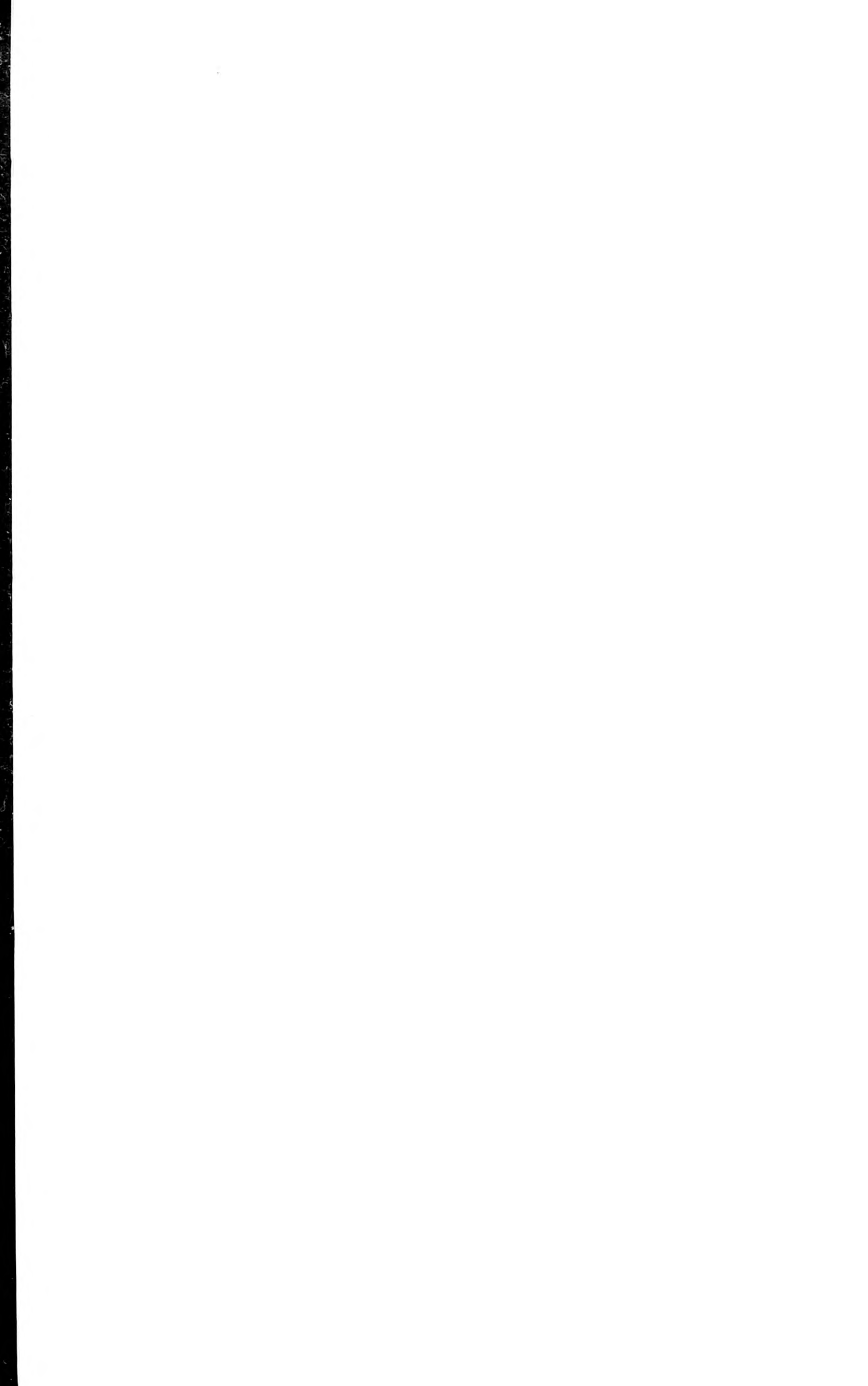


FROGPOND XXVII:3



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HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA
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Editor's Message

Dear HSA Members and Friends:

This will be my last issue as Editor of *Frogpond*, concluding seven years of service. This amounts to twenty-one regular and two supplementary issues, 2214 pages, over 3200 haiku published, and an estimated 150,000 poems read and considered.

Be careful what you wish for!

Seriously, this has been a wonderful seven years for me, and I feel that everything I have volunteered to the Haiku Society of America has been given back to me a hundredfold. I did not, and could not, foresee the many wonderful opportunities that have been afforded me in this position, and it was unimaginable that I should ever count so many fine people amongst my friends. I thank you all for your support, your kindnesses, your compassion, and especially for your fine poetry, criticism and thought over this time. It is a truism, but it bears repeating: I certainly could not have entertained any hopes of making this succeed without your inestimable contributions.

When I first signed on, I made a commitment—to myself as well as to the Society—of three years. At the end of this time, I felt I wanted to add a couple years to my tenure. After these five years I began actively searching for a replacement. I felt it was not good for the Society to be limited to one perspective and taste for too long a period. But I also felt that it would be even more injurious to the Society to simply step down if no strong candidate was ready to step in. Specifically, I was looking for someone who not only possessed a good working knowledge of haiku, but who also had the Society's best interests at heart, and who had acquired the skills necessary to producing a journal to the membership's expectations and in a timely fashion. There are, frankly, not that many people who command all these resources. It has been my good fortune, however, to have worked with John Stevenson for the past several months, and I submit that he is one such person, and, if the members see fit to elect him to this position in this current election, I am convinced he will serve you well.

Thanks again for letting me be part of your lives these many years, and thanks for being so much a part of mine. I hope it is my good fortune, in my new freedom of time, to get to see all of you soon, around the country and in person.

Take care.

Jim Kacian, Frogpond Editor

haiku

1: An unrhymed Japanese poem recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived, in which Nature is linked to human nature. It usually consists of seventeen *onji*.

2: A foreign adaptation of 1, usually written in three lines totalling fewer than seventeen syllables.

full moon—
newts glide through
the Sea of Tranquility
Sara Winteridge

hospital hallway
this far
and no further
Mark Hollingsworth

5

my day-old son—
comparing his palm lines
with mine
David Grayson

singing in the night—
I forget the meaning
of my words
Matt Dennison

incoming tide
gull feathers floating
over the boat ramp
Larry O'Brien

star gazing
at the shore's edge . . .
beacon flash

Victor Ortiz

the moon follows as far as i'm willing to go

Marlene Mountain

candlelight
your voice moves
into shadow

Deb Baker

6

waking to
his callused fingers
and the sound of rain

Katherine Cudney

silent church—
a burst of sunlight
covers us with saints

Ian Daw

old farmhouse—
the pitch of the
patterned linoleum

Tom Clausen

nearly autumn
yellow butterfly
chimney-high . . .

Emily Romano

7

the ant
struggling with
my arm hairs

Yasuhiko Shigemoto

one on none
echoes slap
the schoolhouse wall

Charlie Close

old cane chair
and the farmhouse verandah
lean to the right

Jeffrey Harpeng

gallery wall
the shadow
of a screen door

Victor Ortiz

all-day rain
cleaning out
the catchall drawer

R. A. Stefanac

Civil War battlefield
the plunk of bois d'arc apples
on unknown stones

Elizabeth Howard

8

autumn rain
peppers the sand . . .
a missing toe's phantom itch

Curtis Dunlap

her hands
cast shadows on the wall—
faint ones

Brett Taylor

rocking sleepers—
the night train taking us home
or away

Peter Yovu

the day's cares
distant hooting
of an owl

Le Wild

9

shell fossil
I listen to the sea
from long ago

William Cullen Jr.

So clear across the col . . .
from the next peak
a hiker's "OK"

David Elliott

full moon
we open our
paper bags

Doreen King

the life it lives
low tide or high tide
rock periwinkle

Bruce Ross

across the pond
a brief concentration
of ducks

Paul O. Williams

late afternoon—
beading the fence wire
a row of ants

Sue Mill

10

staying with friends . . .
a silverfish
where the walls meet

paul m.

trail grit rinses
down the drain . . . a moth
flutters up

Scott Mason

heading home
after a sunny day—
back seat singing

Marcus Larsson

rush hour rain—
at the traffic's end
a rainbow

Fred Donovan

11

letting it ring . . .
I watch the last sun leave
the mountain tops

Caroline Gourlay

quiet rain . . .
the old man next door
coughing

Edward J. Rielly

on the highest branch
one crow
displaces another

Jeffrey Harpeng

The Conscious Eye

On the Urban Experience

Dee Evetts

AT THE END OF MY PREVIOUS COLUMN I undertook to devote some space to urban haiku of a grittier variety than those so far considered. However, I have since realized that while there is no lack of both published and unpublished work fitting this description, many of these poems lack any real depth when it comes to trying to say something about them. Images abound—of prostitutes, drug-dealers, panhandlers, of the homeless, of street performers and the simply eccentric. But these images, however accurately or aptly drawn, too often fall short of confronting the urban experience in any significant way.

I am accordingly going to shift my ground a little, to pursue what is for me more interesting quarry: poems which—gritty or not—in some way represent what I would broadly term the claustrophobic aspect of urban life. That is to say, the oppressive, the threatening, the alienating.

My first example comes from Tony Pupello:

steady drizzle
the meter maid goes
from car to car¹

12

At first take this poem may not bring anything like oppression to mind. Yet here is a woman trapped in a thankless job, distributing penalties to others trapped in a daily scramble to find a legal parking space. Add to this the rain coming down, and the scene becomes relentlessly bleak.

In a much lighter vein the same poet gives us this:

blustery wind
the dog walker sorts
a tangle of leashes²

There is a suggestion that the person who has this rather mundane job is also entangled personally in the urban predicament. (We may note that in both of these poems the natural elements are unwelcome, serving only to aggravate the situation.)

Taxidrivings is another of those grinding urban livelihoods.

as we talk—
the cabbie's eyes
in the rearview³

In this poem Robert Scotellaro delineates a moment of awareness, and possibly of empathy. The passengers are absorbed in their conversation, yet one of them notices that the driver is observing them—whether with contempt, amusement, or indifference, is impossible to know. This poem seems to be about separate existences tangentially connected, and the elusive comprehension that other people's lives are as real as our own.

It must be the very density of urban populations that dictates a degree of insulation from our fellow beings—a necessary self-protection, even if inherently unnatural. I was charmed and intrigued by the behaviour of a friend from Arkansas who visited me once for a weekend in New York. For two days he cheerfully and tirelessly greeted everyone we passed on the street, stepping aside to let them by, and holding shop doors open for them. I wondered how long he could sustain such openness and courtesy, were he ever to move to a large city.

It is as if city-dwellers inevitably (and to an extent unconsciously) separate themselves into tribes: salespeople from their customers, drivers from the driven, waiters from those they wait upon. Michael Ketchek has a poem that points this up with keen observation:

in passing
to another waitress
her real smile⁴

I find more than a hint of sadness and frustration in this, that such distances come to exist.

There is of course the other side of the table, and in particular the viewpoint of solitary diners. Here is Bruce

Detrick ruefully observing that he has been marginalized:

table for one
the waiter doesn't
light my candle⁵

For a woman the experience can have a rather different slant, as evoked by Miriam Bourne:

she dines alone
waiters in the shadows
watching⁶

To what extent this scrutiny is imagined rather than actual is irrelevant, for the subject's discomfort is palpable.

Women alone in a big city obviously have every reason to be on their guard. Brenda Gannam's

midnight subway
watching her apply lipstick
he licks his lips⁷

remains appropriately ambiguous. Is the man licking his lips in a predatory way, or could it be quite innocent—an involuntary imitation, for example?

Pamela Miller Ness has a poem that we can place beside this:

winter night
a stranger in the laundromat
asks my name⁸

14

The poet does not specify whether the stranger on this occasion is a man or a woman, but from the tone of the piece we may conclude that it is the former. Meanwhile the first line suggests that they may be alone in the place, and if this is the case then the question could be heard as not just an unwelcome overture, but a threatening one.

How different is the mood of this poem by Vanessa Proctor:

city street
the briefest touch
of a stranger's hand⁹

In a way this contradicts—while yet confirming—all of the estrangement embodied in the preceding work, glimpsing as it does the potential for human connection in any place and at any moment.

I feel it would be a little too tidy to end on this note, all the more so since this issue of *Frogpond* concludes the series on urban haiku, and at the same time features the final appearance of “The Conscious Eye”. I announce this with regret, but also with gratitude for the many contributions and comments that I have received over the past seven years.

By way of farewell then, I am glad to present this poem by Karen Klein:

near the hospital
sparrow's skeleton
picked almost clean¹⁰

15

This is a sombre image, yet paradoxically it can be viewed as a heartening one. There is an overarching and thereby consoling unity—a kind of grace—offered here.

But that is only my response; readers will have their OWN.

* * *

1. *South by Southeast* 3:4
2. *The Pianist's Nose* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 2001)
3. unpublished
4. *bottle rockets* 9
5. *For a Moment* (Farrington Press, 2000)
6. *Behind the Fig Leaves* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 2002)
7. *edge of light: The Red Moon Anthology* (Red Moon Press, 2003)
8. *haiku spirit* 20
9. *Presence* 16
10. *Hands Full of Stars* (Aether Press, 1995)

Empty kitchen
the mug of coffee that was
too hot to drink

Carol Purington

afternoon shadows
the lunge
of a shuffleboarder

Carlos Colón

light snow
waiting for the train
to pass

Fred Donovan

16

a day to Christmas
the endless blinking
of brakes

LeRoy Gorman

New Year's Eve—
glitter on the waitress's
fingernails

Allen McGill

New Year's morning—
I cradle the egg a moment
before cracking it

D. Claire Gallagher

winter wind
following animal tracks
into the woods

Dietmar Tauchner

17

long silences
between notes—
twilight snow

Linda Jeannette Ward

thin snow over ice
half a heart
in her question mark

Francine Banwarth

Passover
snowflakes fall into
Elijah's cup

Bruce Ross

spring sun
watching the pine tops
stirring

Deb Baker

snow melt
a bicycle
scavenged for parts

Barry George

spring rain—
milk in her left breast
unexpectedly sweeter

Duro Jaiye

18

relaxed yet it comes through forsythia

Marlene Mountain

partly cloudy
tulips in shadow
tulips in light

Agnes Eva Savich

the bank of a hawk
a foot from the ground
long spring days

Burnell Lippy

the score keeper
peeks out of the scoreboard
spring rain

Alan Pizzarelli

19

a cloud of mayflies
the swing beneath the oak tree
slows to a stop

Gary Warner

magnolia shade
a lawn jockey's face
painted white

Katherine Cudney

wedding over
my son's chair askew
in the twilight

Yoko Ogino

any fireflies yet?
neighbors' greetings
in the cool dusk

Matsuyo Sato

dusk—
a ball field's lights
shining through the trees

Chad Lee Robinson

Father's Day
the first gift
from his daughter-in-law

Yoko Ogino

20

the last words
of his epitaph,
untrimmed grass

Adelaide McLeod

she answers
without hesitation,
fireflies

Scott Metz

seeds planted—
counting the seconds
after lightning

D. Claire Gallagher

today's green pea harvest
only seven
in the bamboo basket

Nobuko Masakawa

21

ironing
his white shirt
the summer waiter

Tom Tico

Graduation Day—
tufts of purple thistle
resist the breeze

Robert Gilliland

porch swing squeak
a firefly blinks a path
through the gate

Darrell Byrd

Everyone at the table
laughs too hard—
lightning!

Michael Cadnum

summer heat—
the hornet's nest bulges
in the woodpile

Jack Barry

class reunion
the photographer
moves us closer

Yu Chang

22

with flashlights
children fight each other
until dawn

Scott Metz

searching for seaglass—
someone's china pattern
turns up

Andrea Grillo

Slight excitement
when I put on
sunglasses

Yasuhiko Shigemoto

rambling rose
the gardener ties up
shoulder-length hair

kirsty karkow

23

a meadow takes over
the meadow I planted—
summer sabbatical

George Dorsty

entering
the batter's box
afternoon shadows

Dan McCullough

brightening stars
standing among them
fish nibble my feet

Peter Yovu

burrs on crabgrass—
the drawn out feeling
of summer

Janelle Barrera

stuffy museum—
the fan Hokusai painted
of sea cucumbers

Stanford M. Forrester

sunset—
shells in my pocket
begin to move

Duro Jaiye

24

remembering
where the water snake hides . . .
a smell of crushed mint

Robert Mainone

the crackle
of a radio homerun—
Sunday siesta

Shimi

changing light—
a pool
below the falls

Merrill Ann Gonzales

daughter
on his shoulders . . .
mimosa in bloom

Robert Gilliland

25

separated again . . .
the green flash
at sunset

paul m.

lingering dusk
she dabs some bread
in seasoned oil

Shimi

summer dusk avoiding the sustain pedal

Philip Rowland

senryu

1: A Japanese poem structurally similar to the Japanese haiku but primarily concerned with human nature; often humorous or satiric.

2: A foreign adaptation of 1.

by phone
my sister says
we are in touch

Hilary Tann

How much longer
will my umbrella lean
by your door?

Michael Cadnum

27

at the curb . . .
my husband's suitcase
packed with snow

Michele Harvey

my DVDs
without the player
after she left

Dietmar Tauchner

fireflies
to booms and crackles—
the dark house next door

Rees Evans

the moon brighter
through diseased Monterey pines—
a car alarm sounding

Michael Dylan Welch

late night hissing . . . air mattress

Le Wild

thrown away
without counting—
birthday cards

Gary Hotham

28

smoking on the porch
how perfect everything is
except that we die

Pete Lee

drama class
the novice
botches a death scene

Tom Painting

mixed smells
from the school cafeteria
guessing today's special
Teruko Omoto

my late lover's
hidden diary
what did the stars mean?
Allen McGill

29

family vacation
in the museum corner
uncle's hard kisses
Roberta Beary

around the war memorial road rage
R. P. Carter

bush track each time we clear a little more
Vanessa Proctor

hostess
the vintage
of her kiss

Ernest J. Berry

patients' lounge
wrinkled magazines

R. P. Carter

funeral home
the ticking of a clock
in the office

Mark Hollingsworth

30

irrigation circles
returning
to my flight tray

Scott Mason

on the third night of Passover I eat all the symbols

Ruth Holzer

dance rehearsal
counting steps to the
bus sign

Ariel Lambert

late for work
a chill in the shadow
of skyscrapers

Vanessa Proctor

31

elevator
the breath
of tall men

Hilary Tann

inserting a piece
in my jigsaw puzzle
the TV repairman

Francine Porad

halfway through
my first draft
switching to pencil

Karen Sohne

Haiku in the Wild

Richard Gilbert

Metamorphosis in Haiku

Now I shall tell of things that change, new being
Out of old . . . give me the voice
To tell the shifting story of the world.

Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, "Invocation"
(trans. Horace Gregory 1958)

METAMORPHOSIS, the magical transformation of form and identity, is a primary mark of existence, and over the past century the dissolving and mutation of "identities" (buildings, towns, jobs, landscapes, media, art) has come to represent a fundamental aspect of the modern environment, attended most recently by the postmodern ethos. Writers like Bill McKibben express concern over metamorphoses occurring between nature and society: the potential loss of human identity through future human genetic manipulation, discussed in *Enough: Staying Human in an Engineered Age*, and the loss of wild nature, a main concern of his work *The End of Nature*.

32

Varieties and variations of metamorphosis are innumerable. In Greek myth, the Earth is created from inanimate matter and given life by the hands of Gods; a larva spins a cocoon, emerging as a butterfly; coal becomes diamond; carbon dioxide, limestone. The hero transforms him or herself, confronting initiatory challenges through stages of life. Snakes shed skins, seed becomes flower, magicians transform flowers into pigeons. Computer-generated effects morph reality in cinema—and metamorphosis is a given in dreams. Couched in the metaphors of language and narrative story, metamorphic acts offer roads of vision, and pose mysteries: how form transforms, how one becomes "other" and how that other becomes "I". The universe harbors magical powers, transforming identities, reversing, converting, or fusing

them. Metamorphosis indicates that the faces and “fingerprints” of identity float upon deeper seas. Dudley Young points out in *Origins of the Sacred* that metamorphosis embodies the sacred energy of the swarm, psychically resonant with Dionysus and divine madness; the universe as flagrantly metamorphic, its transformations extending beyond human conception. In this sense, the moment of metamorphosis remains part of the wild. Gary Snyder posits that the wild is “a measured chaos” from which one may discover “the grain of things”.

I will argue that consciousness, mind, imagination, and language are fundamentally wild. “Wild” as in wild ecosystems—“richly interconnected, interdependent, and incredibly complex. Diverse, ancient, and full of information. At root the real question is how we understand the concepts of order, freedom, and chaos. Is art an imposition of order on chaotic nature, or is art (also read “language”) a matter of discovering the grain of things, of uncovering the measured chaos that structures the natural world?” (Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Watersheds*, 1995, pp. 163-172).

“The grain of things” arises through fundamental contact with the wild: an inchoate imagination, an “uncovering [of] the measured chaos that structures the natural world.” Tapping the treasury of the western imagination, Ovid provides story after story of shocking, irruptive metamorphosis, from God to human, human to plant or animal, from human to God, etc. Through irruptive metamorphosis, lines of identity and reality are crossed and the world, as “consciousness, mind, imagination, and language” is revealed as sacred and wild.

The sense of metamorphosis in haiku is a topic which can only be touched on here; I would like to comment on several haiku which evoke a landscape of metamorphosis as an important feature, in that the identities of one or more phrasal images in the poem hover upon an extended moment of metamorphosis as the haiku coheres.

lakeside memorial
the single shadow
of clustered tadpoles

(Ferris Gilli, *frogpond* XXVII:2, p. 5)

In Gilli's haiku, the base image "lakeside memorial" retains its realism, yet within the lakeside shallows, an indeterminate image constellates. The single shadow is made "impossible" and is at the same time composed of teaming, swarming life. The shadow, typically a solid (inanimate) identity is possessed by ("of") a swarm of tadpoles: one form of identity continually metamorphoses into another: neither just a shadow nor just a tadpole cluster; the haiku brings out this metamorphic crux of image and action. The metamorphic act occurs within the superposed section, with the haiku grounded by the realistic environment of "lakeside memorial."

night wind
flexing window
reflections

(Christopher Herold, *frogpond* XXVII:1, p. 5)

At the poem's center is "flexing window", an intriguing collocation. There is an air of indeterminacy to the unusual collocation, catalyzed by the indeterminate syntax surrounding the verb: is it the window or the night wind flexing—or both? A physical force (night wind) paradoxically distorts an ephemeral image (reflections). There is linguistic irruption—the ambivalent language is disjunctive, and our perception of reality is imploded or transmuted. Which sense of flexing (muscular or bending) is to be applied—and—how can wind flex a reflection? It may be the flexing glass which causes refraction, yet the poem's concision and collocational fusion evokes semantic indeterminacy and paradox, powering a metamorphic transmutation of reality. The world is refreshed by the poetic magic of opened perception.

34

cold rain—
my application
to become a crab

(Fay Aoyagi, *Modern Haiku* 35:2, p. 116)

Aoyagi's haiku poses a fantastical, Kafkaesque reverse-anthropomorphism, where an application (a bureaucratic social instrument) becomes a metamorphic instrument urging a transformative fusion or harmony ("no separation") with the natural world. Each line of the haiku wittily subverts

the next, via semantic disjunction; the central metamorphic power resides in the high degree of disjunctive allusion—what does it mean—to apply to become a crab? Within a landscape of cold rain, an ambivalent image arises fusing normally separated identities. The cohering image seems a fusion of three separate realities, elemental, social and wild /animal.

a cow comes
out of the barn
half hay

(Jim Kacian, *Presents of Mind*, 1996)

begins prosaically enough with a barnyard, until the last line, a show-stopper of an impossible collocation, in its role as a compound noun. What strange metamorphosis is embodied in this creature, half plant and half cow? Having once tended a homestead, I recall having seen cows coming out to pasture after a barn feed, their wide backs buried under hay. A friend had another interpretation: having eaten its fill, the cow had literally become half hay. In any case, the central image of the poem seems to humorously focus on a creature (or perception) in a moment of metamorphosis. Again, an ambivalence or indeterminacy of identity is evoked through language, as “half hay” applies countability (half) to an uncountable noun (hay). A well-wrought and placed impossible collocation fuses surprise and transformation, creating a world rooted in poetic metamorphosis.

Haiku, through concision, disjunction, use of nature-image, environmental sensibility (“objective” landscapes, imaginal or realistic), contain heightened possibilities for metamorphosis. Certain haiku bring this quality strongly to the fore, evoking a unique poetic experience which harkens back to archaic underpinnings in literary and cultural thought. The question of what we might mean by “the wild”, and how we might value the wild seems relevant to both haiku and humanity’s future. Through experiential moments of metamorphosis, the reader moves beyond fixed identities, potentially sensing “the grain of things,” which Snyder equates with “absolute freedom and wildness.” Haiku, utilizing various means unique to the genre, can powerfully impact consciousness with embodied, psychically charged moments of metamorphosis.

a tank approaches
the hut explodes . . .
I change the channel

Peggy Garrison

cockfight
sand sprays
my face

Nate Haken

blood in the meat tray
angry
with the butcher

Jean Dion

36

a pit bull
humps my leg
i let him finish

Alan Pizzarelli

static cling
her panties
in his drawers

CarrieAnn Thunnell

department store
looking for
each other

Tim Bravenboer

inthereeds lamingo

Mike Taylor

37

a heron
for every photographer—
adult summer course

George Dorsty

all the family's here—
the persimmon ripens
unevenly

James Chessing

mother's album
the story
of my childhood

Yu Chang

in-laws on the phone—
dappled light plays
on the garden path

Fran Masat

my head
in my hands—
the phone on its cradle

Gonzalo Melchor

big city moon
our vocabularies
exhausted

Paul Pfleuger Jr.

38

Ash Wednesday
a drop of water hangs
on the snowman's nose

William Cullen Jr.

sunny afternoon
the anguish
of a birdie putt

Michael Fessler

having brushed off
several small ants
an extra large one . . .

Tom Clausen

board meeting
a few pigeons
strut on the ledge

Gary Steinberg

39

birthday morning
he tells me that 53
is a prime number

Pamela Miller Ness

sunset ends—
the steel returns
to her eyes

Gary Steinberg

waiting up
puffs of steam
from the iron

Connie Donleycott

linked

forms

tan-renga

41

decision time
tiny ripples
in the river

a blue eggshell
quivering

*Michael Dylan Welch
Pamela Miller Ness*

With Each Step

crowded shop—
the toddler's shoes
light up with each step

the wooden *geta* clacks
under my 80-kilogram weight

drying seaweed
a snorkeling flipper
blisters my heel

sandals left
on a deserted cape—
ants carry red petals

flung to the herb garden
mud from my workboots

kicked barefoot
the soccer ball
arcs over the net

Closed for Repairs

comfortable—
again I sew up
this old bathrobe

beating the dents out of
his new third hand car

away on a trip
with my favorite suitcase—
the handle comes off!

shabby bistro—
the worn wooden handles
of the cutlery

our waitress's big smile
with a missing tooth

famous cathedral
in scaffolding to the top
closed for repairs

43

*Betty Kaplan
Max Verhart*

Torque—A Sequence

Iraq forgotten—
the stubborn top
of the jelly jar

what matters?
the stubborn top
of the jelly jar

nothing else—
the stubborn top
of the jelly jar

mind zooms in
the stubborn top
of the jelly jar

glaciers in Greenland
the stubborn top
of the jelly jar

the taste of blood

THE LAST DOG WE HAD growing up, a boxer named “bullet”, developed the habit of jumping up and laying his paws on the chest of anyone who approached. licking and slobbering, he only wanted to play, but would knock over small children so we were forced to take him to live in the rural town of my grandparents. there was plenty of open space, rabbits and possums to hunt. when he needed to be chained, he had the shade of the plum trees. on our visits, we would throw the green canning plums for him to chase. he liked to chase. he also sometimes went after the neighbor’s chickens and killed a few. “once they get the taste of blood, you might as well shoot ’em,” the man explained. And one day, that’s just what he did.

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first fist fight
the taste of blood
in my mouth

w. f. owen

A Perfect Cut

OVER THE WEEKEND a faculty colleague of mine died suddenly of what they called a “massive heart attack.” we were not especially close, but had talked often about such mutual interests as computers and television shows. a Film Studies Professor, he invited me to one of his night classes several years ago. he had brought in one of the writers of Star Trek: The Next Generation with rough cuts of a yet-to-be-seen episode. after class, he explained to me at length how to make the episode perfect through better fades, lighting and more effective storyboarding. “like building a house,” he always said.

blue sky
the carpenter makes
a perfect cut

w. f. owen

36-Hour Pass

MY BUDDY AND I standing at a window high in the Allerton Hotel on the only weekend we managed to claim solely for ourselves. He told his parents that he was confined to quarters and wouldn't be driving up to Chicago from Kentucky where we were in the midst of Basic Training. Ray loved his parents and it was probably the only time he ever lied to them—he was more than aware that he was their bright-eyed boy and the family's best hope. An hour after midnight on a Sunday morning with a heavy rain falling on the city. The moving traffic on Michigan Avenue creating fluid patterns of light on the wet pavement below. Rush Street's rain-muted, multi-colored myriad of nightclub signs flickered off toward the northwest—a blurred but pulsating neon river running through vast and immutable questions out there in the darkness. We stood stark naked without acceptable answers. Well . . . there was one fully acceptable answer: the Korean War brought us together and that was the only good thing about it! Two kids from blue-collar backgrounds trying to figure things out, and plumbing our courage for what was to come in the year ahead.

secret sharers
shadows in the mirror
of a dark room

Jerry Kilbride

Okinawan Blues

46 NEARLY THREE HOURS on the plane. nothing but clear weather from Japan's Kansai airport to Ishigaki. the dull rocky mountains on the mainland contrast sharply to the chain of green-mountain'd islands south of Kyushu. arrival at Ishigaki is uneventful. the people, birds, cars, buses, even the green of the island seems to be preoccupied with some long, unspoken, easygoing mantra.

winter vacation—
the beach too hot
to walk on

Duro Jaiye

Apple Blossoms

AN OLD TREE hangs over our dirt driveway so that it brushes our car as we drive past. Last year, our first year in this country house, I admired its blooming. This year the gardener says it is leaning because some of its roots have worn away.

wet apple blossoms
on the dark branches
on the dark earth

Bruce Ross

Wave

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WATCHING MY MOTHER fumble through her pockets, dropping candy wrappers, tissues, and balls of crinkled lists, I was stabbed with loss. She's getting old—really old. She no longer cares about her appearance the way she used to and that was all she used to care about. She's even losing interest in telling me what to do. I should feel liberated but I want to cry.

florescent-lit elevator
she turns and
waves good-bye

Wendy Smith

Haibun

YOU GIVE BIRTH. You nurse them. Wean them. Take out the trash and drive them to piano. They get a boyfriend or a girlfriend and maybe a college education. Which you pay for. They get an ATM card and a cell phone. In that order. They get a job. They come back home. It's not what you expected. Every day is a scorcher.

fresh quart of orange juice
I watch the seal-strip
re-curling

Laurie W. Stoelting

essays

Notes from Tule Lake

An Interview with Violet de Cristoforo

Violet de Cristoforo was born near Hilo, Hawaii in 1917. She was sent to Fresno, California in her mid-teens to be educated. She married Shigeru Matusuda and joined the Kaiko School of Haiku with its modern-style approach. At the outbreak of World War II she and her family were sent to Japanese-American internment camps, settling with her children in Tule Lake Segregation Center in Northern California. After the war they were expatriated to Japan. In 1953 she remarried and resettled in the United States. She has edited an anthology of internment camp haiku, *May Sky, There Is Always Tomorrow*, and authored a collection of her own camp haiku, *Poetic Reflections of the Tule Lake Internment Camp*. Some of the latter haiku appear in the recent anthology, *California Poetry, From the Gold Rush to the Present*.

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BR: Ippekiro Nakatsuka (1887-1946), one of the early founders of modern-style Japanese haiku that rejected traditional mandatory seasonal references and a 5-7-5 structure, said “haiku floats from heart to heart”. Why was this modern-style haiku practiced in America before World War II and in the internment camps rather than the traditional style of haiku?

VC: The intent of haiku practitioners in the Fresno-area from 1939-1942 was to Americanize themselves, including their haiku. They wanted to use American expression that reflected their environment. Therefore they did not use the seasonal references of traditional Japanese haiku. They were Americanized and should use American thoughts and feeling.

BR: You have expressed the preference for haiku that reflects “one’s state of mind” as opposed to “restrictive expressions of scenery and objective subtleness” of traditional haiku. What is “personal” or “interior” feeling in modern-style haiku?

VC: As opposed to traditional season words, one focused on one's emotion, "whatever you feel," and basically a subjective response. One's surroundings were different and therefore one's haiku was different.

BR: You have written that one must try to live a "normal life" in the internment camps. How was this situation bearable?

VC: It was not bearable. We did not do anything wrong. The war with Japan was not our responsibility. We lost everything. Our farm. Our property. Our heart and thinking. We had only natural subjects for our haiku.

BR: You mention Hitler, barbed wire, armed guards, etc. Is there a real comparison to the Holocaust camps?

VC: I think so. And in our camps we were the only nationality interned.

BR: Kyotaro Kmuro wrote in his introduction to *Rohwer Concentration Camp Haiku*: "In order for us to transcend our condition we must immerse ourselves in nature, and be grateful to find happiness in the life of haiku poetry." Respond?

VC: We did immerse ourselves in nature. We didn't get caught up in camp politics. What we expressed was heartfelt both in terms of nature and human nature.

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BR: Did you find happiness in haiku?

VC: We practiced haiku and it was the only thing you survived on. Some went insane and some committed suicide. We met once a month to practice haiku, our "principle ideology", I guess you would call it.

BC: Here are an internment haiku by Suiko Matsushita and a one-liner by you:

cosmos in bloom
as if no war
were taking place

A man picking and discarding cosmos flowers his face ever so gentle

And here is the comment you placed after your haiku: “A sense of compassion and affinity permeated me as I left him in his own world of nature.” What is this “compassion”?

VC: He had nothing to look forward to. The only affinity he had was in flowers like all of us did. When we were interned we could take only what we could carry (vegetable seeds, flowers). We didn't know what would happen. Many took nothing but seeds. We had to abandon our fruit and vegetable plantings. We had tears having to leave. We could at least write something about this experience. Leave something behind as a record. We had nothing else. In haiku we had our sanity restored to us.

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BR: Here is another of your haiku:

vegetation seems meager
here and there
summer garden plots

Is this simply description?

VC: All we took with us were seeds. The internment camp was based on volcanic ash. Nothing would grow. We had to contend with no fertilizer, the wind blowing, and winter. My mother planted two rows but nothing came up. She died in camp. I was thinking of her when I wrote this haiku.

BR: Here are two one-liners by you:

two summers forced to be here I hold this year's flower seeds in my hand
depressing autumn sky thinking about the war

How could you reconcile not having control of your life?

VC: My relatives were in Hiroshima at the time of the A-bomb. The “depressing autumn sky” refers to the condition of my relatives in Japan. I became aware that it is the war our lives depend upon. One could not trust your neighbor in the camp because of informers. We had nothing other than writing haiku.

BR: Here is a one-liner by you:

many dandelions are stepped on only one blooming properly

Is this an allegory of your condition in the camp?

VC: It is the condition. Everything we tried to do was stepped on. Here was a miracle in this dandelion. One might survive like this dandelion.

BR: Here is another of your haiku:

Breathing deeply
woman with woman's feeling
dense summer grass

Explicate your haiku if you would.

VC: Even nature tried to survive. Humans likewise. One something would survive. That one would be me. I would survive. Farmers just starting out. Everything was destroyed. Some went crazy. Some committed suicide.

BR: Here is another of your one-liners:

white bare feet the endless wave of wild grass

And here is your commentary on this haiku: "... I realized the monotony and the futility of our existence." Could you explain this realization?

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VC: Tule Lake was covered with volcanic sand only. One must be barefoot. I had to walk two to three miles this way daily to see my hospitalized children and mother. My feet were also especially delicate. I looked at the sky, crying: "Have you too abandoned us?" The sky was the only thing to look up to. We didn't want to say God or Buddha. We were very careful. The guards would otherwise tell us we were narrow-minded.

BR: Do you have any new haiku?

VC: I have not written much haiku over the last years since

my husband died. I am preparing things so that when I die things will be in order and I can tell him so!

BR: Did you ever write traditional haiku?

VC: I never tried though my father and mother wrote it.

BR: How is your garden going? Any haiku from that?

VC: It is beautiful, if nothing else. I am not now writing haiku, but feeling occurs.

BR: How does it feel to be the oldest living poet in the new California poetry anthology?

VC: Uh! I don't know! I hope I can carry on!

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Interview by *Bruce Ross*
Permission for quoted and translated material
from *Violet de Cristoforo*

* * *

Erratum from XXVII:2

every so often
the sound of a passing car . . .
sleeping alone now

Jay Santini

to which the author appends

in *frogpond*
a typo in my poem . . .
alone with it

Walter Prichard Eaton and the Haiku Spirit

If Walter Prichard Eaton (1878—1957) had not been so enamored of the theater he might have become one of our more important nature writers. He certainly had the haiku spirit, a deep love of nature, and a more than able pen. But his love of the theater and his dedication to it took up most of his life and writing. His *The American Stage Today*, published in 1908, was the first of his more than two dozen books, many of which were about or for the theater, including at least two plays he wrote himself. Besides writing about the theater and nature, he also wrote a novel, a book of poems, and a series of children's books about the adventures of a group of Boy Scouts. Among his many essays are several picturesque evocations of life in New York City that merit reprinting. His nature books include *On Yankee Hilltops* (1933), *In Berkshire Fields* (1920), *Barn Doors and Byways*

In the latter, which contains some of his best nature writing, he has a passage describing our spiritual reactions to different natural environments. It reminds me of a haiku poet's concern for the seasons and how haiku often involve a poet's love for a particular locale. In reading it, however, one has to be prepared to encounter—there and elsewhere in Eaton's writings—an over-use of exclamation points and a tendency towards a theatrical style of expression, both very un-haiku-like flaws. Here is the passage—it is from the chapter entitled "Nature and The Psalmist:"

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... Not long ago I spent many weeks in the prairie country of the West, a sense of oppression constantly increasing in weight upon my spirit. Those endless, level plains! Those roads that stretched without a break to infinity! A house, a group of barns, a fruit orchard, now and then a clump of hardwoods, alone broke the endless, flat monotony of snow-covered fields—no, not fields, but infinitudes where a single furrow could put a girdle about an entire township in my home land! My soul hungered for a hill; my heart craved, with a dull longing, the sight of a naked birch tree flung aloft against the winter sky. Back through the endless plains of Illinois the train crawled, away from the setting sun. But the next daylight disclosed the gentle, rolling

slopes of the Mohawk Valley, and before many hours had passed the Berkshire Hills were all about us, like familiar things recovered. The camel-hump of Greylock to the north was sapphire-blue and beckoning. The nearer mountains wore their reddish mantles, pricked with green, above the snowy intervalles, and laid their upreared outlines stark against the sky. Shadowy ravines let into their flanks, suggestive of roaring brooks and the mystery of the wilderness. The clouds trailed purple shadow-anchors; the sun flashed from the ice on their scarred ledges. And a weight seemed suddenly lifted from my spirit. The words of the ancient Psalmist came to my lips unconsciously: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from God."

Yes, God dwells in the high places! The Pemigewasset Indians who would not climb Mount Moosilauke because the Great Spirit abode on the windswept summit, the ancient Hebrew Psalmist who dwelt in the shadow of the Syrian hills, and I, "the heir to all the ages," are alike in this primitive sense that God's dwelling place is up there where our eyes instinctively lift; for the glory and the wonder of the hills is upon us all, and we cannot believe otherwise.

Yet what of the man who never saw a hill? What of the tribesman of the plain or desert, or the Illinois farmer's boy? Where, for him, is God's dwelling? I have seen men from the prairie whom the hills oppressed, who hungered for their level roads stretching arrow-like to the far horizon, just as I hungered for the blue heave of Greylock. . . . Does [God] speak to the prairie boy in the rustle of the endless miles of corn? Does He dwell in that pearly cloud which hangs forever above the far horizon? Is His dwelling this pervasive immensity of space? Somewhere He dwells for each of us, for man perishes who does not find for Him a habitation; but where it is depends, after all, on habit—on so simple a thing as the silent influence in early years of external sights and sounds. I was born near the hills and nurtured on their breast, and I am never happy long away from them. The most beautiful thing in the world to me is Mount Moosilauke; and the loveliest music ever made is the song of the hermit thrushes on the slopes of Cannon when the sunset shadows are creeping amid the hemlock aisles and far below on an upland pasture the cow-bells tinkle as the herd winds down to the valley. Were I a psalmist, from such things would my metaphors be drawn, and I would bid the world once more lift up its eyes unto the hills. But there may be psalmists of the sea and prairie, of the

of the frozen North and the languid tropics. After all, what matters is the sense of divinity that surrounds us, the enkindled spirit which strikes out from Nature the ultimate metaphor.

Despite the overly dramatic touches, this is in some ways almost a perfect little essay on how landscapes evoke different emotional responses. And it has numerous haiku-like touches that are nascent with haiku possibilities: the shadowy ravines with their hidden brooks; the ice on the scarred ledges; the cloud that hangs forever above the far horizon. One feels Eaton could, if he'd been familiar with haiku and had attempted to emulate its standards of simplicity and concision, have become a capable haiku poet.

Eaton's professional life, however, was devoted to the theater. It was evidently his first love. One can sense that proclivity even in the manner with which he dramatizes the elements of nature in the preceding passage, nearly declaiming some of their attributes. He was a controversial drama critic from 1902 to 1908, first with the *New York Tribune* and then the *New York Sun*. Theatrical producers objected to his criticism, which was directed at commercially motivated productions that he felt lacked artistic integrity, and they caused him to lose his job with the *Sun*. As a drama critic, while inveighing against producers who put monetary success above creative concerns, he was very much involved in encouraging amateur theatrical groups. In 1909 he started writing regularly about the theater for the *American Magazine*. In 1919 he became an editor for *Drama*. While doing work at that periodical for the next eleven years, he was also writing articles for other publications: general essays on various subjects, especially the theater, and pieces on country life and nature.

In 1920 he also started a teaching career that would last for the rest of his life. Beginning at Columbia where he taught drama criticism for three years, he lectured or taught at a few other schools before becoming an associate professor at Yale in 1933. He taught playwriting there until his mandatory retirement in 1947. He continued giving lectures and teaching at several schools of higher learning into the early 1950s.

Eaton was born in Malden, Massachusetts on August 24, 1878. He had an early interest in writing, starting his

own newspaper when he was thirteen, and learned to love the theater while still fairly young by going to see famous actors, such as Edwin Booth, performing on the stage. He entered Harvard in 1896 and graduated in 1900. In that year, even before he graduated, he began working for the *Boston Journal* as a newspaper reporter. He died in Chapel Hill, North Carolina on February 26, 1957.

In Michael Solomonson's full page biographical sketch in *American National Biography*, Eaton's nature writing gets only passing mention because so much of his life and professional reputation concerned the theater. I think his essays on nature and other subjects deserve to be better known. His style often leans too much towards a kind of nineteenth-century sentimental prettiness and to the use of fanciful metaphors. And as we have already seen, he often drifts into a theatrical mode. His poetry, takes these weaknesses even further—adding archaisms such as “hath” and “whence” and the rhymes and meters of greeting card verse. (Fortunately his output of verse was small.) In his best descriptive prose he usually avoids the temptation to decorate the language and keeps his eye on what he is trying to describe. In *In Berkshire Fields* he turns a haiku-like eye on such things as forgotten roads, crows, lady-slippers, foxes, and moss on roof-shingles. *On Yankee Hilltops* contains interesting essays on “wet woods” and “woods sounds.”

At the beginning of his essay “Upland Pastures,” the first chapter in *Green Trails and Upland Pastures*, he explores the idea of how the names we give natural locations have a suggestiveness that presents an image to the mind. It is expressed in much the way a haiku poet might talk about the suggestiveness of the few words in a haiku:

There are alluring names in the corner of the world where I dwell, such as the Upper Meadow, Sky Farm, and High Pasture. Is there not something breeze-blown and spacious about the very words High Pasture? You do not need a picture to bring the image to your eye. Your image will not in the least resemble our High Pasture, to be sure, but what does that matter? You will see a greensward flung like a mantle over the tall shoulder of a hill, the blue dome of the sky dropping down behind it, and to the ear of memory will come the faint, lazy tinkle of a cow-bell. It is the magic of the words which matters, not the realism of the image.

One of Eaton's most beautiful passages of nature writing occurs in the same chapter as these lines on place names. It is about the view from high on the side of a mountain. One of the hardest visual events to capture in any kind of writing is the viewing of a large vista or panorama. When writers try to describe what they see from the top of a mountain, they are usually at a loss to do so in such a way that their readers can get the same sense of awe and beauty they themselves have felt. They usually have to fall back on a description of the emotions they experienced: a subjective, generalized account of the event, rather than an objective recreation of the view that the reader can see.

Yet Eaton, in the passage I'm referring to, presents us with the view from a "hilltop eighteen hundred feet above the sea" with such vividness we almost have to shade our eyes with our hand as we observe it. We look with him from the blue lakes far below to the "dome of the Taconics" beyond them in the west and then up to the great clouds sailing in the summer sky. One of the clouds "sweeps across the sun, and trails a shadow anchor over the pasture"—and the whole panorama of light and shadow he partly describes and mostly suggests rises out of the page before us:

In these softer modern days, when we all desire the valley warmth, the nervous companionship of our kind, the handy motion-picture theater, many an upland pasture is going back to wildness, invaded by birch and pine upon the borders, overrun with the hosts of the shrubby cinquefoil, most provocative of plants because it refuses to blossom unanimously, putting forth its yellow flowers a few at a time here and there on the sturdy bush. Such a pasture I know upon a hilltop eighteen hundred feet above the sea, where now few cattle browse, and seldom enough save at blueberry season does a human foot pass through the rotted bars or straddle the tumbling, lichen-covered stone wall where sentinel mulleins guard the gaps. It is not easy now even to reach this pasture, for the old logging roads are choked and the cattle tracks, eroded deep into the soil like dry irrigation ditches, sometimes plunge through tangles of hemlock, crossing and criss-crossing to reach little green lawns where long ago the huts of charcoal burners stood, and only at the very summit converging into parallels that are plain to follow. Some of them, too, will lead you far astray, to a rocky shoulder of

the hill guarded by cedars, where you will suddenly view the true pasture a mile away, over a ravine of forest. Yet once you have reached the true summit pasture, there bursts upon you a prospect the Lake country of England cannot excel; here the northbound Peabodies rest in May to tune their voices for their mating song, here the everlasting flower sheds its subtle perfume on the upland air, the sweet fern contends in fragrance, and here the world is all below you with naught above but Omar's inverted bowl and a drifting cloud.

It is good now and then to hobnob with the clouds, to be intimate with the sky. "The world is too much with us" down below; every house and tree is taller than we are, and discourages the upward glance. But here in the hilltop pasture nothing is higher than the vision save the blue zenith and the white flotilla of the clouds. Climbing over the tumbled wall, to be sure, the grass-line is above your eye; and over it, but not resting upon it, is a great Denali of a cumulus. It is not resting upon the pasture ridge, because the imagination senses with the acuteness of a stereoscope the great drop of space between, and feels the thrill of aërial perspective. Your feet hasten to the summit, and, once upon it, your hat comes off, while the mountain wind lifts through your hair and you feel yourself at the apex and zenith of the universe. Far below lie the blue eyes of Twin Lakes, and beyond them rises the beautiful dome of the Taconics, ethereal blue in colour, yet solid and eternal. Lift your face ever so little, and the green world begins to fall from sight, the great cloud-ships, sailing in the summer sky, begin to be the one thing prominent. How softly they billow as they ride! How exquisite they are with curve and shadow and puffs of silver light! Even as you watch, one sweeps across the sun, and trails a shadow anchor over the pasture, over your feet. You almost hold your breath as it passes, for it seems in some subtle way as if the cloud had touched you, had spoken you on its passage.

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Cor van den Heuvel

* * *

This essay is from a work in progress entitled The Haiku Spirit: One With Nature in North America. All the quoted selections by Walter Prichard Eaton are from his Green Trails and Upland Pastures, published by Doubleday, Page & Company, Garden city, New York. Copyright, 1917, by Doubleday, Page & Company.

Issa: The Essential Books

Ueda, Makoto, *Dew on the Grass: The Life and Poetry of Kobayashi Issa* (Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands, <<http://www.brill.nl>>, 2004). ISBN 90-04-13723-8. xii + 194 pp., 6.5" x 10", hardcover. \$79 through booksellers or from the publisher.

Lanoue, David G., *Pure Land Haiku: The Art of Priest Issa* (Buddhist Books International, 820 Plumas St., Reno, Nevada 89509, buddhistbooksrbc@att.net, fax: 775-348-6613, 2004). ISBN 0-914910-53-1. 144 pp., 6" X 9", perfect bound, wraps. \$12.95 from the publisher (\$3 s&h for the first copy, \$1 each additional).

EACH OF THESE FINE BOOKS ON Issa (1763-1828*) requires a deep breath before diving in. Makoto Ueda's latest work, *Dew on the Grass: The Life and Poetry of Kobayashi Issa*, does in succinct and engaging form the same kind of excellent job as his earlier book on Buson, *The Path of Flowering Thorn: The Life and Poetry of Yosa Buson* (1998), giving a comprehensive overview of the poet's life, including many poems and other writings situated in the contexts of their composition. The back matter contains extremely useful indices, including both English and Japanese (in romanization) references for the poems. The English poem index is arranged by seasons and season words, indicating the latter. For the moment, the deep breath with respect to *Dew on the Grass* will come upon noting the price of this work and deciding whether or not to take the plunge and buy it. We can only hope that some publisher will take up the paperback rights and issue a more popularly priced edition. But I would urge those deeply interested in Issa's haiku and Issa the man not to wait for that event before getting the book. Issa's life has been heavily mythologized in both Japan and the West—to a certain extent with his own encouragement—and we would do well to understand it much better before we accept the usual simplistic and demeaning notions of this complex man and his poetry.

David Lanoue's study, *Pure Land Haiku: The Art of Priest Issa*, promises and delivers a very different look at Issa's poems. The deep breath here, we take before entering a territory previously uncharted in English-language writings on Japanese haiku: a Buddhism quite foreign to all the hoopla about Zen in haiku foisted upon us by R. H. Blyth

and his followers. And a poet—Issa—as dedicated to that Pure Land vision as surely and fully as any Bashô ever was to Zen. For the truth of the matter is this: Any deeply held religious or philosophical beliefs will undoubtedly influence the work of an artist. We already know of the Zen in Bashô's haiku, the art-for-its-own-sake in Buson's, and the Confucianism of Shiki's poetry. Here is Issa's Pure Land haiku. (Unfortunately, this book has no index; any index would have been a boon to those who wish to do more than read through the book once, though the table of contents is somewhat helpful in this regard.)

Reading Ueda's *Dew on the Grass*, we soon discover that Issa did indeed suffer the death of his mother during his infancy, an unsympathetic step-mother, and estrangement from his home and family at age 13. However, reading on, we find that he raised himself from adolescent poverty to the position of an up-and-coming poet through a combination of talent, stubborn persistence, and some good luck. Issa was able to live much as he pleased throughout his middle and later years. Issa also married for the first time at age 50, once he had straightened out his grievances with his step-mother and half-brother and resettled in his original home village. And, though he seems to have been happy with his first wife, Kiku, he actually spent much of his time away from home visiting other poets throughout the region and tending to the business of being a haikai master. During his final decade, however, Issa knew deeper sorrows as he lost all four children born during his lifetime and the wife who bore them. (When Issa died, a later wife was pregnant with a child who did survive well into adulthood.)

The one area where Issa seems to have shown deep anger was in the dispute with his step-mother and half-brother—and with the elders and residents of his home village—over his claim to half his father's estate. As Ueda points out, his negative feelings about these matters show up not only during their height, in the poems of his 30s, but during his later, more affluent times as well. Despite this, Issa maintained a surprising equanimity toward his lot in life. Ueda speaks of Issa's "faith in True Pure Land Buddhism, which deepened as he grew older and more infirm" (89), and cites "Issa's attempt to formulate a poetics on the basis of . . . the True Pure Land sect of Buddhism"

(87). At the core of Issa's poetry there also lies, in Ueda's words, "a confessional theory [of haikai poetics] . . . unique in its total acceptance of human nature as it is" (88).

After reading Ueda's book for a basic grounding in Issa's life and poetry, one would certainly do well to take up Lanoue's *Pure Land Haiku*. Here, we find that True Pure Land Buddhism not only supports Issa's poetic theories and practice, but also lies at the core of many of his seemingly simple poems as well. Unlike Ueda's book, in which the chapters follow the progress of Issa's life, Lanoue's book examines Issa's life and poems under chapter titles related directly to his Buddhism, thus: "Ichi Daiji: The One Great Thing" (the introduction), followed by numbered chapters on "Unsui: Cloud-Water Wanderer", "Ninjô: Human Feeling", "Setai: The State of the World", "Mujô: Transience", "Jinen: Naturalness", "En: Karma", and "Nembutsu, Tariki: Prayer and Grace".

Lanoue says Issa has a "sense of kinship with fellow creatures [that] is not a silly affectation but rather a genuine emotion of the type that any family member might feel for another" and goes on to illustrate the point with a number of haiku (101-103). Lanoue is not looking for Issa's connections with the haikai tradition, but rather seeks the religious roots of his convictions as they manifest in his verses. Thus, Lanoue says,

Because [animals] lack the human heart with its tendency to covet and the human brain with its drive to calculate in the service of covetousness, Issa's animal cousins are somewhat better off than humans, karmically speaking, and so serve as role models in his poetry, embodying a better way of being in the world: guileless, non-striving, and living in the moment. (102-103)

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In the concluding section of *Pure Land Haiku*, Lanoue says, "Issa's haiku can be viewed—correctly, I think—as the records of myriad trusting and accepting encounters of self with universe in which the two disclose their essential unity." (129)

Before concluding this review, I would like to share some of the relatively few poems that both Ueda and Lanoue have translated, so that readers may judge for themselves which best reveals Issa the poet, the person any

of us might like to get closer to through reading such books. Since Ueda's book presents poems chronologically, I take them in his order. (The format is the romanized Japanese, centered, followed by Ueda's version on the left, Lanoue's on the right, each with the page number where it appears in their respective books. Where the romanization differs slightly, I have followed Ueda.)

hito nami ni tatami no ue no tsukimi kana

like the others	like the others
I sit on the tatami floor	on tatami mats . . .
to admire the moon (36)	moon gazing (21)

(In awe of the fact that Issa, then a very self-conscious young commoner, was allowed to sit inside with older haikai masters—instead of out on the wooden veranda—at this moon-viewing party. The sliding walls were doubtless moved aside to make the moon visible from the interior.)

63

chô tobu ya kono yo ni nozomi nai yô ni

a butterfly	butterfly flits
flits away, failing to find	as if wanting nothing
any hope in this world (70)	in this world (102)

(Both versions are equally accurate, and together display something of the range of meaning of the original.)

naki haha ya umi miru tabi ni miru tabi ni

mother I never knew—	my dead mother—
each time I look over the sea	every time I see the ocean,
over the sea (76)	every time . . . (31)

(Lanoue's—on the right—is the more literal translation.)

yasegaeru makeru na issa kore ni ari

skinny frog	scrawny frog, fight on!
don't give up the fight—	Issa
Issa is here (106)	to the rescue! (30)

(Ueda's—on the left—gives the more accurate impression, though I like Lanoue's "scrawny" here.)

These two books each give us a substantial number of translations of Issa that far surpass the quantity and quality of anything we have had heretofore.

The advantage of reading Ueda's book is clear: He includes all facets of Issa's life, from balancing Shintô references against Buddhist here and there (from about 400 c.e. onwards, there are almost no religious purists among Japan's great poets and artists), through revealing Issa's intemperate side in both acts and poems, to showing us Issa's almost devastating loneliness toward the end of his life. Ueda also includes several passages of Issa's prose, from letters to haibun to diaries, as well as one complete *kasen* (36-stanza linked poem) by Issa and his disciples and portions of others. For a good look at all the many facets of this fascinating poet, we can only be extremely grateful for Ueda's *Dew on the Grass*.

Reading Lanoue's *Pure Land Haiku* presents two primary benefits: First, by going deep into Pure Land Buddhism and its close relationship to Issa's haiku, the book reveals unsuspected depths and a more rounded richness in a poet too often dismissed as the author of poems appropriate for children. Second, this same process gives us a much greater appreciation for the breadth and diversity of haiku in Japan, and can help us pull our heads out of the Zen-haiku barrel, a serious set of blinders that has hindered our view of this poetry and its possibilities long enough.

I hope that all who are truly interested in Japanese haiku, in all its complexity and wild ranging beauty, will take up both of these new, and, to my way of thinking, essential books on the poet Kobayashi Issa and his works.

* Because of differences between the traditional lunar and Gregorian calendars, some authorities indicate that Issa died in 1827; following Ueda, I give the dates according to the latter calendar. Also note that traditional age counts have a person age one at birth and age two on the following Lunar New Year; I follow the modern understanding here.

Contagion

HAIKU, WE HAVE LONG KNOWN, is a poetry of suggestion, of implication, understatement. Sometimes, they are created by the juxtaposition of two apparently disparate images which, together, imply far more than the sum of their parts. And, haiku is much like a minimalist drawing which, with a telling line, can create form as solid as that evoked by the heavy use of highlights and shadows.

Why do I remind us of these things? Because readers of *Deep Shade Flickering Sunlight Selected Haiku of O Mabson Southard* (Brooks Books, Decatur IL, 2004) need to bear them in mind as they embark on all this book discloses.

The book is definitely 'a trip'. A trip into the early history of American haiku as it sought to define itself and, at the same time, simulate the Japanese haiku's 17 *onji* format by a strict adherence to the 5-7-5 syllable count in English. In managing that juggling act, Southard also forgivably incorporated vestiges of Western poetics mixed in with the characteristic simplicity the Japanese master poets achieved.

So, one finds much in Southard's work that is theatrical and old-world, over-blown in its fascination with stage directions/prepositions: to, up from, through, from under, beyond and so on which serve perhaps another purpose: as syllable-count additives? And highly staged gestures and tints of anthropomorphism as in these:

Against the cloud-drift
the wooded cliffs lean forward—
and release a hawk!

Up from quiet ferns
querying the dusky air
a shy mosquito

One banana leaf
gives to its dark untorn mate
shivers of moonlight

Certainly not his best efforts (many of which are located at the beginning of the book).

Continue, and the reader will find trite, flowery language such as "aswirl, ebb and flow, round the lake's thawed glade,

pinking the clear mountain top, drowning banks, a weft of thin mist [“on its way to meet the moon” that is!], a “fitful star”—all of which set my teeth on edge!

The book is also a trip, literally, to exotic lands which make for many lush experiences in and of themselves. And it further takes one on an unexpected inward journey of the psyche of this passionate man.

Tranquil, now, the lake . . .

Once more a steady mountain
rests on steady clouds

With a sudden snort
the pregnant mare curls her lip
round a wisp of grass

A patter of rain . . .
The lily pad undulates
on widening rings

Clean classic writing. Poems like these and so many more like those cited below certainly showed American writers attempting haiku in the 1960s what could be done with haiku in English.

As hailstones pelt her—
the sitting catbird, eyes closed,
points her bill straight up

Still sunlit, one tree;
into the mountain shadow
it lets fall a leaf

Down to dark leaf-mold
the falling dogwood petal
carries its moonlight

66

But what really interested me most about what Southard created, was what I found in his sequences of “sister poems” which appeared in *Haiku West* magazine three decades ago. No more the composer of the individual haiku, Southard now has found a way to expand his canvas, to incorporate a whole other dimension to his individual works. It directly parallels the connections, stanza by stanza one aims for in

renku. That “leap” between consecutive stanzas [or verses] by which the individual link expands its meaning by either reflecting, reverberating off of, or borrowing “fragrance” from the stanza/link which precedes—as well as by that which follows it.

It is enough to cite

For my sister’s horse
I listen in the stillness—
and hear my own heart

to psychologically prepare the reader for a true understanding of this series of poems which derive their collective impact from a passionate and unusual love. For these are truly love poems—as Robinson Jeffers’ “Tamar” was a love poem. And no less so because they are incestuous. In them, by combining seemingly innocuous haiku of nature—in DAWN—Southard gleans far more:

67

With the lily pads
in our tryst-cover, the breeze lifts
my sister’s leaf skirt

Seeing herself seen
atop the snowy hemlock—
the raven flies off

So my eyes may rest—
my comet-watching sister
lets me comb her hair

Poems from pp. 64 to 91, a group of titled sequences, all manifest this new expanded potential utilization of individual haiku. As Southard’s daughter tells us in the biographical information, “Ordway had decided to . . . cultivate an independent, unconventional lifestyle.” Southard is a sensualist in the broadest meaning of the word. When one examines his perhaps most famous poem:

The old rooster crows . . .
Out of the mist come the rocks
and the twisted pine

and realizes that the poem preceding it is

Still followable
through this morning's cling of dew—
my sister's green trail

and that rooster poem is followed by these two:

The door bursts open . . .
Into the hut, the gust brings
a green maple leaf

Catching us at our tryst—
our mother gathers bindweed
for my sister's hair

that poem becomes re-defined and, in addition, one realizes Southard has really hit upon a method in his poetry that is in keeping with his "desire to escape a life of conformity."

I do not think for one moment the organization of each of his titled sequences is arbitrary. One would have to believe that those who first read these sequences long ago and did not utilize what they offered were either politely averting their eyes due to the subject matter—or else they just plain did not appreciate what Southard was up to as he forged his internal narratives.

The final section of the book, *WINDSWEPT GRASSLAND*, hurtles into some rough waters. The poet's wife, alas, injects herself into some dreadful forays:

Close to ocean-doom
the river whispers farewells
to its drowning banks
with Malia Southard

Off with that old cloak . . .
Let her wild skirts ebb and flow
round her dancing feet
with Malia Southard

Snow peaks hear the flute . . .
Potato-blossom girls dance
on the high pampa
with Malia Southard

But what is worse, this is contagious! We find poems by Southard such as

Round the lake's thawed glade
flickering in the sunlight—
a flight of wild ducks

Shredding purple crests
from its own breakers, dawn's gale
besprinkles the dunes

As if that were not bad enough, the book ends with this:

To the single moon
she opposes her breasts twain—
and her babe's buttocks

Oh, puleeze! This downward plunge of the wordmeister is as embarrassing to behold as the antiquated theatrics of the 19th and early 20th century actors strutting, gesticulating, projecting their voices to the back rows with a flowery excess of language that was acceptable then. That was before we realized how simplicity and understatement and implication in haiku can still bring one to the heart of things with results that are potent and timelessly fresh.

What this book of "Selected" [not collected] haiku lacks is good editing. Some pitiful work has been allowed to stand right in there alongside the large number of Southard's fine poems! That, to me, constitutes a breach of editorial responsibility, for what else is the unwitting reader to assume—the tendency being to swallow all the hoopla in the Publishers' Note, Life and Work and the back-cover quotes that hawk the greatness of the poetry within? That all Southard's work is good? Not true. But the downside to that is, anything in the book stands to be emulated.

Then how is one to view this book? As an example of some of the roots of American haiku, it is a tribute to how far we have progressed toward simpler, cleaner, more subtle haiku since Southard was held up to us as a paradigm of excellence for the 1960s and 1970s. But more importantly, it offers readers who only know a few of Southard's individual haiku from Cor van den Heuvel's *The Haiku Anthology* the chance to become acquainted with what I see as his most exciting contribution to modern haiku: his unique sister sequences.

Anita Virgil

Re:Readings

Karen Klein on Yu Chang (“xxx/am I/telling too much”) “With perfect economy, this senryu conveys the apprehension and vulnerability felt by the speaker about the number of X’s, probably at the end of a letter or a note. Did that third X convey too much affection? did it reveal too much need? too much desire? would two have been enough? or even two too much? The X’s themselves show the power of symbols and the anxiety felt by the speaker could be extrapolated to any fiction writer or poet who worries about his/her choice of a word.”

Karen Klein on Dan McCullough (“ignoring/the handwriting on the wall.../turnpike restroom”) “The “handwriting on the wall,” with its sense of coming doom, resonates from the biblical “Book of Daniel”. [The ruler, Nebuchadnezzar I believe, also ignored the warning.] Placing the phrase in a “turnpike restroom” decontextualizes it and renders it humorous. But if we think about the sexual content of what usually constitutes the handwriting on a restroom wall, maybe ignoring the phone numbers of available partners is, in fact, heeding the warning and avoiding situations potentially dangerous to health.”

Karen Klein on Helen Russell (“high summer/halfway home from tennis/we know it is over”) “This poem captures the moment of mystery and doesn’t try to explain it or find an image for it. There may be no image for that awareness. At some point in the season, inexplicably we know that it’s over. Perhaps “halfway” with its somewhat indeterminate sense—neither definitively here nor there—underscores the intuitive nature of this awareness.”

Robert Epstein on Allen McGill (“growth rings/of a felled tree/moment of silence”) “[This poem] has caught a poetic glimpse of Henry Thoreau’s heartfelt connection to trees: “Old trees are our parents,” the author of *Walden* writes in his *Journal*, “and our parents’ parents, perchance.... Behold a man cutting down a tree to come at the fruit! What is the moral of such an act?” Thoreau’s is a Buddhist understanding of interbeing: We are one with all things; this realization returns us to, and arises out of, silence—the origin of all beings.”

Robert Epstein on David Lanoue (“the “Lost Dog” sign/
nailed deep/into the oak”). “Alas, in our distraught frame of
mind, we nail a sign deep into an oak, utterly failing to
realize that the tree itself is a living being. What a Buddhist
might point out with compassion, Thoreau observes with
indignation: “It is worse than boorish, it is criminal, to inflict
an unnecessary injury on the tree that feeds or shadows us.”
As an animal lover, I certainly empathize with the frantic
search for one’s beloved dog. Nonetheless, on a deeper
level, in so-called acts of “loving” those to whom we are
attached, such as dogs and cats, we often turn a blind eye—
the opposite of mindfulness—to all that lies outside our self-
created small (or large) circle. However, I don’t think the
poet was pointing to this absence of mindfulness.”

Robert Epstein on Burnell Lippy (“fallen apples/
touching each other/abandoned farm”). “I responded to a
crisis walk-in this week at the nonprofit mental health
agency I work in: two young mothers—sisters—walked in
with three children (all under 5) in tow, in search of shelter
after having been evicted from their grandmother’s house
following her death. So many fallen apples go unnoticed; so
many people, rendered homeless, go unseen, uncared for
and yet they exist—no less human than you or I—struggling,
suffering, surviving, succumbing...just as you and I. In the
end, all I could do was encourage them to keep faith and
acknowledge how touching it was to know they had the
shelter of each other.”

Dan McCullough on Tom Clausen (“left and right / he
follows the way / of his kicked stone”) “I think of the utter
unpredictability of kicking a rock. Will it shoot off into
someone’s yard? Under a car? Down a grate? Or maybe it’ll
be missed completely. What this haiku does is meld this
uncertainty with the blatant predictability of a figure moving
side to side, down the street. Watch this activity next time
you get the chance. Even if you can’t see the kicker’s foot or
the stone, you know exactly what the person is doing.”

Merrill Ann Gonzales on Michael McClintock (“a
neatened desk/my days here/all but vanished”) “Sometimes
one finds a haiku that manages to speak the unspeakable.
Since 1999 I’ve been shredding the papers of my late
husband, and just as I was beginning to think I had the end
in sight, I realized that to some extent these papers gave our

lives validity. It was almost like erasing his life, and mine at the same time. McClintock may not have felt the full impact of his words, given the qualifying “all but”, but he certainly has communicated profoundly to this reader.”

Peter Yovu on Robert Gilliland (“a breath of turned earth/between one dream/and the next”) “The intricate interplay of sounds in this poem wonderfully embodies its gauzy meaning. Between dreams (the dream of sleep and the dream of waking) the earth turns in space as it is turned by an unseen plow, furrowing the dark. The moment is momentous, as the curtain between worlds flutters and breeze becomes breath. For all its diaphanous appearance, the haiku has a sensuality which can be tasted in speaking it out loud, or better yet, in a whisper. The more I look, the more I see.”

Peter Yovu on Tom Clausen (“left and right/he follows the way/of his kicked stone”) “I like the way this haiku is particular (something the poet experienced one Sunday morning after the rain had stopped) and, in equal and inseparable measure, universal (something we all do, following the often unpredictable course of events we initiate, sometimes enjoying the game, sometimes having no choice but to go where we are led). The poem reminds me of some of the anonymous “folk-truths” to be found in W.S. Merwin’s *Asian Figures*.”

Patricia Neubauer on Tom Clausen (“left and right/he follows the way/of his kicked stone”) “He who kicks a stone and follows it has either no place to go or a place to go with all the time in the world to get there. Nevertheless, it is frequently during these moments of play that creative ideas are born. On the other hand, if one has allowed a definite time to reach a specific appointment, one walks in a straight line with all attention focused on the business in hand and the preoccupied mind will not be receptive to impressions that may ripen into creative expression.”

Patricia Neubauer on Tom Clausen (“out of its reflecting pool/the wind blown/fountain”) “The shape of falling water and the effect of its reflection in the pool are an essential part of the design for a fountain. In this case, the original intent of its designer has been cancelled out by the force of the wind. In the same way, exterior forces may distort the original design of any work of art so that that which its

creator meant to present is distorted or misunderstood. But still, I and other readers of this haiku probably delight in the fact that the natural force of the wind has proven stronger than man's ingenuity."

Maureen Virginia Gorman on Joann Klontz ("my lapsed religion.../three flocks of geese/waver into one") "Against the backdrop of the heavens the merging of three flocks are suddenly the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Learned lessons from years of catechism resurface with a skyward glance and tempt us to judge the way we've shifted in our fundamental orientation to life."

Andy Hacanis on Rees Evans ("Halloween dusk/the siding salesman's/gold earring") "I love how that little gold earring so completely dominates the whole poem, even to the point of diminishing the significance of Halloween. Everyday is Halloween for some, and the siding salesman is a drifter masking as a salesman for a murky siding company that could very well be nonexistent in a year or two."

Andy Hacanis on David Lanoue ("the 'Lost Dog' sign/nailed deep/into the oak") "Desperation, helplessness, unrelieved angst. The force with which the nail was driven into the tree represents all that the dog's person couldn't do. We will do anything to save our loved ones, including more damage. The sign is really a memorial to all the lost, from all of us still here waiting, for what?"

Andy Hacanis on Francine Banwarth ("winter stars.../the sirens/fade") "A cold winter night, and long after the thrills and tragedies of life fade and die out, it's still a cold winter night. I would consider myself fortunate, complete, to embody the emptiness of that night dotted with stars, with such reach."

Christopher Patchel on Peggy Willis Lyles ("a stone, a leaf.../the quiet closing/of a door") "Like this poet I am drawn outdoors most days, even when the weather turns colder, often picking up tactile objects as I go. This is the end of such a walk. These are the different reminders of it that were gathered along the way. I'm intrigued by the quiet associations within this fall scene, and the spare, spaced rendering, which invites me to ponder them."

books

&

reviews

On Becoming a Hippopotamus

Modern Haiku Association (Editor) *Japanese Haiku 2001* (Gendai Haiku Kyokai, 2001). Translation supervisors Eric Selland, Philip Zitowitz & Martin Lucas, forewords by Tohta Kaneko and Akira Matsuzama, historical and critical essays by Nana Naruto, Kaen Taniyama, Ken'ichi Abe and Ban'ya Natsuishi. ISBN xxx. 297 pp., 6" x 8", perfect softbound. \$35 ppd. from YOU-Shorin Press.

I once asked a question in comparing these poems:

In a water pail,
nodding to each other:
a melon and an eggplant

Buson

after the heated argument
I go out to the street
and become a motorcycle

Tohta Kaneko

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The question was: How has Japanese haiku moved from the still dominant classic tradition of haiku, exemplified by the witty aesthetic objectivity of Buson, to the more demonstrative direction of modern haiku such as Tohta's expressionistic motorcycle haiku?

The answer may be sought in this impressive anthology of modern-style Japanese haiku rendered in unfailingly crisp English translations and supported by informative essays on the history and stylistic issues of this haiku. Those essays and the anthology of 183 haiku poets provide the answer to my question.

Tohta has been called a typical representative of modern Japanese haiku. I remember hearing him state that haiku should reflect how a person lives their life. His own move from ideological reflection to an expressive psychological subjectivity, as in the motorcycle haiku, exemplify his theory of haiku.

Whether in response to the last World War, Western ideological and cultural influences, technological changes, and the like, Japanese culture was becoming something new and much haiku began to reflect this. The actual poetic trope of transformation shows up throughout this anthology, whether as lightly metaphoric (dancing like a camellia), more assertively metaphoric (becoming a tree, becoming a child again), as extended metaphor (becoming a bee in a flower) or, as below, aggressively expressionistic:

The moonlight tempts me
to become
an elephant keeper

Cherry blossoms are falling—
you also must become
a hippopotamus

Notice the radical nature of the second one by Nenten Tsubouchi. The most common poetic experience in Japanese culture, watching cherry blossoms, is contrasted with a call to an absurd transformation. Or is it? The sound values of cherry blossoms (*sakura*) and hippopotamus (*kaba*) play off each other (“k’s” and “a’s”). One feels the weight here of a resistance to the conventional mode of expressing an undeniably beautiful sight, with the imperative reflecting that resistance. If there has been a true modern revolution in Japanese haiku, here it is.

But that revolution began earlier in the history of modern Japanese haiku. Starting with Shiki’s two main students we find a dialectic between traditional haiku values, such as nature subjects, season words, a 5-7-5 “syllable” structure, a literary aesthetic way of treating haiku infused by a Basho-like connection with real or remembered subjects, and the like, represented by Kyoshi, and modern haiku values, such as more urban subjects, the dropping of season words, the dropping of a 5-7-5 “syllable” structure, a more realistic way of treating subjects infused by a Shiki-like connection with real subjects (the *shasei*, “sketch from nature,” method), and the like, represented by Hekigodo.

Along the way to this revolution a number of important patterns in haiku writing became apparent, including Zen minimalism, feminism, new phrasing, and neo-traditionalism. This anthology begins with examples of the two important modern haiku wandering poets in the Zennian mode, Santoka (1882-1940) and Hosai (1885-1926). Notice the stark psychological immediacy of the following examples which have, in fact, done away with the traditional way of writing haiku:

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Hailstones	Even when I cough
Into my begging bowl for alms	alone

So these two inaugurate the so-called “free form” direction in haiku whose main lasting features were focusing a haiku on internal psychological dynamics and paring down traditional haiku values of form and treatment.

Although women were freely represented right from the beginning of the Japanese literary tradition in the dominating waka (*tanka*) form (Princess Nukuda appears in the *Man’yōshū*) and Murasaki Shikibu wrote *The Tale of Genji*, perhaps the first novel in world literature, they were under-represented in

haiku until very recently. The first two examples are from women born in 1899 and reflect the difficult sense of psychological and social isolation of women at the time. The second two reflect more modern-sounding psychological, even expressionist, haiku (the authors were born in the mid and late 1900's):

Snowing hard
I will die knowing
only my husband's hand

White dew—
I will have my obi on
when I die (75)

The nuisance
of breasts—
a long rainy season

The birth cry
between my thighs
stretches to budding tree darkness

Such haiku have created a literary space for women to speak to their own psychologically specific condition in their own voice.

There was also a change in phrasing that accompanied new directions in subject matter. The first example below (its author born in 1899) is an example of the so-called non-seasonal movement that here hints at the codified autumn moon of traditional haiku but could be in any season. The newness is in fact in the image of a moon beam touching the author's very doorbell, like a visitor, to produce a new way of phrasing haiku feeling. The second (its author born in 1913) is in the New Style mode and specifically a reaction to war in an expressionistic vein:

A moon beam
stretching all the way
to my doorbell!

War stood
at the end of the corridor

Now haiku could be written, when a author wanted to, with an angle to free phrasing and free choice of subject matter expressed in an internally honest way (the author of the second haiku was in fact arrested in 1940 for the frankness of his writing on war).

Nonetheless, there has been in the modern haiku mode a form of neo-traditional haiku. The pivotal figure is Shuoshi Mizuhara (1892-1981) who originally studied with Kyoshi and was a member of his *Hototogisu* group. In 1931 he published the essay "The Truth of Nature and the Truth of Literary Arts", a rejection of traditional haiku, in his journal *Ashibi* and dropped

out of the *Hototogisu* group. His phrasing and subject matter has much in common with the more lyrical tanka values which, according to the biographical note, freed “haiku from the rigid objectivity and representationalism of *Hototogisu*.” Yet the residue of traditional haiku is still apparent in his work:

Blossoming pear trees
drifting clouds
on Katsushika plain

Carp in midwinter
keeping still
their fins drooping

Shuoshi, notwithstanding, has had tremendous influence in allowing for the more radical subsequent expressions of internal responses to nature to be expressed in a lyrical way.

The key to these more radical departures and beyond is the literary and artistic term “expressionism” which reflects a rejection of mere representation of nature and experience in general in an objective manner in favor of the expression, often in a dramatic way, of internal emotional states. This anti-representational faithfulness to emotion led to abstract treatment in literature and painting. As the author of the first of the following examples (with authors’ birth dates ranging from 1900 to 1955) advises, one should “get a good grip on reality by seeing with the mind’s eye”:

In Hiroshima
my mouth opens
when I eat an egg

Sea lice
live without shadows
die without shadows

A dazzling sea
someone with bleached bones
stands up

For the young peach tree
one light year begins
with expectation

Swatting a moth
I break myself into pieces

For my absence
of a thousand years
I hang a waterfall

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These writers, though some are clearly writing in a surrealist manner, are motivated to respond honestly to their internal states however radical they may appear to a traditional haiku sensibility. Yet, oddly enough, each of these examples, and many of the kind in the anthology, has a clear link to nature, a presiding element in haiku.

One of the two concluding essays on modern haiku techniques is by Ban’ya Natsuishi (born 1955), an editor of this

anthology and the author of the waterfall haiku cited above. This essay focuses on the issues of *kigo* or “season words” and *kireji* or “breaks” between images as they affect and are redefined in modern Japanese haiku. He concisely considers the animistic background of *kigo* and *muki* or “non-season words” in traditional and modern haiku, calling the two together “keywords.” He goes on to discuss a “new style of expression in contemporary haiku” in which “contemporary *muki* haiku have been enriched and expanded by using keywords taken from all living things . . . human beings, and their culture . . .’ He then asserts: “Replacing season words, these non-seasonal keywords are the center of contemporary haiku and account for the current interest the Japanese have in short poems”. It may be that “keywords” have offered an inroad into haiku creation by cultures not subject to the *kigo* and *muki* of Japan, but one wonders whether this is really the whole story in Japan where haiku in all forms in great numbers continues to be written and appreciated. And one notices tremors of a contemporary resurgence of interest in *kigo* with worldwide regional projects to create examples of local season words. Yet in terms of the revolution in modern Japanese haiku subject matter he couldn’t be more on target.

More interesting is his examination of the *kireji* which in traditional haiku demarcates a separation, implicitly or explicitly, between two juxtaposed images, most often a more general or “universalized” image in the first 5 “syllables” and a more specific, more concretely active image in the following 12 “syllables”, to produce what I have referred to as an “absolute metaphor”. Ban’ya adds that contemporary haiku uses both *teikei* or “fixed forms” like the linguistic particle *ya* (equivalent to a colon, dash, period, or exclamation point) of traditional haiku, which separate images, and *jijuritsu* or “free forms” which make breaks between images without a *kireji*. He goes on to note: “*Kire* [a “break” in a general sense] makes it possible for recent contemporary haiku to express the leap in the poet’s unique viewpoint and the shift in their poetic form”. In other words, there seems to have undergone a change in haiku structure. Rather than connecting two images connected in the poet’s sensibility and moreover sustaining a representational fidelity, the *kire* now reflects a shift in thought or imagination. For Ban’ya, in fact, the “excellent poet is someone who can skillfully insert the *kire* inside the haiku”. Suggestive of the “link

and shift” technique in *renga*, such “internal linking” asks the reader to uncover an oftentimes demanding connection between an image and a thought or imagined image, a far more demanding act than tracing an author’s feeling in the two implicitly-liked images of traditional haiku.

Kyoshi has said in relation to haiku, “Deep is new”. Will thought-centered modern haiku lead to a postmodern language-centered haiku following the school of poetry influential in American poetics? Does some of that haiku already reflect such values? There seems to be two questions at hand: 1) Will Japanese haiku retain its defining connection with nature? and 2) Will the end of haiku continue to be some form of profound, even joyful, realization? This outstanding anthology will help us sort out the answers while providing us with not a small amount of pleasure, like a sleeping kitten (81), paulownia blossoms (135), the sameness of New Year’s Day (141), a single fire on Kanto plain (157), muddy shoes wiped with early spring snow (161), and a child disappearing into the haze at the A-bomb site (163).

Bruce Ross

The Legacy of Charles Dickson

Dickson, Charles B. *A Moon in Each Eye*, Illustrations by Shelia L. Whitfield, selected and edited by vincent tripi, AHA Books, POB 767, Gualala, CA 95445, 1993 ISBN: 0-944676-95-2

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IN THE 2004 SPRING ISSUE John Stevenson asked *Frogpond* readers to ponder and share which collections have inspired us over time.

Every time I read Charles B. Dickson’s elegant volume *A Moon in Each Eye* its depth and lucidity revitalizes my appreciation of haiku. Although Dickson often adheres to the traditional English 5/7/5 form, his haiku are neither cluttered nor forced, but appear effortless and natural. His poems reveal the command of a master as they ripple effortlessly through the reader’s awareness.

Dickson’s poetry demonstrates that the ability to juxtapose images in haiku emerge from the interconnectedness

of ourselves with the world. Writing haiku is more than technique; clarity in haiku emerges from clarity of the heart and mind.

Artfully edited by Vincent Tripi and published in a bold black and white format by AHA books, *A Moon in Each Eye* illuminates three ideas which are central to understanding and writing haiku: an emphasis on the natural world, change and renewal, and the haiku path. The first haiku of the volume (luminous morning/a wood duck's iridescence/glides among the cattails) sets the tone for the whole collection. When I read this poem, I see the duck's brilliant feathers, I smell the marsh, and I hear the gliding.

Dickson's poems illustrate the paramount value of multi-sensory images. In Dickson's hands, the streams, mountains, marshes, meadows and farms of his native Georgia are luminous and iridescent. To paraphrase Aldous Huxley, Dickson opens the doors of perception.

Change and renewal are fundamental tenets of haiku. By presenting distinct images, Dickson exhibits a marvelous ability to freeze moments in time: blazing fireplace log/ring after ring the years/become smoke. Or, one of my all-time favorites: Satchmo singing:/what a wonderful world—/the first crocus. Highlighting and juxtaposing specific, concrete images infuses haiku with universal meaning. Generations will listen to Satchmo, and generations will experience the joy of the first crocus as winter fades and spring begins. However, a crocus barely lasts a few days. Life is transitory, but it is still a wonderful world.

Over the years much has been written about the haiku path. I never met Charles Dickson, but I imagine he wandered along many paths in the mysterious backwaters of life. His poems suggest that life offers a myriad of choices and that acceptance and compassion are crucial: backwoods road/the infinity of ways/old barns can lean.

Dickson rarely uses personal pronouns, but when he does, the results are unsentimental and outstanding: this trail so long/my flashlight/dimming. Dickson died in 1991, but his poems remain luminous and enlighten the trail for haiku poets.

Porridge

Kerouac, Jack *Book of Haikus*, Edited and with an Introduction by Regina Weinreich. Pp. xxxvii + 200. Penguin, 2003. US\$13.00.

JACK KEROUAC (1922-69), the King of the Beats, started writing haiku with the belief that this short poetic form was an avatar of Zen and pursued haiku and Zen to his drunken end. I do not know if this is common knowledge among those who continue to be enthralled by “On the Road”—published more than 45 years ago!—but it is what comes through in the generous collection of more than 700 of his haiku Regina Weinreich has assembled in “Jack Kerouac: Book of Haikus.” (Yes, as Weinreich notes, Kerouac added “s” to the word “haiku” to indicate plural, which is seldom done today.)

Among the earliest Japanese advocates of the notion that haiku embodies Zen was Bashô’s contemporary Onitsura (1661-1738), and among the most famous in recent years is Nagata Kôï (1900-97). Onitsura regarded *Teizen ni shiroku saitarutsubakikana*, “In the garden blooming white are camellias” as his signature piece. It was a response to a Zen master’s query: “What’s your haikai eye like?” Among Kôï’s haiku is *Dai-banshun doron doro doro doro doron*: “Great late spring muddy mud mud muddy.” I don’t know whether this was a response to anything.

Yet Onitsura and Kôï are exceptions. The development of the haiku form has had such a tenuous linkage with Zen that most Japanese haiku practitioners today would probably be surprised to learn that in the United States the association of haiku with Zen has been pervasive. Here’s, for example, how the Haiku Society of America defines the form: “An unrhymed Japanese poem recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived in which nature is linked to human nature.”

How has this come about?

The answer is simple: the influence of the Zen proselytizer D. T. Suzuki and the Zen devotee R. H. Blyth. Suzuki’s many books arguing that Japanese culture is based on Zen started appearing as early as 1927, and Blyth’s books simply asserting that “haiku is Zen” began to appear in 1949. Kerouac was so devoted to their books that he was aggrieved, Weinreich tells us, when one of Blyth’s four-volume “Haiku” went missing.

As important, Kerouac’s friend and guide in Zen was Gary Snyder, who practiced Zen and translated poems of the Chinese Zen mystic Han Shan, “Cold Mountain.” Kerouac

gives an account of how Snyder told him how to express himself in haiku.

“A real haiku’s gotta be as simple as porridge and yet make you see the real thing, like the greatest haiku of them all probably is the one that goes ‘The sparrow hops along the veranda, with wet feet.’ By Shiki. You see the wet footprints like a vision in your mind and yet in those few words you also see the rain that’s been falling that day and almost smell the wet pine needles.”

The haiku in question reads, in the original, *Nure ashi de suzume no aruku rôka kana*. One of the 20,000 pieces Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) wrote in his relatively short life, it is not often anthologized, probably because Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959), the dictatorial inheritor of the conservative wing of the Shiki circle, did not include it when he made a selection of 2,300 of his teacher’s haiku. But Snyder was right in praising the haiku. It has the on-the-bull’s-eye kind of immediacy associated with Zen.

In no time, Kerouac decided to call his haiku “pops”, saying: “POP—American (non-Japanese) Haikus, short 3-line poems or ‘pomes’ rhyming or non-rhyming delineating ‘little Samadhis’ if possible, usually of a Buddhist connotation, aiming towards enlightenment.” At all order, whatever “enlightenment” may mean. Still, he kept reading Buddhist sutras. One of his early pieces is endearing because Snyder described Kerouac in one of his poems.

My pipe unlit
beside the Diamond
Sutra—What to think?

In his poem, “Migration of Birds,” Snyder wrote:

Jack Kerouac outside, behind my back
Reads the *Diamond Sutra* in the sun.

Early on Kerouac also wrote:

Juju beads on
Zen manual—
My knees are cold

Here, “juju,” also called “juzu” and “zuzu,” are the Buddhist prayerbeads. Among Kerouac’s last pieces is:

Sleeping on my desk
head on the sutras
my cat

Kerouac naturally wrote haiku-esque haiku which readily recall their Japanese counterparts, such as—

Frozen
in the birdbath,
A leaf

In my medicine cabinet
the winter fly
Has died of old age

“Frozen” brings to mind, for example, Buson’s *Furuike ni zôri shizumite mizore kana*, “A straw sandal sunk in the old pond and the sleet.” As for the image of a dead fly, Murakami Kijô (1865-1938) wrote *Fuyubachi no shinidokoro naku arukikeri*, “A winter wasp, with no place to die, is walking.”

I first came across Kerouac’s haiku in the second of the three editions of *The Haiku Anthology* that Cor van den Heuvel has compiled. The selection of five Kerouac pieces in that Simon & Schuster book (1986) ends with one that may be called Kerouakian:

Missing a kick
at the icebox door
It closed anyway

In a somewhat different way, the following two may be equally Kerouakian.

What is Buddhism?
—A crazy little
Bird blub

Haiku, shmaiku, I cant
understand the intention
Of reality

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And, yes, porridge. He wrote one referring to it, which also reminds us of his life with his mother:

Christ on the Cross crying
—his mother missed
Her October porridge

A devoted son, Kerouac lived many of his last years with his mother, Gabrielle.

Hiroaki Sato

(This review originally appeared in The Japan Times, March 28, 2004.)

Wry Smiles

Herrmann, Evelyn H. *Cornflowers* (Small Poetry Press, Concord, CA, 2003) No ISBN. 32 pp., 4.5" x 6.5", saddle-stapled softbound. \$11 ppd. from the author at 2 Park Terrace, Mill Valley CA 94941 USA.

THE HSA DEFINES SENRYU as “primarily concerned with human nature; often humorous or satiric.” A key word in this definition is “often”: one strength of senryu is its versatility. Though often humorous, the form also accommodates serious voices. *Cornflowers*, a first book of senryu by Northern California poet Evelyn Hermann, shows some of the range of expressions of senryu today.

The majority of senryu published in haiku journals today are humorous or witty, and the same is true of *Cornflowers*. Hermann’s mainstay is language-based humor, especially puns:

gourmet chef
at home
on the range

I counted 38 senryu of this type in the book, out of a total of 65 poems. While I enjoy this kind of humor in other contexts, I find that poetry of this type does not leave a long-lasting imprint. Paul O. Williams, speaking of senryu generally, explains: “as with most humor, senryu manages to dispel feeling with a smile or a laugh ... as some balloon of feeling grows in the poem, it pricks it with its wry smile, its observation, its regaining of control over the self through laughter. Senryu writers walk away from their poems once again self-contained.”¹ This state of “self-containment” naturally means that there is less impact after the reader leaves the poem.

However, I do find that other kinds of humor can generate longer-lasting impressions. Humor that addresses deep-rooted social issues can do so because readers live in society and often have first-hand experience of the issues addressed:

anti-wrinkle cream ad
the model
too young for wrinkles

No reader is immune from the consequences of aging in a culture obsessed with youth. Hermann nicely articulates this shared experience.

On a few occasions, Hermann employs a strange, surreal humor that is memorable precisely because of its strangeness:

trapped,
 in the vinegar bottle—
mother

This poem can be characterized as “surreal” because the statement cannot literally be true and because the image is slightly unsettling. It reveals its truth through dark humor. Hermann’s poems in this vein are uniformly good; unfortunately, there is only a smattering of them in the book.

Humor is only one path toward achieving understanding. Unfortunately, non-humorous senryu is less common today – in general, and in *Cornflowers*. This is regrettable because non-humorous senryu can also leave a strong imprint. For example, poems describing everyday experiences – a hallmark of the form—can be subtly revealing:

repeated phone call—
 someone I don’t even know
 asks me how I am

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This poem remarks upon a typical experience – the telemarketing call. This encounter can prompt a variety of feelings: at the topmost layer, irritation and frustration. But below these reactions lies the irony of the false intimacy. This irony can lead the reader to other layers: for instance, does anyone call repeatedly, truly asking how one is?

Hermann’s sense of humor will delight some readers. Ultimately, however, I hope for a balance of “serious” and humorous senryu – from both Hermann and other senryuists.

David Grayson

1 Paul O. Williams. “Engagement and Detachment in Haiku and Senryu,” in *The Nick of Time: Essays on Haiku Aesthetics*. Lee Gurga and Michael Dylan Welch (eds.). Foster City, California: Press Here, 2001: p. 58.

Clear Listening

Stevenson, John *quiet enough* (Red Moon Press, PO Box 2461, Winchester VA, 2004) Foreword by Peggy Willis Lyles. ISBN 1-893959-44-9. 100 pp., perfect softbound. \$12 from the publisher.

John Stevenson's second full collection, *quiet enough*, almost certainly will leave no lover of contemporary haiku snoozing in his or her chair. Clear listening to the soul's own music is to be found on every page. Stevenson's work in haiku, tanka, and the short-short haibun, are pleasingly mixed in this book into moods and tones rich with wit, humor, and one of the American haiku community's most poised and graceful phrase-makers. If anyone doubted the lyrical potentials of contemporary haiku, if anyone imagined that haiku's vaunted objectivist posture toward nature and human experience excluded the subjective force and witness of personal expression of personal emotion, *quiet enough* is a collection, like Fay Aoyagi's *Chrysanthemum Love*, published earlier in the year, that will challenge old shibboleth's and move us all closer to establishing a distinctive English-language haiku that suspends itself comfortably between the two poles of human awareness and consciousness, the subjective and the objective. I suspect there will be gnashing of teeth and new rounds of tireless (tiresome?) argument and disputation among the genre's historians and cultural interpreters. Let it be so. Meanwhile, the rest of us can enjoy the fruit's of a master's best work.

88 Stevenson's is a unique voice of empathy and dispassion. He has an exquisite awareness of essential, memorable details from ordinary life that whole generations have shared, as in these two poems:

matinee
the summer sun
under an exit door

shopping alone
the doors
part for me

He has successfully honed his words and phrases to create a language of great, instrumental delicacy, range, and flexibility, to record contemporary life with compelling, frequently humorous and self-observant, psychological validity:

a crowded street
I'm the one
who steps in it

Stevenson's tanka, of which there are eight in this collection, speak from the same center, and with the same technical precision:

of course
the summer sky
is beautiful
I mustn't hate them
for saying it so often

The wit here is not dependent on wordplay or mere cleverness, but on the sly honesty and directness of the confession and self-rebuke.

There is also a touch of New England mysticism in this realism, absolutely unmistakable in poems such as this one, a favorite of mine:

a deep bruise
I don't remember getting
autumn evening

Meaning? For the meaning we are obliged to peel back the words and go into the bruise, the un-remembering, the autumn evening. Stevenson's world, exemplified here and relentlessly explored in its many angularities throughout this collection, is not a passive place, but a world that bruises us, toys with us, plays with us, appears to favor us with joy and unsought gifts while it taunts and mocks us—and then forgets. These are personal visions and experiences, true, but Stevenson's poems are utterly open to our recognition, and their moments and events have an often uncanny familiarity: It is the same world as our own, and Stevenson's poetry has the force of profound, unadorned witness.

Stevenson's world seems to be a positive place, overall, without being smarmily "wholesome". It is a place that *does* seem to respond to us, our presence, our desires—we don't even have to knock.

Stevenson's more lyrical realism is seen in poem's like this one, of which there are many:

walking home barefoot,
we enter the shadow
of the hill

(for M.V.)

The Biblical allusion to the Psalm is there, if we care to pick it up. Stevenson's poems appear to be rich in such allusions, but his technique is so unobtrusive and nonchalant that, frequently, the intellectual and discursive depths that are there we can easily pass over on the first outing, in the sheer pleasure of the concrete imagery—here, so tactile and visually arresting.

Sometimes Stevenson is more direct, the world having a pith to it that he makes his own:

I know the rules—
the wind blows
the leaves move

Observant of himself, and observant of the apparent dialogue the world keeps with its creatures, Stevenson's eye is never far from his fellow humans. Not surprisingly, he is as aware of the bright as the dark side of human character. Here are two poems in which, in spite of ambivalence found elsewhere in the book's poems, Stevenson appears to find reason not just for hope, but for some comfort:

September morning
none of the students
has failed . . .

winter sun
a stranger makes room
without looking

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In this senryu, Stevenson's empathy for a guard dog is a piece of wisdom the rationalist may object to but the poet in us *knows* for a fact:

barks at me every day
but just lately
he sounds lonely

Stevenson's first collection, *Some of the Silence* (Red Moon Press, 1999), was one of that year's best. That this poet should publish a collection of such power, scope, and achievement as *quiet enough*, within just five years of his first, indicates a high order of achievement. Without doubt,

Stevenson is a prolific poet. What sets his work apart is his disciplined and distinct voice, technical purity, and a language that is in complete control. These are the achievements that make possible the poem from which the title of this book is taken:

snowy night
sometimes you can't be
quiet enough

Anyone interested in measuring the course and determining the direction of English-language haiku at this stage of its history and development must read and understand this book.

Michael McClintock

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Books Received

Facey, Erica (Ed.) *Time Haiku Anthology* (Time Haiku Group, Basho-an, 105, London E4 7JG, United Kingdom, 2004) 201 pp., 7"x5" perfect softbound. ISBN 0-9530165-1-X. £8.99 UK. *An extensive collection of work from the ten years of the Time Haiku Group's publication, Time Haiku. The stated intention of the group was to use the work of poets from a wide range of skill levels and to present articles that would be understood and enjoyed by such a diverse group.*

Dorsty, George *making way* (tribe press, Greenfield MA, 2004) 2 pp., 15"x4" "pinch" book. No ISBN. \$4, from the author at PO Box 33, Jamesport NY 11947.

The second in vince tripi's "pinch book" series, each being a modest chapbook consisting of a single long strip of quality paper, featuring a dozen or so poems, folded into a 4"x4.5" folder, with wraps. Pleasing and could be perfect for a theme book or sequence. Nicely done here.

Grand Central Station Tanka Café, *The only the bulbs* (The Grand Central Station Tanka Café, New York 2004) 32 pp., 5.25"x4.25" saddlestapled softbound. No ISBN. \$4 ppd. from Allen M. Terdiman, 2 Indian Cover Road, Mamaroneck NY 10543.

This second collection from this most illustrious of American tanka poet conclaves features 24 poems and 2 pen & ink illustrations. It is a good and quick insight into what's going on in English-language tanka today, and definitely worth having at this extremely modest price. Recommended.

Rowland, Philip *together / still* (Hub Editions, Wingland, Longholm, East Bank, Sutton Bridge, Spalding, Lincolnshire, UK PE12 9YS, 2004). ISBN 1-903746-34-5. 70 pp., 4.75" x 8", perfect softbound. \$10 ppd. from the publisher.

An extended meditation on relationship through the medium of haiku, this collection also creates a sense of finding a place away from one's own place, and how this shapes the way we live and relate. Affecting haiku and tanka from a voice we will want to hear again. Recommended.

Feingold, Bruce *A New Moon* (Red Moon Press, Winchester VA 2004). ISBN 1-893959-43-0. 80 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", perfect softbound. \$12 ppd. from the author at 16 Hazel Road, Berkeley CA 94705.

The first collection by this well-known Bay Area poet and clinical psychologist—surely the preponderance of psychologists who are taken with haiku cannot be an accident. A celebration of home and friends in many locales, with enhancing illustrations by Eona. Recommended.

Jones, Noragh *Stone Circles: Haiku and Haiku Prose* (Pilgrim Press, Troed Rhiw Sebon, Cwmrheidol, Aberystwyth SY23 3NB Wales UK, 2004). ISBN 0-9539901-2-5. 82 pp., 5.75" x 8", perfect softbound. \$12 ppd. from the author at the above address.

A retelling of Celtic myths, set in their home landscapes, in modern terms by a poet who has lived with them her whole life. Heartfelt and affecting prose and telling haiku. Recommended.

Gilroy, Tom et. al. *the haiku year* (Soft Skull Press, 71 Bond St., Brooklyn NY 11217, 2004). ISBN 1-932360-16-6. 174 pp., 5" x 7", perfect softbound. No price. Enquire with the publisher.

This is the second edition of a book which first appeared in 1998 and which won the American Library Association's Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults 2001 Award, which attests more to the popularity of Michael Stipe (one of the contributors) than to the literary merit of the haiku. Nevertheless, this book does suggest, and rather better than some, what the popular perception and use of haiku is "out there", and worth a look if for no other reason than that.

Emrich, Jeanne *Reeds: Contemporary Haiga #2* (Lone Egret Press, PO Box 390545, Edina MN 55435, 2004). No ISBN. 120 pp., 5.375" x 8.375", perfect softbound with dustjacket. \$16 ppd. from the publisher.

This is a beautiful book, well-conceived and -executed in every way. It establishes it as the pre-eminent haiga journal in English, and consolidates Emrich's excellent beginning with her first volume. It makes this reader eagerly look forward to the next installment (as well as wish to appear in it). Very highly recommended.

Lewin, Roger A. *spring fed pond* (Quercus Literary Publishing, 504 Club Lane, Towson MD 21286, 2003). ISBN 0-9741527-0-6. 192 pp., 6" x 8.875", stab softbound. No price. Enquire with the publisher. *This book is notable mainly for its interesting design (the work of Gerry Greaney), featuring glossy uncut pages, irregular text placements and layouts, stylized "chapter" dividers, and so on. The poems are largely haikuesque, often drawing conclusions and subscribing to a "way" of thinking that the poet recommends. Interesting to look at.*

Biliarska, Ginka (compiler) *Song of the Water* (AngoBoy, Sophia Bulgaria, 2004). ISBN 954-737-426-5. 48 pp., 6.275" x 6.25", perfect soft-bound. No price. Enquire at <angoboy@abv.bg.>
A collection of childrens' haiku and haiga from Eastern Europe, at once charming and innocuous. Bilingual and in color. A labor of love which teachers especially might appreciate.

Beresford, Martin *Riding on the Wind* (Marina Publications, 1500 Francisco Street, San Francisco CA 94123, 2004). ISBN 0-9754946-0-0. 90 pp., 5.25" x 8.25", perfect soft-bound. No price. Enquire with the publisher.
A first book from a self-proclaimed beginner, and of course the poems evidence this, but even so this is a book which will remind many of us of our first hours and days with haiku.

Watts, Alan *Zen and Senryu* (Locust Music, PO Box 220426, Chicago IL 60622, 2004). Locust#49. *Haiku* (Locust#50). \$13 apiece from the publisher at <http://www.locustmusic.com>.
These old tapes, once available as LPs and now in contemporary mode, feature Watts all dressed up and at his most imperious (not nearly so much fun as some of his other readings, also available from Locust). The first is a series of readings and stories on the nature of zen, the latter lectures on haiku. For lovers of Japanese culture and zen, certainly.

Hotham, Gary *Odor of Rain* (Northeast/Juniper Press, PO Box 8037, St. Paul MN 55108-0037, 2004). ISBN 1-55780-169-X. 16 pp., 4" x 3", handsewn soft-bound. \$5 ppd. from the publisher.
11 poems, all familiar, in a format that Juniper perfected 20+ years ago and which still holds up well. Recommended.

Terdiman, Allen M. *Haystacks* (Lily Pool Press, 2 Indian Cove Road, Mamaroneck NY 10543, 2004). ISBN 0-934714-32-0. 44 pp., 6.75" x 8.5", letterpress, handsewn soft-bound with dustjacket. \$X ppd. from the publisher.
This handsomely produced volume is a collection of haibun comprising a kind of selective memoir of the author's life and times, and engaging if not taut.

Southard, O Mabson *Deep Shade Flickering Sunlight: Selected Haiku of O Mabson Southard* (Brooks Books, 3720 N. Woodridge Drive, Decatur IL 62526, 2004). ISBN 1-929820-05-4. 128 pp., 8.5" x 5.5", perfect softbound. \$16 from the publisher. *At last a generally available collection of the best of Southard's distinctive haiku. The author is the most "poetic" of the early writers who carried haiku, and it is instructive to see how he is able to wed an adherence to 5-7-5 with concision and specificity, which, as those of us who have tried are well aware, is no mean feat. Recommended.*

Kaus, Tyler G. *Rocky Mountain Hai-ku* (Xlibris, 2004). Illustrated by Leia Andrea Pope. ISBN 1-40108356-0. 110 pp., 8.5" x 5.5", hardbound. No price. Enquire at <Orders@Xlibris.com>. *A smattering of haiku from the Japanese masters (translator(s) uncredited) and a lengthy gleaning of Rocky Mountain haiku by the author "employ[ing] the classic 5-7-5 syllable format".*

Hart, William *On Cat Time* (Timberline Press, 6281 Red Bud, Fulton MO 65251, 2004). Illustrated by Jayasri Majumdar. ISBN 0-944-48-31-5. 30 pp., 5.25" x 4.75", letterpress softbound. \$9.50 ppd. from the publisher.

I must confess I'm a tough sell on cat (or dog or other pet) poem collections, so let that bias stand first. Nothing in this volume compels me to change my mind—which isn't to say that there isn't the occasional felicity. The letterpress impression of my copy is uneven and distracting, which didn't help.

Burkhart, Owen *A Single Breath* (Unlimited Publishing, Bloomington IN, 2004). ISBN 1-58832-037-5. 120 pp., 6" x 9", perfect softbound. \$11.99 from <www.unlimited publishing.com>. *This, the poet's first volume of haiku, is testament to the simultaneity of the path which haiku poets follow in the west—most of the themes and moments of this book will be recognized from elsewhere. It suggests that our journey is at least as affected by what we read as by what we live.*

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Jones, Ken *Stallion's Crag* (IRON Press, 5 Marden Terrace, Cullercoats, North Shields, NE30 4PD UK, 2003). ISBN 0-906228-84-0. 104 pp., 4.25" x 5.75", perfect softbound. \$15 ppd. from the publisher (US bills only, please).

Jones is the most prolific and best known apologist for a vibrant haibun culture emanating from the United Kingdom. His work, however, is often extremely "local" and difficult to place and parse. It's an old question he asks: can one export the local muse to the rest of the world with effect? Much of the success in such enterprises relies upon the good will of the reader, which is engendered by the author. It's a difficult situation to resolve, if you're not on the positive side of the spin.

Porad, Francine *Sunlight Comes and Goes* (Vandina Press, 10392 NE 12th Street, I-307, Bellevue WA 98004, 2004). ISBN 1-88738-24-4. 24 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", saddle-stapled softbound. \$15 ppd. from the publisher.

Porad is one of the more prolific haiku poets in English, and this is her twenty-third individual collection. It is perhaps more bittersweet than her others in that it is colored by the chronicling of the illness and death of her late husband Bernard. There is much else here, but I felt that this event was rightfully the most insistent presence in the volume. But the poet is a survivor and the poems suggest that this has not changed. The reproductions of some of her recent paintings are amongst her finest.

Dolphy, Steve *The Cry of the Duck Egg Seller* (Ram Publications, 2003). ISBN 0-9545630-1-8. 70 pp., 4.25" x 5.75", perfect softbound. \$8 ppd. from the author (US bills only, please) at 265 High Street, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 5NB UK.

This first full-length collection aims to reflect some of the facets of the poet's two extended stays in Viet Nam. There is quite a range in the volume, both in terms of material (from the ancient to the modern) as well as in style (some of these poems were written nearly 10 years ago).

McMurray, David *Haiku Composed in English as a Japanese Language* (Pukeko Graphics) 110 pp., 10.5" x 7.5", hardcover. ISBN 4-931424-13-9 C 3482, \$29.98, internet orders from <www.pukeko.ws>.

From the editor of the weekly Asahi Haikuist Network column, this book suggests not only will the proliferation of haiku written by English-speaking poets have an influence on Japanese haiku, but the composition of haiku in English by people for whom English is a second language will have an influence on haiku and perhaps eventually on the English language. The process through which "poor" or "improper" English becomes first appreciated as creative innovation and eventually accepted usage will be accelerated through the shared use of English by haiku poets around the world?

Ueda, Makoto (Translator and Editor) *Far Beyond the Field: Haiku by Japanese Women* (Columbia University Press, New York 2004). ISBN 0-231-12863-0. 272 pp., 5" x 9", perfect softbound. \$19.50 from bookstores.

This anthology, by the well-known translator and Professor Emeritus from Stanford, adds to the somewhat scant knowledge we have of women poets working in haiku from the seventeenth century to today. Four hundred haiku by twenty poets, several still living, impart a sense of the marginalized existence of women in this predominantly male world, as well as underscoring emphases that might be seen as more traditionally female: the lyric, the erotic, to name two. Highly recommended.

HSA

News

The Virgilio Haiku Contest 2004

It has given us enormous pleasure, and we've felt honored to read so many haiku from so many fine upcoming young poets. For the most part, they are happy, exuberant haiku full of light-hearted energy. There is also a keen sense of place and the feeling that these are true experiences. It may be noted that none of the haiku that we have chosen use capital letters, or even much in the way of punctuation. We have looked for fresh images, juxtaposition, use of all five senses, and haiku that show rather than tell of an event or feeling, leading the reader to think more deeply. To those whose haiku do not appear below, please remember that poetry is subjective, and at another time and place, your haiku might well be the one chosen.

Our warmest congratulations to the finalists, and thank you to all those who submitted haiku, for their interest and effort. Bravo! Very respectfully,

an'ya and kirsty karkow, Judges

FINALISTS

ocean shore
lost in a pile of rocks
a seal sleeps.

James Kelly, Age 17
Wahlert High School
Dubuque IA (Grade 12)

kk: *Considering all the varied shapes and shadows on the shore, this seal cannot be seen unless the poet is very quiet, studying the scene as words of a haiku start to form. Imagine the happiness as she/he suddenly notices a sleeping seal; this feeling of wonder conveyed to the reader. The form of the seal is indeed "lost", camouflaged, and this moment is very nicely rendered in classic haiku form.*

an'ya: *A fine zoom effect in this haiku, from the wide setting of a vast ocean shore being lost in a pile of rocks, to the last line when the writer allows us to see a sleeping seal. Just as if this seal is nestled safely in the rock arms of the sea itself. Multiple images of ocean, shore, rocks, a seal, yet all tied together in a common theme to form a complete haiku moment.*

cold in church
mother and I
move closer

Amanda White, Age 17
Wahlert High School
Dubuque IA (Grade 12)

kk. *A successful haiku leads the reader to deeper thoughts with each reading. This one succeeds. The poet and his/her mother move closer not only physically, but possibly spiritually and emotionally as well. There is excellent use of alliteration.*

an'ya: *This haiku has deeper layered meaning than it appears to have at first reading. I feel the coldness perhaps of an old stone church, juxtaposed with the warmth of a mother/daughter or mother/son relationship. This could possibly have deep religious implications as well with the mother image representative of the Virgin Mary, although the author skillfully leaves it up to reader interpretation.*

summer cottage
the bullfrog
slips my grasp

Emily Cornish, Age 15
School of the Arts
Rochester NY (Grade 9)

kk: *For me, this haiku tells of the hard, slippery things in life being set aside, or even lost in summertime lightness. In this case the comparative shortness of the middle line works in that it emphasizes the difficulties (represented by the possibly warty bullfrog) that have slipped away. Nice use of "s" sounds.*

an'ya: *This haiku to me is simply "real", and bullfrogs are definitely "slippery" creatures. I can also empathize with the writer's dismay of not being able to hold on to said frog, and yet I enjoyed the humor. So many things in life simply "slip-away", which is what makes this particular piece so profound, especially having been composed by a younger author.*

shifting shadows
deep in the hills
a dog barks

Allison McCrossen, Age 13
School of the Arts
Rochester NY (Grade 7)

kk: *This poem presents a shaded, thought-provoking landscape . . . slightly mysterious. I like the middle line pivot which makes sense with the first and also with the final line. The use of sound, a bark, far away, makes for an eerie feeling. Here the mood is reinforced by the image.*

an'ya: *I'm intrigued about the "shifting shadows"; line two draws me in even further, (deep into the hills), and just when I'm right on the very edge of this haiku, "a dog barks", startling me back into reality. Skillfully vague enough to be effective as a haiku moment.*

metallic taste	Jenny Zhang, Age 16
the cold stream spills	Cedar Shoals High School
from my hand	Athens GA (Grade 11)

kk: *It is refreshing to find the underused senses of taste and touch here. Also, the reader's senses are jarred awake with the sharpness of the cold water and its acrid flavour. This well-written poem leads the mind to ponder about mountain streams, hiking and even a little philosophy about letting go when life gets bitter.*

an'ya: *What person has not thought this very thing when drinking from a mountain stream? The taste of pure water is so unknown to us anymore that it does taste shockingly metallic. Not to mention that mountain streams are always really "cold". This is a well-crafted haiku that has juxtaposition, natural alliteration, and unbelievably, incorporates four out of five senses, which not many old-time haiku poets are even able to do! There's taste, touch, sight, and the sound of the stream as well.*

koi	Elizabeth Hetherington, Age 16
nibbling	School of the Arts
my copper wish	Rochester NY (Grade 11)

kk: *In a novel and arresting way we know that this poet has made a wish on a copper coin and tossed it into a pool of carp. We also know that a carp is investigating the coin. All in 5 words. I wonder, as maybe the writer wonders, will this affect the outcome of the wish? I agree with an'ya that another image would perfect the verse . . . juxtaposing with this very original and already intriguing image.*

an'ya: *This is a haiku that some would say has bent the rules. However, it does show us as readers a very unique way of looking at an otherwise common situation, which is what a successful haiku should do. Had I been critiquing this one, I would suggest that it's author perhaps might consider using an emdash after "koi", or perhaps even consider combining lines one and two, making room for a wide setting in line one. Overall though, I sense definite potential in this writer's ability for many more fine haiku to come.*

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THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Treasurer's Report First Quarter (April 1 through June 30, 2004)

OPENING BANK BALANCE: **\$32,754.00**

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Respectfully submitted,

Paul Miller, Treasurer

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\$100 for the best unpublished work
appearing in the previous issue of *Frogpond*
as voted by the HSA Executive Committee

autumn wind
in his sweater pocket
the missing button

Nancy S. Young



Frogpond Capping Poem

writer's block
another New Year's
resolution

Alice Frampton

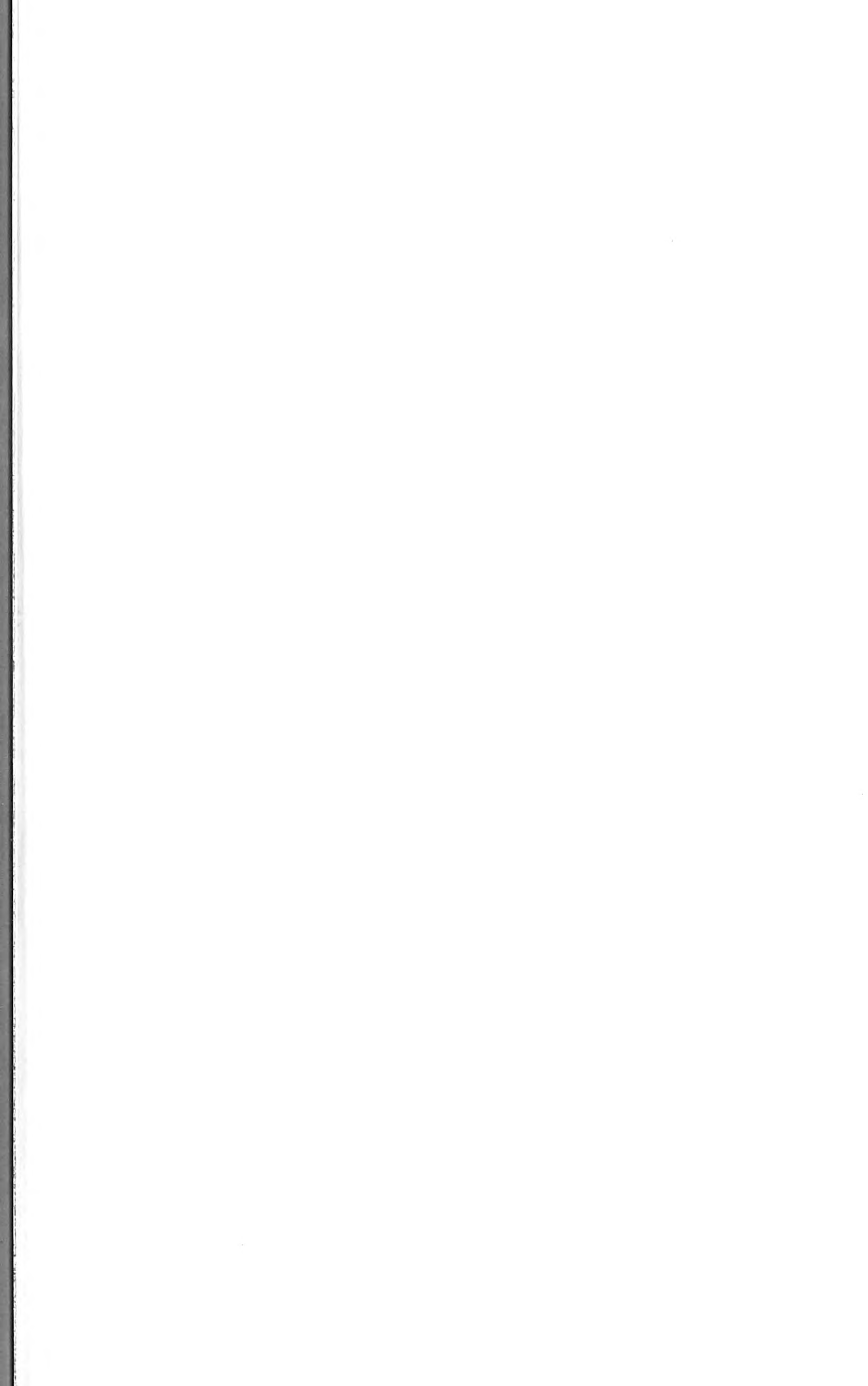


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