

frogpond



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Haiku All Around: Takahama Kyoshi

by Sharon Ann Nakazato

“I have a small pond in my garden.

“I keep golden carp in the pond. During the winter the fish tend to stay at the bottom. However, one day I suddenly noticed something pitch black swimming on the top of the pond. When I looked closely I discovered thousands, tens of thousands, more than you could count of frog eggs incubating.

“It must have been two or three days after that: I was meandering with my walking stick along the shore of the pond when I was startled by a sudden kerplunking sound in the water. One large frog had dived into the water, making the sound. I recalled Basho’s poem (an early spring poem), and I felt in my heart that I had truly understood it for the first time.”

For Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959), haiku and experience, haiku and daily living were inseparable: “The daily life of the heart is the deeply swelling tide; and *ku* are the waves on its surface . . . my haiku are the records of my life,” he wrote in his *Ku Nikki* (Haiku Diary). Kyoshi lived during the time of greatest change within a short period in the cultural life of his country. He remained at the very center of the whirlpools eddying through the haiku world, publishing one of the most important literary forums of the century, *Hototogisu* (The Cuckoo). Moreover, he was the chosen first disciple of the man who probably left the most ripples in the haiku pond after Issa—Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902). Yet, throughout his life, Kyoshi declared himself the champion of tradition in haiku—so much so that when a reporter asked him what influence the Second World War had had on his poetry, he replied firmly, “None whatsoever.” And when Shiki, standard bearer of modernism in haiku (and tanka) as well as Kyoshi’s teacher, asked Kyoshi to become his formal successor, Kyoshi refused, hurting Shiki deeply and causing a rift that might not have healed but for Shiki’s severe illness. Kyoshi was later to say that the person who had loved him most in the world had been Shiki.

Doubtless Shiki’s disregard for season words and his proclaimed

policy of a purely objective descriptive function for poetry (so-called “imitative realism”) were difficult for Kyoshi to endorse. Kyoshi repeated over and over:

Shin (Deep) is Always Shin (New)

“Those who burn with the hot blood of youth are always aflame with the ambition to do something new and original. Young people who have edged their way into the cramped universe of haiku are still anxious to try new experiments, breaking the 17-syllable form and throwing off the iron chains of *kigo* (season words); however, this will only result in the destruction of haiku and will place the iconoclast outside the pale of the haiku world. And then, many other younger poets are inclining toward retaining the 17-syllable form and *kigo* while at the same time trying as much as possible to extend the limits horizontally in a fresh direction. This is fine to a certain point, but such poets often fall into the danger of creating poems that are not really haiku. The efforts to expand haiku in a horizontal direction are commendable; yet I am more inclined to think that more new paths will be found by venturing deeper and deeper down already existing roads.

“While both methods of search may yield new discoveries, I believe that the new which is revealed by seeking deeper and deeper is not a novelty of the moment but will live long and stay new. That is why I repeat over and over that *shin* (deep) is *shin* (new).

“Haiku is a classical art form. As long as it is severely restricted by the limitations of 17 syllables and season words, we cannot expect such great departures to spring from its roots. It is an old vessel. But I am working now to explore as deeply as I can within these limits. I will continue to seek to brew rich new wine in the old vessels . . .” (1935)

Theoretics aside, many of Shiki’s poems are unequivocally “I” poems; however, the poetry that he encouraged translates in English more directly into the kind of “imagistic” poems that we often mistake for all of haiku. He also enlarged the scope of experiences acceptable for haiku material, and for all that Kyoshi supported haiku arising from direct experience, he did not always approve of the blips that fell within Shiki’s wide-ranging screen. Kyoshi preferred nature always as subject and encouraged his students and readers to find their new haiku experiences whenever they could in things that had been around Basho and Buson before them as well.

“There is emotion and then there is nature; or there is nature and then there is emotion. We place the importance on nature, but without

the emotion words do not become poetry.

“Flowers-and-birds themes are not (objective) phenomena of nature. The human element is included in them. Human activities, which are influenced by the seasons, are a part of the flowers-birds-wind-and-moon. All these aspects of nature are represented by the two words flowers and birds . . . You must not think of the object and your feelings as separate things. If you separate them, you will be deluded. At the actual moment that we create a poem, we are not thinking about what our feelings may be. We encounter the actual scene, see, our feelings are moved, and the haiku emerge. We could as well say that our feelings are in the beginning and the natural scene comes after and the haiku comes out of these. However, in terms of the order, in the past the emotion came first and the natural scene after, whereas the tendency now is to have the natural scene come first and then the emotion. But at the moment of creation it is all the same and the two are linked immutably.” (1934)

Haiku *was* Kyoshi's life. He allowed it to enliven his existence: “When it's hot most people just fan harder, but the haiku poet discovers something special in the heat . . .” At the same time, he definitely had no truck with any haiku poet who traded on his position or who held himself lofty and apart: “As far as the haiku life goes, it's the daily life of the average human being. I don't see any reason to make a big deal of ‘living the haiku life.’ In the old days, it was the practice to wear a special cap and show off the ‘master's robe’ and strut around with ‘I am a haiku poet’ written all over, but everyone in my group of friends hates all that. We all dress like everyone else, work like everyone else, sleep, spend our days acting just like the man in the street.”

Kyoshi's life began on February 22, 1874 in the former castle city of Matsuyama on Shikoku Island. He met Shiki when he was 18 and Shiki was 24 through classmate and for years comrade in haiku, Kawahigashi Hekigodo (1883-1937). Together they became the right and left pillars in Shiki's revolution. In May of 1895 when Shiki, in soldier's uniform, was on a troop carrier headed for the Sino-Japanese war front, he spit blood and had to be carried back home, where Kyoshi nursed him. It was in December of that year that Shiki, who knew his days were numbered, tried to nominate Kyoshi his successor and was refused. Kyoshi married in Matsuyama in 1897 and also began *Hototogisu* in that year, moving it to Tokyo in the following year. He suffered his first severe intestinal attack two years later at the age of 27 and had to be hospitalized. He was to be tormented with intestinal ailments all of his life though they did not stop him from living to the respectable age of 85.

In the following years Shiki's condition worsened until in 1901 Kyoshi began commuting between Tokyo and Osaka where he could care for Shiki. After Shiki's death in 1902 it was Kyoshi who took responsibility for editing all of Shiki's work (which supports the supposition that the disagreement between them was ideological, but not critically so, and not personal). Kyoshi also enjoyed a close relationship with Natsume Soseki (1867-1916), the giant of modern Japanese literature, and was especially supportive and critically helpful in Soseki's formative years as a writer.

Kyoshi was throughout his life quite versatile in the classical arts. He began studying Noh drama at the age of 40. He not only performed in Noh plays but wrote them as well, along with Kabuki plays and novels. In the tradition of Saigyō, Bashō and the others, he traveled a good deal and, after the War especially, went on many pilgrimages. Although he is not considered a specifically Buddhist poet, Buddhist themes permeate his work. (He does speak of the spirit of tea, Zen and haiku being essentially the same; I think we may understand Zen as standing for Buddhism in general, as his travels and haiku correspondence indicate the usual Japanese indifference to sectarianism.)

in the mountain temple
both the Buddhas and I
are molding

the gate to Gio temple
when the priest is out
if you push it it opens

alone, Kyoshi
accompanies the Milky Way
to the west

I'd like to live here, I think
in the abandoned temple
watching the moon

a person is looking up
to the spring skies
nothing is there

Actually, it is probably more accurate to say of Kyoshi's poetry that it is very personal rather than simply "Buddhist." Many many of his poems were written on particular occasions, as is common in Japanese haiku circles—for the birth of an heir, a death in the family, a visit, someone sick. Directed toward particular people one can often feel his personal caring in the effort to find new wine for the old skins.

To a priest friend on acceding to a mountain temple
from now on
the deer and the monkeys
will become your disciples

Sent to Chief Priest on Mt. Hiei after lightning
destroyed a temple building
unscorched in the lightning fire
the Lamp of the Law
continues to burn

One special characteristic of Kyoshi's poetry that should be noted is the reflection of what he calls in Buddhist language "the passing change in all things" in many of his poems, accomplished through an actual sequence of images in space or actions.

the things in the garden
hurrying to wither—
I was watching

flowing past—
quicken
of the radish leaves

evening cherry blossoms
red paper lanterns
burn and fall

The critic who towers over evaluations of 20th century Japanese belles lettres Yamamoto Kenkichi has said of Kyoshi that he "poured a drop of oil on haiku's dying fire." Whether haiku in Japan was dying or

merely faltering is open to speculation. But I believe that we writing and appreciating haiku in the West may learn much from his tender nourishing of what he saw as traditional in a modern climate.

A Selection of Haiku by Takahama Kyoshi

Zen temple moss
pecked into
by this small bird

autumn breezes
in my eyes
everything is haiku

loving longing
for my father
like days in "little spring" *

first
I look at my wife's face
the new year begins

*"Little spring" is the term given to the brief warm spell in late winter.

the deerfly comes
out of the hole and looks
around is all the world

procrastinating,
it won't enter the cocoon,
the silkworm

he says a word
I say a word
autumn is deepening so!

history is sad
I hear it and forget it
aging in autumn

in the cool kuzu drink
the wind from the pines
drops some dust

a parent's heart
quietly viewing
the fallen leaves

closing the rain doors
farther and farther away
the frog

drenched by the rain
dried by the sun
the carp banner

the mountain temple
its treasures visible
in a rain of flowers

Tomo

'fresh honed blade
sinks into the radish
very gently

turning to leave him
my umbrella is caught
on a dripping branch

Biology teacher
alone after school
staring into the cage

early autumn evening
falling,
falls

through
the young leaves
my neighbor's wife

country road
a circus-poster tiger
in the spring rain

March winds the weathervane points everywhere

summer breeze
a ladder leaning against
a half-painted house

rising
over the freak-show tent
a gibbous moon

Blue morning glory
at the outhouse window—
the heat

from floor to floor
lifts a crushed chrysanthemum
the empty elevator

Building the dollhouse—
a monarch fans its wings
on a cross-beam

In the museum—
the Calder mobile
backs into me

pale sun
on the breakfast plate
dogwood blossoms

sulfur butterflies
drift over the wild mustard . . .
its sudden fragrance

stifling heat
on tenement roofs
the cold moon

chrysanthemums
on the bedside table
early dusk

Charles D. Nethaway

louisiana flood
a horse standing still
on the overpass

young woman
in the spring meadow
blossoming

winter tree:
the blackbird watches me
throwing seed

noontime sky—
the constellation
I can't see

the old woman
looking into the stars
sky all snowy

Summer ends —
two woodchoppers remember
how cold it was last year

early spring thaw;
spring deer just circles
base of the mountain

the old man stalks
on the abandoned homestead—
spring drizzle

Sparrows
through milk-crate cages
hopping in and out.

A bird wings—
shadow falls
on a single flower.

. . . falling in place
pebbles
settling in the pond . . .

Pile of poems
resting place
for daddy-longlegs.

Marion J. Richardson

An all-day rain
ducks have the pond
to themselves

moonlight
a red canoe
under the willows

full moon tonight
in the dark river
another moon

in the morning mist
islands floating

Lee J. Richmond

Selections from *Night-Ride*
Copyright ©1981
by Lee J. Richmond

Recalling friends
who change country . . .
the spring wind!

Everyone gathering
plum-blossoms, throwing away
plum-blossoms.

The blossoms have fallen;
perhaps now
I can be ill in peace.

I walk alone;
the swans all night
in couples.

Luna moth;—
as if this world
were stopping-place.

After the thunder,
the morning-glories
correct themselves.

It's because of loneliness,—
this jar
of purple irises.

Unhappy butterfly—
the one, I think,
in Issa's verse.

Moving among
sunflower rows,—
my eyes begin to fail.

The long day;
someone is fathering
a scarecrow over there.

Entering autumn;
as if they cared,
the cries of insects.

Spotted horses
in deep autumn;
the wind blowing up behind.

Having cut the peony,
I looked for someone
to scold.

About to bloom,
this amaryllis,—
the snail under the leaf.

This winter day,
the world seems god-less,—
knocking at the door.

As I grow old,
the morning-glories
look quite modern.

Now broken
on broken chimneys,
the winter sunshine.

Winter seclusion;
only bright thing,
a fever.

His death-poem,
before I could protest;
December gale.

a cowbird stands on an eggplant warm spell

*

on seeing yellow daisies bloom, a sudden hunger

*

dusk a number of minnows in the turn-hole*

(*turn-hole: where a stream flows
around a rock and deepens)

*

under a rock, I find a shadow

*

mail from a foreign country on a hot day

*

rain pours from the sky, then after a while, stops

*

a squirrel in the pear tree, dropping leaves one by one, summer

*

a sparrow bends over in grass and disappears, a hazy day

a boy shouts in an open field, then listens intently

*

my girlfriend keeps hiccuping, midnight

*

an ant crawls under the shadow of a rock, emerges

*

an apple falls from a tree, for a while, that's all that happens

*

a tiny snake threatens me with his little teeth, summer ends

*

picking green tomatoes, I've a headache

*

my neighbor's rhubarb's overgrown, soft patter of rain

*

in the ice above the stream is nothing

*

on the fire escape, snow

Winter has come—
cold sunlight migrates across
my backyard.

letters unanswered . . .
snow blows under
cracks in the door

It's a cold winter night,
I eat anchovies
without eyes.

snow bound—
using yesterday's
kleenex

The sun sets
on the last day of winter,
I let it.

The road grows dark,
The turn-hole grows dark:
Everything's dark.

a bird flies over
the cliff and disappears—
a hot day

although it's summer
there's not a single clock in the house
nightfall

a rock
thrown down through the trees
goes forgotten

Ross Figgins

Selections from *American Haiku*

solar eclipse —
without introduction
strangers speak

scattered dry leaves —
the kitten shakes its paw
to remove the sound

withered rose —
left on her desk
one more day

most often scolded —
the last burro stops
to nibble flowers

Selections from the *Splash* Series

The following poems are selections from the *Splash* series. The *Splash* series is the product of a group of local poets living in, or near, northern New Mexico. The group has formed to write and appreciate haiku and has held intermittent workshops. Richard Bodner is the editor.

Editor's note: Richard Bodner is a HSA member and queries on the series may be made through him at: 1329 Sixth St., Las Vegas, NM 87701.

from *Splash One: Around an Old Pond*

Red burst
through the window
winter geranium.

Betty Mendoza

Three red roses
a gift
my heart leaps.

Bonnie Blough

Deep drink of morning air
taste of saki
on my thumb.

Virginia Bodner

from *Splash Two: Leaves Along Sixth Street*

A child once more
on bedroom shades drawn
the swaying leaves.

Carlos Kemm

Children's bicycle wheels
with cards pinned to make noise—
starlings from bird bath.

Carlos Kemm

Wind through the branches
gone without leaving a trace
the autumn evening.

Richard Bodner

bob boldman

heart sutras

listening to the tick
of the metronome half-heartedly

the nail
in the hand of christ
my heart pounding

a day of clouds:
the heart in my ribs
caged

surgery:
the waves of his heart
on the scope

(for there)

Last Visit to my Uncle

hot wind's roar
stops with the car—
hush of prairie grasses

we pick silk off corn:
his few wisps left
after chemotherapy

hoping to show me the owl
he is slow to name what hovers
in the dusk

waking on his porch
sunrise shimmers the outline
of a mourning dove

this morning
his brown garden shoes
look too heavy

dry parsley
where his cold frame was
prairie wind

dusty road
he reads beetle tracks
at the end of his own

attic stairwell
in the smell of dried sage
ancestor photos

bawdy family joke
across the generations
his spark

from his shaking hand
I take the light package
of bib lettuce seeds

hugging his thinness
dry rasp
of a cicada

prairie—
riding with me
the horizon*

*first appeared in BRUSSELS SPROUT Vol. 3, No. 1.

Iowa Morning

first rays
spangling the frost
horned lark notes

still
lying in the ditch
frost

mating hogs:
through bristles
and spilled semen
sunrise

cedar windbreak
turning the wind
into sound

clanging down
on the silence
hog trough lid

Tom Smith

A cigarette
at midnight: a mouse
in the fireplace.

Rain over ice:
my neighbor's beetle
staggers drunkenly.

A couple of cabbage whites
weave a double helix round
the old bull's puzzle.

Proxade Davis

skiing the dunes
the shining sea
over and beyond

sea wheat
dips
in the sunset

Sequence

rejected
he polishes
the granite cheek

granite face
smoothed to satin finish
she watches me

the curtain
bellied by nightwind
brushes her

HSA Sampler

an on-going selection of work being done by members of the Haiku Society of America.

The smell of pine
leads me up this path
to a woodpile.

Margarita M. Engle

she unfolds the wool
over her knees
swallows take flight

Sister Mary Thomas Eulberg

a hint of pale sun
this February noon—
a wasp lumbers by

Elisabeth Marshall

Resting on the oars—
Not a thought in the world:
The sound under the silence.

Humphrey F. Noyes

A glassy calm,
raindrops carve holes in the sand
and in the sea

Rain pool,
mosquito flies away
from itself

Rebecca Rust

Approaching storm—
the jet's trail enters
a thunderhead

Ross Kremer

The kite leaps from the
hand like a hawk from the
falconer, loving sky.

Ulrich Troubetzkoy

Cool June morning;
beyond the dusty window
daylilies in shadow . . .

Barbara McCoy

only the quiet
and lengthening of shadows
autumn sunset

Gene Williamson

a little awkward still
from the wools of winter
the maypole dancers

she carries them so carefully
her buttercups
wrapped in brown paper

Anne McKay

Listening
Only moonlight falls
on my shadow

Carol Scott Wainwright

Warm sand
tossed into the wind—
Tears

Linda K. Trujillo

The river
sparkle of moonlight
the cat's eyes

Sister Mary Ann Henn

Apt to blush
When caressed
The pollen of mimosa!

Rekha R. Shah

HAIKU PAINTING, by Leon M. Zolbrod. Kodansha International, Tokyo & New York, 1982. 48 pages. \$18.95

The genre of *haiga*, here translated “haiku painting,” is curious. It seems so much a part of haikai that one assumes as long a history. But it turns out upon inquiry that the term itself may not have come into being until about 1800, and that the genre as we now know it may be largely agential. (In contrast, haibun, another genre related to haikai, was first so identified by Basho in 1690, and the first collection of haibun appeared in 1705.) Reflecting this relative newness of the term and the genre’s amorphousness, a recent twelve-volume set on haikai art published in Japan does not attempt to define haiga until the fifth volume, which is devoted to Buson and his contemporaries. The same reasons may account for the fact that Mr. Zolbrod’s book under review is the first book on the subject in English.

What is haiga? Watanabe Kazan (1793-1841), poet, scholar, patriot, and painter, said: “The essence of this art is just to sketch, to represent everything in a catchy way, and to draw as roughly as possible. If one were to compare this to people, someone who is wise, prudent, and eloquent in practical affairs would be bad. Someone who is awkward in practical affairs and untutored would be regarded as artistic.” (p. 42) The attitude described here is that of the Taoist sage, which may be summarized as transcendental breeziness. Among those who did interesting work, Kazan counted Buson, who happens to have once boasted, “In informal painting in haikai mode, I know of no one my equal in this country.” (Letter dated the 11th of the 8th month, 1776.) Happily, Buson’s boast has been justified, for he is now considered one of the best haiga painters. It is appropriate that Mr. Zolbrod should allocate 13 out of 32 color plates, or over 40% of the whole, to Buson’s work.

To give some notion of what an exemplary haiga is like, I may mention Buson’s “Flower-viewing Matahei” (Plate 21, p. 23), which is regarded as a masterpiece. In this hanging scroll (103.3 cm. by 25.5 cm.), Buson depicts a figure and a gourd under an inscription consisting of a preface, a hokku, and his signature. The preface reads: “The scattering of flowers in the Capital is like the peeling off of Mitsunobu’s Chinese white,” and the hokku: “I’ve met Matahei in Omuro, its flowers in full bloom.” The figure, a tipsy male in a red cap, is tottering about bare-foot, his shoulder and most of his chest exposed as his jacket slides down. The gourd that lies on the ground near the man’s feet is apparently emptied of its content—saké. Mitsunobu (1434-1525) is of the

Tosa family that provided the shogunate with official painters, and Matahei is a painter in the early 18th century who is said to have started the school of folk painting known as Otsu-e. Omuro, famous for its cherry flowers, is in the suburbs of Kyoto (Capital),* The idea, then, is to praise informality, casualness. This is admirably enhanced by Buson's fluid calligraphic style and the ease in his execution of the figure that verges on frivolity. Indeed, the man embodying the Taoist notion of making merry in a very down-to-earth manner is almost a caricature in a picture done in black ink against the uniform sand-colored background with only two touches of red. In accordance with the haiga ideal of retaining only the essentials, the cherry flowers are completely absent along with any other bit of landscape.

Haiga as a genre tends to be inclusive, but Mr. Zolbrod's selection, representing the period from Nonoguchi Ryuho (1595-1669) to Watanabe Kazan, is judicious. Also, in addition to the 32 color plates, he has managed to insert 30 black-and-white photographs. Each painting has a detailed caption. And at the end of the book Mr. Zolbrod gives a cogent description of the circumstances and the social setting that nurtured and sustained haiga. I will recommend this book to anyone interested.

—Hiroaki Sato

*My information on the painting differs somewhat from Mr. Zolbrod's. The translation of the inscription is mine.

TRACKS ON THE RIVER, by Paul O. Williams, Cornflower Press, R.R. No. 1 – 4 Dogwood Lane, Elsah, IL 62028, 1982. \$2.25 pp.

Paul O. Williams has chosen 64 poems (60 of them previously published), and arranged them with 9 photographs in his first book of haiku, *Tracks on the River*. They are presented in seasonal order.

Introducing his book, Williams writes:

I have limited the collection to poems about one place— a stretch of southern Illinois near the Mississippi River—in the hopes that one poem may contribute to another in helping to create a larger impression. (p. 5)

An evolving composite of the region does emerge, each haiku then arising against a quiet, but not blank, ground—or tensions occur between haiku:

two small flies mate
on the south windowpane—
snowflakes blowing

the unpainted shed
leaning against
the drifted snow

The “two small flies” are busily involved with one another while the snow flurries and gusts, striking the other surface of the pane; in the diffuse light the flies, though contrasting the snow in color, are too full of motion to be sharply etched. But the “unpainted shed” stands incised, a few strokes showing it clear and still against the snow.

The Mississippi River supplies both title and title haiku:

a powerboat wake
crosses the sunset’s red track—
the restless water

An image recurring again and again, the river becomes centrally important to the book’s unity. Streams and floating things move toward the river, mist unites its near and further shores, the breath condenses, rising through its rain. In the context of the book, the river comes to be heard even in haiku that have no necessary reference to it:

the old dog
twitches in his sleep:
winter darkness

Some haiku included are not wholly successful. A burden of information may overextend a rhythm, or crowd out a focus of tension.

the small waterfall
once more falls through bare branches
into a wrinkled sky

on the smooth river
a group of ducks, one of gulls—
snow falls on them

And the first haiku in the body of the collection seems planned:

from the ridge top
no plowed fields and trees—
only fog

But contrast it with this next:

thawing rain—
from a high outcrop, a rock
clatters down and stops

Aspirated and nasal consonants predominate until, midway along the second line, sharp, stopped consonants replace them.

The “thawing rain” is hissing, now, and in it can be heard the grainy textures of the snow and ice and stone—it has dissolved the very surface of things and with them, the superficial discontinuity of perceiver and event: we are utterly exposed. Among the very finest in the book, this is a haiku wrenched from chaos.

To leave *Tracks on the River* at this point would be somewhat misleading, for it is also a hospitable book, as in these two haiku, the one full of ripening, the other, of incipient rebirth:

goldenrod—
the song of the grasshoppers
grows heavy

shifting the eye
from the nearly full moon
to the buds between

—Stephen Gould

DARK, by Cor van den Heuvel. Chant Press 129 E. 10th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10003, 1982. 32 pages. Signed & Limited to 65.

In his writings and discussions of haiku, Cor van den Heuvel has shown himself to be intelligent and sensitive, and to have a special concern for form. In *Dark* he shows no less and, in fact, he shows more: he is a sensitive and highly skilled poet—a true craftsman whose interest in form has extended from care for the individual poem through to the form of a book. *Dark* is well edited, tightly conceived, beautifully printed (on what appears to be a hand press with hand set type) and, above all, is moving.

It is so carefully put together that it radiates an awareness that a book, as much as the individual poem or an artist, needs a conscious intention to succeed as art. Here the intention is to explore and convey to the reader the inner/outer sensation of darkness. As such, this reader found *Dark* to be a refreshing break from the more common haiku book which often consists of every haiku of an author's which any editor ever chose to print. Those of course have their place, even, admittedly, an important one, but it is reassuring to see an author with more intention than simply to be a haiku poet—and to see him succeed.

There is a nice variety of form in the book's 13 haiku (and Mr. van den Heuvel can get away with this, it is hardly noticeable) from three-liners to one-liners with various modes of punctuation. And one poem even spreads across two pages. It reads "a milkweed seed/ drifting over the darkening lake." But to accurately appreciate this poem it must be seen in the original. "A milkweed seed" appears on the left-hand page, somewhat above center. "Blowing . . ." appears on the right-hand page, slightly below center. This is *not* done for experimentalism's sake, but to dramatize the complete and painful split of the poem's two elements. The rest of the book reads like a sequence or dramatic progression revealing different aspects of the sensation of darkness.

If this first poem is, on a very simple level, taken as light's tensions with darkness, then the next poem integrates the two (in the ripples—both light and dark):

November evening-
the wind from a passing truck
ripples a roadside puddle

Next comes:

the shadow in the folded napkin

This is an invitation to stand in the shadow, perhaps to nooze or sleep there. Either way, it is seductive. Next we are shown what we can expect to find if we go into the shadow (the dark):

a branch
waves in the window
and is gone

Surprising? This is a wonderful portrait of transitoriness and gains much from being included in a collection called “Dark”, though it is hard to describe what this is.

Dark contains a number of other exceptionally high quality and dramatic haiku which, unfortunately, there is not enough space to comment on except to say that some seek sensations on the inside, in purely psychological terms:

in the mirror, too alone

and others on the outside, in a more imagistic mode:

a stick goes over the falls at sunset

The real joy of *Dark*, for this reader, is that Mr. van den Heuvel has embraced the sensation of darkness as much, and as openly, as he has form. He demonstrates Keats’ negative capability—the ability to stand in doubts, pain, and conflict (the dark) without uncomfortably reaching after answers, solutions, or other compensations. This book is a treasure.

—Bruce Kennedy

HAIKU NEWS

Contest Winners

Proxade Davis, VP of The Cape Cod Haiku Society, reports the winners of a recent haiku contest: First prize was awarded to Trudi Rockey of Centerville, MA and Second prize and Honorable Mention was awarded to Cynthia Ballentine of Falmouth, MA. The judge was Lorraine E. Harr, editor of *DRAGONFLY*.

Publication Party

There will be a publication party at the Japan House, May 16, 1983 at 6:15 p.m. for Hiroaki Sato announcing his new book *ONE HUNDRED FROGS* (From Renga to Haiku to English). Mr. Sato will give a lecture on his book at the beginning of the evening, followed by refreshments.

ONE HUNDRED FROGS is being published by John Weatherhill and is due out in April. Cost of this soft-bound edition is \$14.95.

Plan to attend if you are in the area.

Correction

In the last issue of *Frogpond* one sentence was inadvertently left out of Cor van den Heuvel's article "John Wills and One-Line Haiku." This occurred in the second full paragraph on page 39 and the paragraph should have read, in its entirety:

"Printing haiku in two lines has not caught on. Bob Boldman, Swede, and a few others have tried it. I think, though, that for haiku, two liners are esthetically, simply as a form on the page, unpleasing. In English, they remind one of aphorisms or epigrams, which have often appeared in couplets. There is something too balanced and rational about them—they do not have the unfinished suggestibility of *the*

haiku, which is best reflected by three lines. One can get a feeling of suggestibility in one line, but the unfinished aspect is not so easy. One line has the advantage of unity, or oneness, but it may tend to look like a complete, closed sentence. On the other hand it may seem like a one-line excerpt from a longer work—but this is not the kind of “unfinished” we want. We want the openness of the haiku, but we want it to also seem like a complete poem. In any case, three lines combine these paradoxical elements while two lines do not—considered solely as form, of course.”

—Please note that Herman Ward has taken over as the sub/mem secretary of HSA, replacing L.A. Davidson and her years of devoted service. Please address all pertinent correspondence to Mr. Ward.

—If you have not yet renewed for 1983, this will be the last issue of *Frogpond* you will be receiving.

HSA Merit Award Books

First Prize: *Walking the River* by Bob Boldman,
\$100 High/Coo Chapbook No. 8, 1980

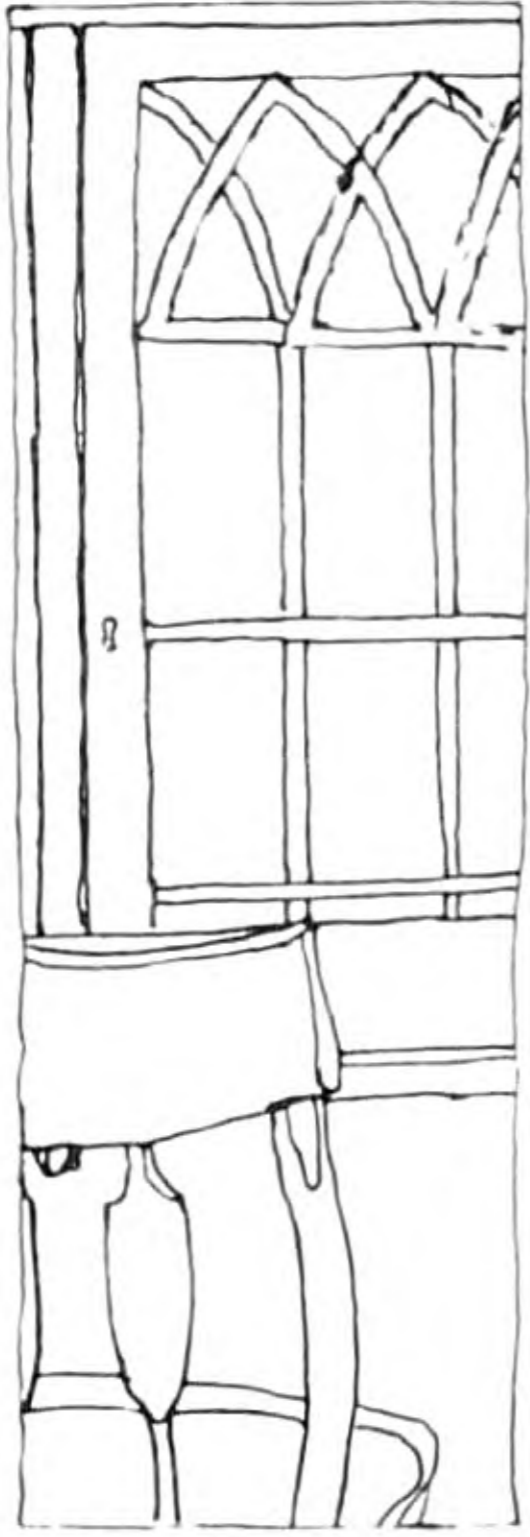
Second Prize *dark* by Cor van den Heuvel,
\$75 Chant Press, 1982

Third Prize: *39 Blossoms* by Elizabeth Lamb,
\$50 High/Coo Chapbook No. 17, 1982

Eminent
Mentions: *The Shape of The Tree* by L.A. Davidson,
 Wind Chimes, 1982

Sun-Faced Haiku, Moon-Faced Haiku by Alan Gettis,
High/Coo Chapbook No. 11, 1982.

This year's judge was Virginia Brady Young.



Filling my flat
with spring —
a sparrow

