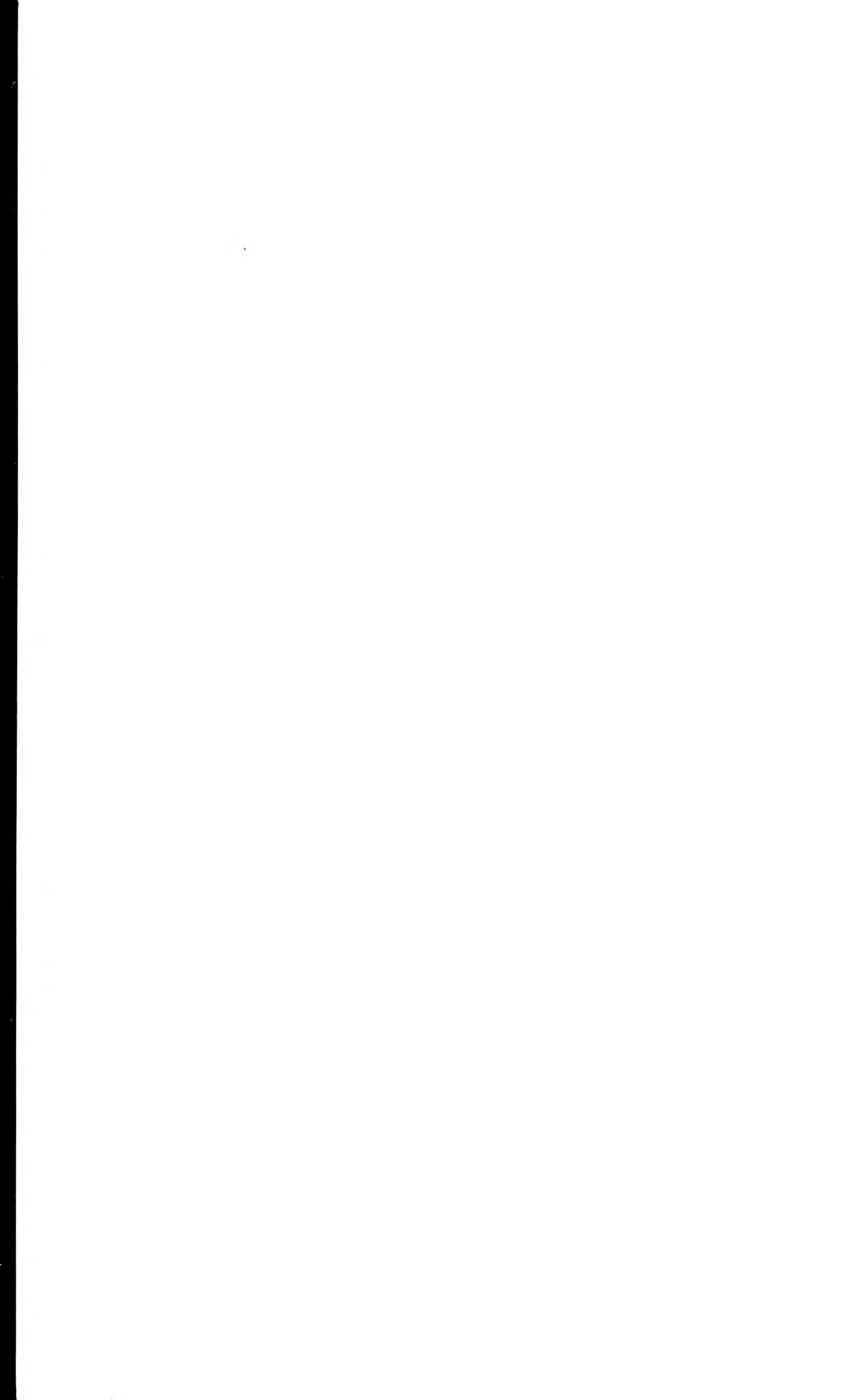


FROGPOND XXVII: 1



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HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA
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President's Message

The year 2004 is properly rung in, and the HSA has elected a new slate of officers. Sincere thanks to the 2003 officers for their fine work and hearty congratulations to all the new and continuing officers. I could not imagine a better lineup to carry the Society forward.

High on my to-do list is to revisit the HSA by-laws with an eye to increasing responsiveness and allowing the EC to work officially on the Internet. I would also like to simplify elections, provide for the replacement of officers mid-term, and clarify the HSA's relations with other haiku organizations. I hope Treasurer Paul Miller will prepare (for the first time) an HSA budget. Our publishing program and poetry contests are thriving and can be expected to continue to be responsive to the needs of the membership. We are excited about the new HSA logo and the report of the haiku definition committee both of which will likely affect what you see in *Frogpond*.

I am thrilled to find myself as your President. I plan to attend all four 2004 HSA meetings and hope to meet most of you this year. Of course, I am always open to receiving your complaints and suggestions.

Charles Trumbull, President

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.

night wind
flexing window
reflections

Christopher Herold

shortest day—
what it's like to be
the paperboy

Museki Abe

nearly daylight—
lamps turning on
and off

William Fraenkel

Empty loading dock
smell of diesel lingers
in the winter morning

Mark Fremont Harris

Sparrows . . .
another way of looking
at the sparrow
vincent tripi

pouring syrup on pancakes / Sunday morning quiet

Norene Law

nursing home
the feel
of the handrail

Mark Hollingsworth

campus chimes ring
icicles
in the air

Helen Russell

6

chrysalis
the hitched team throws its weight
against the sledge

Kay Grimnes

moving day—
watching the sun set
somewhere else

Michael Blaine

seagulls
along the seashore
salt-white pebbles

Doreen King

fledgling moon
a tuft of eider down
drifts to the tideline

Cherie Hunter Day

7

a corner
of the garden—
unknown seeds

Michael Kennedy

rain all day
my son flips
the etch-a-sketch

w. f. owen

hearing the island
divide the river
starless night

Burnell Lippy

dark hotel room—
passing cars track in
the sound of rain

Barry George

down the misty window a dribble of clarity

Michael Dudley

the numbness
of scar tissue—
forsythia

Peggy Willis Lyles

8

on the far shore
a gap in the green—
spring fever

George Dorsty

daylight moon
who cares
about blossoms

Ernest J. Berry

April argument
we can't subdue
our laughter

Marcus Larsson

high tide
we drift over
the rocks

Yu Chang

bike crossing—
the glittering eye
of a goose

Barry George

first raindrops
freckles scattered
across your nose

Allen McGill

pouring cream
over the berries
morning sunlight

Emily Romano

The new wind chime
doesn't make a sound
summer solstice

Carol Purington

no rush
to close the kitchen door
against the rain

Bonnie Stepenoff

Route 66
a tumbleweed
changes lanes

John J. Dunphy

10

old-growth forest
a trail leads to this place where
the talking stopped

Christopher Herold

black of night—
this joy of entering
the rain together

H. F. Noyes

morning on the dock
summer trees shadow all
but the last board

Cor van den Heuvel

summer afternoon
the teens wait their turns
to pet the puppy

Nathanael Orion Tico

11

ice cream line—
an angry child drops
her mother's hand

Nina E. Robb

moving day—
the coolness on my cheek
after your kiss

Michael Dylan Welch

Russian salesgirl—
all her reflections
in piled cherries

Zinovy Vayman

The Conscious Eye

On the Urban Experience

Dee Evetts

WITH THE CURRENT ISSUE of *Frogpond* this column takes a new direction, after almost two years (interrupted only by the special feature on 9/11 poems) exploring personal and family relationships. Viewed another way, this marks a return to the domain originally envisaged for the series. Which, as some readers may recall, set out to examine work that had some kind of political, social, or environmental import.

About a year ago Tom Tico wrote to me proposing urban haiku as a theme, and I have been mulling this idea ever since. My hesitance was due to the sheer size of the territory, and at the same time the difficulty of defining it. I will be saying more about this, but wish to focus first on what I have come to think of as the compelling reasons for tackling this subject.

My own interest in urban themes has very obvious origins in the ten years that I spent living and working in New York, and more particularly through association with fellow members of the Spring Street Haiku Group. A highlight of that decade was the “Haiku on 42nd Street” project, which in 1994 provided a unique opportunity to install a selection of urban haiku on empty movie theater marquees along 42nd Street at Times Square.

It has always seemed inevitable to me that I would draw frequently upon everyday experiences and the immediate environment, in my writing. And at our monthly Spring Street meetings, while individual preferences varied, there was never any question that city-focussed poems were just as welcome, and as valid, as those on more traditional themes that were brought to the group for discussion. There were many aspects of haiku that we debated over the

years, but this was a given. Our playing field was level, it seemed, and I came to assume that it extended in all directions.

This assumption has been challenged by some of the reading I have done while preparing for the present series. In a short essay published in 2001, Tom Tico declares that “most of the haiku magazines are not representative of the world in which we actually live. Instead, what is presented is uncomfortably close to a nostalgic dream of the nineteenth century, where too many purely natural scenes prevail.” He asks:

As we enter the new millennium, is it not an uncontested fact that life for most of us is an urban experience? Then why is it that the haiku magazines do not reflect this? Why is it that the palpable presence of the city, especially in its grittier aspects, is for the most part missing in their pages? The answer is simple: it’s the editors. It is they who determine what percentage of the magazine’s haiku will be based on urban experience. And their choices are inextricably linked to their ideas of what does or does not constitute a haiku.¹

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Tico’s questions are pertinent, but the answer is surely not so simple. On the contrary, it is complex and elusive. From my conversations with the few editors I know, it is clear that they are only too glad to receive and to publish strong work of any kind. With sizable journals to be filled on schedule, they simply do not have the luxury of establishing quotas—even if they were minded to do so.

It is true that if you have just written a gritty urban haiku, you would be best advised to send it to *RAW NerVZ* rather than to *The Heron’s Nest*. But this is simply a matter of knowing your market, of being savvy about where to submit—as with any other genre of writing. With regard to the mainstream journals, it is apparent that we have something of a chicken-and-egg situation. Is it the editors who are limiting the poets, or the poets who are limiting the editors? Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in between.

Towards the end of a lengthy essay published about a year before Tico’s, a different view of the problem is taken by Haruo Shirane. Referring to the Haiku Society of America’s definitions for haiku and senryu (which can be seen on pages 4 and 26 of this magazine), he states:

One consequence of a narrower definition of haiku is that English language anthologies of haiku are overwhelmingly set in country or natural settings even though ninety percent of the haiku poets actually live in urban environments. To exaggerate the situation, North American haiku poets are given the alternative of either writing serious poetry on nature (defined as haiku) or of writing humorous poetry on non-nature topics (defined as senryu). This would seem to discourage haiku poets from writing serious poetry on the immediate urban environment or broader social issues.²

Note that Shirane does not blame the editors *per se*, but the definitions which the editors (amongst others) supposedly perpetuate.

Again, I cannot agree that the explanation is as straightforward as this. I doubt whether even one in ten of contributors to *Frogpond* have these definitions in mind when they are writing, nor even when they are submitting work for publication. But at the back of our minds? Yes, that I'll concede. Not in the form of definitions, but as an accumulation of impressions, derived from everything that we have ever heard or read about haiku. Which in the case of anthologies and journals, is indeed weighted towards the haiku-as-nature-poem end of the spectrum. Note how the argument tends to become circular once again.

Thus the problem lies not so much with dogmatic or opinionated editors, nor with established rules or guidelines, but rather with something inconveniently amorphous and much harder to influence: a consensus or status quo, a climate that is not conducive to the expression of the urban experience in haiku.

If there is a vicious circle operating here, how could it be interrupted? I hope that this column can make a contribution, by featuring and discussing notable examples, as well as cogent critiques such as these by Tico and Shirane. To this end I want to show how their views (in that order, below) converge as they each conclude their arguments:

It seems to me that man is as much a part of nature as the trees and the flowers. And the cities in which he lives are also a part of nature, like anthills or beehives. Man in the cities is not divorced from nature, he's in the midst of it. So it's the perfect ground in which to write haiku.³

Topics such as subways, commuter driving, movie theaters, shopping malls, etc., while falling outside of the traditional notion of nature, in fact provide some of the richest sources of modern haiku, as much recent English-language haiku has revealed, and should be considered part of nature in the broadest sense.⁴

Where then to start, in examining and illustrating this premise?

I am prompted, partly because I came across this poem very recently and was captivated by it, and partly to demonstrate that there are Japanese antecedents, to give first place to this haiku from 1948 by Takaha Shugyo (translated here by Tsunehiko Hoshino and Adrian Pinnington):

as soon as I board,
the tramcar lights up—
autumn dusk⁵

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This brings to mind numerous occasions in my life (at least two in New York, another in Stockholm) when I found myself walking towards an unlighted bus at a terminus on the outskirts of the city. Was the driver already at the wheel? Could he see me approaching, and would he wait for me? Is it mere chance that he starts the engine as soon as I have paid my fare? Takaha conveys these speculations, and much more: intimations of loneliness and reprieve.

I have put myself in a mood for urban classics, and here is one from Cor van den Heuvel, writing some 15 years after Takaha:

high above the city
dawn flares
from a window-washer's pail⁶

I have always admired the way this early poem exemplifies and celebrates the city, and at the same time locates it, not just geographically or globally, but within the solar system. It is the kind of leap that Stanley Kubrick gave us at the beginning of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, when the bone-weapon flung triumphantly in the air by a primitive ancestor dissolves, spinning, into a gleaming space-station revolving in outer space.

In a more muted key, here is a van den Heuvel poem

from just a few years ago:

cold evening rain
in his window, the tailor
pulls a long thread taut⁷

As with so many of his haiku, this one is patently of the city, and simultaneously of something larger, more universal. It is a measure of van den Heuvel's stature that his work so often seems to transcend the distinction between urban and non-urban haiku.

For a classic of a very different kind one can turn to Alan Pizzarelli:

done
the shoeshine boy
snaps his rag⁸

Here we are unequivocally on the street, or possibly a station concourse. With pithy acumen the poet has recorded a gesture that epitomizes the pace of the city, the characters that people it, the hustle to earn a living.

On that same concourse it is easy to imagine Karen Sohne's enigmatic encounter:

androgynous stranger
winks at me⁹

Just around the corner, that must be the flower stall where Evan Mahl noticed

16

with his clippers
the florist prunes
his cigar¹⁰

And there on the other side of the street, I catch a glimpse of Carl Patrick considering a purchase:

at the fruitstand
I take off my mitten
to feel the coconut¹¹

His journey home may be slower than he expected, according to Doris Heitmeyer:

traffic jam
the bus driver peels
a green apple¹²

At last the urban maelstrom begins to ebb, as observed in this subdued but memorably resonant poem by Ed Markowski:

downtown dusk
the sound of steel awnings
rolling down¹³

We know of course that the city never sleeps—but that is for another time. Meanwhile I hope that I have in this introduction given some idea of the range of expression to be found in poems that represent the urban experience, and helped to substantiate Haruo Shirane's contention that this is one of the richest sources of modern haiku.

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* * *

1. 'Urban Haiku', *RAW NerVZ* 6:3
2. 'Beyond the Haiku Moment: Bashō, Buson, and Modern Haiku Myths', *Modern Haiku* 31:1
3. Tico, *op. cit.*
4. Shirane, *op. cit.*
5. *Selected Haiku* (Tokyo, 2003)
6. *the window-washer's pail* (Chant Press, 1963)
7. *Pink Bulldozer* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 1999)
8. *The Flea Circus* (Islet Books, 1989)
9. *Woodshavings* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 1994)
10. *The Parakeet's Mirror* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 1993)
11. *In the Waterfall* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 1997)
12. *Five O'Clock Shadow* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 2000)
13. Unpublished

(Submissions for this column may be sent to Dee Evetts, 131 Roszel Road, Winchester, VA 22601. Please indicate whether the work has been previously published, supplying details.)

among the waves
in the sea of Japan,
a woman's perfume

Scott Metz

hot wind
the sting
of red dust

Lenard D. Moore

the red barn's image
oscillates in the pond
dragonflies mating

Elizabeth Howard

18

summer haze
a crow flaps free
of the asphalt

H. Gene Murtha

August morning:
the taste of tin
in a slug of juice

Patrick Sweeney

dawn—
once more the walls of my tent
close in

Peter Yovu

hot day
a fly struggles
in the baptismal font

William Cullen Jr.

last day of camp
ahead of the others
a single red leaf

Judson Evans

late-day shadows
the bottoms of pears
crowding a box

Burnell Lippy

footpath at dusk . . .
ahead of me hermit crabs
vanish into holes

Janelle Barrera

noh play—
watching the throat
behind the mask

Hilary Tann

dry creek
we ford
the canyon wind

Steven Thunell

rough landing
the warmth
of your hand

Yu Chang

20

early autumn
the prayer worn off
a prayer strip

Bruce Ross

scent of diesel—
the tugboat's wake
rolls into shore

Curtis Dunlap

the sparrows gather
at the building's bottom
autumn clouds

Bruce Ross

shaping
round hills—
vulture's shadow

Robert Mainone

21

elementary school—
beyond the sprinkler's range
a few blades of grass

D. Claire Gallagher

fallen hazelnuts we bring them home and forget them

Ruth Holzer

fish tank
the drift of sediment
in a moonbeam

William Cullen Jr.

dry fall leaves
with their tang
of ginger ale

Paul O. Williams

a chill in the air
my husband and I
lower the sail

kirsty karkow

her breath steadies
against the window
autumn rain

Gary Steinberg

22

against the flutter of moths the window

marlene mountain

moonlight . . .
our newborn's tears
fill my breasts

Katherine Cudney

warm days of October the iris shows a bit of next year's green

marlene mountain

passing rain—
the fallen pine needles
smell wet

Gary Hotham

23

October wedding
the bittersweet's
bright orange berries

Karen Klein

Indian summer
honey flows
into the tea

w. f. owen

burning leaves
clusters of onlookers
at each pile

Allen McGill

no seabirds today
a north wind edges the waves
with foam

Marian Olson

carrying the bucket
out to the compost pile—
crunch of fallen leaves

Michael Ketchek

October stroll—
at the bend of a wall
turning leaves

Scott Mason

24

shorter days
today it's an ad
for a hearing aid

Joann Klontz

island night—
sea from a dark sleep
wakes on the moon's path

H. F. Noyes

first cold wind of winter—
I let in
the cat

Museki Abe

exciting at first
then sad,
watching the dogs race

William Fraenkel (after Basho)

25

Unable
to play the role—
last year's Santa

Tom Tico

too heavy to lift
a pumpkin
white with frost

Emily Romano

starless . . .
a forest path
of birch light

David Rilling

sennryu

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.

Indian summer
the jack-o-lantern's grin
becomes a scowl

Cathy Drinkwater Better

the deep knot
of his studded brow
he weighs my turnips

S. R. Spanyer

27

psychic fair . . .
getting a reading
on the psychics

Charlotte Digregorio

autumn leaves—
softly tracing
her ivy tattoo

Darrell Byrd

Halloween—
to a simple question
my life story

Tom Clausen

Courting my friendship
he offers to lend me
his self-help books

Tom Tico

Sparrows lift—
the stutterer's
sentence

Patrick Sweeney

quietly
we become
audience

Hilary Tann

28

rock throwing
our circles
about to meet

Alice Frampton

overlook
exchanging echoes
with my son

Tom Painting

Confessions over
an old lady polishes
both brass doorknobs

George Swede

She is using
the tone of voice I'd hate
. . . if I could hear it

William Scott Galasso

29

in the cancer ward
silenced by the power
of the air conditioner

Marcus Larsson

fragment of rainbow
. . . trying to recall
an old lover's last name

Linda Jeannette Ward

check-out girl . . .
glumly wishing us all
the same great day

Anne LB Davidson

the jury chats
while judge and counsel talk—
the witness in the box

Cor van den Heuvel

another soldier
dies in Iraq—
ant in the kitchen

Paul O. Williams

I sprinkle chili powder
across the ant trail—
that tune in my head

D. Claire Gallagher

30

debating politics at a potluck dinner

Christopher Patchel

anti-war concert
the houselights come up
for the sing-along

Carolyn Hall

Moscow park—
soot where the eternal flame
used to be

Zinovy Vayman

open air theatre
Hamlet turns to the crowd
of umbrellas

Paul Wigelius

31

a mosquito bothering
the White House correspondent
Evening News

Michael Fessler

reading
about national security
over his shoulder

Patrick Kelly

night train
we are all in this
alone

Christopher Patchel

Haiku in the Wild

Richard Gilbert

Beyond the Near Distance . . .

horizon
why and
why not¹

Rajiv Lather

THIS POEM HAS NO TIME, as the horizon has no space: sky and Earth meet in a two-dimensional line, at an outer limit of sensual image. Just as the dimension of “horizon” appears, “why” a question-word of causation inverts the exterior image, launching us into the center of an abstraction, an unanswerable question. Impelled by rhythmic substitution occurring in the next two lines (a similar rhythm repeated but with different wording), the reader cannot pause for breath or concept as the first “why” is extended then dashed against the inversion: “why not”.

It seems as though location itself has disappeared, by the final “not” of the poem; an elegant and playful extinction of meaning. Do you return to the horizon to gaze out again? Simone Weil has written that “distance is the soul of beauty”, and distance seems one concern of this haiku. The horizon marks an edge of visibility, recedes or retreats as we advance; something we can see but not touch except with imagination. Does the horizon inhabit an ache to move closer to that hovering sense of soul, at the furthest extension of perception? As this haiku presents distance and limits, it *brings* soul. In form, the haiku is like a window, the single word of the top line split symmetrically by the two-word lines beneath, suggesting a dialectic base holding an overarching synthesis—with a sense of pun, the horizon’s conceptual curve is revealed. Rhythmically, “horizon” is an extensive word, full of vowels and breath, which contrasts starkly with the clipped, cut rhythms that follow: a why for above, and “why not” for below the line of the thought-horizon.

Where shall we look to find this haiku? Towards philosophical speculation, or a point at the far limits of sight? The reader lands in new haiku locations, which seem to contain a number of diverse and disjunct conceptual landscapes arising in a few short sharp shots of instants. Yet that horizon remains sensual, even languorous, bringing the sense of weather, sun or moon rising or setting, clouds becoming distant and miniscule, disappearing into the limit of sky. Without this strong, imagistically evocative word, the haiku would fall into abstraction, lose its ground or earth.

Communication in haiku seems often to be a play of the direct and indirect, of first-images and thoughts followed by resonance, displacement and return. Here the contact is extremely abrupt and irruptive; contextually shocking. If “horizon” is taken as the fragment and “why and/why not” the phrase, we can find several points of disjunction beyond the main *kireji*. Due to the disjunction of rhythmic substitution, a second juxtaposition separates the haiku phrase of lines two and three: “why and”—“why not”. Each collocation in the phrase creates additional eddies of disjunctive irruption: why—and, and—why, why—not. In its play with the concepts of horizon and polarity, this haiku is unique and creative.

One of the problems that haiku confront is a Cartesian split: a *kireji*-break creates two disjunct parts to the poem, implying that the poetic world is a representative duality: objective/subjective, human/nature, image/thought, movement/stillness, inner/outer, etc. Successful haiku subvert this dualistic separation, inculcating unique, qualitative interactions with the reader’s consciousness: a novel coherence arises in the poem, not directly indicated by the text. However, if this element of subversion is not sufficiently nuanced, juxtaposition becomes formulaic, hackneyed, and the world remains in pieces. Here, nuance is provided by multiple disjunctions which are both semantic and conceptual. Lather’s haiku tests the limits of duality in haiku by heightening our consciousness of it; subverting the habitual use of juxtapositional function altogether, semantic and conceptual realities are questioned. Motivated by a sharply intelligent sense of humor, the context of this poem is the horizon of haiku—gazing out, one senses its solution.

home from work
my briefcase full
of air-conditioning

James Paulson

forced key
breaks in the lock—
clouds float off the moon

Mike Spikes

slow summer rain—
the rush to read her manuscript
before the workshop

Lenard D. Moore

34

whisky tenor
the fireplace logs
burst into flame

kirsty karkow

sleepless night
the pulsing
of the clock's colon

Mark Hollingsworth

pre-dawn silence—
I immerse myself
in an old *Frogpond*

Billie Wilson

wrinkled skin
on my warm milk—
visiting grandma

Joanna Preston

35

heated scrabble game
we make
two-letter sounds

Paul Pfleuger Jr.

Mom's attic—
cobwebs fill the arch
of my ballet slippers

Fran Masat

old address book
no one living in the middle
of the alphabet

John S. O Connor

it's over—
slicing his shirt
for the ragbag

Roberta Beary

autumn colors—
how assertive
she becomes

Tom Clausen

making up
her eyeshadow swivels
in its pot

Pamela Miller Ness

36

island ferry
an empty beer bottle
rolls back and forth

David Gershator

after divorce
her tan line
a bit lower

Dan McCullough

after swimming
the ocean between
my shoulders

Korie Beth Brown

high tide line
two dogs sniff
the same bitch

Carolyn Hall

37

lunar eclipse
a nipple peeks
over her dress

Paula Fisher

Dakota bar—
the bride wears white
cowboy boots

Jennifer Soule

holiday greetings
I can only remember
her first husband's name

Joann Klontz

now in French—
the stewardess repeats
her charming performance

Tomislav Maretic

Beyond the hangers
of kimonos
Tokyo skyscrapers

Kai Falkman

last days together
she sings softly
in the bathroom

Dee Evetts

38

deep winter t e e t h m a r k s of the borrowed pencil

Michael Dudley

the taste of a cigarette
the waves of the lake
fill in my footprints

Joshua Gage

having decided
I leave the house
taller

Joan Morse Vistain

hard pews and slow hymns
the rose
drops a petal

Mark Koerber

39

Civil War reenactment
from one of the corpses
ring of a cell phone

John J. Dunphy

twig snaps at ear
sap oozes onto blood
o rounded red dot

Guy R. Beining

the bugler
bows his head:
muddy boots

Ernesto V. Epistola

linked

forms

tan renga

Gramma showed me how
to twist thread
into French knots—

the acupuncturist twirls
golden needles in my hands

41

Coming In Waves (A Cooperative Rengay)

fireworks stand—
lit up by floodlights
the frenzy of moths

crowded beach
we settle on driftwood

out of darkness
the barge—
burst of applause

explosion
purple and green streamers
rain into the sea

smell of gunpowder
coming in waves

spark and sizzle
after the grand finalé
distant echoes

sunlit attic

sunlit attic
a hole
in the butterfly net

childhood memory—
a friend buried
in dry leaves

43

drought's end:
a snail
stretches

dreams . . .
another layer
of sunscreen

Executive Order 9066

scorching sun—
the exhibition of suitcases
from the Internment Camp

a month of sunflowers
his middle name declares
he is American

war-time news clipping
of all-Nisei battalion—
a white day moon

her high school photo
taken before '42 . . .
a wind chime slowly turns

August cicadas
could I carry an ocean
in one suitcase

Expecting

first trimester—
the stack of pregnancy books
getting larger

curved pine
next to the straight pine—
a gentle rain

45

second trimester we name our cars

turning off war news
we replay
the ultrasound video

third trimester—
a forecast of sunshine
for the morning

the weight of a sparrow

THE ORPHANAGE HOUSED over two-hundred boys and girls at any given time. My estranged parents' matriarchy convinced themselves that my older brother and sister and I would be happier living together in an orphanage than if we were divvied up between aunts and uncles. Ironically, the orphanage children were separated by gender and again by age, living in units quaintly called "cottages". The cottages were actually residential wings branching off a quarter-mile-long main corridor. The living quarters were of austere, concrete-block construction and painted a pale, institutional green. I entered the nursery cottage when I was two years old. After that, I saw my brother and sister only on visiting day, and then only if a relative had time on a Sunday to drive out and spend a few hours with us.

heat lightning
the weight
of a sparrow

46

Each of the three nursery dormitories on the girls' side could accommodate up to twelve beds. I lived with thirty-five other girls ranging from two to six years old. We showered in groups of three or four, turning the water on and off in response to a verbal command given by a nun in full habit. She stood in the bathroom doorway, emphasizing her instructions by flipping the light switch on or off. Between the water-off and the water-on commands, we soaped ourselves thoroughly and awaited inspection, shivering from cold and fear of chastisement. A slap on a wet, soapy bottom always stung more when received in front of the others. After showers, we marched single file to our beds and knelt to thank God for a roof over our heads, food in our bellies and clothes on our backs. We also asked Him to take our souls in case we died while we slept.

nursery rhyme
the croak of a bullfrog
from the murky pond

Lying awake in the narrow metal bed, I tried to remember my mother's scent. I rocked myself back and forth, the way

I imagined she would if she were there with me. It wasn't long before I could feel the sharp stubble of my father's cheek against mine and smell his whiskey breath as he touched my face with goodnight kisses. Hot tears slipped from beneath my closed eyelids and I turned into my pillow, letting the floodgates open. The wrath of the house-mother nun would have surely come down upon me if she'd been monitoring the dormitory intercom. I listened for her footsteps in the hallway and hearing none, I rocked and cried myself to sleep.

storm clouds gather—
the rustle of leaves
startles a wren

Katherine Cudney

47

Blank Verse

Days, then weeks, go by. Intentions are good, but fruitless. The best I can do is write about not writing. And jot occasional, nearly illegible, notes on scraps of paper as we motor down country roads. Perhaps a poem in there somewhere.

checkerboard sky—
another bundle squeezed
from the baler

Carolyn Hall

Haibun

I REMEMBER VERY LITTLE about my mother's funeral. Except she didn't want one. Not even a memorial service. Simply her ashes scattered at sea. A romantic last wish from an unromantic woman.

watching the waves
oh mother
where are you?

Harriot West

Haibun for Futakami

HIDERO FUTAKAMI IS A LOCAL HISTORIAN. Today he has agreed to take me on a tour of Fukushima to show me the places where Shuzo Sera's life came to its end but not his reputation. Hidero explains that Sera was not a bad person, as many people think. Think? I wonder. Who thinks of him now?

To my amazement there are fresh flowers in tall cylinders at the monument to Sera and his servants. Most are plastic made to look like bamboo, but some are real bamboo.

cut flowers
my translator says "ruthless"
for "rootless"

I ask Hidero where Sera stood when he was guillotined and his head sent to the district capital.

memorial site
on the south side of a lantern
stone letters

Hidero tries to read the crumbling engravings, "Difficult, difficult... I may look in my books at home. My wife calls my collection of books trash. I am afraid of my wife and god." We drive to the military compound. It is now just a sprawling shrine with a dark wood temple, modern sculptures and the sparkle of new gravel surrounding the ancient graves.

48

hollowed out tree
the gray of the south wall
the dark of the north

After the American Civil War, Hidero says, surplus weapons were shipped to Japan, which was bracing for its own inner conflict. In 1945 Americans set up their garrison at the same military compound on the bank of the river where Sera's headless body was dumped. Nothing is left from the Yankee barracks or Sera's house, and the river has been dammed, bridged and encased in sturdy embankments.

Zinovy Vayman

The Wait

IT IS A VERY HOT AFTERNOON with blinding sunlight and a bright blue sky. Parched fields, many of them overrun with dunes, radiate heat. Under a stand of banyan and bo trees, men smoke, play cards, and discuss the drought. Not far is the village pond, now shrunk in size, where teenagers bathe their buffaloes and take a swim. Camels lazily feed on tiny leaves of babul, their ploughs idle.

In the main street a long queue of women waits in front of the hydrant for the one-hour supply. They are dressed in long blouses over long skirts, their thin cotton shawls speckled with yellow, orange and red. Heavy silver jewelry, with a touch of ivory and gold, glitters around their ankles, arms and neck.

49

sand whirls...
in adobe shadows
toy carts and rag dolls

There is a buzz down the line as water begins to flow. Women leave for home; balancing full earthen pots on their heads with the help of a thick cloth ring. As the hour comes to a close, a fight breaks out between the woman filling her third pot and the one behind her. It starts with an argument, moves on to shrieked abuses and ends in hair pulling. The supply shuts down and the two furious women leave empty-handed.

late summer dusk—
gossip
spreads faster than night

The next day, people gather in two groups. Meetings and lengthy discussions take place. Tempers flare as the temperature rises, and the situation becomes tense. The warring parties arm themselves with sticks and sickles to take over the faucet.

dark clouds—
the embers in hookahs
die out

Rajiv Lather

That Summer

CONEY ISLAND. The sand was dirty and the ocean dirtier, but it seemed like a summer-long paradise to me—home of the Cyclone, the Steeplechase, the Parachute Jump and Nathan's frankfurters. What more could anyone want?

The bungalow on Surf Avenue was narrow and dark. The screens on the tiny porch had been torn for years.

Boardwalk shade
the glitter of sunlight
on sea and trash

Dad complained about its condition and the rising cost to rent it. "We could get a phone instead," he insisted. "President Truman says . . ."

"Richie'll be there," I interjected. "Please, can't we go?"

"So it ain't a palace," Mom said. "This is?" she gestured at our railroad apartment on West Fifteenth. "We'll be out of the heat, and he'll be away from those street hooligans."

She winked at me. Dad could come down on weekends. The subway cost a nickel, all the way to the far reaches of Brooklyn.

holiday jaunt—
jostled straphangers
tunnel to the sea

"I'm gonna see if Richie's here," I called when we arrived, and dashed out the door.

Richie lived in the Bronx, way up in the Williamsbridge section. "Like near Alaska?" I'd asked, when I first heard it. That was six years earlier, just before we started school. Richie was a stocky, dark-haired Italian kid, contrasting with my blond, blue-eyed Irish look. We were buddies, though our parents hardly knew each other.

Every June began a new summer adventure. We swam, roamed the Boardwalk, watched people bet on fixed wheels of fortune, whistled at couples at the Tunnel of Love and scared little kids outside the Cave of Horrors. Nights were a world of bright lights, loud music and the smell of cotton candy.

calliope strains
carousel horses
mirror reflections

A stranger answered the door. "Richie's parents said you'd be by. They didn't know your address, or they'd have let you know—Richie got polio."

I didn't hear much of the rest of it: not dead . . . in a wheel chair . . . And the not hearing continued, along with not seeing, not tasting. I hung around with some other kids for a while, but mostly roamed the streets alone that summer. Lights were too bright, music too loud and the laughter phony. Got a job retrieving baseballs tossed at weighted bottles by people trying to win kewpie dolls.

"Six balls for a dime," my boss called to the crowd. "Everybody wins."

51

Allen McGill

Half a World

Jet lag. Sleep deprivation. Stress. Depression. Mix in a jumbo for 26 hours. Queue for checking in. Queue to collect the bags. Queue for the shuttle bus. Jangled, jumbled. Terminal three, terminal eight. Gate six, board at two pm. Gate fifty one, board at a quarter to nine. Crowds of people with identical suitcases. Forms to sign. Have you ever—No. Are you carrying—No. Date of birth. Today's date. Passport number. Flight number. Please ensure that your seat—Engines thrumming. The tail slewing a little. Flying over Nevada. Flying over Greenland. Local time is—Reset your watch. Try to sleep. Try to eat something. Try to read. Sunset for the second time in eight hours. Turbulence. The man beside you catches his breath.

first night in England—
from hotel bedsheets
the scent of a stranger

Joanna Preston

Followers of the Way

Back before the war began in March, I caught myself rambling around the house worrying about bombs and anthrax attacks and I often pictured myself in the kitchen, huddled under the window strapped airtight with duct tape and sheets of clear plastic. But one night, while I was sweeping crumbs from under the oven, it occurred to me that God's got good people everywhere, people like those Hebrew midwives in Exodus, whose names don't make the news but who are everywhere to be found, and so it happened that I began to replace my vague, nervous musings with little mental pictures of kind old women from my church.

one at a time,
along their invisible path-
ants in the kitchen

Del Doughty

Dayclear

THE OJIBWAY have a custom when honoring their dead which releases the spirit of the loved one so that it can be carried to the ancestors, given back to the earth—the original grandmother. In this way, mother, and in so many other ways, I set your true spirit free, casting it between this nightbreak and dayclear, sending your spirit off on its journey.

river mist rising . . .
I call your name out
to the other side

Marjorie Buettner

Embroidered Quilt

TWELVE PLAIN CREAM SQUARES, each a different month: a smiling snowman for January, nesting blue birds for May, a plump turkey for November, stitched by my mother's great grandmother in the wilderness of Ohio. She must have had so much to do. So why spend hours elaborately decorating? Scraps sewn quickly together would have been

sufficiently warm. Once designed, what's left but the boredom: needle in, needle out, pull the thread, repeat? Was the repetition a comfort? An escape, a time to sit quietly and think? Was the quilt a gift for someone she loved, a child she was carrying? Perhaps she stitched for the same reason I write: so as not to forget.

family quilt
my daughter's fingers trace
winter sun

Deb Baker

flying a kite

first, they put a strip across the road to count traffic. then, they put up a stop sign. now, they have erected a signal light. they call us a city. my friend calls it progress. he shows me how to find our location on his global positioning satellite system. i listen politely, but don't get it.

in the parking lot
flying a kite
with my son

w. f. owen

On the Way Home

THE NARROW DIRT ROAD runs through the forest. We are on our way home from a day at Cognomen Lake.

Suddenly a loud crash of thunder almost simultaneously with a bolt of lightning. The storm grows wilder.

I huddle on the floor in the back of the car.

There in the distance a small shack on the corner. "We will stop there until the storm lets up" my father says. As we approach the corner, a bolt of lightning strikes the little house and it goes up in flames.

And I am only three years old.

shaped by the weather
the pumpkin on a vine

Betty Kaplan

essays

Images of John Wills

THIS IS AN EXAMINATION of three haiku of John Wills, focusing on the images he uses and the way these images are portrayed. Wills writes like a painter of *sumi-e*. His depictions are monochrome, drawn with the fewest of brushstrokes, each line carrying great weight, not only in visual terms, but also in terms of the overall tone and meaning. This visual sparseness conveys the beauty of the natural world in a mood of simplicity and solitude.

first light
between the snow and snow
the pencilled woods

Dawn is breaking in a snowy landscape. The woods, which separate the snow, are “pencilled,” emphasizing that the trees are bare and gray. It is almost a geometric design, with gray and white shapes contrasting and separating each other. Dawn is associated with color usually, such as rose or yellow-orange, but not here. This light is the very first light of morning, illuminating the scene in the midst of darkness. The woods and snow are just being revealed by the light. Thus the dawn light too is a shade of white and gray. In fact, the whole image is monochrome. It could be drawn only with plain pencil. The haiku reflects the aesthetic of wabi or poverty. Instead of an effulgent, glorious dawn, we have an understated, modest hint—just the very beginning of day, sketched with the barest number of strokes.

The metaphor of a work of art, here a pencil drawing, suffuses the poem. Pencils are made of soft carbon—graphite—which could suggest an earthy solidity to the woods. In order to draw the snow, however, one needs only the outlines. The snow itself can be the blank parts of the paper. It is an absence. Snow has traditionally depicted the transient and ephemeral because it melts away to nothing. The penciled woods define the boundaries of the snow. They separate two blanks.

The word, “pencilled” brings a human element into the scene (a British spelling is used, rather than “penciled,” the one more familiar to U.S. readers). The woods seem

to be drawn in pencil by a human hand. But the poet is not looking at a picture. He is looking at a landscape. “Pencilled woods” is a metaphor. The woods appear as if pencilled. The poet is not looking at a drawing in a book; he is seeing nature, experiencing it at a particular moment. The image is seen as a work of art. What “artist” drew nature? It is as if the original Creator just drew the woods there on the first day. “Between the snow and snow” has a Biblical cadence. Note in Genesis—And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. “Between the snow and snow” sounds like “divide the waters from the waters.” And “first light” suggests Let there be light. It is not just any time during dawn; this is the “first light.” This lends a pale glow to the scene as mentioned earlier, but there is also the implication that this is not only the first light of a particular day, it is the first morning of the world. Perhaps in this sense the poem is paying homage to the original artistic act.

blackbirds
on the blowing reeds
one above another

This is another image that can easily be pictured on a scroll or a screen. Blackbirds weigh a little over two ounces, light enough to be supported by reed stalks. The lightness of the birds and the surprising strength of the reeds are a source of pleasure and wonder.

56 The breeding season for blackbirds is summer, when they congregate in freshwater marshes or swamps and nest in the reeds and cattails. Since the wind is blowing, perhaps it is late summer.

Looking at the visual aspects, Wills identifies how the birds are positioned (“one above the other”) both in regards to each other and within the picture frame. A view of two, blackbirds is arranged artfully on the reeds. A seemingly random moment of the natural world is ordered and beautiful.

a dog fox barks
the snow lies deep
in the hills

For foxes, mid-winter (December and January) is the peak mating season, so they roam while seeking partners. Cubs that were born in the spring are chased away by the parents and forced to make their own way. This activity results in territorial barking by other, already established foxes.

This barking imbues the poem with loneliness. It is a single fox, alone, barking. In this case, the primary sensory involvement is auditory, not visual. The barking is the only active detail in the scene. Perhaps the barking is muffled—both by distance and by snow. The line “the snow lies deep” conveys a sense of the world being covered and withdrawn, reinforcing the *sabi* of the poem. It is interesting that the detail provided about the fox lets it be heard, but not seen.

The visual image is an empty landscape of snow in the hills. The world is still, but for the barking of the fox. Ironically, this sound draws attention to the silence of the scene, which, interestingly enough, is portrayed in visual terms instead of auditory. Silence is expressed by the image. The lines “the snow lies deep / in the hills” is a “quiet” visual image, the exact opposite of the barking auditory one. While the two earlier poems dealt primarily with visual images, this one does something more complex. It combines an auditory image with the visual. These two images balance and contrast each other. This is a scene both frozen and lonely, but also deeply calm and beautiful.

There are examples of this visual trait in other haiku of John Wills. The effectiveness of his images and the artistic perspective he brings to them is striking. Much more could be said about each of these poems from other perspectives. I hope the present essay promotes more discussion about his work.

John Wills died in 1993.

Efren Estevez



Reflections on Masahide's Moon Haiku *A Response to Stephen Broyard*

I was delighted to read Stephen Broyard's essay on Masahide's haiku (*Frogpond* XXVI:2), as it is one of my favorites. Although I greatly respect R.H. Blyth, whose understanding of Zen astounded me, I never quite grasped why he characterized Masahide's poem as "pretentious". Yet, as Blyth was a trickster of sorts, someone who frequently turned things upside down and inside out, I simply assumed that he was doing so again in his appraisal of Masahide's poem. I figured I would apprehend the paradox when I finally caught a glimpse of enlightenment; then I would see what Blyth saw: a door, perhaps, that looked closed, but was actually open, as he once wrote.

As much as I valued Broyard's reflections, the comparison he made between Masahide and Diogenes did not resonate at all for me. That is because Broyard hung the parallel on a perceived "stubbornness," which, as with Blyth's reference to pretentiousness, I utterly failed to discern, at least in the Japanese samurai's case.

If, as Blyth asserted, Basho approved of Masahide's poem, it must have been because the father of haiku felt something deeply "Buddhist" in the poem. Stubbornness is not Buddhist in the sense that it ordinarily arises out of a will or "ego". Masahide did not stubbornly refuse to apprehend the moon only from a particular vantage point; that is, where his barn once stood. It is absurd to even contemplate such an idea, it seems to me.

58

Perhaps it would help to ask: What is a barn? To a 17th century writer, it is a place where animals and food are stored. A barn may be thought of as a quintessential symbol of material existence, designed to "preserve" the illusion of permanence.

The Buddha's fundamental teaching centered around impermanence; namely, that all things arise and pass away. To attempt to hold onto, or store up, possessions, ideas, experiences, is to suffer. Masahide, like the rest of us, suffered as a result of his attachments to the material world, though he failed to "see" this for a long time. One might say that the ego or self, in effect, is the sum of thoughts emanating from all our attachments.

Thus, the incineration of Masahide's barn—the storehouse of goods on which his material self depended—occasioned a profound realization: the poet “died” to his false self and was reborn, spiritually, as the moon. Or, to put it another way, along with the barn, his attachment burned away, such that the poet and moon became one. In Buddhist terms, we could say that Masahide realized emptiness or egolessness; that is, the notion that one has a self that is separate from the world is revealed to be an illusion. The “seeing through” this illusion enables one to see reality-as-it-is. Until this “enlightenment”—moon lighting—occurs, things like barns are seen to be solid, to “obstruct” one's view of the moon, of that which is eternal.

But, did the barn have to burn down in order for Masahide to behold the moon? We know the moon, like the sun, is always shining, but there must be a spiritual awakening in order for this sacred truth to penetrate our consciousness. A “flip of consciousness” as philosopher Alan Watts described it, must take place.

Some 28 years ago, I spent a summer session in college at Albany, NY. My girlfriend at the time and I were renting a room in an apartment from a slightly eccentric woman who described herself as a vegetarian, though she had a jar of tiny dried fish in the pantry that revolted me. One night, while cooking Hamburger Helper for dinner, this woman paused beside me and casually, yet provocatively asked, “What are you having for dinner tonight, *cow*?”

As a longtime meat-eater, I “knew” very well what I was preparing to eat for dinner, but until that moment in this little Albany apartment, I never put two and two together. Instantaneously, a lifetime of illusion disintegrated. The barn burned down for me, revealing “the moon of awareness” that I and the cow I planned to eat were, spiritually speaking, one, not two, not separate. When one's true self, in the Buddhist sense, is revealed, life is forever changed, and so it was for Masahide, who shared his revelation—and joy—in this beautiful, “pretentious” (from the Latin, meaning “to stretch before”) haiku. He rejoiced, one might say, in a newfound reverence for life.

Robert Epstein, Ph.D.

The Seahawk's Feathers

An Interpretation of Classical Renga

This is the first kasen of Sarumino-shu, written in Kyoto in early winter, 1690, published 3 July, 1691. This translation was begun 24 April, 2003 and was completed 4 June, 2003.

¹ **Kyorai** (1651-1704) also known as Rakushisha, one of Basho's most devoted disciples

² **Basho** (1644-1694)

³ **Boncho** (?-1714) a physician in Kyoto, who, along with Kyorai played a leading role in editing *Sarumino*.

⁴ **Fumikuni** (?-?) well-educated doctor who moved to Kyoto and later Edo to follow Basho.

the seahawk's feathers
preened just so,
the first of the cold drizzle¹

a gust of wind and then
the leaves are hushed²

early morning
traversing the river
my breeks wet through³

a dainty bamboo bow
to scare raccoons⁴

vines of ivy creeping
over the slatted door
the evening moon²

not for the giving:
these pears of such repute¹

as autumn fades
his wild strokes yield
a unique sumi-e⁴

so wonderful . . .
the feel of knitted footwear³

peace presides
in everything while
not a word is uttered¹

sighting a village
the noontide conch is blown²

the plaited grass
of last year's sleep mat
fraying at the edges³

one petal falls
then another: a lotus⁴

a bowl of broth
wins the highest praise,
graced with suizenji!²

the road ahead
above three miles or more¹

this spring also
Rodo's man stands ready
in the same employ⁴

hazy-moon night,
a cutting has taken root³

though bound in moss
the old stone basin sits well
with the blossom²

anger in the morning
finds its own resolve¹

two day's worth
of foodstuffs consumed
at a single sitting³

a snowy chill:
the north wind over the isle⁴

to light the fire
on sundown he sets off
for the peak temple¹

the mountain-cuckoos,
done with all their singing²

a gaunt man
still not strong enough
to sit up in his bed⁴

with next door's help
the ox cart is pulled in³

he, obnoxious lover,
shall be guided through
the Hedge of Thorns²

his swords just now returned
in sign of parting¹

a desperate haste
this way and that
the head stroked with a comb³

“Look then here's a madman
firmly fixed on death”⁴

blue heavens
the daybreak moon still lingers
in morning light¹

first frost on Mt. Hira:
the autumnal lake²

a door of twigs,
a *waka* to proclaim
the theft of buckwheat⁴

wrapped in a soft kilt
these windy evenings³

jostling for pillows
one snatches a little sleep,
then off again²

Tatara's skies still red
the ragged clouds¹

a tack shop frontage
from the crupper maker's
window—blossom³

young buds burst aflame
amongst old loquat leaves⁴

Suizenji: special nori-seaweed
rich in minerals from Suizenji
pond in Kumamoto, Kyushu
where the Mukai family
originated

Rodo: (?-811) a Chinese poet/
teamaster during Tang Dynasty

Tatara: the name of a beach near
Hakata, Kyushu, where a crucial
battle was fought

Translation by
Eiko Yachimoto
& John E. Carley

What Is Renku And How Do I Read This Poem?

It is not easy to define renku, but it is very easy to enter into the renku world with all its wonders.

Having no experience of writing renku, and no knowledge of the traditionally derived 'rules', does not prevent you from finding a new joy, a new world of language here. Unlike haiku, tanka, and indeed all other forms of poetry, renku challenges even the definitions of literature, authorship and ownership. But renku grabs you because in it you will encounter the full power of language, a power ranging from the most primitive to the most sophisticated usage. This is a precious magnetic field where the power of organic words equals the power of linking one heart to another, the power that draws you into a fictional world shared by the renjyu (participating poets), of bringing a dead man up and walking, of falling in love in another world, in short, the power of believing in humanity afresh.

With the great help extended to me by John. E. Carley I completed the translation of one kasen from the well-known haikai anthology *Sarumino*, or *Monkey's Raincoat*. I would like to share this first kasen of *Sarumino*—the last haikai anthology Basho supervised—with *Frogpond* readers. Prof. Nobuyuki Yuasa's kind encouragement to write an introductory note to our translation prompted me to write this short article. He compared our version with a former translation and acknowledged the unique value of our efforts. I am obliged also to Torahiko Terada and Tsuguo Ando for their critical commentaries of the original text.

At the time this poem was composed Basho had just completed the journey that furnished *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. His earlier works had gradually made Basho and his Shomon group known to the majority of the haikai world and yet Basho had not yet published any renku composed with poets of Kyoto, the cultural center of a traditional Japan.

62

Two Specific Goals

From the outset this kasen is unique. In his ardent desire to demonstrate his theories of linkage Basho allowed his disciple Kyorai to write the hokku. All four renjyu must have shared two goals here: the first to pay respect to the literary tradition of Japan, and the second to announce, in Kyoto where the emperor's palace existed, the arrival of the new Shomon approach to renku.

The dai-san by Boncho is rather a shocking verse for such a epoch-making performance unless you know the classic *waka* by Hitomaro, the Manyo laureate, celebrating the empress Jito and her grand river crossing in the course of building the capital. By using such a low-register word as *matahiki* (translated as “breeks”), Boncho showed his daring haikai spirit.

In the fifth verse from Basho is an oblique reference to the *Narrow Road*, presented as an anecdote in which the protagonist, intending to scare a raccoon, is in turn frightened by the desolate appearance of a deserted mansion. The clue lies in the existence of another classic *waka* on an ivy-covered road and Basho's choice of the slatted door, of the type with many horizontal bars reinforcing the door panel. In Basho's verse the ivy vine is creeping through the narrow space between those bars. It is, at the same time, an encouragement to the protagonist: this narrow road overgrown with wild ivy is something all travelers must encounter. Don't be afraid. Raise your eyes! The moon is so beautiful up there!

In the Shomon lexicon *renku* does not mean a mere word association game—an interplay of solely subjective impressions. *Renku* is the medium through which to demonstrate a depth and expanse of knowledge, through which to affirm your ability to handle each word as a living seed of imagery. The process of composition also entailed good manners, witness Kyorai's humble reluctance to write a moon verse: the glorious position in a *kasen*. That Kyorai should choose to ‘spill’ this verse is not accidental. Basho's ‘bowl of broth’ verse can be read as an invitation to Kyorai to write about the moon in his native Kyushu, the link being the special *nori*-seaweed which grows in Suizenji pond, Kyushu. Kyorai's answer was: “Well, I have to walk home and about the time I am home the moon must be at the best position for moon viewing. Why don't you write the moon verse, Fumikuni?” To this Fumikuni answered: “Rodo, who was so admired as a poet, once received a letter asking that his servant be dispatched with a positive response to an invitation to attend a poetry party (an episode from Chinese literature). Boncho, if you will be Rodo (the moon verse poet), I will happily take the part of Rodo's man.”

Boncho cannot repeat this humbleness, because another glorious position of a *kasen*, the blossom verse, is coming up next. Thus Boncho wrote a nice moon verse which ushered in a beautiful blossom verse by Basho. In this episode we clearly see the master's intention of combining the old poets (himself and Kyorai) and the new poets (Boncho and Fumikuni), who, though only recently taken root, were, when combined with

the old poets, doing great things—just look at their first blossom!

The third face begins with another daring verse from Boncho. Fumikuni then renku-transfers that extra volume of foodstuff to an extra place, i.e., the island. The reference here is to an extraordinary poet-emperor who was banished to Oki island where, after 18 years of exile, he died. The Emperor, Gotoba—editor of *New Kokin Waka Shu*, the famous *waka* anthology—longed to return to Kyoto and every sundown felt compelled to set off to the peak temple in order to light the signal fire for the imaginary boat that would be his salvation. Basho's link is excellent: another summer has gone with nothing happened . . . a sentiment which duly undergoes renku-transfer to become that of a long term patient slowly recovering from his illness.

At this point Boncho decided to prepare the stage for a love verse that would pay tribute to the *Tales of Genji*. His verse on the ox cart is based on the episode of "Utsusemi", or "Empty Cicada Shell", from the *Tales*. This fragile looking lady proves to be a wily strategist who uses the neighbour's parking lot to disguise Genji's visit! Basho obliges with a verse on Rokujo, a lady of consequence, and a rival for Genji's affections. Her residence incorporates the renowned Hedge of Thorns.

Kyorai had written several psychological verses in previous folios, and his verse on the blue heavens and the lingering moon is compared by some critics to a sketch in a Dostoyevsky novel. How blue the sky looks to the man who is destined to die . . . Basho coolly responds to Kyorai with the mirror image of mountain frost.

The *waka* aesthetics typical of this verse from Basho in turn elicited a *haikai* response from Fumikuni. So to Boncho: someone wrapped in a kilt gives us two different protagonist possibilities depending on which verse it is to be paired with. Basho might have envisioned all three of his *renjyu* and Uko, the wife of Boncho, as the protagonists who jostled for pillows—it is said that they even slept together in the same *mosquitō* net as they edited *Sarumino* with such enthusiasm!

Now we see Kyorai finally complying with Basho's invitation to write about his homeland, Kyushu, when we read his verse on the beach Tatara. Following Boncho's well-crafted last blossom verse, Fumikuni proudly announces the vigor of budding new talents while he respects two of his elders, the old leaves.

Many compare this *kasen* to a refined concerto played by four musicians. When one reads closely, it is hard to disagree.

Eiko Yachimoto

Favorite Haiku

once again
geese heading south
some never to return¹

Steve Sanfield

This Zen adept has written in his memorial haiku what to me is a final word on death. Basho wrote that “the moon and sun are traveling through eternity,” and that “each day is a journey, and the journey itself is home.” So that journey south is a home for some geese, and our own last journey is a homecoming. We can be, every one of us, eternally grateful that we’re not suns and moons, whose traveling is endless. Grateful for life, grateful for death.

silent night
the singing hands
of the deaf child²

Jerry Kilbride

Surely one of the loveliest haiku I’ve ever read. If you’ve ever visited a school for the deaf, you recognize these singing hands, especially at recess. Whittier pointed out that “nature speaks in symbols and signs.”³ Kilbridge’s deaf child joins in nature’s singing silence. I find this a particularly *giving* poem. Many an artist and writer has reflected what we only have what we give.

after the honking
and honking
the passing moon⁴

Robert Henry Poulin

Sometimes in our over-serious reaction to the slow pace of recognition for our genre in wider literary circles, we forget that humor has been traditionally such a vital element in haiku. Blyth considered it an *essential* element.⁵ It is surely something we more and more *need* in our “brave new world,” as an antidote for encroaching shadow. It is antidotal, even healing, when the humor involves such a charming reflection upon natural, everyday sound and sight so easily passed over in our self-absorption.

H. F. Noyes

1. “Holy Uncertainty #14”
Sumner

2. Christmas Card 2002

3. To Charles

4. *Modern Haiku* 33:2

5. R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. I

Re:Readings

Tom Painting—on w. f. owen (autumn evening/tipping the lamp shade/for story time) “Emily Dickinson begins one of her poems with the lines, ‘There’s a certain Slant of light, Winter Afternoons—’ w.f. owen’s haiku also conveys meaning through the play of light. owen writes about ‘tipping the lampshade’ in preparation for story time. I can picture the scene clearly. There is warmth and anticipation as experienced by both parent and child. What makes owen’s haiku resonate for me is that the scene is set in an autumn evening. There is no mistaking that the slant of owen’s lamplight is a parallel to the autumn daylight that has faded. The lamplight extends the day, in the same way the bedtime story extends the precious time shared by parent and child. Additionally, the bedtime narrative extends a kind of knowing from one generation to the next.”

kirsty karkow on Christopher Patchell (into fall. . ./having dreams that my car/ doesn’t brake) “One of the joys of reading haiku is finding a poem that resonates totally; one that accurately reflects a moment or experience of one’s own. Christopher wrote a haiku that I can relate to completely. I, too, have dreams when my car’s brakes won’t work, the hill is often steep and the fear of falling very real. The play on words with the kigo is perfect. Possibly this means that we think our lives are out of control but it made me laugh.”

66 karkow on Pegggy Willis Lyles (a steeper trail/ hickory trees/ grow from rock) “A quick reading paints a lovely hillside scene. But, there is so much implied beneath the surface. It is all about persistence and strength; fortitude in the face of great challenge. The poet is managing a steeper trail, difficulties, and notices the hardwood hickory growing from a most inhospitable terrain . . . rock. This is all about determination to survive. As always, I admire Peggy for her keen ability to spark my awareness.”

Christopher Patchel on John J. Dunphy (divorce support group/wedding ring groove/on my finger) “A poignant pairing of circles, one an image of fresh loss, the other of newfound support.”

Patchel on Angelee Deodhar (salt wind—/moonlight silvers the sand/in our hair) “All the senses are engaged and enveloped, the sound textures of the words adding to the intoxicating

atmosphere they describe.”

Michael Ketchek on Ian Daw (Hospital garden—/last year’s leaves/cling to the wall) “O’Henry’s “The Last Leaf” in three lines. Well done.”

Ketchek on Yu Chang (she leans/a little closer/ladybug on my palm) “Besides the unidentified “she” (daughter, wife, girl friend) I think the ladybug and the poet are all leaning closer to each other too. Nature and two people all brought together by this little bug.”

Robert Epstein on Christopher Patchel (used books—/leaving the shop/an hour older) “Like the poet, I love used bookstores and was jarred—then alarmed—by the observation that I, too, emerge older after each visit. Fortunately, I remembered the Zen teaching that every utterance conveys but half the truth. For, as I read in a (used) book by spiritual teacher, Krishnamurti, ‘when you love to do a thing [,] time does not exist.’ Perhaps, after all, I spend as much ‘time’ in used bookshops as I do precisely because I have happened upon a way to counter aging by encountering the Eternal Now. Time will tell.”

Tom Tico on Yasuhiko Shigemoto (ants riding/the moth’s wings/others drag) “This poem is unique, not so much in what it portrays but rather in what it suggests. You don’t read many haiku-if any-that lend themselves to a reflection on the class system in society. The dynamic that prevails in this poem built the pyramids, sustained American slavery, and led to the downfall of the French and Russian aristocracy.

Tico on Christopher Patchel (used books—/leaving the shop/an hour older) “While the poet is browsing through the bookstore he forgets about time, and in so doing, transcends it. But the minute he leaves the shop he is once again in its grip. And whether he bought books or not, he’s aware that he paid a price for that browse, and paid for it in something other than money. He paid with an hour of his life.”

Tico on w.f. owen (starry night/bobby pins/in her hair) “After gazing at the stars the poet looks at the woman he loves and sees how her bobby pins glint in her dark hair. Undoubtedly it’s because of the deep feelings he has for her that he’s able to make the comparison between her dark-headed beauty and the starry night. In his eyes, at this particular moment, she’s an image of the universe.”

Michael Dylan Welch on Yu Chang (she leans/a little closer/

ladybug on my palm): “Is the person leaning closer a grandmother, a wife, or perhaps a child? Somehow I see a child, because of the childlike wonder this poem captures. Indeed, haiku itself is an art of leaning closer.”

Welch on Robert Gilliland (jackknifed rig/a trooper waves us/into wildflowers): “It seems unconscionable for a haiku poet to drive his or her car over wildflowers, and here a state trooper is not so much providing permission as forcing the act. Despite the jackknifed big rig, we feel the poet’s momentary resistance, and celebrate the shared appreciation for nature that must be temporarily sacrificed because of circumstance.”

Welch on Rees Evans (christmas night/a neighbor switches off/his wise men): “Where once wisemen followed a light to find the Messiah in Bethlehem, now the wisemen are themselves a light that others see—at least for part of this holy night. The lightness (karumi) in this poem does not mask the criticism I believe it makes of the commercialization of Christmas.”

Welch on Tom Clausen (just arrived—/our dog sniffs/their tires): “The dog sniffs the car’s tires not just in preparation for the act of possibly relieving itself, but also to smell the actions of other dogs who have done so before. What is unique about this poem is that the smell of other dogs has entered into new territory without those dogs actually ever being there themselves.”

Welch on Pamela Miller Ness (Easter morning—/the Madonna’s roses/wrapped in plastic): “This haiku (not a senryu, despite its placement in the senryu section) adds a touch of human interaction and concern to a Madonna statue. We know from the need for plastic that it is still cold, and perhaps the flower-giver also wishes the statue to be warm.”

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Welch on Claire Gallagher (styling mousse/expands in her palm—/salon gossip): “The styling mousse (not “mouse” per the typo in the poem) is a delightful symbol for the salon gossip. Just as the mousse expands in the stylist’s hand, so, too, does the gossip build from fiction or the seeds of fact.

Carlos Colón on Ebba Story (“Quiet Playground”) “Rarely are individual links praised from renga/renku/rengay, but ‘a bristle/of TV antennas/on the rooftop’ deserves it. She picked a fine ‘collective noun’.”

Carlos Colon on Brian Tasker (Manhattan restaurant /everybody’s voice I can hear/but mine) “I believe I was one of the gaggle of guzzlers (drinking a Black and Tan and adding to the din).”

Karen Klein on Alice Frampton (spring memorial/the dampness/in a handful of soil) “Whether this memorial is for someone long dead or a recently deceased person, the ‘dampness’ in the soil conveys a sense of aliveness. For me, the haiku takes its meaning from this word. As an adjective, ‘damp’ can be applied both to inanimate objects and to persons, as in damp hands, forehead, etc. In this haiku, the damp ‘handful of soil’, which in some traditions is tossed into the grave, can stand for the persistence of the spirit of the one memorialized. This ongoing ‘life’ is reinforced by the ‘spring’, the season of revival, rebirth, and resurrection.”

Klein on Bob Boni (warm summer day/bathing/in it) “The indeterminacy of the word ‘it’ is what makes this haiku work for me. The pure pleasure of the ‘warm summer day’: are we ‘bathing’—a word that suggests immersion—in the warmth after being cold, in the summer and all that it might mean, in the joy of the pleasure of it, in the whole surround? For me, the ‘it’ is all of those things and more.”

Klein on Gary Hotham (anonymous—/a stale cup of coffee/dumped) “Finding the right juxtaposition is as appropriate in senryu as in haiku. What image more perfectly expresses anonymity than the ‘stale cup of coffee’ we might find left on the cafe table that we dump before sitting down to our own hot cup?”

Andy Hacanison Rees Evans (christmas night/a neighbor switches off/his wisemen) “This simple binary act, of switching off the lights in the tacky xmas lawn decorations, sums up the depth and reach of the predominant contemporary holiday spirit. On and off. The solstice missed in the hassle of shopping, the big day over, the modern plug-in wisemen shut down, just like that.

Elizabeth Hazen on Max Verhart (burning holes/in a bamboo cane—/the scent of music) “This one made me catch my breath, it is beautiful in so many directions. Few sighted people are aware of how freely the senses flow together and complete each other.”

Dee Evetts on Tom Clausen (the load tied down—/her painted toenails/on the dashboard): “There is a finely conveyed zestfulness and insouciance about this, regardless of its ambiguity. The poet is starting a road trip, or just moving some furniture—no matter. It’s summer, his companion has her bare feet up on the dash, the load is secure, all’s well with the world.”

books

&

reviews

Begin Again

Gurga, Lee *Haiku: A Poet's Guide* (Modern Haiku Press, Lincoln IL 2003). ISBN 0-9741894-0-5. 170 pp., 5.5" x 8", perfect soft-bound. \$20. Available in bookstores.

THIS MORNING ON "CAR TALK" (the most widely broadcast radio show in the U.S.) I heard Click and Clack, "the Tappet Brothers", reciting car haiku submitted by listeners. Some were quite amusing and clever. Our local newspaper sometimes runs movie review haiku (the plot in three lines and seventeen syllables). Haikus for Jews have made the internet rounds, as have Zen-like computer error messages. So it is no great surprise that Lee Gurga, distressed by the proliferation of what he calls "pseudohaiku" (or *zappai*) begins the first chapter of this excellent new book with an explanation of what haiku is not (*i.e.*, any short poem written in three lines comprised of 5 then 7 then 5 syllables).

One might wish that a book on how to haiku would start with what haiku is, rather than what it is not. And why a novice might want to engage in this particular art form. In the preface Gurga does, in fact, invite newcomers to join in the fun. "[Haiku] can change the way we see and think," he says. "It can even change the way we live."¹ But the opening chapter presents an unembellished history of haiku from Basho to the present and continues with a cursory overview of the basic elements of haiku—perhaps at a level beyond the ken of the novice. Poems are presented as examples of seasonal awareness before introducing the idea of *kigo*, followed by classical Japanese haiku in translation that (it seems to me) a novice would be unlikely to comprehend.

But do not be discouraged. All of this takes place in the first twelve pages of the book. By page thirteen Gurga has hit his stride, and the next 140 pages are chock full of useful information, articulately presented and copiously illustrated. "A haiku is created from two ingredients," Gurga says, "an experience and an expression of that experience in words after it has passed through the poet's heart."² In the long sections on "The Art of Haiku" and "The Craft of Haiku" he expertly takes his readers down the path that will lead to adroit expression of experience.

Both beginners and those who found their way by

reading haiku and related books and journals (educating themselves by example, without benefit of instruction) will find this book a welcome addition to their collections. Gurga himself came up the “hard way”. He picked up Blyth in high school, fell in love with the subject matter, struggled completely on his own for 20 years, till at last he found Higginson’s *The Haiku Handbook*.³ Since then he has come a very long way, indeed. With the recent passing of Bob Spiess, Gurga assumed the mantle of editor of *Modern Haiku*. He is in perfect position to pass on his wisdom and guide young (metaphorically speaking) haiku poets.

The strength of this book lies in Gurga’s articulate definitions and explication of the principal elements of haiku: form, season, the haiku moment, the “cut” or caesura, and internal comparison—as well as the various aspects of haiku craft and aesthetics. Nowhere will you read a clearer explanation of the differences between Japanese and English with regard to the use of 5-7-5 syllables, or of Blyth’s 2-3-2 stress form. Gurga borrows wisely and selectively from the wisdom of Kuriyama, Yasuda, Henderson, Blyth, Higginson, Spiess, and Robert Lowell. But there are more than enough fresh insights to assume that Gurga, himself, will be quoted in future books on the subject. To his credit, he has gone to great lengths to provide an example from the current canon of English-language haiku to illustrate each technique he describes. (He has done his homework, collecting 195 poems by 126 contemporary poets.)

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Repetition is key in the acquisition of a new skill. Gurga’s teaching technique employs enough repetition to drive home the point, but never feels redundant. A single idea may be approached from several different angles or presented in several different contexts. Using fictional examples of “bad” haiku to make a point, as well as showing unsuccessful early drafts of what turn out, in the end, to be fine haiku, a student is taught how not to as well as how to haiku. If you are like me, you may find yourself occasionally scratching your head, trying to figure out how a particular haiku illustrates a particular point. But those instances stand out by dint of their rarity.

Gurga has strongly held beliefs (such as the importance of season words). “Season is the soul of haiku, as simple as that.”⁴

Because it can link the experience of a single moment to the universal forces of change and renewal, the seasonal reference “. . . enables the poet to invoke the whole of the natural world with a single image. . . . By relating a single instant of time to the season in which it occurs, the poet can suggest a mood that would otherwise be impossible to create in so short a poem.”⁵

As may be expected, the importance and use of season words is thoroughly examined and liberally illustrated with examples of “explicit”, “implied”, and “indirect” reference to season. But even in this firmly held belief Gurga is open to expansion of the form. “. . . haiku conventions such as the Japanese season word will surely be objectionable to some,” he writes. “They may seem arbitrary and can lead to misuse and poetical ossification . . . We Western poets may not find a use for specific culture-bound Japanese terms, but must bow to the power of the seasonal references in Japanese verse. We should develop a corpus of season words of our own; it will make our haiku—and our lives—richer.”

Skillfully and effectively juxtaposing images in haiku is an elusive art, especially difficult for beginners, but often a stumbling block for seasoned poets as well. The sections on juxtaposition, internal comparison, and cæsura, are particularly strong and illustrate the various kinds of interaction between images—echo, contrast, and expansion—as well as the unexpected associations of images.

The primary poetic technique of the haiku is “the placing of two or three images side by side without interpretation. . . . A space is created between the images in which the reader’s emotions or understanding can lodge and grow.”⁶

Gurga is at the top of his form when discussing simile and metaphor in haiku. Re simile: “The genius of haiku . . . is that it is about how things are rather than what they are like.” And “If a thing is like something else, then best to talk about that other thing in the first place.”⁷

The subject of metaphor is, of course, more complicated. As Gurga says, “The technique of juxtaposition inevitably likens one thing to another or invites some comparison between images. That counterpoised elements can be interpreted metaphorically as well as literally adds depth and resonance to many of the best haiku.”⁸ He warns, however, against figurative language.

In using figurative language, the poet “does all the imaginative leaping, leaving the reader nothing more to admire than the poet’s virtuosity. . . . By presenting the scene without interpretation—and all figurative language is interpretation—the poet co-opts the reader into making the imaginative leap, and, in the process, become a co-creator of the poetic moment. This link between poet and reader dramatically distinguishes haiku from other kinds of poetry.”⁹

“Effect should be a tool of the poet,” Gurga says, “not the point of the poem.”

It is not enough simply to record what one has seen (though Gurga acknowledges that there are some who feel this is the only way to write “genuine” haiku). The chapter on “The Craft of Haiku” is replete with descriptions and examples of the beneficial (or detrimental) application of rhyme, alliteration, consonance, assonance, onomatopoeia, and rhythm in haiku. I was pleased to find a section which pays close attention to the importance of the look, and particularly the sound, of haiku. . . . confirming that Gurga is of a mind that haiku is indeed poetry.

“Because the haiku was introduced to the West as a Zen art and generally presents a single *satori*-like instant of awareness, many would say that the poem itself must be written in a instant of inspiration. This puts a premium on spontaneity and insight and downplays the role of craft in writing. Some would even go so far as to say that a haiku is not a poem, but merely a brief record of awareness. The opposite view is that a haiku is surely a poem and as such is subject to evaluation by the same standards as any other poem. This means that revision is as important a part of haiku writing as it is for any other genre.”¹⁰

The look of haiku on the page is also given full attention, with discussion of lineation, enjambment, titles, capitalization, and five pages devoted to punctuation, as well as techniques of Japanese poetry that can be applied to English-language haiku (e.g., cutting words, pillow words, and pivot words or swing lines.) The section on Haiku Grammar covers the use of verbs, modifiers, articles and possessive pronouns. The section on Poetic Devices again covers simile and metaphor, unresolved metaphor and symbolism, synesthesia, personification and the pathetic fallacy, and allusion. Gurga addresses humor and wit and

Basho's aesthetic principle of *karumi* or "lightness." ("Heaviness results from the use of ponderous, clotted language that impresses the reader into service rather than opens a window to experience."¹¹) There is a discussion of truth and poetic truth ("Falsification occurs when the poet inserts preconceived notions into the poem"¹²), accuracy, and freshness. There is enough in this one chapter to engage a novice writer for months, if not years. Seasoned writers will appreciate it not only as a refresher course on haiku basics but also as an opportunity to enjoy Gurga's clean prose and refreshing insights.

The chapter on "Writing and Revising Haiku" is addressed primarily to the beginner and presents a useful typology of haiku (story in a sentence, cause and effect, context and action, etc.) as well as guidelines for editing and advice on publication.

It is a tricky business deciding where to begin a book. If you throw your reader headlong into the philosophical and historical meat of the matter, will you scare off the more timid comers? It is a possibility. But anyone who picks this book off the bookshelf, or orders it because of its title, has already shown an interest in haiku. The greater fear, therefore, is that presenting the mechanics of haiku before establishing the mindset necessary to employ them wisely may encourage newcomers to pen just the kind of soulless haiku the author warns against. So if there is one flaw in this book, it is the decision to leave to the end the detailed history of haiku, as well as the thorny question of whether the values of classical Japanese haiku can be successfully exported to English and other languages. Gurga maintains that it is as important today as in Basho's time to embrace haiku aesthetics. Regarding contemporary haiku: "Whatever its status as literature, haiku requires a special state of mind, not necessarily *Zen satori*, but a mindset that impels poets to go outside of themselves to achieve an understanding of the 'suchness' or essence of things."¹³ Gurga reminds us early on that even experienced poets are still "beginners", so for them as well as novices, it would have been best, I think, to begin at the beginning.

Having said that, the penultimate chapters are both engaging and informative.

Gurga clearly agrees with Harold Henderson's¹⁴

assessment that haiku in English “cannot differ too much [from Japanese haiku] and still be haiku.” In Gurga’s words, “One may accept or reject [the æsthetic principles that have informed the genre since the time of Basho], but one’s posture must be based on a knowledge of them.”¹⁵ Toward that end, he spells out some of the æsthetic principles which had infused literature in Japan by the seventeenth century and which became a significant part of the “Basho revolution” (and which, he says, continue to make haiku a viable literary form today). Among them are *wabi* and *sabi*, as well as *hosomi* (“slenderness”) which “allows the poet to paint the scene, then disappear”¹⁶ and *shibumi* (“astringency”) which “gives haiku its tang—the flavor of persimmons rather than peaches.”¹⁷

“The *wabi* ideal of loneliness and poverty, of standing apart from the crowd, and the *sabi* appreciation for what is undervalued and time-worn have made it possible for haiku to be seen by some as a way of life or spiritual quest, the ‘way of haiku’ *Hosomi* and *karumi* have helped mold haiku into a genre of poetry that is capable of great depth but at the same time capable of the restraint necessary to achieve this without overwhelming the reader. . . . Pure perception allied with restrained expression are the ideals upon which haiku is founded.”¹⁸

Blyth¹⁹ identified thirteen characteristics of the state of mind that is needed to create and appreciate the kind of Zen haiku Basho wrote. Gurga revisits Blyth’s Zen-based æsthetic principles, illustrating them with the haiku of contemporary English-language haiku poets. A few examples:

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Loneliness:

casting stones
into the ocean—
empty winter sky

Stanford M Forrester

Freedom:

A gust of wind—
the falling leaf
spirals upward

Lori Lambert-Smith

Materiality:

idle summer day
sucking meat
from a fig

Michael McClintock

Whether you believe there is, or is not, a relation between Zen and haiku, these carefully chosen poems paired with Gurga's succinct descriptions of the principles ("Real freedom is not doing what you want but wanting what you do", and "Materiality shows that the real truth is in objects rather than in ideas") is, in my opinion, one of the most instructive passages in the book.

In the final chapters Gurga expresses his personal philosophy and attitudes toward the writing of haiku and its potential to "replace the ennui that dominates so much of our culture."²⁰

"It is in cultivating spiritually exalted states of mind . . . that haiku offers us something that is available nowhere else in our culture. . . . Haiku offers humankind some alternative to the postmodern anthropocentric, narcissistic culture of our times."²¹

Quoting critic James Johnson Sweeney who says, "the only genuine art contribution of any epoch is . . . one that supplies what the epoch lacks," Gurga replies: "Haiku can do that."²²

The book ends, appropriately, with a look ahead. Followed by an extensive list of resources, including books; North American and British haiku print journals (including editors' names and addresses); online journals, other online resources, and North American haiku organizations; as well as a useful index.

There is nothing else out there that is quite so accessible a tutorial as *Haiku: A Poet's Guide*. For any and all who have decided to venture into the haiku world, they would be well advised to take this volume along on the journey.

Carolyn Hall



Notes

1. Gurga, Lee *Haiku: A Poet's Guide* (Modern Haiku Press, Lincoln IL 2003), p. vii.
2. *ibid.*, pp. 141-2.
3. Higginson, William J., with Penny Harter. *The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1985.
4. Gurga, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
5. *ibid.*, p. 25.
6. *ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
7. *ibid.*, p. 84.
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*, p. 50.
10. *ibid.*, p. 60.
11. *ibid.*, p. 96.
12. *ibid.*, p. 98.
13. *ibid.*, p. 128.
14. Henderson, Harold G. *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Basho to Shiki*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1958.
15. Gurga, *ibid.*, p. 14.
16. *ibid.*, p. 126.
17. *ibid.*
18. *ibid.*, p. 127.
19. Blyth, R. H. *Haiku*. 4 vols. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1949-52.
20. Gurga, *ibid.*, p. 142.
21. *ibid.*, p. 132.
22. *ibid.*

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Errata from *Frogpond* XXVI:3

quiet street
the beggar's dazzling smile
gone in sleep
Bruce Ross

autumn beach
the sand our children built
into their castles
F. Matthew Blaine

Tasting the word husband for the first time
Agnes Eva Savich

used books—
leaving the shop
an hour older
Christopher Patchel

styling mousse
expands in her palm—
salon gossip
D. Claire Gallagher

Voicings

Chula, Margaret *The Smell of Rust* (Katsura Press, P.O. Box 275, Lake Oswego, OR 97034) 97 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", perfect softbound. ISBN 0-9638551-2-3. \$14.95 from the publisher.

The recent Haiku North America conference provided an occasion to reflect on the fact that we have some very effective oral presenters of haiku among us. Certainly Margaret Chula must be considered prominent among them. Between her frequent public readings and the audio and CD versions of her 1993 collection, *Grinding my ink*, many of us have a strong impression of her voice, both figuratively and literally. This is an unusual situation for an American haiku poet, with most of us working in near-perfect obscurity. It is a factor in reading her new collection of haiku, *The Smell of Rust*, and one that cuts both ways. We can easily hear these poems in the author's own voice, much as one reads David McCullough or Shelby Foote in their own voices, having heard them so often in the course of Ken Burns' "The Civil War" on PBS. For those of us who are as well attuned to Margaret Chula, this insures that certain things come across; that one does not read a number of poems before the author's sage, regional identity and other such matters come into focus. One also starts with a sense of the preferred cadences, timing and oral phrasing of the work. As a result, we have a better than usual sense that what we are receiving is what the author is sending. The other side of this is that we are not able to do what we normally do, which is read the poems in a voice that is somewhere between our own voices and no voice at all. While this method leads to many an error, only sometimes to be corrected by a subsequent reading, it does allow us to evaluate the poems as acts of communication—to sense how true they are as something separated from the author.

This is a fine collection of poems and, for the present, that is probably all any of us cares about. But the day will come when haiku will receive wider attention through the work of haiku "celebrities". When that happens, it will be simultaneously an asset and a liability to the cause of English-language haiku. In addition to a new collection of her tone-perfect poems, Margaret Chula has given us a small glimpse of this other thing, this part of our collective future.

John Stevenson

Marching

Moore, Lenard D. *Gathering at the Crossroads* (Red Moon Press, PO Box 2461, Winchester VA 22604-1661, 2003.) ISBN: 1-893959-25-2. 16 pp., 5" x 7.5", saddlestapled softbound. \$8 from the publisher.

THIS LITTLE CHAPBOOK of ten haiku and eighteen photos is a chronological story of the million man march. It follows in the tradition of *Desert Storm: A Brief History* and *The Open Eye* where many of Moore's haiku have an African American flavor. The photos are crisp, and I like the embedding of haiku within the pictures, done on four occasions here. Distinguished photographer and poet Eugene B. Redmond's photos remind me of the award-winning pictures in *Life Magazine*.

Each haiku is linked to a photo, yet photos and haiku stand out on their own individual merits. As in *Desert Storm*, Moore's haiku not only make me feel as though I am at the event, but also elicit my own moments. The first poem recalls a memory—an instant when I attended an invitational track and field meet in Mansfield, Ohio—where the buses of many schools sat in rows in the huge parking lot.

The photo makes me feel there are positive reasons for these men to be riding together, which is the beauty of the moment. There is no fighting or arguing, no black on black crime. The haiku—"gathering place / bus after bus idling / as the sun comes up"—expands beyond the scene on that one bus: it gives the sense that this is how it is on the other buses. There is hope arriving with this large gathering of black men.

The next haiku provides a beautiful contrast: "sun plaza: / one million shadows darken / foot by foot". Whether the number of participants was several hundred thousand or a million, a huge number of people gathered, and I can hear the footsteps and see the shadows invading the bright sunlight. This puts me in mind of Basho's "From all directions / Come cherry petals, / Blowing into the lake of Nio".

I particularly appreciated the final haiku: "night after the march / reading the million-man pledge / to my pregnant wife". The poet, back from the long trip and probably exhausted, takes time to make the pledge to his wife—his present reality—and his child—his future.

My only unhappiness with the book is that it is too small. Once again, Lenard Moore has taken an historical event and reflected it back to the reader in a book of haiku. This glossy little book speaks volumes in a brief compass. Anyone interested in black history and culture, or writing haiku from a consciously cultural perspective, should definitely get this book.

Francis W. Alexander

Long Shadows

Wills, John *Reed Shadows* (Burnt Lake Press and Black Moss Press, 1987). Perfect softbound. ISBNs 0-920349-02-1 (Burnt Lake) and 0-88753-163-6 (Black Moss). \$11.95 (in 1987).

THERE ARE A FEW BOOKS that I find myself reading periodically as a means of renewing my efforts to write true haiku. Some of them were written by poets who are still living and whose company is a great comfort. And some are the work of poets no longer with us and who may have departed before there was any opportunity to express my gratitude to them. This is the case with John Wills, and particularly with his 1989 collection, *Reed Shadows*. The book contains haiku of a consistently superior order, imbued with extraordinary restraint and uncompromising simplicity and directness. He seems to have faith in his readers and to leave them the task of discovering for themselves what he has experienced. This is a tonic after reading (and writing) so much haiku that tells more than it should. For the past five years, I have read *Reed Shadows* at least once a year and I believe it has steadied me. My copy was a gift from Tom Clausen. It's hard to say where you might be able to get your copy but worth the effort.

I would like to hear from readers of *Frogpond* on the subject of which haiku collections serve them in this way. Which individual collections of haiku have proven themselves a continuing influence and inspiration for you? What do you read again and again? Why?

John Stevenson

Books Received

Bachini, Annie *the river's edge* (The Bare Bones Press, Frome, Somerset, UK, 2003). No ISBN. 100 pp., 5.5" x 4.25", handsewn softbound. £6 ppd. from the author at Flat 1, 26a Tomlins Grove, Bow, London E3 4NX UK.

A first collection from one of the bright new voices of British haiku, which includes many poems which will be new to readers this side of the pond. Conscious of the tradition without being enthralled by it.

martone, john *eyelid incorporating panicle* (dogwood & honeysuckle, Huntington IL, 2003). No ISBN. 24 pp., 4" x 5.5", handsewn softbound. No price, enquire with the author at 1818 Phillips Place, Charleston IL 61920.

It is apparent that john martone is a small enterprise unto himself, and that his work is intended to be read in the context not only of postmodern haiku, but postmodern poetry at large. More of his ventilated musings which compel a strong sense of place while managing all that.

British Haiku Society *Brushwood 2* (British Haiku Society, Sinodun Shalford Essex CM7 5HN, UK, 2003). ISBN 0-9522397-6-0. 32 pp., 5.75" x 8.25", saddlestapled softbound. £5 from the publisher.

Being the results of the second Nobuyuki Yuasa International English Haibun Contest, and featuring the top eleven entries, along with notes from the adjudicator, Mr. Yuasa. This slim volume is one of only two books dedicated to haibun each year, and deserves our support.

The Association of Haiku Poets *A Catalogue of Non-Japanese Books & Magazines in the Library of the Museum of Haiku Literature* (The Association of Haiku Poets, 3-28-10 Hyakunincho, Shinjukuku, Tokyo 169-8521 Japan, 2003). No ISBN. 176 pp., 8.25" x 11.75", perfect softbound. No price.

I include this volume only for its informational aspect: more than 50 pages of English-language haiku books in the Japanese museum dedicated to the genre, plus another few pages given over to the copious journal holdings. This is one sort of measure of how far we've come.

Hazen, Elizabeth *Back Roads with a White Cane* (Tape Reproduction or Braille Reproduction, 2003). \$5 each from the author at PO Box 155, Colchester VT 05446.

This is a project of love and need: the first, I believe, book of haiku prepared for use by the blind, in both tape format and braille (read by the author, who has partially recovered after spending several years without sight). Features suggestions of how to enjoy haiku, and how to find more. If you have a blind friend, give him a copy of this.

Kawai, Hayao *Buddhism and the Art of Psychotherapy* (Texas A&M University Press, College Station TX 77843-4354, 2003). Foreword by David H. Rosen. ISBN 0-89096-698-2. 162 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", hardbound, no price. Enquire with the publisher. *This is an unusual book to find its way to the Frogpond review table, but I'm happy it has. The author is the first Jungian psychoanalyst in Japan, and this is the story of his quest for authenticity, and what that might mean in his dual cultures and symbolic lives. Recommended.*

Ristic, Dragan J. (editor) *Crosswinds* (Punta, Nis, 2003). ISBN 86-83119-65-3. 128 pp., 5" x 8", perfect softbound, \$10 ppd., from Zoran Doderovic, Sumadijska 20, Novi Sad 21000, Yugoslavia. *A multilingual collection of recent work by five poets with roots in the Balkans, including HSA member an'ya, this is a typical product of the haiku culture of Yugoslavia: attractive, adventurous, uneven, poorly edited (insofar as the English is concerned), visionary, local. It is always worth looking at these books for the larger view they offer.*

Emrich, Jeanne (editor) *Reeds: Contemporary Haibun* (Lone Egret Press, PO Box 390545, Edina MN 55435 USA, 2003). No ISBN. 64 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", perfect softbound, \$12 ppd., from the publisher. *A serial book dedicated to haiga has been a long time in coming, but at least it's been worth the wait. This well-designed book includes not only 44 pages of full-color haiga, but also a useful brief introduction, a brief history of the genre by Stephen Addiss, contributor bios and a page of recommended related books. Highly recommended.*

Davidson, L. A. *bird song more and more* (Swamp Press, 15 Warwick Road, Northfield, MA 01360, 2003) 18 pp., 7" x 5", saddle stitched. ISBN 0-934714-31-2. \$6 from the publisher. *Featuring the usual beautiful production values of Swamp Press, this is a poem to the poet fashioned by editor vincent tripi from twelve very carefully selected Davidson haiku. It is described as the first of a "Haiku Masters Mini Series" and will leave readers wanting more, both of L. A. Davidson and of the books that will be part of this series. A small portion of the most nourishing morsels, this one is highly recommended.*

Lucas, Martin *Earthjazz* (Ram Publications, 13 Witham Road, Islesworth TW7 4AJ, England UK, 2003) 68 pp., 4.25" x 6", perfect softbound. ISBN 0-9511386-9-3. \$8 from the publisher. *Lucas is one of Britain's finest haiku writers and sensibilities, and it is always worthy of note when he releases another volume. These poems do not disappoint, being in his particular style and evincing his continued interest in his subject matter. I believe this volume is a particularly apt volume for exploring the question of whether or not haiku travel well: they are in English, of course—do they sing in America?*

Cook, Wanda D. and Linda Porter, Editors *Nami* (Pine Island Books, PO Box 317, W. Springfield MA 01090, 2003). No ISBN. 70 pp., 5.375" x 8.25", perfect softbound. \$12 ppd. from the publisher.

The first anthology from the Haiku Poets' Society of Western Massachusetts brings the work of 25 poets between these attractive covers. Nicely designed and presented, a tribute to the organization.

Yoshimura, Ikuyo *Waiting for a Breeze* (Rainbow Press, Oonawaba 4, Gifu 500-8889, Japan, 2003). No ISBN. 60 pp., 8.25" x 4", perfect softbound. No price, enquire with the publisher. *Ikuyo Yoshimura is in the enviable position of not only understanding how the haiku works in Japanese and English, but also composing in both languages and traditions. These poems from a trip to western Australia are not earthshaking, but competent and pleasing.*

Purington, Carol & Larry Kimmel *a spill of apples* (Winfred Press, 364 Wilson Hill Road, Colrain MA 01340, 2003). Illustrated by Merrill Ann Gonzales. ISBN 0-9743856-6-2. 64 pp., 5.375" x 8.375", perfect softbound. \$10 ppd. from the publisher. *A lively collection of tanrenga, rengay, renku and tanka sequence—linked forms all which explore not only the ostensible subject matter of the poems, but the nature of collaboration, by two excellent poets.*

Takahashi, Mutsuo & Hakudo Inoue & Kazuya Takaoka & Emiko Miyashita *Haiku: The Poetic Key to Japan* (P-I-E Books, 2-32-4 Minami-Otsuka, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 170-0005 Japan, 2003). ISBN 4-89444-282-5. 6" x 9", perfect softbound. ¥3800 from the publisher or bookstores.

This sumptuous collection of classic and modern Japanese haiku in translation has great ambitions, as suggested by the subtitle. But just as impressive as the fine selection and presentation of the poems is the stunning photography. Highly recommended.

84

gill, robin d. *Rise, Ye Sea Slugs!* (paraverse press, PMV #399, 260 Crandon Blvd. Suite 32, Key Biscayne FL 33149-1540, 2003). ISBN 0-97426180-7. 484 pp., 7.375" x 9.75", perfect softbound. \$27 ppd. from the publisher.

That this is the work of an obsessive is apparent from the very beginning: 1000 poems on the sea slug? But I found it—dare I admit it?—oddly compelling. Much more than just old poems on a minor theme, it's an intriguing blend of science, lore, poetry and speculation which touches on countless points of knowledge, without being pedantic (though there are times when it is pretty learned). Not for everyone, but for the intellectually adventurous, you'll find plenty here to reward your enquiry. The Japanese for all poems is included. Recommended.

Hoshinaga Fumio *Kumaso-ha* (Tokyo, 2003). ISBN 4-89373-977-8. 90 pp., 7.375" x 10.375", hardbound with slipcase. ¥2800. Enquire with the author.

A gorgeous production from the leader of the Hi-Hi School in Japan, this volume is the first to exhibit some of Hoshinaga's poems rendered into English. Not enough of them to be able to recommend this book to solely English readers, though those with Japanese will want it.

Cesaro, Ingo *Ich träumer deinen Rhythmus . . .* (Neue Cranach Presse, Joseph-Haydn-Straße 4, D96317, Kronach, Germany, 2003). No ISBN. 142 pp., 5" x 8.25", perfect softbound. 9 Euros ppd. from the publisher.

An interesting project, to collect 1000 poems on the occasion of the millenary of the city of Kronach, from poets around the world. The result is varied in content though uniform in structure. Congratulations to the editor, but of interest mainly to German readers.

Santoka Taneda *For All My Walking* translations by Burton Watson (Columbia University Press, New York 2003). ISBN 0-231-12517-8. 128 pp., 5.5" x 8.25", perfect softbound. \$16.50 ppd. from bookstores.

Santoka is a darling of contemporary translators, and it was only a matter of time before the eminent Mr. Watson would weigh in with his take. This volume includes a useful introduction, a chronology of the life of the poet, 254 poems and excerpts from his prose diary. A review of the various versions now extant would be most welcome. Recommended.

Lanoue, David (editor) *Haiku Society of America Members' Anthology 2003* (HSA Publications, 2003). ISBN 0-940172-01-9. 72 pp., 5.25" x 8.25", perfect softbound. \$10 ppd. from David Lanoue, Xavier University Box 22, New Orleans LA 70125 USA.

105 poems from as many members of the Haiku Society of America. This volume has had an odd history, and not nearly the respect it deserves, especially given the calibre of editors it has attracted over the years. This volume is, I would say, typical: uneven, as one might expect from the way in which it is created, but with many excellent poems and a few gems that simply will not be found elsewhere. Recommended.

Einbond, Bernard Lionel *Crestwood Lake* (Red Moon Press, Winchester VA, 2003). ISBN 1-893959-24-4. 72 pp., 5" x 7.5", perfect softbound. \$12 ppd. from Linda Einbond, 284 Westchester Avenue, Crestwood NY 10707.

A second posthumous collection from a past president of the Haiku Society of America, winner of the 1987 Japan Airlines International Haiku Contest. Repetition and cumulative effect of themes which remain fresh for the poet instructs how a poem, and poet, evolves over time.

HLSA

News

The Harold G. Henderson Haiku Competition 2003

First Place (\$100)

Billie Wilson, Juneau AK

whalebone
from a beach near Savoonga—
winter rain

The winter rain makes me feel the passing of the whale all the more strongly. How can we not feel that the passing of the whale is somehow related to our own inevitable passing someday? But a further layer is revealed through the use of 'Savoonga' which is an island populated by an indigenous people who still survive as their forefathers did: hunting walruses, whales, and reindeer. Like the whales they hunt, theirs is an ancient way of life—something also facing extinction as the whale pods decline and their children grow up and move away. After reading this poem, I feel as if I am standing on the beach holding more than just the bone of a whale, but perhaps the bone of a civilization. An exceptional poem!

pm

This poem allows a contribution to its meaning from the reader. I hear it evoking this continent's aboriginals and their way of life, and its distance from ours. The choice of "winter rain" as the season word is very fine.

PG

Second Place (\$75)

John Stevenson, Nassau NY

All Saints morning
a path
of trodden leaves

This is a poem about multiple paths. All Saints morning straddles Halloween (All Saints Eve—a night of childish

play in which we assume roles) and All Saints Day (where in the Christian canon we reflect upon the lives of the saints and their deeds). The poet, an adult, reflects upon the paths taken in their life. This is a poem about taking stock. I like that I am not told the result of this reflection. Leaving it open allows each reader to take stock of their own life.

pm

The leaf path, which is ephemeral, was created by the Hallowe'eners the night before. The poem takes me to a scene where I experience acute awareness of the passing of time for the narrator, the season, and the masked and costumed children.

PG

Third Place (\$50)

Carolyn Hall, San Francisco CA

cremated
in her favorite kimono—
small green plums

(for Phyllis Jackson)

The small unripe fruits spark the memory of a loved one's untimely death. This was someone close to the poet, someone close enough to know their intimate likes and dislikes. I wonder if "plum" couldn't be a nickname?

88

Despite the poem's somber overtone, there is a lot of liveliness shown in the color of the kimono and the fruit--a coloring no doubt reflective of the deceased's life. This strong poem overcame my prejudice against Japanese affectations.

pm

In this haiku the occurrence of death without the presentation of a subjective emotion allows the reader to fill in a personal reaction. The "small green plums" third line allows for a variety of interpretations.

This is a haiku that unfolded beautifully for me upon contemplation.

PG

Honorable Mention

spring rain—
the gravedigger latches the door
of his backhoe

Timothy Russell, Toronto OH

spring rain the cat's pink nipples

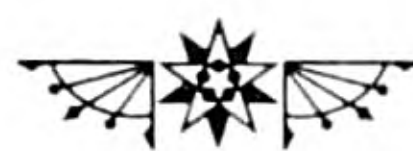
Carolyn Hall, San Francisco CA

* * *

As a testament to the diversity of this year's submissions, few poems in our respective shortlists matched, but on the poems we declare winners we were unanimous. Because a haiku asks more involvement from the reader than most other forms of poetry, any reading is a deeply personal and subjective one. While we were in complete agreement about the merit of the top poems, we each had individual responses and thus will be addressing them individually.

We thank the HSA Board and all the entrants for the opportunity to review so many heartfelt and diverse submissions, and congratulate the winners.

paul miller & Patrick Gallagher
Judges



The Gerald Brady Memorial Senryu Competition 2003

First Place (\$100)

w. f. owen, Antelope CA

aftershock
the picture on the wall
straightens

Second Place (\$75)

Carlos Colón, Shreveport LA

in the middle
of making love
counting syllables

Third Place (\$50)

R. A. Stefanac, Pittsburgh PA

nudist camp
where to begin
with the sunblock

Honorable Mention (unranked)

90

Clothesline—
the shirt shows off
its biceps

Zhanna Rader, Athens GA

open mike night
the audience
goes dead

Bob Boni, Morristown NJ

getting acquainted—
I learn another name
for wild radish

Carolyn Hall, San Francisco CA

Judges' Comments

The 2003 Haiku Society of America Brady Awards received 526 entries that covered a wide range of human experience. We wish to recognize the efforts of all contestants who shared their work with us. The senryu we chose to honor exhibit a keen sense of the 'aha moment' are concise, have no awkward line breaks, work on multiple levels, and give the reader a new twist on an old concept of human nature.

The use of the word 'aftershock' in the First Place senryu could refer one of the later (sometimes minor) shocks that follow a major earthquake, or to the moment of quarrel. In either case, one might expect the picture to have fallen or suffered further misalignment, so the third line comes as a surprise. This senryu underscores how the mundane, a picture straightening itself, can help make the unbearable bearable. No easy accomplishment but done with great skill in this First Place senryu.

Our choice for Second Place senryu does what all good senryu do. It takes a not uncommon event and gives it a slice of humor by showing us our own human frailty. While not everyone can relate to counting syllables during a passionate encounter, most have experienced some wool-gathering during an emotion-filled event.

The Third Place senryu leads the reader to an unexpected place, 'nudist camp' followed by a life question, 'where to begin' and then hits us with the pedestrian use of 'sunblock'. All this is accomplished successfully in eight words.

The Honorable Mentions were of equally high quality and are therefore unranked.

Ellen Compton & Roberta Beary
Judges



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THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Treasurer's Report Fourth Quarter (October 1 through December 31, 2003)

CREDITS:

Balance from Third Quarter 2003	\$23,688.34
Membership Dues and Contributions	15,565.57
Education Packets	540.00
Einbond Contest Fee	75.00
Frogpond Samples	263.00
2003 Members' Anthology	156.00

TOTAL CREDITS

\$40,287.91

DEBITS:

Frogpond Account	\$4,123.78
Newsletter Account	4,208.80
Brady/Einbond Contest Expenses	24.32
Henderson/Brady Prize Money	525.00
HSA Logo Prize Money	125.00
Sora Award Expenses	53.77
Education Packet Expenses	569.56
Museum of Haiku Literature Awards	300.00
2003 Members' Anthology Expenses	899.52
HSA Secretary Expenses	2,600.01
Honoraria	162.00

TOTAL DEBITS

\$13,619.76

BALANCE:

\$26,668.15

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas R. Borkowski, Treasurer

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

jackknifed rig
a trooper waves us
into wildflowers

Robert Gilliland



Frogpond Capping Poem

writer's block
fourteen syllables
to go

Dan McCullough

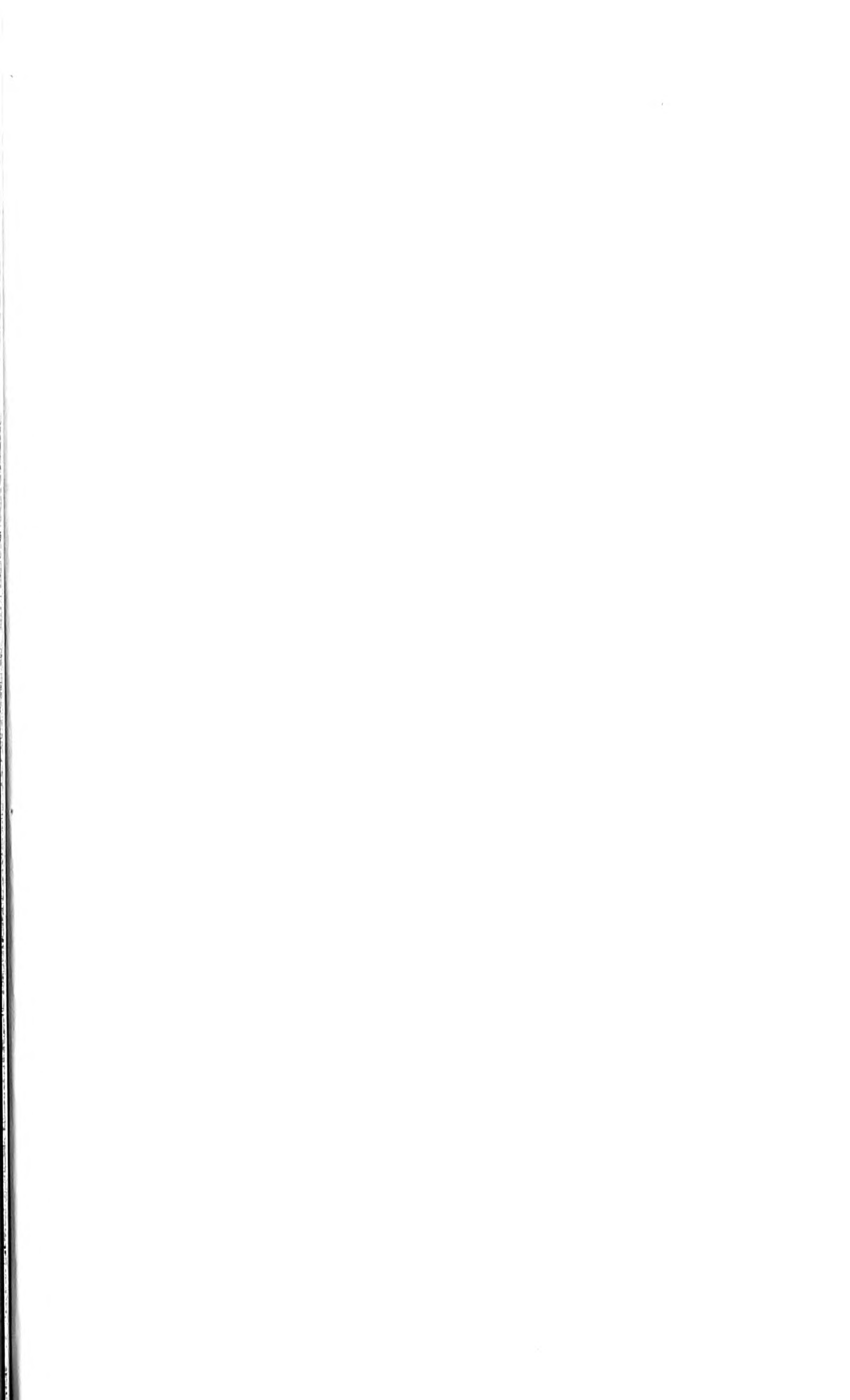


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