









# Frogpond

The Journal of the Haiku  
Society of America

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## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

2007 WILL BE THE THIRTIETH YEAR of publication for the Haiku Society of America's journal, *Frogpond*. The year after that will be the fortieth of the Society itself and will be celebrated with a conference and perhaps other observances.

*Frogpond's* thirtieth will be celebrated primarily within the journal itself. Each of the three 2007 issues will include some material reprinted from earlier issues. The plan is to focus on one decade in each issue, starting with reprints from the years 1978 through 1987 in volume XXX, number 1. Issues number 2 and 3 will cover the years 1988 through 1997 and 1998 through 2007 respectively.

In addition, I am hoping that readers, particularly those readers who have been members of the Haiku Society of America for most of the past three decades, will share their reflections on *Frogpond*. I'm hoping that there will be enough of this material contributed to allow two kinds of feedback to appear here throughout 2007: 1) full essays by individual authors and 2) a variation of the ReReadings column, in which brief reflections and comments by various readers will focus on some particular work that first appeared in *Frogpond* and that seems especially inspiring, moving, or otherwise significant to the reader.

I mention this now because the selection of work for the winter issue began in August. By the time you read this, the process will be well under way. So, please give this your immediate attention and know that your contributions are eagerly sought and will be gratefully received.

With best wishes, always,  
*John Stevenson*



*Museum  
of Haiku  
Literature  
Award*

\$100 for the best unpublished work  
appearing in the previous issue of  
*Frogpond* as selected by vote of the  
H.S.A. Executive Committee



**From XXIX:2**

open sissors beside a vase of water

*Eve Luckring*



haiku



Frogpond XXIX:3

first leaves falling—  
I listen too hard  
and miss the sound

*Bonnie Stepenoff*

urban schoolyard  
a single sap bucket  
on the lone maple

*Robbie Gamble*

pencil box  
the silkworm  
cool to my touch

*Yu Chang*

Midas-touched  
willow leaves flowing  
over the spillway

*Patricia Neubauer*

cloud shadow  
coming apart . . .  
a bison herd

*William Cullen Jr*



# Haiku Society of America

autumn morning  
I still have the tooth  
I lost in my dream  
*Collin Barber*

pebbles on the headstone  
a leaf, too  
briefly  
*Michael Capozzi*

sostice  
the ball game  
goes into extra innings  
*Victor Ortiz*

sundown colors both flags over Antietam

*Paul Pfleuger Jr*

moonlit bridge . . .  
an ant moves  
on the railing  
*K. Ramesh*



Frogpond XXIX:3

autumn deepens  
one leaf carries another  
across the pond

*Burnell Lippy*

twilight—  
smoke curls  
from the curing shed

*Hilary Tann*

above the taillights  
of cars headed home—  
the glow of evening

*Tom Tico*

wet nose  
of the half-born calf  
a snowflake

*Ann K. Schwader*

he speaks of her  
in the present tense  
frost on the vodka bottle

*Keith Heiberg*



Haiku Society of America

freezing night  
a monk considers  
the wooden Buddha

*Robert Henry Poulin*

someone I loved  
wind spinning snow across  
a field of snow

*Peter Yovu*

distant singing—  
the winter stars  
almost touch

*Ian Daw*

crescent of snow  
in the clay pot—  
morning moon

*Clyde Glandon*

snowy day  
breaking the crust  
of the still-warm bread

*Cathy Drinkwater Better*



Frogpond XXIX:3

after my cough—  
the cat's eyes  
slowly closing

*C. R. Manley*

cold morning  
a motionless puddle  
on a roof

*Bruce Ross*

leaving me  
with a wild hair style  
spring wind

*Tom Tico*

forsythia  
a shaft of sunlight  
in the birdhouse

*Harriot West*

Easter  
blue eggs drop  
under a horseshoe crab

*Fran Masat*



Shakespeare's birthday  
starlings whistle  
from a gnarled tree

*Allen Burns*

spring night the pines share something private

*Scott Metz*

spring breeze  
the shy one singing  
inside her room

*Rick Tarquinio*

kindergarten  
first two leaves  
on the bean sprout

*Marilyn Appl Walker*

chimney smoke  
the stumps of trees  
in the rain

*William Cullen Jr*



Frogpond XXIX:3

awake before the thrush fully awake as the song begins

*Marlene Mountain*

spring cleaning  
my first deep breath  
of new leaves

*Marie Summers*

tulip days—  
the doorman mouths  
carpe diem

*Janet Brof*

sunrise out of the mist come blossoms

*Doreen King*

falling petal  
in a gust of wind—  
how long? how far?

*Michelle Tennison*



## Dissection of the Haiku Tradition: Rivers and Oceans

by Fay Aoyagi

When I started this series of essays last year (in Volume XXVIII, Number 1, Winter 2005), I wrote I would “discuss one of the traditional elements of haiku: kigo.” As the series develops, some readers may feel that I am just telling personal stories. I have no intention of providing analytical or academic thoughts through my writing. What I am dissecting here may not be a haiku tradition in the typical sense. Digging into my culture, my background, and my emotions helps me explore kigo. I write haiku to tell my story. A story can be about how I ate ice cream. A story can be about a historical event awakened by cherry blossoms or the winter wind.

*hirogereba biichi parasoru tote ryôbun*

opening  
a beach parasol claims  
its territory

*Kigajô Fukumoto<sup>(1)</sup>*

What is the first image in your mind when someone asks you to write a haiku about the sea? The sea is our birth place. Life started in the water, didn't it? Is it too abstract to write about? How about European explorers like Columbus venturing into the sea? You may say you have never met Columbus in your life and it is against your principles to write an imaginary haiku. I may compose a haiku about kamikaze (the Divine Wind). Let me tell you how I leap from 'sea' to 'Divine Wind.'

In the thirteenth century, Mongolians (the Yuan Dynasty in China) tried to invade Japan. Their fleet failed to reach Japanese soil because of a typhoon in the region; not once but twice. The Japanese thought their gods protected the country and destroyed the Mongolian battleships. I think a name for the suicide attack by zero fighters during WWII came from this belief.



## Frogpond XXIX:3

I crossed River Styx  
as a kamikaze pilot  
August dawn

*Fay Aoyagi*<sup>(2)</sup>

When I was a child, I wished I could be ‘a new kid in town.’ Each time a transfer student arrived in our classroom, his/her name was written in big letters on the blackboard. I truly wanted to be the one at the center of the class’s undivided attention. I am not sure that is why I left Japan and became a new kid (adult, rather?) in a foreign city. I fantasized about changing my surroundings like a river flowing through different landscapes.

*hinokuchi no sabiuro fukaki wataridori*

deep rust  
of the sluice—  
migrating birds

*Mariusu Nadaya*<sup>(3)</sup>

One of my clients in Silicon Valley has a large saltwater pond in front of its global headquarters. I see many geese there throughout the year. Sometimes I feel that exchanging places with a bird may not be a bad idea. Of course, a life as a bird can be tough, too.

Those geese seem to think human beings are little more than walking trees. They act as though they are the owners of the property. Yet occasionally, I see the hue of sadness in their eyes.

*dono umi mo umi to tsunagaru ôashita*

every sea connects  
with other seas—  
New Year’s Day

*Minako Tsuji*<sup>(4)</sup>

You do not have to watch a movie about the Titanic or read *Moby Dick* to know the danger of the sea. One day, it is calm and friendly; next day it can kill hundreds or thousands of



## Haiku Society of America

people by tsunami. The kigo, 'ôashita' (New Year's Day), in the above haiku literally means 'a big dawn.' When we see sunrise, someone at the other side of the sea may be admiring moonrise.

I cannot shake off a wild thought: a gigantic octopus is at the deep ocean bottom. Its spread tentacles form for the foundation of the earth; so that everything on the land above, buildings, bridges and trees, can stay erect.

*shinkai-de yadokari hirou santoukaki*

in the deep sea  
i pick up a hermit crab . . .  
the date Santôka died

*Dhugal Lindsay<sup>(5)</sup>*

Dhugal, a marine biologist, is an Australian who lives in Japan and composes haiku in Japanese. 'Yadokari' (a hermit crab) is one of my favorite spring kigo. The literal translation of the Japanese characters for yadokari is 'a worm living in a rented dwelling.' Sometimes I feel close to the yadokari which has to rely on the shell of other creatures. After all these years living in the United States, I sometimes feel like a yadokari if I stay in Japan longer than a month.

*Hiroshima atsushi naifu no yôni kawa nagare*

Hiroshima heat—  
the river flows  
like a knife

*Shin Yamaguchi<sup>(1)</sup>*

When I lived in Tokyo, I seldom traveled to other parts of Japan, except for ski trips. Each time I accumulated enough money or vacation days to travel, I visited other Asian countries. Going to the Philippines or Thailand was cheaper than domestic travel. My older sister moved to Indonesia shortly before I turned twenty. I could squeeze money out of my parents, who have never traveled by air, if I included a visit with my sister in the itinerary.

In those days I was not interested in Japanese traditional culture, not even haiku. Now, I regret I did not see more kabuki (a play and dance by an all-male cast), bunraku (a puppet show),



## Frogpond XXIX:3

and rakugo (comical story telling). I was shocked to realize how little I knew about Japan when I moved to the United States. I did not have answers for most of the questions asked by my American colleagues and friends.

Stubovi mosta  
posle bombardovanja  
spojeni nebom.

After bombing  
the pillars of the bridge  
arched by the sky.

*Nabjsa Simin* <sup>(6)</sup>

I found this haiku in Aozora (meaning ‘a blue sky’ in Japanese; a web site featuring haiku from South-Eastern European countries). The above haiku is from an anthology published in 2000 about the bridges destroyed in the war. Serbian originals are accompanied by translations in English, French and German.

Haiku, I believe, is a sketch of life. What I mean by ‘sketch’ is not limited to describing nature. Nature is a part of our lives, but we witness civil wars, riots and political scandals on this earth. I am not saying that haiku poets should make a statement through haiku. After I started writing haiku, I began to find more pleasures in small things; such as bird songs in the early morning or the first camellia blossom opening in my neighborhood. At the same time, I have an urge to describe things that only exist inside of me. Kigo can be the entrance to the waves, the flows, or the swirls in my soul.

Next theme will be ‘Moon.’

(1) *Gendai Saijiki (Modern Saijiki)*, edited by Tota Kaneko, Momoko Kuroda, Ban'ya Natsuishi, Seisei Shuppan, Tokyo, 1977

(2) Unpublished

(3) *Ginko Kukai Hikkei (Indispensable Handbook for Ginko and Kukai)*, edited and published by Kadokawa Shoten, Tokyo, 2000

(4) *Umi To Yama No Raibiriensu (Labyrinth of Seas and Mountains)*, edited by Shinji Saito, Kawade Shobo, Tokyo, 2004

(5) *bottle rockets #14 2006* edited by Stanford M. Forrester and Ann D. Foley, Wetherfield, CT

(6) *Treca obala reke (The third bank of the river)* edited by Nabjsa Simin, 2000, ([www.tempslibres.org/aozora/books/bank/bank00html](http://www.tempslibres.org/aozora/books/bank/bank00html)).



Haiku Society of America

on a glad morning i am glad spring sun

*Jim Kacian*

springtime  
a couple of chipmunks  
in the stone wall

*Kirsty Karkow*

secluded spot  
two cars parked  
close together

*Michael Ketchek*

fertile ground  
the gardener  
takes no credit

*Yu Chang*

dandelions—  
I give someone  
easy directions

*Tom Clausen*



Frogpond XXIX:3

the blues hang over the red dirt

*Marlene Mountain*

coon dogs  
echo in the night . . .  
Southern accents

*Keith Jennings*

first scout trip  
the campfire sizzles  
in the rain

*Elizabeth Howard*

purple-finch song  
the newspaper brides  
younger this year

*Paul MacNeil*

bats hunting  
insects  
in my heart

*Jason Sanford Brown*



Haiku Society of America

the length of her life birdsong

*Victor Ortiz*

insect dust  
wiped from the windowsill . . .  
the faintest breeze

*John Barlow*

summer loneliness . . .  
the child thinks I like  
giving him homework

*Janelle Barrera*

Moroccan sky  
the clouds  
in Arabic

*Johnette Downing*

evening beach . . .  
finishing  
someone's sand castle

*Jörgen Johansson*



Frogpond XXIX:3

Fourth of July—  
a small town band attempts  
“The Stars and Stripes Forever”

*M. Kei*

fireflies . . .  
and zero gravity  
after a few beers

*Yuko Hirota*

a tall straw  
color drains  
from crushed ice

*Scott Mason*

after peeling my burnt skin new coolness

*Scott Metz*

this desert night  
the River of Heaven  
between her dark breasts

*James Tipton*

Haiku Society of America

full briefcase—  
ragged clouds follow  
ragged clouds

*D. Claire Gallagher*

muggy night  
the scrape of her flip-flops  
up the steps

*Lenard D. Moore*

summer wading  
a submerged issue  
of *Time*

*Mathew V. Spano*

cheap wine  
rain runs off  
the scorched roof

*Lynne Steel*

August dusk  
all the cantelope rinds  
on one plate

*Burnell Lippy*



Frogpond XXIX:3

sunrise  
gilds cloud . . .  
the whole prairie

*Ruth Yarrow*

evening sky . . .  
how far it travels  
the firefly's light

*Stanford M. Forrester*

cold slice  
of apple—  
a game of horseshoes

*Helen Russell*

night heat  
a gnat floats  
in tequila

*Dave Boyer*

August heat—  
William Penn  
in a bronze overcoat

*Daniel Liebert*

Haiku Society of America

day's end  
thumbs stretching  
the overall's straps  
*w. f. owen*

my last quarter  
in the jukebox—  
summer moon  
*Dustin Neal*

wandering away  
from my friends' quarrel . . .  
the dune grass  
*Dee Evetts*

dockside promenade  
the moonlit drift  
of flotsam  
*Scott Mason*

return from vacation  
each day's paper  
wrapped in plastic  
*Judson Evans*



Frogpond XXIX:3

back from vacation  
all the apartment doors  
painted red

*Peggy Heinrich*

the play of light  
on stone and water  
a slow paddle

*Kirsty Karkow*

full moon  
two straws  
in the coconut

*James Tipton*

end of summer  
the soft touchdown  
of a seaplane

*Carmen Sterba*

summer sunset  
the photographer  
takes a step back

*Marcus Larsson*

senryu



wandering thoughts  
gather round  
the arriving train

*Leanne Hills*

rusty key—  
looking around  
for the house

*Grzegorz Sionkowski*

another layer  
of intimacy . . .  
the surgeon's hand

*Karen Cesar*

the hard-breathing trout  
explaining death  
to a child

*Dave Baldwin*

in a dream  
light lovers  
without shadows

*Dietmar Tauchner*

GUN SHOW

orange paint

sprayed outside the stencil

*Judson Evans*

“charming cottage”

windows etched

by bear claws

*Liz Fenn*

trunk magnet

“Support Our Troops”

bleached white

*Robbie Gamble*

Fourth of July

checking the schedule

to see when we’re free

*Ian Marshall*

night on the town—

how beautiful the girl

my wife finds fault with

*Lee Gurga*



rainy weekend . . .  
revising poems  
from the workshop

*Lenard D. Moore*

sunlit garden  
when did my father grow  
an old man's neck?

*Lynne Rees*

rickety billboard  
the ghost of a name  
through the whitewash

*Jim Kacian*

jet lag—  
escalator teeth  
from the nether world

*D. Claire Gallagher*

tug-of-war  
the sides are equal  
until her 'ex' weighs in

*Ariel Lambert*

skipping breakfast  
to brush her Barbie's hair  
with a toothbrush

*Ariel Lambert*

bare patch in the garden—  
again my daughter doesn't  
answer her phone

*Carolyn Hall*

whispers  
in the waiting room  
mother's MRI

*Deborah Kolodji*

mountain rest stop—  
nursing a coffee,  
encouraging my car

*Edward J. Rielly*

so Steven is gone . . .  
he showed me  
how to eat a mango

*Helen Russell*



Frogpond XXIX:3

frayed sweater  
her head curled in the pocket  
of my collarbone

*Joshua Gage*

day off—  
the dog works the bald spot  
in the rug

*Roberta Beary*

class reunion  
the most likely to succeed  
borrows a cigarette

*Stephen Peters*

arthritic cat  
the bell  
on his collar

*Robert Epstein*

at the barber's  
my hair swept away  
with the other hair

*Daniel Liebert*

Haiku Society of America

exposing  
the inner life  
a popcorn kernel

*William M. Ramsey*

offspring of our angry sex

*R. P. Carter*

body surfing—  
a rising swell  
in my gut

*C. Avery*

dessert menu  
the hairs on her arm  
touch mine

*Dee Evetts*

the boy's first deer  
the deer's first boy  
~ meadow's edge

*Karma Tenzing Wangchuk*



Frogpond XXIX:3

running late and  
kissing  
the corner of her smile

*Sean Perkins*

a radio oldie  
from childhood . . .  
the double entendres

*Christopher Patchel*

the pear soap scent of her in the suitcase

*Dan Schwerin*

a library book  
with underlined passages  
I agree

*Teruko Omoto*

pencil in hand  
I watch my sister  
photograph the sunset

*Hilary Tann*

Haiku Society of America

lowering their voices  
before each subway stop  
lovers' quarrel

*Gonzalo Melchor*

poolside  
the teenagers lounge  
near the deep end

*Tom Painting*

church picnic—  
a couple slips  
into the cornfield

*Curtis Dunlap*

moon dog night—  
a guy I used to drink with  
asks for spare change

*CarrieAnn Thunell*

her words sting—  
the mosquitos want me  
just as I am

*David Giacalone*



Frogpond XXIX:3

flower arranging  
we gather  
around the table

*w. f. owen*

after the mamogram  
crisp linen pillowcases  
on the bed

*Susan Mary Wade*

morning walk . . .  
weighing the cost  
of picking up a penny

*Joan Morse Vistain*

home from vacation  
the garden weeds  
in moonlight

*Dorothy McLaughlin*

at the height  
of her youth  
my grandma's bouffant

*Chad Lee Robinson*

Haiku Society of America

fire & brimstone  
a yawn passes through  
the choir

*M. Franklyn Teaford*

high school tournament  
the cheerleaders jump higher  
than the starting five

*Michael Fessler*

tongues of Five Poet Glaciers  
we complain of hat hair

*Frances McConnel*

obedience school  
lesson one:  
the owner must bring a leash

*Pat Tompkins*

dog days  
the garage band  
next door

*Christopher Patchel*



Frogpond XXIX:3

mothers' group  
the jingle of keys  
in little fists

*Vanessa Proctor*

sugar grains  
dissolving into water—  
your whispers

*William M. Ramsey*

birthday morning  
the bog  
lined with iris

*Pamela Miller Ness*

all the things  
I might have done  
advertisement blimp

*Jason Sanford Brown*

last day of school—  
she tells me there was nothing  
more to learn

*Tom Clausen*



## Haiku Sequences

*Pages 39, 44*

## Haibun

*Pages 40 - 43*

*Pages 45 - 49*

*Pages 51 - 57*

## Tan Renga

*Page 50*



## CHANGING HOMES

changing homes rice seedlings exposed to the sun

dead mosquito this intricate pattern

garden dirt embedded in our soles

the sky rumbles a break in her packing

moonlight the oldest trick in the book

letting thoughts go the drift of stars

*Scott Metz*

## OATMEAL

PAPA IS COOKING OATMEAL for supper. He stands over the old stove just as he had the last time I saw him four years ago when I left for the Marine Corps. Daily oatmeal with milk and black coffee. He doesn't seem to notice me, intent on stirring the bubbling paste in the dented pan. Taking the spoon I stir for him. It resembles the glue I used in grade school, cooked well past done. The spoon stands up at attention by itself. I remember helping him mow lawns in the summers. Back then, he would say, "you won't have to eat all day after a bowl of this—it sticks to your ribs." I motion for him to sit at the table, then hand him the pan. He eats it right out of the pan. Less dishes to wash. As I pour the milk for him, he stares blankly at my face.

autumn deepens  
he searches the pan  
for my name

*w. f. owen*

\*\*\*

## Blanket Party

MUFFLED SOUNDS OF FISTS striking body parts through the blanket in the pitch-black of our platoon's Quonset hut. The shit bird deserves it. Good Marine? Not yet. He can't keep up on marches, can't do push-ups, sit-ups, or even clean his rifle right. No one talks about his blanket party—nobody needs to.

field day inspection  
bouncing a quarter  
off his blanket

*w. f. owen*



## BUBBA

HE DIES ONE NIGHT AFTER SHOWERING. Instantly everyone on the boat knows, but a three man team is assigned to continue CPR. There is no doctor onboard a submarine to pronounce him dead, so legally, ethically, morally, life saving measures must be continued.

But he is dead.

All Ahead Flank to Florida and when we are in helicopter range a doctor is flown out to pronounce him dead. The CPR is stopped and those standing watch can take a moment, to breathe, to smoke, to cry.

He is gently placed in a body bag and carefully positioned into the freezer. We continue on to Florida for a memorial service and a couple days R&R.

summer wanes—  
an empty  
soda machine

*Jason Sanford Brown*

## ENDLESS MOUNTAINS

ONE OF THE THINGS I love so much about backpack camping is how warm and solid twigs and branches feel as I gather them up for an evening fire. Then, after I've eaten and the fire keeps the dampness at bay, real contentment sets in.

listening  
to the stars  
a summer night

*Liz Fenn*



## SPRING MADNESS

forsythia buds  
about to burst open  
a bee flies by

IF I WENT DOWNTOWN RIGHT NOW in my old painting clothes, I thought, I'd have time to pick up my photos and get home before rush hour. My feet might be cold in my open sandals but, no, I'd be in the car, then the subway, with just a few blocks to walk outside.

I grabbed a jacket and left. As I came out of the subway there was a Kramer clone standing a few yards away. He was swaying slightly, waving his arms, looking up across the street and muttering. I looked up but could not see anything unusual there. Was he crazy or drunk? I decided to pass behind him.

When I got to the corner the light was red and I stood there. A few seconds later I realized the man was only a few feet away, looking me up and down. Suddenly he shouted, "You can't come with me. You're not wearing socks!"

Against my will I looked at him and then directly into his eyes, which I thought might provoke him, but I couldn't resist. His eyes were twinkling and he looked immensely pleased with himself. I burst out laughing, then he too laughed and went strutting across the street, elbows high in the air—pumping up and down.

As I walked to the photographic store, I wondered if anyone had heard, but was laughing so hard I didn't care. On the subway ride home, I wondered what had prompted the outburst. I was glad we had laughed together.

on the subway  
a much-pierced person  
offers me a seat

*Muriel Ford*



## HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

LATE SIXTIES. My wife and I wait with our small baby in our tiny student apartment. A bag packed. Mom and Dad are coming to take us home for the holidays. When they arrive, we sit and talk a bit. Then Dad goes out to the car and brings back our Christmas presents. I must have been confused. They've just come for a brief visit. When they leave, I realize they haven't seen me in a while. The beard and long hair.

chemistry lab—  
the boy with warts  
drops acid on them

*Zane Parks*

## ROME

THE TABLES IN THE SHADE ARE TAKEN but an older couple sign to us that they are ready to leave. Before Aron was born my wife and I went to Italy almost every year. This is his first time and he is really enjoying himself. He loves the food.

We have brought postcards to the table with us. Although we are only at the beginning of our trip we have a lot to tell and if we finish the cards today they should arrive home before we do. Anette will join us later, bringing stamps and the address book. We have bought roughly twenty cards.

Having sat quietly for a while, Aron asks if the mammoth's heaven is close to the elephant's heaven.

ancient ground  
children stand on their bike pedals  
while crossing the square

*Marcus Larsson*

**FORGET-ME-NOTS**

midday swelter  
bougainvillea tangled  
in a barbed-wire fence

forget-me-nots  
mixed colors on my palette  
turn to brown

roadside lupine  
the deflated airbag  
on the driver's side

hospice  
a tulip open  
beyond itself

sunset  
marigolds gather  
the last rays

*Carolyn Hall*



## MAMMATUS

THERE ARE CLOUDY SHADOWS on the X-Ray near the joint . . . once again his (my husband's) left knee has to be operated upon, twice, a two stage arthroplasty . . . first to remove the loose, swollen prosthesis put in six months ago and then two months later a total knee replacement.

Unbearable heat . . . the only colour in the garden is from the hot orange, yellow, and pink portulaca and the mimosa, through which red bottomed bulbuls and sunbirds flit. Suddenly the sky darkens, the sun is hidden and the portulaca close . . . after the first few faltering drops, there is a deluge.

Sitting quietly, listening to the rain drumming on the tin overhang of the verandah, I watch the flowers of the frangipani get carried downstream in a now raging torrent. And as suddenly as it came, the storm disappears, leaving the fiery gulmohar fluorescent against a cool grey sky filled with a koel's song.

Sometimes very ominous in appearance, mammatus clouds are harmless and do not mean that a tornado is about to form; a commonly held misconception. In fact, mammatus are usually seen after the worst of a thunderstorm has passed

another long day  
the coolness of  
a snail track

*Angelee Deodhar*



## HEADWATERS

river mist  
I think I can see  
my childhood

BETWEEN ADLAI STEVENSON AND SPUTNIK, I spent summers at a girls' camp on Paradox Lake in upstate New York. The end of June we'd board a train at Reading Station. It was a long ride from Philly to Fort Ticonderoga.

The best ride? The year we went by Pullman overnight: the magic of turning your seat into a bed around which you draw a curtain. Of course we stayed awake on candy. The morning was grim.

a passing train  
at breakfast I sit  
with the girl who throws up

For me the heart of summer was the overnight canoe trip—Paradox Lake to Schroon Lake via the 'Snake' River: we slept on a sandy lake front, paddled all day in the sun. We had to kneel in front of the thwarts of a heavy wooden canoe to transport our gear. One year we volunteered to ferry the canned goods. There were waves. It was tough.

When I grew up and had my own daughter, I sold our antique chairs to pay for her summer camp. She never signed up for the canoe trip. When she told me . . . I cried.

starry night  
we sing  
our hearts out

*Laurie W. Stoelting*



## BARFLY

IT SEEMS SO LONG AGO THIS MORNING, since I purchased a book by her favorite poet, the late Charles Bukowski. Over the distance of at least three states, I've carried its title with me in my head: *What Matters Most Is How Well You Walk Through The Fire*. Even after all these years, I am amazed at how four months with someone can feel like an eternity. Her name was Julia, and we met at a bar quite like the one I have entered tonight.

Most of the surrounding counties are dry, but life on the road has cultivated my ability to find places where patrons imbibe deep into the night. Tomorrow is the third day of my current journey, and I have no idea where it will end. I don't even know the name of this town, but I feel as if I've been here many times before.

summer night—  
the jukebox plays  
what she always played

*Collin Barber*

## ALOOF AND ALONE

SHE GATHERS HERBS in lonely places. Her interest is in healing. She knows the uses of the things she collects, though she never sees those who eventually use them. Once the herbs are sold, she forgets about them.

high on a ridge  
the silhouette  
of a wild stallion

*Emily Romano*



## ISLAND

AFTERSHOCKS OF FIREWORKS. We were talking about death, without naming it, substrate of conversation rising to the surface again. Someone not quite close who could have been us, disappeared. My visit to the cemetery, Ken Lay on the front page. I say depression is consciousness of death; you say it is neurochemical. I say, two sides of the coin, as one could analyze the neurochemistry of love. I tell you how Delos was purified by prohibiting the pregnant and the dying. An island you must abandon by nightfall. We count what we want to accomplish, the point where death can't scuttle the design. Vectors of evasion, circle of talk, an orbit that begins to decay . . . We make the pact again we will miss nothing that we break by morning.

flickering stamen  
reflection of the candle  
inside the flower

*Judson Evans*

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## “TANGO” BY ALBEÑIZ

JULY 20, 2005. My birthday. 76 years. I have dozed off to the clock radio and I come awake to that tune—the tune I may have danced to on my 19th birthday.

Unpacking for summer  
among my size 20 shorts  
the size eight leotard.

The summer I came to New York to study art, my two roommates were scholarship students at Miss DeLancey's Drama



## Frogpond XXIX:3

Academy. Classes were held in a large, dark mansion in midtown, with a small but professionally equipped theater and stage, a dance studio, and a maze of practice rooms. I doubt any such buildings survive. Perhaps Miss DeLancey herself owned it—she looked as old as the building.

Elderly actress—  
my eyes keep returning  
to the hairs on her chin.

My roommates talked me into taking modern dance class on Saturdays, when I had no art classes. So for the rest of the summer, after a half hour of generic modern dance exercises, we went through the same moves, in our sweaty little black leotards, to the same inane little piece of music—our “performance piece.” It consisted of a four-phrase unit which repeated, with variations, for quite a while, always returning to the same place with the feeling of not having been anywhere. It was sentimental, at times plaintive, and unmistakably “common.” Its name was simply “‘Tango’ by Albeñiz.” Its usefulness in teaching raw beginners was clear. It was predictable, easy to count, easy to remember—and equally hard to forget.

Years later—humming  
that tune in the kitchen, the bath,  
the recovery room.

I can't account for my nostalgia on hearing it the first thing on my birthday—except that, having finally managed to forget it, I heard it afresh. And a whole summer of revelations came rushing back.

After dance class  
the Museum of Modern Art—  
Picasso's guitar.

*Doris Heitmeyer*

**TAN RENGA:**

first warm day  
fleas jumping  
on linoleum

*a horseshoe  
thuds the box*

w. f. owen  
*Mark Hollingsworth*

end of summer  
washing sand  
from our swimsuits

*feet squeezing  
into school shoes*

w. f. owen  
*Yvonne Cabalona*



## A LATE SUPPER

LIFTING AN INNER EYE on childhood memories, blurred decades roll back to a rare and treasured neighbor coming home from work. Once again, at six on a summer evening. Or was it six-thirty? Or seven, perhaps? Later than other fathers for sure.

It was the same every day, six days a week, my friend's immigrant father, Dave, got off a bus on 16th Street and walked the long walk, down hill, to his boxlike home, beside the creek, just beyond the dump.

foundry worker  
blackened with soot  
one foot after the other

Across the street and up the block from his home, many other fathers wore wife-ironed white shirts and ties with their lightweight suits. They came home around five, and had a smoke. Inhaling first, in a trendy movie star stance, a wrist cocked and uplifted in the new savoir-faire.

Not Dave.

wiping his face on a sleeve  
he hugs his wife . . .  
potato pot boiling

With steam of the kitchen left behind, he called his girls, "Jean . . . Joanne . . . Janet . . . Judy . . . Jane . . ." His only son, Milton, already had a hold on his father's rough hand. Neighborhood kids came, too. We didn't even need our parents' permission to go with Dave.

gap-toothed  
soup bowl haircut kids lined up—  
their lemonade stand deserted

"Pile in."



## Haiku Society of America

We respected Dave's soft invitation, but still we pushed and shoved a bit, hurrying to claim our spot against the rickety wooden sides that clacked as we nudged each other and settled against them.

the old truck coughed  
and pulled uphill . . . windblown hair  
tickling small faces

Now and then a shout came from an overheated driver behind the truck. "Get a HORSE!"

Inevitably a call from one of the kids followed. "Go faster!" This was always echoed by some other kids. But Dave never went faster. I imagine he simply hoped for enough wind in his window to cool the heat that still steamed deep in the two bony shoulders that had "shaken out castings" of pig iron . . . from dawn to near dusk.

the blast furnace  
flared its orange-red inferno—coal  
and men's spirits devoured

Dave never drove real fast, with all the kids in the back. Others might have enjoyed speeding down the modern highway, but . . . this was Dave's way.

Heading home, downhill, the sun had set. Little voices thanked him for the ride, but he didn't expect it. He didn't expect anything special.

bumping up onto gravel  
he set the brake—  
a sigh trailed his "All out"

The ride, I suspect, helped ease Dave back into being . . . into being more of whoever it was that he used to be. A kid from across the sea. A family man. A friend to all us kids. Bone-weary . . . he went in to a late supper.

*Kay F. Anderson*



## MERGANSERS ON THE EAST RIVER

TOOK A WALK over to the East River yesterday (March 18, 2006). I walked in the cold and blustery sunshine over to Stuyvesant Cove and saw seven ducks floating and diving on the windy river. Luckily I had my binoculars with me. The ducks were red-breasted mergansers, two males and five females. Both sexes have dramatically striking profiles. With their sharp, pointed beaks, swept back crests, and streamlined bodies they ride on the water like miniature cruisers. The male's black head and long black crest take on a bluish-green gloss as they turn in the sunshine. The female is mostly grayish with a rusty red head and a reddish crest and looks almost as perfect a subject for an artist's brush as the more colorful male. Below his glossy head, the male has a white collar above a dark-barred red breast, a white underbody, black back, and white wings with dark endpatches. When the female is in flight she reveals a white underbody with the white extending on the underwings halfway out to dark endpatches similar to the male's. When these ducks dive to look for fish, they do it from a floating position, looping in a smooth curve into the wind-rippled water with hardly a splash—like a comma turning over and swiftly slipping into and under the surface of a sentence. Watched them curveting and diving, floating and sailing along, on the bright blue and silvery river for more than a half hour. The East River looked as pure as a river in paradise, the wind and sunshine burnishing it to glittering sheets of various shades of blue and green.

between dives  
the merganser's crest blows  
in the wind

*Cor van den Heuvel*



## OLD MAN

DAD HAD TAKEN ME to have my hair cut short. “He keeps trying to look like a Beatle,” he told the chuckling barber.

Afterwards, in the car, I hid my head under a baseball cap.

Backing out of the slot, Dad slammed his brakes. My cap flew off. A long-haired teenager wheeling past behind him on a bike screamed, “Watch where you’re goin’, old man!”

“Old man?”— I’d never thought of my father as old.

Forty years ago and Dad a decade younger than I am now.

day after day  
wheeling by—  
this same blue sky

*Roger Jones*

## FOR DAYS

FOR DAYS HE’S WANDERING ABOUT the grounds of the hospital sitting in the shady trees of summer the sunlight streaming through boughs in the heat of day he even walks in the rain and embraces the winds blowing on his wet forehead like paths to travel down even though the grounds at night may not be safe he smokes cigarettes to give his nerves some calm relief and this help but the smoking is bad for his help and now he is planning to quite like he has done three times for eight weeks at one try but time will tell whether he will succeed in his so called triumphs he has had for some time now and he will improve on his mental health by following strict rules he faces at Chait but it’s not so bad as where he was before when death was a step away.

Lights out:  
blue light glows from headlights  
outside the apartment

*Gerard John Conforti*



## ISLAND BEACHCOMBER

THERE'S A YOUNG GUY walking up and down Bluebeard's Beach with a metal detector. I catch up with him and ask in a joking way: Hey, what are you doing on my beach?

He smiles and stoops to pick up a dime. He tells me that the small change is just that. No, the real money isn't in the chump change but in the jewelry that Caribbean tourists leave behind. A fresh crop every season: rings, watches, necklaces, earrings, especially gold and diamond earrings. Hopefully one can recoup the cost of the detector with a good hit on a virgin beach. A beach that hasn't been carefully gone over with a detector. Trouble is the beaches in the Virgins are hardly virgin.

Doesn't it get tiresome hitting on beer caps?

Sure, but who knows what's down there. We all like surprises in the sand.

How about real treasures, pieces of eight?

There's always a chance in these waters, old pirate hang-outs.

Any luck so far?

No luck so far-nothing-nada-zip. Not a damn doubloon . . .

Bluebeard's beach  
a ghost crab  
digs deeper

*David Gershator*

## CYBER CAFÉ

IT'S FOUR WEEKS since I struck out for the Escalante Wilderness of Southern Utah. The roads are rough and clouds of dust kick up behind my truck. Signs warn that they are impassible when wet—as if it ever rains here. Each day, I load my pack with food, water, and camera equipment and strike off for remote canyons. I walk dry streambeds, cross arid cac-



## Haiku Society of America

tus flats and search out places where the view through my camera lens fills with weathered sandstone spires and curving canyon walls.

In the desert silence, the only sounds have been an occasional birdsong, the rustle of lizards hidden in sage brush. At night, a small fire casts a ring of yellow warmth, the moon journeys through the sky, a coyote yips in the thrall of the hunt.

Today, I pass through a small town and enter a cyber-café. It's a kaleidoscope of the senses: new age music, the fragrance of coffee and baked goods, a steady hum of voices.

In this Mormon dominated town, the café is an alternative gathering place for a mix of people who wear the down-to-earth garb of the 70s. Crafts and artwork decorate the walls. A bulletin board offers the usual in new age dalliances: massage, tarot, acupuncture, whole earth foods.

Like me, a number of people ply their computers. I don't speak with anyone except to order coffee and food. Yet, I feel connected. It's as if we solo travelers have each used a different path to find our way to this small oasis.

Email floods in—messages from friends and a wave of spam offering sexual aids and the companionship of wanton females. I feel like a 19th century sailor arriving at an island port, thrilled to find mail from home and, there for the taking, an exotic woman.

The messages rest in my mind like the flotsam and jetsam found on a beach—glad tidings and troubling news. I am torn by the urge to rush home to the complexities of everyday life and the desire to return to the simple elegance of the canyon lands.

desert streambed—  
a scatter of debris from  
the last flash flood

*Ray Rasmussen*



## IN A BORROWED CLASSROOM

MIDDLE SCHOOL GEOMETRY. First period meets in the science lab. After late release homeroom, students straggle into the lab. Nine boys and two girls walk to the back, scan shelves above the sink, pull a jar, beckon me, and yell, "This is a sheep brain." I glimpse the floating specimen, read "Sheep Brain" on the label. "Put the sheep brain in your head," says a white boy to a black boy, who says, "Ba, then I would eat your clothes." The black boy bends over, as if he has four legs. I tell them to be seated, take out their textbooks, turn to page 25. There are no calculators. None can be used on the self-test. I return to the teacher's desk, sit on the high metal chair facing two rows of students seated side by side. No talking. No walking. Just an hour of integers.

late summer sun  
through Venetian blinds—  
shadow of trash cans

*Lenard D. Moore*

## SIGNS OF AGE

I'm waiting on a hard seat in the little clinic behind the Out-patient Department. The others here are silver haired. One very old man droops in a wheelchair. He is thin and has long fingernails. That must be his daughter, who speaks about him to the attendant in a loud voice, as if he isn't here.

new hearing aid  
shocked by the sound  
of my footsteps

*Barbara Strang*

# Essays

Pages 59 - 70 *A Haiku Eye on Camden*

Ruth Yarrow

Pages 71 - 75 *Re:Readings*



## **A Haiku Eye on Camden: 1st Annual Nick Virgilio Haiku Conference**

*Keynote Address by Ruth Yarrow, March 25, 2006*

I never met Camden's haiku poet Nick Virgilio but did correspond a bit with him. Through his haiku, I feel I've been given a part of the soul of this city. In this presentation I would like to turn a haiku eye on Camden by sharing haiku that many others and I have written in urban settings and that feel as if they could have been written in Camden. I hope that by the end you feel inspired to keep your antennae out for those brief moments of heightened awareness when what you're sensing resonates with emotion.

I won't go into the attributes of haiku at length here. But I would like you to listen for several characteristics of haiku in this presentation. A number of these short breath-length poems are closer to senryu, which focus solely on humans, and end with a snap, often surprising and humorous. However, many others exhibit key characteristics of haiku. First, they are written in the present tense, putting you in the shoes of the poet so you experience that moment, but NOT telling you what the poet feels. Haiku is a form that respects the reader's ability to complete the poem, and expects that we step into the poem and feel the emotions that result from the experience without being spoon-fed what those emotions are. Here is a haiku by Nick Virgilio that leads you into his footsteps—see what emotions arise for you.

winter evening:

leaving father's footprints

I sink into deep snow      *Nick Virgilio, Selected Haiku, 1988*

A second characteristic, in addition to being written in the present tense, is that haiku often hint at a season, enriching it with the feelings we associate with that time of year. Even in the inner city, nature reaches us from the sky and with the



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weather. Here are four of mine from the four seasons that could have been written in Camden:

I lift the baby  
in spring sunshine—  
our shadows fuse

*Sun Gilds the Edge, 1998*

hot sidewalk—  
in wide chalk strokes  
a child draws the sun

*Upstate Dim Sum 2002:1*

ice cream truck—  
dancing behind it  
dry leaves

*Raw NerVZ VIII:2, 2002*

dismantled park bench—  
between concrete arms  
winter wind

*Frogpond XIX:3, 1996*

Third, haiku resonate with the comparison or contrast between two parts of the poem. Let's take one of Nick Virgilio's haiku as an example.

into the blinding sun . . .  
the funeral procession's  
glaring headlights

*Nick Virgilio, op. cit.*

Each of us has our reaction to this poem. What I hear is the resonance between the blinding sun and the glaring headlights. Who would have thought that a poem about the sun would be so dark! Can you feel yourself right in this moment of watching the procession start off, squinting into the sinking sun, overwhelmed by the glare of the headlights, feeling a welter of emotions associated with the death of a loved one—sinking feelings like the sun, the glare of anger at the loss, the heavy dark feeling, even with light from both directions? And all this in just a few words, and less than seventeen syllables? To me, this is the great appeal of this form. It will help you notice that



## Frogpond XXIX:3

moment of deep awareness and then capture it so readers can experience it for themselves.

To help cast a haiku eye on Camden today, I went to the city's website and found a list of facts they said the world should know about Camden. They do have that chamber-of-commerce feel to them, as if Camden is trying to overcome negative images and sell itself to the world. But let's use them as a springboard to share some haiku. After sharing each fact with you, I'll offer some haiku that seem to relate to that aspect of the city. Without trying to label them you'll recognize some ending with a senryu snap, and many with haiku reverberations.

Fact Number 1: Camden is one of the top six communities in the U.S. for entrepreneurial growth. Here are some haiku about work.

too windy for work  
the window washers' ropes  
float free

*Lee Giesecke, Frogpond XXVI:3, 2003*

As well as the freedom of the day off, do you also hear the danger of the job depicted by those ropes blowing up in space? The following one puts you in the shoes of someone, possibly with a low income, facing serious differences of opinion with fellow workers.

freezing rain  
tallying the strike vote  
at the union hall

*Ed Markowski, Frogpond XXV:2, 2002*

styling mousse  
expands in her palm—  
salon gossip

*D. Claire Gallagher, Frogpond XXVI:3, 2003*

The next poem is very short—one image. But the poet puts the sun in the poem by omitting it, telling us a lot about the constraints of being stuck inside a taxi.

the cabby's  
one pale arm

*Carol Montgomery, Modern Haiku XXII:2, 1991*



## Haiku Society of America

end of a long day  
the old bartender's feet  
take the floorboards home

*Jerry Kilbride, Woodnotes 23, 1994*

We also might experience Camden's entrepreneurial growth  
in our shopping:

used books—  
leaving the shop  
an hour older

*Christopher Herold, Frogpond XXVI:3, 2003*

crowded mall  
water magnifies a goldfish  
in a plastic bag

*Peggy Willis Lyles, Frogpond XXVI:2, 2003*

spring madness sale—  
all men's and women's pants  
half off

*John Sandbach, Frogpond XXV:2, 2002*

Fact Number 2: Camden is undergoing massive citywide  
revitalization—more than one billion dollars in public and pri-  
vate investment.

The first two were inspired by very similar experiences.

old house crunched  
in the power shovel's jaw—  
whiff of cedar

*Ruth Yarrow, Modern Haiku XXXV:3, 2004*

spring breeze . . .  
a whiff of new lumber  
and old cusswords

*Joan Morse Vistain, Frogpond XXVI:2, 2003*



## Frogpond XXIX:3

summer's end  
the quickening of hammers  
towards dusk        *Dee Evetts, Modern Haiku XXXIV:3, 2003*

Here the poet alludes to the days getting shorter; feeling summer rushing by, as well as the press of work on that evening.

autumn dusk . . . sparks  
falling from the welder's  
high steel perch  
   *Thomas Heffernan, Modern Haiku XXV:2, 1994*

I love how the fall of the colored sparks echoes the fall of leaves, and how the height of the welder comes in the emphasis of three words you just can't say quickly—high steel perch!

Fact Number 3: Camden has a dynamic waterfront, home to Walt Whitman, Battleship New Jersey, and Adventure Aquarium.

beach of pebbles  
the chosen one skips  
into a new year  
   *Christopher Herold, World Haiku Club 2000-2001*

In the following, the poet never mentions the water, but you can see the soft colors of dawn reflected in it, and hear it slap the shore.

passing barge  
dawn colors  
slap at the bank        *Ken Hurm, Frogpond XXVI:3, 2003*

   light  
up under the gull's wing:  
   sunrise  
   *Ruth Yarrow, Frogpond IX:4, 1986*

## Haiku Society of America

This is one that wrote itself—the curve of the gull’s wing  
echoed the curve of the sun that lit it from beneath.

Fact Number 4: Camden is a college town, including Rutgers,  
Rowen University, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School,  
University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Our Lady  
of Lourdes School of Nursing, Camden County College—with  
a total enrollment of over 9,000.

A day at the office:  
nothing to remind me  
it’s snowing

*Richard Tice, Haiku Moment, 1993*

retirement day—  
the professor erases  
his last question

*Ernest Sherman, Modern Haiku XXXVI:3, 2005*

evening walk  
after office politics  
lilac scent

*Randy M. Brooks, Modern Haiku XXXIV:3, 2003*

Fact Number 5: Camden has world-class healthcare, includ-  
ing the medical institutions mentioned above, plus Cooper  
University Hospital, Virtual Health Camden, and the Croell  
Institute with the world’s largest human cell repository.

ultrasound picture  
slowly passed from hand to hand—  
beginning of spring

*Michael Dylan Welch, Frogpond XXVI:3, 2003*

chicken pox—  
the embrace of my daughter  
even warmer

*Dimitar Anakiev, Frogpond XXII:3, 1999*



## Frogpond XXIX:3

children's cancer ward . . .

the painted smile  
of the clown

*Madeline Beaston, Modern Haiku XXXIV:3, 2003*

We recently lost Jerry Kilbride to cancer; he wrote this five years ago.

day after diagnosis  
avoiding my eyes  
while shaving

*Jerry Kilbride, Frogpond XXIV:2001*

the surgeon speaking . . .  
seeing only the stillness  
held within his hands

*Elizabeth Searle Lamb, Modern Haiku XX:2, 1989*

ambulance window:  
earthshine cradled  
in the thinnest moon

*Ruth Yarrow, Frogpond IX:3, 1986*

mastectomy:  
the surgeon's word massive  
in my mouth

*Ruth Yarrow, Frogpond XXIX:1, 2006*

open wide  
the blue sky fills  
my dentist's window

*James Paulson, Frogpond XXVI:2, 2003*

Fact Number 6: Camden is a hub of transportation, with light rail to Trenton, PATCO to Philly, twenty New Jersey transit routes and the RiverLink Ferry.

You can hear both the anonymity of the city and the glow of the season in this one.

Haiku Society of America

toll booth lit for Christmas—  
from my hand to hers  
warm change

*Michael Dylan Welch, The Haiku Anthology, 1999*

Morning train—  
Entering the dark tunnel  
Suddenly: my face

*Marco Fraticelli, Haiku Moment, 1993*

And half a dozen of mine:

train platform:  
each wet leaf  
face-down

*Wind Chimes 21, 1982*

new driver  
she signals the turn  
with her tongue

*Modern Haiku XXX: 1, 1999*

evening: my yawn  
slips through the bus window  
to a stranger

*Frogpond XXI: 3, 1998*

airport:  
through family turbulence  
flight attendant's smooth walk

*Raw NerVZ VIII:2, 2002*

hot subway:  
rhythm of the blind man's cane  
through my soles

*Frogpond XV:1, 1992*

crowded bus through fog—  
someone singing softly  
in another language

*Seattle Poetry on the Buses, 1998*

What the Camden website wants us to see is the shiny side



## Frogpond XXIX:3

of the city. But in November 2004 Camden was named the most dangerous city, snatching the title from Detroit.

drug violence—

policeman's coffee

shakes a little      *Charles D. Nethaway, Frogpond XIII:1, 1990*

What feels like danger may be specific to how old we are:

schoolgirls take turns

mimicking a stutter—

March wind              *Barry George, Frogpond XXV:2, 2002*

last streetlight—

my shadow lunges on

into dark                  *Ruth Yarrow, Raw NerVZ VI:3, 2000*

cold streetlight:

flash from the back

of the cat's eye              *Ruth Yarrow, Woodnotes 24, 1995*

streetwalker

with a black eye    halo

around the moon              *George Swede, Frogpond VIII:3, 1985*

You know how the reflection of the moon on high cirrus clouds makes a light ring that encloses a ring of dark around the moon? To me, Swede has captured the reverberation with the black eye, and the loneliness of the moon for an abused woman.

Under the present administration, danger is on the news not only locally, but nationally, as we hear the words terrorism and war daily. Reactions vary.

terror alert—

the teenager adjusts

his baggy jeans

*Tony Pupello, Modern Haiku XXXV:3, 2004*



## Haiku Society of America

talk of war  
our teenage son  
allows a hug

*Joann Klontz, Frogpond XXV:1, 2002*

I send a fax  
protesting the bombing:  
pages come out hot

*Ruth Yarrow, www.poetsagainsthewar.org, 2003*

against the wind  
we hold the peace banner—  
our spines straighten

*Ruth Yarrow, Frogpond XXVI:1, 2003*

These poems about the war bring up another challenge of haiku. When we have strong feelings about an issue it might seem easy to write haiku. But to write effectively on a heavy issue requires staying with our experience and avoiding the trap of preaching or philosophizing. It is agonizingly easy to write short poems that are more like bumper stickers than reverberating haiku. But it is possible to do better; Joann KONTZ's moment of having her teenager allow a hug says huge amounts about the present war.

Another enormous issue that borders on the political, for which I have found very few haiku, is racism. A [Camden] *Courier Post* article in January 2001 was titled, "Racism warps Camden politics, and keeps us all down." In his "Litany for the Dead," Nick Virgilio captures a moment from the early days of racism in this country:

at the slave auction,  
missing from the ship's manifest:  
the names of the dead

*Nicholas Virgilio, op. cit.*

slave cemetery  
I scrape the moss to find  
no name

*William M. Ramsey, Modern Haiku XXXIV:1, 2003*



## Frogpond XXIX:3

Despite the lack of haiku on the subject, racism is of course pervasive, though often less obvious to those of us protected by white skin.

food bank line—

a pigeon picks up crumbs

too small to see

*Ruth Yarrow, Frogpond XXIX:2, 2006*

cleaning women

waiting for the bus

streets full of cars

*David C. Ward, Modern Haiku XXVIII:2, 1997*

I read that the Black People's Unity Movement tried to save homes in Camden's Poet's Row—a tussle between eight homes and 80 additional feet of roadway. Certainly the diversity enriches the city. The following are from four African-American haiku poets. The first two are from the early days of haiku in English, written by Richard Wright, author of *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, who wrote over 4,000 haiku. His daughter concluded that Wright's haiku were "self-developed antidotes against illness, and that breaking down words into syllables matched the shortness of his breath," and that the form helped him "spin these poems of light out of the gathering darkness."

A black woman sings:

Filling the sunlight with steam

Bubbling molasses

*Richard Wright, Haiku: This Other World, 1998*

A radiant moon

Shining on flood refugees

Crowded on a hill

*op. cit.*

Also from the early days of haiku writing in this country, Eldridge Knight using a metaphor, usually shunned in haiku, I think very successfully.

## Haiku Society of America

the piano man  
is stingy at 3 AM  
his songs drop like plum

*Etheridge Knight, Belly Song and Other Poems, 1973*

More recent haiku by African American poets include these:

Sunday morning—  
a storefront church is rocking  
a line of icicles

*Dwight L. Wilson, A Half-Moon Shining, 1999*

summer moon—  
the changing rhythms  
of a basketball

*Lenard D. Moore, Heron's Nest III:6, 2001*

Also by Lenard, in his book on the Million Man March:

sun plaza  
one million shadows darken  
foot by foot

I'll end with a quote from Nick Virgilio's last reading that exactly expresses my hope for our Haiku Eye on Camden today. "So," said Nick, "I want you people to write haiku too after this, 'cause you might have a great poem in ya. You never know . . ."

*Ruth Yarrow*



## Re:Readings

*Kay Anderson on Linda Jeannette Ward* (“November dusk— / cotton flurries / on the road to the gin”) “(This poem) conjured up so many thoughts and feelings, after I felt the soft touch of the cotton flurries. Linda put me there, and I slipped on into having seen my first cotton bole in junior high school. Through the years I learned more and more about the hard work that brings us cotton. I learned of the heavy burden borne by those who had to pick it, with their children working beside them in the fields. I see and ponder the cost, the profound cost of cotton.”

*Victor Ortiz on Stanford M. Forrester* (“late afternoon sun / the glow / in each marble”) “By linking the sun and a marble Forrester ties a childhood activity with an eternal moment that is infused with warmth. It may be a coincidence of time if we see the sun’s light in a marble, but it is a matter of perspective if we view childhood as a time separated from the afternoon of one’s life. Aren’t they one and the same? Perhaps it is only later in life that we truly realize the life-affirming moments of childhood we carry in us.”

*Victor Ortiz on Billie Wilson* (“Valentine’s Day / he tells me I’m number one / on this speed dial”) “Words truly can be a gift as these are. Words are powerful and can make us feel strongly, especially if spoken by someone about whose opinion we care. Wilson reminds us that words bring a choice, a choice of interpretation. I choose to experience the truth of these words because the alternative would diminish all of us.”

*Gabriel Rosenstock on Yu Chang* (“outdoor lecture— / a sparrow / takes my students away”) “I have been reading a book that is an antidote to many of today’s ills. It is *How to be Idle* by Tom Hodgkinson. If you are lucky enough to know what it is to be truly idle, don’t take the trouble to order the book.

In the true and noble spirit of idleness I looked for haiku to reflect this mood, this glorious inactivity. A good example is the above from Yu Chang. This is lovely. The students are doing what is perfectly natural . . . dreaming, idling. Anything



will take them away from the abstract—the lecture—to the real, in this case a sparrow.

Someone should produce an anthology of haiku called *In Praise of Idleness*. Haiku lends itself more to idleness than to the white Protestant work ethic. Maybe the day will dawn—or is this just an idle dream—when all of us will have become too idle to make war . . .”

*Bruce Ross on Peggy Willis Lyles* (“sunflowers / at eye level—/ I lift my face”) “At first I was left with the ‘I did this’ trope found often in modern haiku. It sometimes constructs a little drama around the self and thus hedges whatever moment is at hand. But then I reread the third line. Sunflowers, little plant heads, bright yellow with brown or black highlights, that follow the sun. A human head, perhaps looking down, now looks up into these beautiful plant heads or looks beyond these heads to what they follow, the sun. The looking up in either case is metaphoric. It is the idiom of seeing/experiencing something beyond even beauty. It is the moon, rather than the bejeweled hand pointing to the moon.”

*Bruce Ross on Jim Kacian* (“camping alone one star then many”) “A simple one in Kacian’s recognizable one-liner fusion-with-nature style haiku. Here nature reciprocates. The author is alone like the first star. Perhaps he may be a bit lonely. Yet nature provides a wondrous metaphor to counter aloneness: where there was one star now there are, out of the darkness, many. Like witnessing the emergence of the biblical first light. A simple thing that can be seen on most nights. But here magical. And perhaps the author’s aloneness allowed him to see it that way.”

*Bruce Ross on Greg Piko* (“pumpkin soup / in a blue and white bowl / too good to eat”) “Is this a still life: bright orange, sparkling blue and white? One can almost taste and smell and see the creamy texture of that pumpkin soup set against the decorative bowl. How could one eat such beauty. I’ve experienced food so visually perfect I felt the same way as the author. More now in the West attention is given to the art of presentation. Our senses are lifted up from our taste buds and placed somewhere else, almost like an esoteric act of alchemi-



cal meditation. Cezanne's apples anyone?"

*Bruce Ross on John J. Dunphy* ("under the mistletoe / my dog / holds the leash") "You've seen the look your house pet gives you. A need for affection, for companionship. The author's feeling for his dog is obvious. The humor of bringing his dog into the drama of what human beings do under the mistletoe only adds to the fullness of the author's relationship. Does the dog need the author's companionship on one of their regular constitutionals? Surely there is more intended here than just the call of nature."

*Clyde Glandon on Marie Summers* ("day moon . . . / I add more sugar / to my oatmeal") "Some haiku are mysterious but too obscure; some are too spelled-out. This haiku is suggestive and wry; the juxtaposition is not readily, if ever, apparent. The sight of the moon, pale in the light of a winter morning, is 'somehow' related to a need that the author already knows will not be quite satisfied by more sugar, or by the nurture of breakfast, as good as it is. The author still feels a bit pale. A subtle wabi in this 'oatmeal ceremony.'"

*Clyde Glandon on Patrick Sweeney* ("how to answer / the snowflake / that blew into my ear") "An excellent re-representation of the moment of this familiar-since-childhood experience. The moment continues as you also hear the snowflake melting. The reader may well start the attempt to formulate an answer, but none comes—of course—which is yet another, or echoing, haiku moment, resounding gently with joy."

*Clyde Glandon on Michael Fessler* ("the slant / of her handwriting / spring breeze") "Resonating with Issa's 'the cool breeze / crooked and meandering / it comes to me' (trans. R. H. Blyth). In this case the handwriting carries a small, appreciated quality of the personality of the woman to this man, beyond the content of the message. The breeze has also added its touch of slightly blowing the handwriting into its slant, perhaps causing the man's heart to slant too. It is all most welcome."

*Pamela Miller Ness on Laura Orabone* ("spring funeral / one chair separates / widow from bride") "In eight words, how eloquently and poignantly the poet summarizes the life cycle: even in spring, the season associated with youth and renewal,



how close the bride is to the widow.”

*Pamela Miller Ness on Eve Luckring* (“open scissors beside a vase of water”) “This haiku works perfectly in one line, the form reinforcing the meaning. Reminiscent of some of the best short poems of William Carlos Williams, Luckring's juxtaposition of two ordinary objects is filled with narrative content that invites the reader in to complete the story. As with all successful haiku, many interpretations are possible: Perhaps someone is about to cut flowers in her garden and has set a vase of water on the kitchen counter, or she might be about to make an arrangement of flowers just unwrapped from the florist, or perhaps the arrangement is complete and left open for the mind's eye of the reader.”

*Pamela Miller Ness on Peggy Willis Lyles* (“sunflowers / at eye level—/ I lift my face”) “While reading this issue of *fp*, I found myself returning again and again to the mystery and resonance of this haiku. A few days after reading it, I found myself in a garden with sunflowers at eye level. I walked up to them to try to experience the poem first hand, and I felt the power of Lyles' experience. I was too close to the flower, whose head truly resembles a face; they were too intense and too gorgeous; and the contact was too intimate. Yet the poet doesn't look away or down; she lifts her face, as if looking for something beyond the sunflower, perhaps toward those flowers that were even taller, to the sky above, or to something beyond. The final line may bring to mind the Psalm, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.” Whether or not the reader is religious, there seems to be an acknowledgment here of a creative force, perhaps the power of nature or of a deity. This is a masterful, provocative, and memorable poem that I shall continue to carry with me.”

*Pamela Miller Ness on Jim Kacian* (“camping alone one star then many”) “Kacian paints an entire experience in his six-word one-liner. Again, as in Luckring's, the form perfectly complements the meaning: the speaker is recumbent on the ground, parallel to the heavens; and as his eyes adjust to the dark, the stars reveal themselves in a linear fashion. The speaker may be alone, but he is certainly not lonely.”



## Frogpond XXIX:3

*Efren Estevez on Lane Parker* (“small town— / her lipstick on / a little too tight”) “The words perfectly capture the mood of the image. It is strange to say that her lipstick is on too tight. Perhaps her dress, or her sweater, but not her lipstick. Yet it makes sense, perhaps invoking a forced smile that’s too wide.

Further, the terseness of the language conveys the stiff, ‘tight’ feeling of the scene. Most of the words are only one syllable long. The effect of this is to break up the pace. Note the ‘t’ alliterations; there are seven of them in a poem of nine words. This repetitive sound gives the words a hard and clipped edge. The resulting staccato rhythm further upsets the flow, emphasizing the discomfort and disjointedness of the woman’s appearance with her surroundings.”

*Lenard D. Moore on Dave Boyer* (“her hand on my chest / in the laundry room—/ the short night”) “The haiku opens with concrete details, which imply intimacy with their placement or interaction. The second line contains the setting of this poem; and the reader knows that it’s very hot ‘in the laundry room—’ because of the dryers and ‘the short night’ that implies summer. Could the couple merely be passing the time while waiting for their clothes to dry? What else is happening? Are they lip to lip? Are they sweating? This poem is layered with meaning; it’s very effective without the usage of a verb. How rewarding to see how the woman and man attend to themselves as the laundry washes, rinses, spins and later tumbles dry.”

*Tom Clausen on Janelle Barrera* (“lingering winter . . . / renewing my subscriptions / to everything”) “Anyone caught in the clutch of a winter season that is dragging on and on can appreciate this humorous haiku. To bear up to the cold and bleakness in winter, even subscriptions to magazines and all types of engagements in our life become extra essential. I really like that if winter lingers this person is going to do their own renewing of everything, before spring has done so herself!”



BOOK  
REVIEWS

**By Jim Kacian**

- Pages 77 - 78    *frogments from the frag pool*  
                                barwin, beaulieu
- Page 79            *The Heron's Nest Volume VII*  
                                Herold, et al.
- Page 85            *if someone asks:*  
                                *Masaoka Shiki's Life and Haiku*  
                                Deodhar (translation)
- Page 85            *Right Eye in Twilight*  
                                Natsuishi
- Page 85            *The Haiku Apprentice*  
                                Friedman

**By Dimitar Anakiev**

- Pages 79 - 83    *A String Untouched*  
                                Falkman

**By Jason Sanford Brown**

- Pages 83 - 84    *In Borrowed Shoes*  
                                Aoyagi



barwin, gary & derek beaulieu *frogments from the frag pool* (The Mercury Press, 22 Prince Rupert Avenue, Toronto ONT M6P 2A7, Canada, 2006) ISBN 1-55128-112-0. 112 pp., 5.75" x 5.75", perfect softbound. \$14.95US from the publisher.

Anyone with more than a few years spent in the frogpond will, upon first seeing this book, be reminded of Hiro Sato's enormously influential *One Hundred Frogs*, investigating, as it does, the many tropes of mind that the famous Basho poem *furuike ya* stimulates. And the temptation might be to say, why do we need more of that? (The many variations of the poem in "translation" was, of course, only one of several aspects of Sato's volume.) And there is some point to this: the first one to arrive at any given place does command respect for being first, and in the present case, this volume does not out-frog Sato, so one can't say that this is enhancement.

And yet I am not quite able to dismiss this volume as simply repetitive or, worse, imitative, though it might be either or both. I find sufficient interest in this play (for play it is, nothing more or less) to think that the haiku world will gain something from it. Much of the play is visual, with flow charts and quantum arrows and word golf. Much of what is left is typographic and rather simple-minded, letter substitution being a prominent technique. And yet there is something that lies beneath all this—reverence for the poem and poet, certainly, for what that's worth, but also a deeper inquiry, a curiosity of mind that wishes to investigate its own sense of obsession. There is no shortage of such investigations in our time, but not so much of it has to do with haiku, which seems to suggest a more balanced approach to life than the practitioners of most other arts hew to. We know we're stuck, the glossolalic authors seem to be saying, but we're pretty happy about it. And if we do enough of this, interesting things might emerge—and they do.

In specific, there are two arresting poems in this volume. That may not seem to justify 112 pages, but the point is that it may have taken that much work to arrive at these two moments, and viewed in that context it seems well worth the effort. Also, these poems seen without their context will not seem



to carry so much weight as they do couched amongst like efforts which do not have so much fetch. They gain from being the best of many such efforts, just as we come to appreciate the best art or gems when they are surrounded by lesser examples.

The first is an arch and yet quite sympathetic debunking:

old pond:  
mere plop

One cannot read the poem without conjuring its negative, and once having seized the negative, the positive becomes available again. Quite a nice accomplishment for four words, though of course it relies almost entirely on its “back story” for its punch. And the second is a seemingly thoughtless indictment of haiku, a throwaway:

something;  
something somethings—  
something.

Even as it baldly undercuts haiku technique, the poem argues for specialness: of course this is the broadest outline of what happens in the juxtaposition haiku. On the other hand, those somethings point to the near-miracle that haiku is: how to fill them in with specifics that actually resonate and expand. It reminds me of the old Monty Python gag: “Today we’re going to learn how to play the flute: you blow in one end and move your fingers up and down.” Exactly.

Do you need this book? Probably not. But if you decide to get it, you might be surprised that it has a stronger hold on your mind than you would expect of it. I find I return to Sato’s volume at least once a year. Will I do so with this volume as well, perhaps at the same time? Possibly, possibly . . .

*Jim Kacian*

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## Frogpond XXIX:3

Herold, Christopher (& other editors) *The Heron's Nest Volume VII* ISSN 1538-7747. 182 pp., 5.25" x 8", perfect softbound. \$15 from the editor at 816 Taft Street, Port Townsend WA 98368.

(It is not our usual policy to review other journals in these pages, but we are making an exception because *The Heron's Nest* releases its year's collected materials in an annual print volume.)

What a wonderful enterprise *The Heron's Nest* is. In seven years it has become the premier online site for English-language haiku. It is the place not only where one wishes to be seen as a haiku poet: it is a place where the poet feels at home. This is a special tribute to the fine group of editors assembled at this journal, and to the special care that these editors take to make the site feel like home to so many. The journal is not above reproach: certainly they hew to a house style and are not the most adventurous placement for poems, but they know what they are and they do a magnificent job of highlighting the work of the many who appear here, many for the first time along with seasoned veterans. All in all, it is a great mix.

The print volume is likewise a pleasure. Not only does it include the year's worth of poems, but it incorporates the year's contest winners (with commentary), and includes testimonials to our passed colleagues. It manages all this while keeping standards high. Highly recommended.

*Jim Kacian*

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Falkman, Kai *A String Untouched* (Red Moon Press, PO Box 2461, Winchester VA 22604 USA) ISBN 1-893959-57-0. 160 pp., 5" x 7". \$16.95 from the publisher.

Haiku expresses a mystery—the hidden mystery of life. This charming and absorbing dimension is usually missing from the Western understanding of haiku, which often features rationalism at the expense of poetry. I had almost given up any



expectations of Western haiku when surprisingly a book full of mystery fell into my hands. A scant 50 haiku by the legendary Nobel Prize-winning Swedish diplomat Dag Hammarskjöld accompanied by poetic and instructive comments of another Swedish diplomat, Kai Falkman, was enough to create an original Western haiku book filled with mystery.

The book *A String Untouched* creates a kind of culture shock. In part it uncovers the hidden areas of the life of an historic figure expressed through his own poetry and sensibility, and commented upon by a successor. Kai Falkman's relation to Dag Hammarskjöld contains a kind of mysterious dimension as well. It arouses feelings that could be imagined to exist between master and student. From his comments we can easily see the latter's passion for uncovering the facts of the master's life, undertaken with tenderness and respect. His comments are more a kind of religious service to the figure and poetry of Hammarskjöld than a rationalist critical contribution—they are, in fact, an act of love. How strange for contemporary men who have forgotten the mainspring of poetry!

Perhaps Hammarskjöld's best poem is this haiku:

In the castle's shadow  
the flowers closed  
long before evening.

This poem seems emblematic, the central metaphor of Hammarskjöld's life, the critical essence of it. I am moved as well by his erotic poems and their vitality:

Caprifolium.  
In the gray twilight  
he awakened to his sex.

The scent of Caprifolium awakens Hammarskjöld to his sexuality. This one and the next haiku offer very pagan feelings:



## Frogpond XXIX:3

Boy in the the forest.  
Throwing off his Sunday best  
he plays naked.

This scene might well have been taken from Tarkovsky's *Rublov*. The next haiku in contrast examines the conceptual relationship between religion and sexuality. Even though it has been written "from the intellect" it speaks deeply to the topic:

This stone age evening  
the church spire on the plain  
erect like a phallus.

There is an ancient debate as to what most defines an artist: his/her style (form of expression) or his/her content (themes and topics). Western haiku poetry perhaps has placed too great an emphasis on the question of form. The appearance of Hammarskjöld's haiku examines the problem from a different angle: it incorporates with great passion his life's content. This makes it moving, strong and alive. Partly this is the result of his pioneering role because he wrote haiku in the time when (luckily!) formal problems and methods had not yet been fully investigated. Most important is his need to express himself through (haiku) poetry. Such a need distinguishes real poets from the poetasters. Doubtless the book *A String Untouched* insists upon the primacy of content. In a mere 50 haiku we can find a considerable number of topics closely related to his existence. The main theme of his writing seems to be his frustration with highly formalized life. The question of form in poetry for Hammarskjöld was simply (and again: luckily) solved by 17 syllables. That doesn't mean that his form is dogmatic, tight and uninteresting. To the contrary, there are many interesting elements for discussion. Let us take an example:

Night on the plain. Deserted hall.  
The woman in the window niche  
awaits the sunrise.



Hammarskjöld was a photographer as well, and some of his photos can be found in this book. But in building the structure of haiku (often compared with photography) he abandons the static method of the still image, and instead turns to the dynamics of film. The haiku above reads as though it could be taken from a movie script: it offers a shot, then a jump-cut to another shot, and then moves the camera to the woman . . . ! He uses this sort of filmmaking method in several of his poems.

In some poems Hammarskjöld explores the edges of the genre, yet always remains a poet writing haiku. This is a typical example:

You never return.  
Another man  
finds another city.

This poem seems to be a personal response to Heraclitus: “On those stepping into rivers staying the same other and other waters flow.” (DK22B12; from the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/h/heraclit.htm>>). But what is the difference between aphorism and (haiku) poem? At first glance Hammarskjöld’s poem seems quite similar to the aphorism. This is an optical illusion created by looking upon it from a distance. By reframing it we will see this is not the case. The theme for both—poem and aphorism—are the same: “flux.” But the topic, which usually concretizes the piece of art, is quite different. Heraclitus’ topic is “river” used as a general metaphor, completely abstract and non-personal. It comes from thinking and is philosophic. Hammarskjöld’s topic is “return,” which springs from concrete personal experience. This is an avowal poem, for my taste. We haven’t a concrete image but actual concrete experience behind the poem, which renders the poetic different from the philosophic.

Hammarskjöld’s poetry is a great challenge in many ways. Kai Falkman accepts two, perhaps the most important, aspects: demonstrating the high level of achievement possible in haiku written with spiritual nobleness, and reemphasizing the personal mythology of Dag Hammarskjöld. Both aspects are a kind



of benediction to indigent western haiku. Even more, Kai Falkman creates a cultural context for reading and accepting haiku—perhaps the first such context in the West—that finally confers upon Hammarskjöld’s haiku the value of complex and original literature.

In my opinion *A String Untouched* is not only a passionate reading of excellent poems but also a founding stone for haiku: it is a green oasis and pointer for original haiku literature to follow.

*Dimitar Anakiev*

Aoyagi Fay *In Borrowed Shoes* (Blue Willow Press, San Francisco, 2006) No ISBN. 112 pp., 4.25" x 5.5", perfect softbound. \$10 from the author at 930 Pine Street #105, San Francisco CA 94108.

Ever since Raffael de Gruttola won the inaugural Scorpion Prize [awarded by *Roadrunner Haiku*] in 2005 for his:

reading Chrysanthemum Love  
I start from  
the back of the book

I have adopted his method of reading certain haiku books backwards: Fay Aoyagi's *Chrysanthemum Love*, of course, and now her latest, *In Borrowed Shoes*.

migrating robins  
I return a pebble  
to the ocean

Regardless of the order these haiku read like a letter never sent, never meant to be read by others, like a cathartic purge. Fay writes with a quiet grief and power that affords the reader a peek behind the curtains of her heart to glimpse nothing less than raw, unfettered confession. In this book Aoyagi is “re-



## Haiku Society of America

vealed.” And I love that, it makes me want to call her up and meet her for coffee, to listen to her stories, to become a part of them, to see them to conclusion.

withered grass—  
footsteps of an assassin  
become mine

winter Pleiades—  
he has stopped appearing  
in my dreams

The work in this collection is mythic and wondrous; building a wistful world set to a Bob Dylan soundtrack and governed by magic and transformation rather than the laws of physics. The poems start like a furtive glance and then rumble in on an eighteen wheeled crescendo, usually in less than three lines, not counting what’s between those lines.

summer festival—  
my Astro Boy mask  
has lost its power

the attic  
where silk worms lived  
a shadow with no name

winter roses—  
I am tired of reading  
between the lines

Buy *In Borrowed Shoes*. Memorize it (in any order you choose). Taste these poems again and again then chant them quietly to yourself under a full moon.

lingering heat  
an inventory of things  
I have not done

*Jason Sanford Brown*



## Frogpond XXIX:3

Deodhar, Dr. Angelee (translator) *if someone asks: Masaoka Shiki's Life and Haiku* (Azad Hind Stores, 2005). No ISBN. 146 pp., 5.5" x 8.5" perfect softbound. No price. Enquire with the translator at <angeleedeodhar@gmail.com>.

Dr. Deodhar has made one of the best and most influential poets of Japan available to those who read only Hindi in this credible and accomplished translation (with original English translation of the Shiki-Kinen Museum English Volunteers). I do not speak Hindi myself, but my friend Puneet Gupta assures me that the translation is quite well done, expressive and economical at the same time. A labor of love that will perhaps create a new hotbed of haiku in India.

Natsuishi, Ban'ya *Right Eye in Twilight* (Wasteland Press, Shelbyville KY, 2006). ISBN 1-60047-016-5. 64 pp., 5.5" x 8.5" perfect softbound. \$12 from the publisher at <www.wastelandpress.net>.

Of the many volumes which Natsuishi has offered in English, this is perhaps his most accessible, concerning itself with the travails of a college professor's life, and the incursion of ill-health (in this case, a disease of the eye). For those who have heard the name but don't know if they would "get" him, this is a good place to start.

Friedman, Abigail *The Haiku Apprentice* (Stone Bridge Press, Berkeley CA, 2006). ISBN 1-933330-04-X. 224 pp., 5.375" x 8" perfect softbound. \$14.95 from bookstores or the publisher at <www.stonebridge.com>.

This is an engaging tale of a gaijin's coming to terms with her tenure in Japan through the mediation of haiku, and how it comes to mean enough that she must take it with her to her new home (Canada) and spread it. Well told and worth a look. It also suggests what writing haiku in Japan might mean to those who practice it there.

*HSA*  
*NEWS*

*Pages 87 - 90 Virgilio Awards*



## 2006 Nicholas Virgilio Haiku Contest

Iraqi sun  
an American soldier  
pisses in the sand

*Elishma Farquharson, 18, Grade 12  
School of the Arts  
Rochester, New York*

Forget about politics and think about the image of urine hitting hot sand, being soaked up by the earth, and soon disappearing. This image alone can bring about many thoughts concerning the relationship between man and nature. Certainly the insignificance of one man in comparison to the vast desert is highlighted by how little effect one man's water has on all that dryness. A man in the desert is a lonely image. Add to that the loneliness of a soldier in a foreign land to get a feeling for all that is implied by this haiku. Now and only now add the political implications and this haiku has even more layers of meaning. It nicely demonstrates how to blend contemporary and eternal issues into a successful poem.

three stones on a fence

*Cory Steinmetz, 17, Grade 11  
Vermilion High School  
Vermilion, Ohio*

Don't let the simplicity of this short one line haiku fool you. In it is the mystery of human creativity. The poet has created a scene in which we are told very little, but are given a huge amount to contemplate. There are three stones on a fence that had to have been placed there on purpose. One or two stones could be perceived as mindless human action but three is enough to indicate a plan. Thankfully we are not given a clue as to the nature of this plan. These three stones remain a small mysterious Stonehenge. And as in Stonehenge, contemplating the mystery is endlessly engaging.

new year's day  
walking in yesterday's  
frozen footprints

*Allen Bartter, 17, Grade 11  
School of the Arts  
Rochester, New York*



## Haiku Society of America

This haiku, with its clean, clear imagery, speaks of the relationship of the present and the future to the past. For all the talk of new beginnings on New Year's Day, the past remains unchanging and influential. In a poetic and personal way this haiku says something very similar to what Karl Marx wrote, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past."<sup>(1)</sup> They make it, "walking in yesterday's frozen footprints."

fireworks  
a boy nestles  
into his mother

*Fantazia Edicic, 18, Grade 12*  
*School of the Arts*  
*Rochester, New York*

Vivid images, universal and at the same time very personal, come to mind with this plain and poignant haiku. The vastness of the whole sky filled with bright colors and loud sounds is quickly refocused to a child seeking the security and warmth of his mother. Time, place, and characters we care about, all in an emotional event, are clearly drawn here.

Seven words and eleven syllables paint a mural for both the young and us old guys. The interesting use of the sibilant "s" in each line also helps us recall the sound of those rockets shooting into the sky. Even after reading this poem many times we come back to it for yet more images.

the coarse wool  
of my blanket  
a cricket's rasp

*Guilia Perucchio, 15, Grade 10*  
*School of the Arts*  
*Rochester, New York*

Here is a clever use of synesthesia, drawing the tactile and auditory senses into one experience. The feeling of that "coarse wool" and the sound of the cricket outside blend into a unique, melancholy moment. The use of "rasp" for the cricket's sound in late autumn is appropriate for the internal metaphor.



## Frogpond XXIX:3

This verbless haiku presents us with a sensation-packed event that can be shared by many readers. Here, too, the sounds of the words reinforce the images. The poet uses just eleven syllables and nine words to produce a powerful poem.

bean stalks  
none of my clothes  
fit

*Gen Poehner, 16, Grade 11  
School of the Arts  
Rochester, New York*

This is a special poem by and for the adolescent. That image of the “bean stalks” brings to mind the concept of something fast growing and also the children’s tale Jack and the Beanstalk. The second line jars the mind, taking it in a very different direction. Here is another poem that uses clever juxtaposition of images that present us with two independent ideas synthesized into a wonderful story.

The growth spurts that make a youth feel out of clothes, out of sorts, and out of place are common to many teenagers. The way “fit” sits there all alone on the third line reflects the awkwardness and loneliness that a fast growing young person often experiences.

Judging this contest was a pleasure. There were nearly thirty more excellent poems that fit the definitions of haiku or senryu and could have placed in the top six. There were many excellent poets, who we hope will continue to create. We encourage them to send their best poems to the many haiku journals and magazines in print and on the Internet. Many of the poems we read should be seen by the haiku world.

However, there were another fifty poems that lacked the form and feeling of haiku or senryu. We wish that the teachers who encouraged these students to enter this contest were more aware of the structure and style of contemporary haiku. This can be learned by reading haiku in the well-known periodicals and many sites on the Web. Teachers and students can also encourage their libraries to purchase some of the fine haiku books



## Haiku Society of America

that are available, such as *The Haiku Handbook*, by William J. Higginson and Penny Harter, *Haiku; A Poet's Guide*, by Lee Gurga, or *Writing and Enjoying Haiku*, by Jane Reichhold. These will help everyone achieve a better grasp of the elements of successful haiku and senryu.

*Judges: Michael Ketchek and Jerome Cushman*

<sup>(1)</sup> *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Lewis S. Feuer, Editor, Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company Inc. 1959

## ERRATA

From XXIX:2

migrating whales—  
some of us find  
our sea legs

*D. Claire Gallagher*

(not R. P. Carter, who brought the error to our attention)

blue heron—  
the depth  
of the shallows

*George Dorsty*

in the owl's pellet  
delicate eyesockets  
cleansed of flesh and fear

*Doris Heitmeyer*

(from her haibun, "Fleet Week")



## TWO FAVORITE HAIKU, H. F. Noyes

still wanting  
to fly . . . these feathers  
of the dead owl

*Elizabeth Searle Lamb<sup>(1)</sup>*

This is to me—whether or not so intended—a death poem, and one of the highest caliber. These lines well reflect Elizabeth’s indomitable spirit and unconquerable soul. She will not just appear to live on, but will surely do so in the minds and hearts of those privileged to have been especially close. She will never be forgotten in the far-flung haiku world that she was so instrumental in making a solid reality.

gone from the woods  
the bird I knew  
by song alone

*Paul O. Williams<sup>(2)</sup>*

A fine example of the power of simplicity, this commemorative haiku is the most eloquent of its kind that I’ve ever read. I’m sure that many of us never fully appreciated how vital Raymond Roseliep was to our haiku “woods” until he’d gone.

<sup>(1)</sup> *The Heron’s Nest*, special mention-2004 Valentine Awards

<sup>(2)</sup> *The Midwest Haiku Anthology*, High/Coo Press, 1992



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**INDEX OF CONTRIBUTORS**

- Anakiev, Dimitar...64, 79-83  
Anderson, Kay F...51-52, 71  
Aoyagi, Fay...14-17  
Avery, C...32  
Baldwin, Dave...27  
Barber, Collin...8, 47  
Barlow, John...20  
Barrera, Janelle...20, 75  
Bartter, Allen...87  
Beary, Roberta...31  
Beaston, Madeline...65  
Better, Cathy Drinkwater...10  
Boyer, Dave...23, 75  
Brof, Janet...13  
Brooks, Randy M...64  
Brown, Jason Sanford...19, 37,  
41, 83-84  
Burns, Allen...12  
Cabalona, Yvonne...50  
Capozzi, Michael...8  
Carter, R. P...32  
Cesar, Karen...27  
Chang, Yu...7, 18, 71  
Clausen, Tom...18, 37, 75  
Conforti, Gerard John...54  
Cullen Jr, William...7, 12  
Cushman, Jerome...87-90  
Daw, Ian...10  
Deodhar, Angelee...45  
Dorsty, George...90  
Downing, Johnette...20  
Dunlap, Curtis...34  
Dunphy, John J...73  
Edicic, Fantazia...88  
Epstein, Robert...31  
Estevez, Efren...75  
Evans, Judson...24, 28, 48  
Evetts, Dee...24, 32, 63  
Farquharson, Elishma...87  
Fenn, Liz...28, 41  
Fessler, Michael...36, 73  
Ford, Muriel...42  
Forrester, Stanford M...23, 71  
Fratlicelli, Marco...66  
Fukumoto, Kigajô...14  
Gage, Joshua...31  
Gallagher, D. Claire...22, 29, 61, 90  
Gamble, Robbie...7, 28  
George, Barry...67  
Gershator, David...55  
Giacalone, David...34  
Giesecke, Lee...61  
Glandon, Clyde...10, 73  
Gurga, Lee...28  
Hall, Carolyn...30, 44  
Heffernan, Thomas...63  
Heiberg, Keith...9  
Heinrich, Peggy...25  
Heitmeyer, Doris...48-49  
Herold, Christopher...62, 63  
Hills, Leanne...27  
Hirota, Yuko...21  
Hollingsworth, Mark...50  
Howard, Elizabeth...19  
Hurm, Ken...63  
Jennings, Keith...19  
Jörgen Johansson...20  
Jones, Roger...54  
Kacian, Jim...18, 29, 72, 74, 77-79, 85  
Karkow, Kirsty...18, 25  
Kei, M...21  
Ketchek, Michael...18, 87-90  
Kilbride, Jerry...62, 65  
King, Doreen...13  
Klontz, Joann...68  
Knight, Etheridge...70  
Kolodji, Deborah...30  
Lamb, Elizabeth Searle...65, 91  
Lambert, Ariel...29, 30  
Larsson, Marcus...25, 43  
Liebert, Daniel...23, 31  
Lindsay, Dhugal...16  
Lippy, Burnell...9, 22  
Luckring, Eve...5, 74  
Lyles, Peggy Willis...62, 72, 74  
MacNeil, Paul...19



## Frogpond XXIX:3

- Manley, C. R...11  
 Markowski, Ed...61  
 Marshall, Ian...28  
 Masat, Fran...11  
 Mason, Scott...21, 24  
 McConnel, Frances...36  
 McLaughlin, Dorothy...35  
 Melchor, Gonzalo...34  
 Metz, Scott...12, 21, 39  
 Montgomery, Carol...61  
 Moore, Lenard D...22, 29, 57, 70, 75  
 Mountain, Marlene...13, 19  
 Nadaya, Mariusu...15  
 Neal, Dustin...24  
 Ness, Pamela Miller...37, 73-74  
 Nethaway, Charles D...67  
 Neubauer, Patricia...7  
 Noyes, H. F...91  
 Omoto, Teruko...33  
 Orabone, Laura...73  
 Ortiz, Victor...8, 20, 71  
 owen, w. f...24, 35, 40, 50  
 Painting, Tom...34  
 Parker, Lane...75  
 Parks, Zane...43  
 Patchel, Christopher...33, 36  
 Paulson, James...65  
 Perkins, Sean...33  
 Perucchio, Guilia...88  
 Peters, Stephen...31  
 Pfleuger Jr, Paul...8  
 Piko, Greg...72  
 Poehner, Gen...89  
 Poulin, Robert Henry...10  
 Proctor, Vanessa...37  
 Pupello, Tony...67  
 Ramesh, K...8  
 Ramsey, William M...32, 37, 68  
 Rasmussen, Ray...55-56  
 Rees, Lynne...29  
 Reilly, Edward J...30  
 Robinson, Chad Lee...35  
 Romano, Emily...47  
 Rosenstock, Gabriel...71  
 Ross, Bruce...11, 72-73  
 Russell, Helen...23, 30  
 Sandbach, John...62  
 Schwader, Ann K...9  
 Schwerin, Dan...33  
 Sherman, Ernest...64  
 Simin, Nabjsa...17  
 Sionkowski, Grzegorz...27  
 Spano, Mathew V...22  
 Steel, Lynne...22  
 Steinmetz, Cory...87  
 Stepenoff, Bonnie...7  
 Sterba, Carmen...25  
 Stevenson, John...3  
 Stoelting, Laurie W...46  
 Strang, Barbara...57  
 Summers, Marie...13, 73  
 Swede, George...67  
 Sweeney, Patrick...73  
 Tann, Hilary...9, 33  
 Tarquinio, Rick...12  
 Tauchner, Dietmar...27  
 Teaford, M. Franklyn...36  
 Tennison, Michelle...13  
 Thunell, CarrieAnn...34  
 Tice, Richard...64  
 Tico, Tom...9, 11  
 Tipton, James...21, 25  
 Tompkins, Pat...36  
 Tsuji, Minako...15  
 van den Heuvel, Cor...53  
 Virgilio, Nick...59, 60, 68  
 Vistain, Joan Morse...35, 62  
 Wade, Susan Mary...35  
 Walker, Marilyn Appl...12  
 Wangchuk, Karma Tenzing...32  
 Ward, David C...69  
 Ward, Linda Jeannette...71  
 Welch, Michael Dylan...64, 66  
 West, Harriot...11  
 Williams, Paul O...91  
 Wilson, Billie...71  
 Wilson, Dwight L...70  
 Wright, Richard...69  
 Yamaguchi, Shin...16  
 Yarrow, Ruth...23, 59-70  
 Yovu, Peter...10



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