



**FROGPOND**

**THE JOURNAL OF  
THE HAIKU SOCIETY  
OF AMERICA**

**VOLUME 37:1**

**WINTER**

**2014**

## About HSA & *Frogpond*

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ISSN 8755-156X

Listed in the *MLA International Bibliography*, *Humanities International Complete*, *Poets and Writers*.

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Francine Banwarth, Editor      Michele Root-Bernstein, Associate Editor

**Cover Design and Photos:** Christopher Patchel.

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## Submissions Policy

(Please follow the submission guidelines carefully.)

1. Submissions from both members and nonmembers of HSA are welcome.
2. All submissions must be original, unpublished work that is not being considered elsewhere and must not be on the Internet (except for Twitter and Facebook) prior to appearing in *Frogpond*.
3. Submission by e-mail is preferred
  - (a) in the body of the e-mail (no attachments)
  - (b) with subject line: Frogpond Submission + the kind of work sent
  - (c) with place of residence noted in the body of the e-mail
4. A submission by post will receive a reply only if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope with sufficient U.S. postage to reach your destination.
5. Only one submission per issue will be considered.

### The Submission May Include Any or All of the Following:

1. Up to ten haiku
2. Up to three haibun
3. Up to three rengay or other short sequences
4. One renku or other long sequence
5. One essay
6. One book review

### Submission Periods:

1. February 15 to April 15 (Spring/Summer Issue)
2. June 1 to August 1 (Autumn Issue)
3. September 15 to November 15 (Winter Issue)

Acceptances will be sent after the end of each period.

### Note to Publishers:

Books for review may be sent at any time.

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**Museum of Haiku  
Literature Award  
\$100**

for the best previously unpublished work appearing in the  
last issue of *Frogpond* as selected by vote of the HSA  
Executive Committee

**From Issue 36:3**

her letter . . .  
I'd forgotten  
paper can cut

*Tom Tico*  
San Francisco, California



## Haiku & Senryu

if the toys we played with  
as children told tales . . .  
morning moon

Angela Terry, Lake Forest Park, Washington

mum's closet  
the March of Dimes folder  
half filled

Richard St. Clair, Cambridge, Massachusetts

fall breeze  
my small son hunched  
over fractions

Lesley Clinton, Sugar Land, Texas

pieces of eight  
his artwork  
on the fridge

Julie Warther, Dover, Ohio

winter ennui coming down with a slight touch of clouds

Lolly Williams, Santa Clarita, California

Sailing towards  
its promise of happiness—  
the ocean liner

Edward Zuk, Surrey, British Columbia

dating again  
I fasten the one button  
on my boxers

David Jacobs, London, England

meeting in a town  
where neither of us lives—  
the angle of his hat

Sandra Simpson, Tauranga, New Zealand

making light  
of my indiscretions  
spring equinox

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

the rising moon  
slows the flow of darkness  
towards home

Francis Masat, Key West, Florida

winter days  
I use my spoon  
more & more

Gary Simpson, Fairview Heights, Illinois

trekking alone the path of a satellite

Jeremy Pendrey, Walnut Creek, California

wheelchair tracks  
in new-fallen snow  
her third call today

Cathy Drinkwater Better, Hanover, Pennsylvania

home late  
i sleep with the dog  
at his place

Alwyn Hughes, Jr., San Rafael, California

dun sky—  
the horse of her desire  
rides a far trail

Adrian Bouter, Gouda, The Netherlands

deep summer stars  
a tangle of lily vines  
curling back on itself

Marjorie Buettner, Chisago City, Minnesota

astrophysics  
sinking my teeth  
into the Milky Way

Carolyn Coit Dancy, Pittsford, New York

artist's studio  
her beauty captured  
in cubes and circles

Marcus Liljedahl, Gothenburg, Sweden

falling walnuts . . .  
the end of summer  
in Morse code

Lavana Kray, Iași, Romania



Sunday zoo  
my son asks the way home  
if a lion eats me

Olga Skvortsova, Beijing, China

local coffee shop  
the waitress fans us briefly  
with the day's menu

Michael Fessler, Kanagawa, Japan

toad lilies  
when all is said  
and done

Anne Elise Burgevin, Pennsylvania Furnace, Pennsylvania

Eiffel Tower—  
the wind bends  
the other way

Pravat Kumar, Padhy, India

the still bay  
each whale outbreath  
centers my mind

Bruce Ross, Hampden, Maine

secret heart  
a bend in the creek  
cuts deeper

Michele Tennison, Blackwood, New Jersey

painting calla lilies  
her brush lingers  
in the shadows

Mark Forrester, Hyattsville, Maryland

paper wasp nests—  
e-mails from my siblings  
unanswered

Michael Blottenberger, Hanover, Pennsylvania

moonlit ripples  
the distant quavering  
of a loon

Ruth Yarrow, Seattle, Washington

marriage license  
before the ink dries  
one signature smudged

Karin L. Frank, Odessa, Missouri

just before dawn  
saving the end of the book  
for later

Lee Strong, Rochester, New York

a million stars  
I take all night  
to write one haiku

Thomas Dougherty, Ambridge, Pennsylvania

pine-needled ground  
the silent steps  
of the deer

Michael Ketchek, Rochester, New York

another bombing  
a three-legged rabbit  
leaps a ditch

Ferris Gilli, Marietta, Georgia

three pieces  
of homeland  
in the suitcase

Klaus-Dieter Wirth, Viersen, Germany

the darkening desert sky vertebrae breaking through

the familiar singing  
of creatures with ears  
below their knees

Peter Yovu, Middlesex, Vermont

who bears  
the weight of separation  
fallen blossom

Kala Ramesh, Pune, India

Voyager 1  
enters interstellar space  
the cat's closed eyes

approaching spring  
I take a number  
at the deli counter

Carolyn Hall, San Francisco, California

friday night  
I roll up my shirt cuffs  
like the mannequin

Brent Goodman, Rhinelander, Wisconsin

first day of middle school  
the alluring scent  
of her eraser

redwood grove the taste of her imaginary tea

Bill Cooper, Richmond, Virginia

two cognacs  
the afternoon light  
dwindling

a buoy clangs  
the immense night sky  
is silent

Neal Whitman, Pacific Grove, California

evening stars  
fish in the bucket  
suddenly still

Glenn G. Coats, Prospect, Virginia

the universe:  
also 84% dark matter

Mac Greene, Indianapolis, Indiana

home  
after his stroke  
the frozen lake  
    cracks

Scott Glander, Glenview, Illinois

broken neon  
the pockmarked barber  
strops his blade

Ron C. Moss, Tasmania, Australia

autumn's end  
I fill my loss  
with doughnut holes

Deborah Stewart, Toronto, Ontario

another dawn  
I ask dad if he remembers  
being Japanese

Rebecca Drouilhet, Picayune, Mississippi

Winter fog  
the auger chatters  
against a deep stone

Stephen Gould, Denver, Colorado

your presence  
the mercury reports  
five degrees less

Ajaya Mahala, Pune, India

migrating geese . . .  
catcalls  
from the prison yard

Michele L. Harvey, Hamilton, New York

distant starlight  
the shine of SkyMap  
on my smart phone

Thomas Chockley, Plainfield, Illinois

a wrong answer  
in the third grade—  
lingering clouds

Sondra J. Byrnes, South Bend, Indiana

scars in the tarmac the long road home

another august dead friend's ghost lilies

Jim Kacian, Winchester, Virginia

winter night—  
the phone won't stop  
not ringing

Mike Spikes, Jonesboro, Arkansas

so much unsettled  
milkweed  
heart

not as green as the grass has been saying

Dan Schwerin, Waukesha, Wisconsin



with no evidence  
of my innocence  
spring begins

autumn sky  
only one of us  
deciduous

Melissa Allen, Madison, Wisconsin

her going  
reforms me—  
empty cocoon

Dan Daly, Ballwin, Missouri

ash on my sleeve  
the first shades of dawn  
above the docks

Paul Chambers, Newport, Wales

Goodwill store  
a mannequin wears  
my late father's suit

John J. Dunphy, Alton, Illinois

winter chill—  
he holds my hand  
until I hold his

Bud Cole, Ocean City, New Jersey

melting ice  
rushes over the stones—  
Inuit throat song

Sue Colpitts, Peterborough, Ontario

mourning dove calls  
the sun and moon  
in the same sky

playlist with no slow songs spring creek

paul m., Bristol, Rhode Island

sleight of hand  
where her palm was  
long night moon

S.M. Abeles, Washington, D.C.

the hen's feather  
on a shop-bought egg  
spring moon

Els van Leeuwen, Sydney, Australia

on the wrong street home  
stars with one spot  
in the Milky Way

Gary Hotham, Scaggsville, Maryland

she (not tonight) says the dark side of her face

Adan Breare, Portland, Oregon

palm tree  
the only date  
I've had in weeks

first lesson  
the sound of my guitar  
on my teacher's face

*for Eddy Kozak*

Haiku Elvis, Shreveport, Louisiana

stalled traffic  
the wipers all beating  
to different drummers

Barbara Snow, Eugene, Oregon

rush  
hour  
a  
pop  
song's  
a t t i t u d e

Roland Packer, Hamilton, Ontario

high plains spring  
a couple of stallions  
whinny their manes

Marilyn Appl Walker, Madison, Georgia

one small brushstroke in a wide landscape my breath

her perfume  
through the canals  
of Mars

David Boyer, Stamford, Connecticut

November night—  
a stray breeze teases  
the Diwali lamps

Anitha Varma, Kerala, India

swirling leaves—  
a scribble of starlings  
in the evening sky

Arvinder Kaur, Chandigarh, India

having to look up the disease she whispers

Alan S. Bridges, Littleton, Massachusetts

fingers of the deaf boy  
a  
l  
l  
i  
n  
g  
  
p  
e  
t  
a  
l  
s

*(Inspired by Jim Kacian's talk at HNA, 2013)*

Terry Ann Carter, Victoria, British Columbia

winter camellias  
a high stone wall  
to guard my solitude

assigning my pain a number of autumn clouds

Susan Antolin, Walnut Creek, California

a hard-boiled egg  
shapes my hand  
winter morning

Michelle Schaefer, Bothell, Washington

between us  
no right or wrong  
wild mint

Stephen A. Peters, Bellingham, Washington

mushroom picking  
something about his mother  
he never knew

Jonathan McKeown, Sydney, Australia

the evening  
slowly gathering  
trees

Vincent O'Connor, Cork, Ireland

the  
deep

mirrors

(her  
moon  
pool)

Mark Harris, Princeton, New Jersey

home for a while  
she sorts shells  
in the sand

Owen Bullock, Katikati, New Zealand

aligned with the wind  
harakeke spears  
at half tilt

*harakeke* = Maori for the flax species *phormium tenax*

Margaret Beverland, Katikati, New Zealand

Phone booth,  
my fingers slip  
through the hole in my pocket

Manik Sharma, Shimla, India

slowly up the stairs  
my wife returns home  
autumn night

another tunnel  
and no satellite jazz  
my eyes adjust

Lenard D. Moore, Raleigh, North Carolina

moonless night  
the idea of someone  
I won't see again

Miloje Savic, Oslo, Norway

two cranes wade  
across the shallow bowl  
my grandmother's hands

Elizabeth Steinglass, Washington, D.C.



falling leaves  
the growing lightness  
of my bones

brackish pond—  
the aftertaste  
of gossip

George Swede, Toronto, Ontario

unspoken words  
dark seeds inside  
the honesty pods

Katherine Raine, Wyndham, New Zealand

wilted rose  
was it something  
I said

Jeannie Martin, Salisbury, Massachusetts

harvest moon  
sliding her fingers across  
his stationery

S.M. Kozubek, Chicago, Illinois

alfalfa field  
puffs of wind  
fluffing fricatives

Scott Mason, Chappaqua, New York

dust motes the silence after the eulogy

Mark E. Brager, Columbia, Maryland

all souls' day  
no one i care  
to see again

my anger gone  
with your last breath  
winter begins

Roberta Beary, Bethesda, Maryland

Life ends—  
a white pebble,  
a bit of moss, a petal

Rebecca Lilly, Charlottesville, Virginia

cedar boxes  
full of kimonos—  
the falling leaves

Brian McSherry, Hirosaki, Japan

if glass breaks easily a bird

how a deaf man  
might imagine sound . . .  
luna moth

John Stevenson, Nassau, New York

moths gather the unfinished business of her closed door

writing myself into an acorn

Eve Luckring, Los Angeles, California

laundry day—  
a search for my seal skin

Dawn Apanius, Hudson, Ohio

planting narcissus  
how do I look  
from the rear

Ruth Holzer, Herndon, Virginia

dashboard hula girl  
the way you once  
moved me

Robert Piotrowski, Mississauga, Ontario

hedge bindweed  
it was just  
her way

Jeff Hoagland, Hopewell, New Jersey

the moment  
you took my breath away  
dandelions

Poppy Herrin, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

air show . . .  
the ice cream girls  
compare nail polish

Anne LB Davidson, Saco, Maine

his loose tooth  
back and forth all day  
ants in the grass

Annette Makino, Arcata, California

getting high  
climbing a tree I climbed  
in childhood

Tom Tico, San Francisco, California

first crickets second star to the right

fall colors . . .  
believing I'll prove  
the exception

Christopher Patchel, Mettawa, Illinois

squall line the ragged script of rivers

weasel words the glow of a sodium flame

Cherie Hunter Day, Cupertino, California

night drive home  
we unravel all the things  
unsaid

wet snow  
someone left a bar stool  
warm for me

Randy Brooks, Decatur, Illinois

one degree  
inflates the towhee  
winter solstice

Alanna C. Burke, Santa Fe, New Mexico

early darkness  
children dragging  
back home

Ramesh Anand, Bangalore, India

family dinner  
again gran asks  
who we are

Rachel Sutcliffe, Huddersfield, England

inside the Milky Way  
the white-maned horse  
no one else sees

the wild girl  
a taste of rain  
out of Mexico

Michael McClintock, Clovis, California

blur  
of the fire truck  
red noise

Arch Haslett, Toronto, Ontario

short night—  
on the Rue Cler a fish shop  
clatters open

Patricia J. Machmiller, San Jose, California

morning rain  
a language  
of well-being

Mike Weaver, Montello, Wisconsin

stories unearthed fabric leaning homeward

Susan Diridoni, Kensington, California

fresh mulch  
on the night wind . . .  
stars beyond stars

Rich Youmans, North Falmouth, Massachusetts

the pattern crayons leave  
on the bottom of the box  
hydrangea blossom

Ann Magyar, Brighton, Massachusetts

quilting circle pieces together the scraps of gossip

Jeff Stillman, Norwich, New York

an icy web  
interlacing the bails  
breath of milkers

Quendryth Young, Alstonville, NSW, Australia



sorting old clothes—  
I feel grandma's presence  
with my fingers

Padma Thampatty, Wexford, Pennsylvania

earthworm's  
sidewalk calligraphy  
death poem

Robert Mainone, Delton, Michigan

a container for medical waste (3rd from the sun)

Lee Gurga, Champaign, Illinois

a ring tone  
straight to voicemail  
autumn decay

James D. Fuson, New Haven, Michigan

raw day  
the warmth of the papers  
from the copy machine

Linda Ahrens, Arlington, Texas

midnight at the bar  
the weary ache  
of his smile

Audrey Olberg, Chevy Chase, Maryland

heron also  
leaving the coast  
carrying some of it

Brent Partridge, Orinda, California

home from the hospital  
we widen the path through  
our living room

Margaret Dornaus, Ozark, Arkansas

stifling a yawn deeper into the crystal cave

outside the church  
after confession . . .  
splashed by a passing car

Bill Pauly, Dubuque, Iowa

close encounters  
of the fox kind  
I too am hiding

Renée Owen, Sebastopol, California

keynote speech  
a fly lands  
on the projector

Ben Moeller-Gaa, Saint Louis, Missouri

endless runner beans I try not to say too much

J. Zimmerman, Santa Cruz, California

sunset overture  
the crickets  
come in late

Amanda Burgard, Pinckney, Michigan

rocking chair  
remembering when  
he was into jive

Kevin Goldstein-Jackson, Poole, England

snow sky  
my eyes well up  
with geese

LeRoy Gorman, Napanee, Ontario

earth from space . . .  
and here I am  
dotting an i

Claire Everett, North Yorkshire, England

scary movie  
the pulse  
in her hand

Chase Fire, Harper Woods, Michigan

autumn wind  
I blow the fire  
into being

Munira Judith Avinger, Lac Brome, Quebec

praying mantis where letters go missing epitaph

Francis Attard, Marsa, Malta

I can still hear  
my father call to my mother . . .  
warm river rocks

Barbara Hay, Ponca City, Oklahoma

daydreaming  
spider suspended  
between lily stalks

autumn equinox  
in the waste places  
a golden aster

Merrill Ann Gonzales, Dayville, Connecticut

what could have been snapdragon

Marie Louise Munro, Tarzana, California

potatoes roasting  
over driftwood coals  
we talk of dreams

Ellen Compton, Washington, D.C.

rejection letter  
I make a paper airplane  
and let it fly

Amitava Dasgupta, Houston, Texas

restless reeds  
a swan at the shore shuns  
my shadow

Irena Szewczyk, Warsaw, Poland

tourists stand like saguaro stand like tourists

Mike Taylor, San Francisco, California

dusk  
a raven turns on  
the lamppost

Robert Epstein, El Cerrito, California

second thoughts  
for the third time  
drifted leaves

Ann K. Schwader, Westminster, Colorado

falling bra strap . . .  
all my hidden  
dishevelment

Hannah Mahoney, Cambridge, Massachusetts

unable to remember  
the word for milk—  
crows in a snowstorm

P M F Johnson, St. Paul, Minnesota

squash and tomatoes the sizzle of her sauté

Bruce H. Feingold, Walnut Creek, California

fireplace flames . . .  
Grandpa's stories color  
our faces

Chen-ou Liu, Ajax, Ontario

mountain long before i was an idea

Dietmar Tauchner, Puchberg, Austria

homecoming weekend  
each year a few less  
gathering bittersweet

Mary Frederick Ahearn, Pottstown, Pennsylvania

leaf for leaf  
a distant friend and I  
swap autumns

Diana Webb, London, England

lateral thinking we were lovers blue moon

Susan Constable, Nanoose Bay, British Columbia

my shadow  
the size of Orion  
moonlit grass

Collin Barber, Memphis, Tennessee

drifting snow . . .  
tomatoes on the sill  
ripen for salsa

Charlotte Digregorio, Winnetka, Illinois



night train  
I split the uncut pages  
in my book

dinner alone  
the knife sharpener's  
rusty wheels

Cristina-Monica Moldoveanu, Bucharest, Romania

alley dandelions flower to seed our common fate

A. Lamas, Chicago, Illinois

long after New Year's  
the old year  
stuck to the fridge

David Gershator, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

still river  
still pond  
still winter

Don Miller, New Lisbon, Wisconsin

## International Exchange United Kingdom & Germany

In this third, double installment of our publication exchanges with haiku organizations in other countries (see “Romania” *Fp* 36:2 and “Serbia” *Fp* 36:3), we are happy now to present haiku written by members of the British and German haiku societies. In friendly exchange, haiku by HSA members have recently appeared on the pages of the British Haiku Society journal, *Blithe Spirit* (23:4), and the Deutsche Haiku Gesellschaft journal, *Sommergras* (Dec. 2013, No. 103). Enjoy!

~David Lanoue, President, HSA

### United Kingdom

The British Haiku Society was founded in 1990, and we now have 260 members. We aim to encourage the appreciation and writing of haiku, tanka, and haibun in the UK by publishing our journal *Blithe Spirit* and specialist haiku books. Also, we hold conferences, tutorials, and workshops, most of which are open to the public. In the field of education we assist schools and colleges in teaching about haiku by providing resources and haiku tutors. Our public profile is gradually being raised and recently, one of our members, Lynne Rees, was asked to comment on the BBC World Service about the haiku NASA is sending to Mars.

~David Bingham, Editor, *Blithe Spirit*

(The following haiku first appeared in *Blithe Spirit* in 2013.)

this corn cooking  
in the time it takes  
to sing a song

Maeve O’Sullivan

following a butterfly,  
children  
closer to the border

Kohjin Sakomoto

outpatients  
he holds her coat  
while she's gone

Frances Angela

mist-covered mountain—  
our guide sells us  
postcards of the view

Sean McWilliams

running a stick  
along the rusted gate . . .  
the pheasant's reply

Claire Everett

nothing said  
the stone axe  
weighed in his palm

Colin Oliver

a soldier's boot  
with mud  
from faraway fields

Edith Bartholomeusz

as she sleeps  
a whisper of moon  
curls over frost

John Parsons

pounding  
on a  
blade  
of grass  
the tiny  
frog's  
red heart

Clare McCotter

tall sons stoop  
the coffin barely clearing  
the lintel

Michael Scott

### Germany

Deutsche Haiku Gesellschaft was established on 1/10/88 and since then has contributed with commitment to promoting haiku in Germany. It has become a well-known and popular poetic genre through workshops, competitions, anthologies and in the pages of our magazine, *Sommergras*. When we celebrated our 25th anniversary in June 2013, we recorded around 220 national and international members. We also accomplished the 100th edition of *Sommergras* that year. Over the years, haiku groups have been launched by DHG members, and with self-initiative and dedication they have supported many projects. International and enriching contacts have been made, and *Sommergras* increasingly features contributions written by international haiku poets. In this exchange with the HSA, the DHG board is pleased to present haiku of DHG members for publication in *Frogpond*. With warm greetings to all HSA members.

~Claudia Brefeld, Co-chair, German Haiku Society

Zwischen den Rosen  
Worte  
in Stein geschlagen

between the roses  
words  
hewn in stone

Winfried Benkel

Nacht der Museen—  
jemand berührt ein Windspiel  
aus Rattenblechen

Night of the Museums—  
somebody touches a wind chime  
of rat guards

Wolfgang Beutke

Und ich dachte  
—Name geschwärzt—  
wäre ein Freund

and I thought  
—name blacked out—  
would be a friend

Gerd Börner

bewachen  
die Katze beim Sterben  
Magnolienknospen

guard the cat  
passing away  
magnolia buds

Simone K. Busch

Wachsende Schatten . . .  
Auf der Uhr an der Hauswand  
verschwindet die Zeit

growing shadows . . .  
on the outer wall's clock  
time disappears

Hans-Jürgen Göhrung

Novemberabend  
unter den Hufen des Rehs  
klingt der Waldboden

November evening  
the sound of forest soil  
under deers' hooves

Bernadette Duncan

rastlos  
in den Gräsern der Wind

restless  
between grasses the wind

Gerda Förster

Umzugskartons  
im Zwischengeschoss  
sperrige Worte

packing cases  
on the mezzanine floor  
bulky words

Gabriele Reinhard (Hartmann)

Zerrissenheit. Er  
malte ihr zwei Gesichter  
Eins für die Liebe

dissentation. he  
drew her two faces  
one for love

Angelica Seithe

Wetterleuchten . . .  
ich lausche dem Atem  
des Kindes

sheet lightning . . .  
I listen to the breath  
of the child

Helga Stania

(Credits: "between the roses," *Haiku Calendar* 2014; "and I thought" and "restless," *Deutsche Haiku-Gesellschaft*, online journal; all other haiku, *Haiku-heute*, online journal.)

# Rengay

## Lifting the Lid

Julie Warther, Dover, Ohio

Cara Holman, Portland, Oregon

Angela Terry, Lake Forest Park, Washington

cool draft lifting the lid to the cedar chest	Julie
the perfume she always wore	Cara
fragrant with might have beens . . . paperwhites	Angela
christening gown its box layered with attic dust	Julie
drinking chai from her favorite mug winter dawn	Cara
dried rose petals in Shakespeare's <i>Sonnets</i>	Angela

## Blue Hour

Ron C. Moss, Tasmania, Australia  
*Victor Ortiz, San Pedro, California*

a tuna boat lights up  
the opaque blue  
of forming ice

*at the earth's edge  
a thin blue line*

the blue heron  
swoops overhead  
with a frozen fish

*morning sleet  
blue notes  
against my window*

the blue gothic lips  
of a snowbound skater

*a taste  
of glacial melt  
blue hour*



## **Breathing Deep**

John Thompson, Santa Rosa, California

*Renée Owen, Sebastopol, California*

chemise and sage  
chaparral scents linger  
in the frayed bootlace

*the settlers' route  
bathed with afternoon light*

tumbleweeds  
getting to know  
the ways of the wind

*bleached bones  
the foxes' den  
deep in brambles*

boulder hopping up a dry creek  
to its meadow roots

*moonless night  
breathing deep of autumn's ache  
autumn's glory*

# Haiku Sequences

## Devotional Calendar

Randy Brooks, Decatur, Illinois

looking back  
looking ahead  
my Janu(s)ary prayer

playground slide  
Fe  
brrrrr  
air  
eee

morning chores?  
ma . . .  
rch!

fool's day  
her  
a  
pril!

mmmmmm  
warmmm  
mother  
may I?

one  
by one  
the strawberries  
come  
June

picnic blanket  
on a sunny hill  
Jack and Ju  
ly

au  
gust  
afternoon  
her delicates  
on the line

skip  
sept-  
ember  
tip toe past  
ground zero

daddy  
long legs up  
my oct  
o  
beer

nursing home  
waiting for snow  
no  
vim  
brrr

graveside  
shadows  
de  
scend  
brr

\*Note: I would like to acknowledge the broken Sept-ember which was previously dysjunctified so well by Carolyn Hall to create a resonating breathless memorial. ~Randy Brooks

## Arlington Cemetery

Michelle Schaefer, Bothell, Washington

headstones  
in day heat  
a ghost of a shadow

the silence between  
heel clicks  
unknown soldier

changing of the guard  
during the hush  
he calls in take-out

the old ones  
touch their hearts  
taps

buried brothers  
a grassy knoll  
between them

the length  
of a memory  
eternal flame

gravestones  
both north and south  
21 gun salute

someone  
knew each of them  
white crosses

## Normandy These Many Years Later

Patricia J. Machmiller, San Jose, California

shimmering air—  
small waves lap the shore  
where so many died

lightning  
the sea masks the abyss  
in which they lie

above ruined cliffs  
trees decorated with  
balls of mistletoe

Omaha Beach—  
hydrangea heads poke up  
from behind stone walls

the headlands  
bristle with cornfields  
and turrets

gun emplacements  
try to hold out against  
the encroaching corn

water lilies  
in a reflecting pool  
the names of the dead

expanse of whiteness—  
looking for one among the many  
fallen petals

## The Buson Variations

Cor van den Heuvel, New York, New York

### *First Series — The Old West*

1. snowy plains / five or six troopers hurry their mounts / to Fort Kearny
2. the Sioux warrior gazes / at the sky above the canyon walls / a circling eagle
3. two days from Dodge City / a stagecoach followed / by thunderclouds
4. cottonwoods in bloom / a herd of horses starts / across the river
5. completing the picture / a blue heron lands at the edge / of the lily pond
6. stillness / on the saloon's porch railing / a praying mantis
7. sleepy town / a rooster crows from the fence / of an empty corral
8. behind the saloon / a female voice scolds / the town drunk
9. buzzards overhead / cause a commotion in the wagon train / the desert heat
10. an Indian in ambush / on his beaded headband / a dragonfly
11. a smuggler's canoe / the wakened waterbird / flies to the next cove
12. what happens / through the long night / ask the saw-whet owl
13. at the fort / loneliness on the face of an Indian / bitter wind
14. rendezvous / the old mountain man brings his pelts / and a thirst for news
15. when it walks / it makes a sad sight / the three-legged badger
16. at the stream's source / someone's staked a claim / morning sunlight
17. daisies / the gunfighter starts to pick one / then seems to think it over
18. bare aspens / the river's dried / to a gravel bed
19. moths / around a deserted miner's cabin / Mount Hood in the distance
20. first snow / on the lake's far shore / an elk appears
21. summer sweat lodge / the Indians are making camp / by The Little Big Horn
22. long ago / the song of a bird / by Sitting Bull's tepee
23. party hat askew / Buffalo Bill starts the New Year / in New York City
24. with Wild Bill gone / the bar looks desolate / winter rain
25. a rustler hangs / from the limb of an old tree / the Pecos river
26. end of the fiesta / trash and flowers flow / in the Rio Grande
27. the girl in red / sings of Billy the Kid's grave / her heart is there
28. vision quest / canoeing alone he sees a fox / stare at him from the woods

These haiku were inspired by the translations of Buson's haiku by Makoto Ueda in *The Path of Flowering Thorn: The Life and Poetry of Yosa Buson* (1998, Stanford University Press). To match the variations to their originals, look on page 214, the last page of the index for Buson's haiku in English. The twenty-eight haiku on that page correspond, in the same order, to the twenty-eight haiku in the above series.

## **Material Girl**

Scott Mason, Chappaqua, New York

*voila!*

her eyes come alive  
with dots of titanium white

a fair princess  
on her thousand-flowered field  
all in stitches

classic beauty from Sicily  
her lingering blush  
in tesserae

# Renku

## Lilac Breeze

Richard St. Clair, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Tzetzka Ilieva, Marietta, Georgia

Elizabeth McFarland, Karlsruhe, Germany

### *Side 1 - jo*

fading graffiti

on a row of boxcars

lilac breeze

Richard

almost within my reach

the first twigs of a nest

Tzetzka

hesitant steps

ungainly flapping

and suddenly airborne

Elizabeth

just elected she finds

her new office strange

Richard

### *Side 2 - ha*

silent dance

of ghostly moonbeams

at the snowy plaza

Tzetzka

footprints of a Yeti

or was it something else?

Elizabeth

the elderly geisha

offers a choice of teas

to the *yakuza* newbie

Richard



his words now float  
like helium balloons

Tzetzka

Cupid's arrow  
missed its target and sank  
into the undergrowth

Elizabeth

what will you have me do—  
drill without novocaine?

Richard

*Side 3 - ha*

inside the mailbox  
a frightened five-lined skink  
runs in circles

Tzetzka

pipers warming up  
for the Orange parade

Elizabeth

the usher taking collection  
looks askance  
at the widow's mite

Richard

a hill of rampant *kudzu*  
where our house was

Tzetzka

curls on the crest  
of every wave  
captured by the hunter's moon

Elizabeth

tipsy from the whiskey  
he sings with the crickets

Richard

*Side 4 - kyū*

street riots growing  
and with them  
protests and hopes

Tzetzka

torn strips of plastic  
woven by the blackbird

Elizabeth

the landlord's janitor  
lying in a scented bed  
of cherry petals

Richard

while we're dreaming  
soft rain keeps falling

Elizabeth

### **A Morning Glory**

eiko yachimoto (*sabaki*), Yokosuka City, Japan  
Tateshi Tsukamoto, Funabashi City, Japan  
Sosui Yuasa, Tachikawa City, Japan  
Neil Robbie, London, England  
Yoshiko Robbie, London, England  
Kikuyo Sugiura, Tokyo, Japan  
Chris Drake, Hatogaya City, Japan  
Kris Moon Kondo, Kiyokawa Village, Kanagawa, Japan

a morning glory  
the blue of heaven  
unfolds on earth

eiko

girls in *yukata*, each  
with her sprinkling can

Tateshi

opening the gate,  
I take distant mountains  
into my eyes

Sosui

the sweetness of  
a peach on my tongue

Neil

bright moonlight  
falls across the lake  
from shore to shore

Chris

southering birds arrive  
in the Ainu village

Yoshiko

without their parents knowing  
the young lovers meet  
to renew their vows

Neil

peacefully asleep  
a royal baby

Tateshi

voices call out  
as the boat is pulled  
up onto the beach

Kikuyo

trays placed in a circle:  
a drinking party begins

Tateshi

following blood  
on the snow, he reaches  
his starting point

Chris

in the cold sickle moon  
the ghost sees itself

Neil

high-priestess-to-be  
secluded in Nonomiya:  
the night is hushed

Sosui

ancient tales read  
at the child's request

Yoshiko

in Asakusa  
buddhas listen transfixed  
to these cicada cries

Chris

under the huge lantern  
a map drenched in the rain

eiko

\*\*\*

long lazy nap,  
may this dream take me  
across the ocean

Kris

stroked by an east wind  
surveillance cameras

eiko

our cat in my arms  
everyone strolls together to  
gorgeous blossom spots

Kikuyo

spawning time for carp,  
many a rippling mark

Sosui

### **Tomegaki for “A Morning Glory”**

eiko yachimoto, Yokosuka City, Japan

It is the magic of time that almost always gives birth to a fresh joy, I mean the time renku poets have literally shared for the duration of a live session. When the process includes constant translation for inter-lingual linkings, we often find ourselves rewarded with a deeper joy.

Shorter than a *kasen* by 16 stanzas, a *nijūin* renku with two moons and possible repetition of the same season can result in a supple enough text with only 20 stanzas.

In the spirit of pointillism, each poet from different backgrounds responded, in turn, to the call from a neighboring poet, the call presented in the form of a shortest poem.

# Tan Renga

Yvonne Cabalona, Modesto, California  
*w.f. owen, Antelope, California*

beyond hot  
we emerge like bats  
when the sun sets

*in the theater  
our feet stick to the floor*

John Stevenson, Nassau, New York  
*Ron C. Moss, Tasmania, Australia*

fun house mirror  
reflecting the approach  
of a thunderhead

*the sad-faced clown  
smeared with a smile*

Kathe L. Palka, Flemington, New Jersey  
*Peter Newton, Winchendon, Massachusetts*

reliving the past . . .  
scattered sunflowers  
in a fallow field

*our phone call  
full of silences*

Mark Hollingsworth, Gustine, California  
*w.f. owen, Antelope, California*

garden wedding  
a bumblebee  
in the bride's bouquet

*a pregnant woman  
works the produce stand*

# Haibun

## By the Hollow

Harriot West, Eugene, Oregon

My neighbor trapped Sorrow last night. I heard the metal door slam. Heard the guttural cries, the banging of her body against the bars. She'd grown heavy through the spring, footprints in dew weighing down the grass. At sunup, a man took her away. I remember my cat silent at the window. I remember the leaves shivering.

half-light of morning  
all that remains  
of the moon

## Hopes

Claire Everett, North Yorkshire, England

A shiny, new pin. It winks at me as I pass by. Then it's no good; I can't let it lie. It's just what I need to hold fast to that scarlet ribbon, fresh from the fair, or perhaps for that button-hole I'd make of spring's first celandine, happened upon by a certain someone and placed in my outstretched hand. After all, a flower will fade, but I can keep it, pressed between two sonnets, for a lonely evening when I am old.

But what of this snowflake? that swatch of sea-mist? If, by some miracle, I could secure them, what would their pin board be? last night's sunset? this field of dandelion clocks?

*please do not fasten  
your dog to this bench . . .  
autumn wind*

**Sony Forster is dead and has been for decades, but**

Bob Lucky, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

he is the one who borrowed my Gordon Lightfoot album, the underrated one about Don Quixote, I can't remember the name, but that song about Don Quixote is stuck in my brain, the needle returning again and again to the beginning, and the thought of the idiot he loaned it to who didn't return it to him so that he could return it to me before he died keeps me up at night sometimes.

weeding my library  
among the books I can't find  
books that aren't mine

***Matcha***

Angelee Deodhar, Chandigarh, India

Before our conference we are treated to the art and gentle craft of tea tasting. Depending on the time, the occasion, even your mood, we are told, "The best tea is the one you love the best." We are introduced to the subtle white, the purest orange pekoe, the meditational green, and the omnipresent black. Since time is short and the presentations have to begin, our host, the tea master, has to stop his fascinating talk abruptly. I dream of the row upon row of tea plantations, the estates the British planted two hundred years ago, the poorly paid workers who sing as they work . . .

season of tea  
the pluckers' fingers faster  
than the butterfly

\**Matcha*, also spelled *maccha*, refers to finely milled or fine powder green tea. The Japanese tea ceremony centers on the preparation, serving, and drinking of *matcha*.



## **The Diagnosis**

Dorothy Coraggio, Palm City, Florida

Two lumps of sugar sweetening their bitter news. They sit silently cupping the mugs in their hands feeling the heat of the brew. Reaching over and wiping away her tears he consolingly says, "Don't fret. The kids will take care of you."

sunrise  
his warmth  
first to touch her

## **The Furnace**

Patricia Prime, Auckland, New Zealand

I was sad to hear of the death of Seamus Heaney, perhaps the best loved Irish poet since Yeats. He and I were born in the same year. My Irish heritage is similar to his and I was brought up listening to stories about the Troubles, which feature poignantly in so many of his poems.

His well-known sonnet, "The Forge," is an analogy about writing poetry, for in the same way the blacksmith beats out iron to make something of it, the poet hammers out poems from the bits and pieces he may have gathered from other poems, other places. The poem reminds me of childhood summer holidays spent on a farm. Along the country road was a blacksmith's forge where we stood at the doorway, afraid to go in. We were in awe of the fire from the furnace, the soot darkening the beams, the noise. Sometimes we'd see a horse being fitted with new shoes or a hammer being struck on the anvil. Heaney's line, "Or hiss when a new shoe toughens in the water," is a lovely example of sound equaling sense, and one we often heard coming from the blacksmith's water barrel.

cloud patterns  
a flock of sheep  
holds up the traffic

## Birdcage

John Watson, Columbia, California

I dreamed that I opened the door to a birdcage, but the black bird inside was too weak to fly out. This made me want to quit my job.

yellow awns  
from my socks  
one by one

## Loose Change

Melissa Allen, Madison, Wisconsin

There's a coin in the Yale Art Gallery that was minted, they say, by either Marc Antony or Cleopatra. Antony's head is on one side of the coin and Cleopatra's on the other. The heads are the same size. There's no clue which of them is supposed to be more important. So it's either a Roman coin prominently featuring the lover of the Roman emperor, or an Egyptian coin prominently featuring the lover of the Egyptian queen.

I wonder whether the coin came before or after the assassinations, the children, the war. Or whether—regardless of who had the coins struck—Cleopatra kept one of them around, maybe on her dressing table (if she had a dressing table), to pick up and rub between her fingers while she was having kohl put on her eyelids or whatever. Or whether Antony sometimes pulled one out and tossed it in the air, waiting to see which side it would come down on, tossing over and over until he got the result he wanted, whatever result that was, and whatever it meant.

winter sun  
chasing dust motes  
through the museum

## Legacy

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

Ever since an assortment of Pokémon cards was ruined in the wash, I go through his pockets before doing the laundry. Today I find several bottle caps. Last week it was an old key and before that the remains of a cicada shell. I've thought about insisting he empty his pockets before tossing his soiled clothes down the chute, but haven't for fear of closing a portal through which I discover what my son finds delightful in life.

breezy afternoon  
milkweed pods  
split at the seam

## the way we are

Harriot West, Eugene, Oregon

someone puts on her reading glasses and shrugs *can you believe we're old enough to need these things* and someone says *the mussels here are really good* and someone says she doesn't like ginger and someone thinks she is talking about Ginger in the aerobics class who is always two beats off the music and someone asks *should we order a bottle of wine* but someone wants *one of those fancy cocktails* and the evening disappears into *oohs* and *i wish i'd ordered that* and *let's have dessert* until we are all passing around little plates and the bill comes and someone asks if we should leave 15 or 20% and someone reaches for her iPhone and divides 5 into 248 and someone asks if anyone has change for a twenty and we walk out into the night and someone says *the moon is almost full* and someone says *i ate too much too* and someone laughs and someone sighs

*wish i may wish i might*  
a star begins  
to wobble

## Ferry Ride

Margaret D. McGee, Port Townsend, Washington

The young man circles the passenger deck, a baby in the crook of his arm. He stops and holds the baby upright in front of a glass case containing a carved Salish mask. The baby gravely examines the face of the mask, then grasps a corner of the case and pushes, as if to make the case turn. The man moves the baby so it can view the mask from the side. After a while the baby pulls on the glass corner. The man moves the baby to see the mask from the front again. Push and pull, to and fro, back and forth. Finally the baby turns its head and puts its fist in its mouth. The man tucks the baby in the crook of his arm and resumes circling the deck.

near the end  
my father stops telling me  
to straighten up

## Dear Son

Terry Ann Carter, Victoria, British Columbia

I am writing to you this evening in a sudden moment of terrific aliveness which Winnie-the-Pooh would acknowledge as being grand. I am very interested in learning more about your road of inquiry. What is epistemology anyway—and how does one study it? I have been thinking of you each day this week, hoping that your lunches are sustainable, your bike brakes are working, your rain gear is warm. Let me know what you are thinking if you have any time between assignments and romantic connections. Preferring your profs to be riveting, your printer in fine form. Much love in that department.

no stars . . .  
this dark path  
even darker

### **The Dwelling**

Ellen Compton, Washington, D.C.

High in a limestone cliff under a natural overhang, the doorways are far beyond my reach, yet the dark behind them draws me, holds me. For this brief moment the veil is thin, and stillness is alive with presence. . . .

slant of the light  
a raven's shadow skims  
the desert scrub

### **Planned Obsolescence**

George Swede, Toronto, Ontario

Accused of war crimes, a nonagenarian is deported from Canada for trial in Hungary. He denies all charges and dies just before his court date.

shopping list—  
striking an item  
no longer sold

### **Absurdist**

Peter Newton, Winchendon, Massachusetts

The Height Committee from The Council on Tall Buildings has declared the year's winner. It's all over the talk shows. Soon, they have promised to share the findings of The Think Tank on Depth Analysis. Many of us would like to know how much of the Pacific will need to be pumped off-planet to ensure removal of any trace of fallout.

Fukushima Moon  
the stars also  
have been named

## Snow Bird

Roberta Beary, Bethesda, Maryland

I was 15. He was older and here all year. Even summers. His name is lost; his face a blur. Blue letters on a white board say, "Private - No Trespass." But I do.

sandpiper shore  
the shell-seeker's  
rooted stance

My toes feel the silky weave. Of the net he cast. I know what was caught. And released.

sandy beach  
the soft focus  
of sunset

## Hundred

Raamesh Gowri Raghavan, Maharashtra, India

What an interesting number—ninety-nine! One short of the most magical number ever, one more than the most non-descript of numbers. Ninety-nine, the number that judges everything, from the sincerity of a lover to the contamination in a bar of iron. Ninety-nine, a hungry number, besmirched by an accusation of incompleteness, yet perfect in form—its twin members so beautifully illustrating its two divisors. The first one less, the second one more than that other fabulous number, ten. Ten, which multiplied by itself yields that magic figure all men yearn for. Perfect and yet always incomplete. Ever hungry, ninety-nine.

whitened sky . . .  
in one drop  
the rainbow

**Rest Assured**

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

My mother is dying and I wonder if her morphine haze is anything like the one I am experiencing now, as I lapse into sleep. Half-tuck, knees drawn toward my chest, I contemplate my own passing. Thoughts drift and the next thing I know it is morning.

boundary waters  
a canoeist slips  
into blue

**Rip-tide**

Steven Carter, Tucson, Arizona

*Sleepless nights—*

When I first heard the phrase as a little boy, it puzzled me.

How could nights be sleepless? A person might be sleepless—  
but the night?

How could that happen? Darkness tucked in by the moon and  
stars, waiting for a lullaby?

So I concluded that the night was a living thing, not simply a  
habitat of other living things.

Before I drifted off to sleep, I imagined I heard the night's  
heartbeat, synchronized to my pulse and the pulse of the ocean.

Scott Fitzgerald touched a nerve when, in my early twenties,  
I stumbled on his remark: *In the dark night of the soul it is  
always three o'clock in the morning.*

time  
telling  
me

**Chuang Tsu's Butterfly**

Marjorie Buettner, Chisago City, Minnesota

My sleep is the sleep of one who wants to forget, bathed in darkness reborn into a world not of my own making. I am pulled down, hooked on some darkness where the fish gather around me without eyes and the dust from the bottom rises up over me. Sleep washes over and the dreamer becomes the dream. Movement without motion, music without sound, the dreamer dances a dance of beginnings, of ends, while the world turns slowly in harmony with its own inner song.

spring dawn—  
your breathing in time  
with mine

**Road's End**

Adelaide B. Shaw, Millbrook, New York

At road's end will it be day or night  
or always dusk?  
I'll go there alone and tell those I leave behind  
I did my best.  
I'll leave no riches just a legacy of words  
and stacks of paper.  
Read them or burn them to warm yourself when it's cold,  
and I may come back.

turning leaves  
sometimes a change  
only I can see



## Around the Next Bend

Renée Owen, Sebastopol, California

From the porch of the old cabin, the earthy and dank smell of the river calls to me. The fox, too, knows where to quench his need. Not just for water, but to hunt in early morning shade for tender morsels to bring back to the den. Perhaps he'll rest in a deep thicket, under the flotsam of winters past, nocturnal ramblings still pulsing in his padded feet. I'll not disturb his slumber, so I postpone my visit to hear the water in its rush to the sea. Instead I pick up a needle and sew, weave my yearning into each stitch, my longing into each stab.

my toes translucent  
in long autumn light  
how suddenly I'm fading

## Symbiosis

Cynthia Cechota, Dubuque, Iowa

DWF, post-menopausal, 51, looks 50, solidly constructed, loves butter, hiking, biking, yoga, poetry, gardening, real food, reading, laughing, dark chocolate, ISO an enlightened, emotionally secure handyman, 50–90 with OCD, any race or creed, for hard manual labor and potential romance, if hormonally possible for either party and at the seeker's discretion. Must accept physical maturity, gravitational force, and the second law of thermodynamics. Must own a substantial toolbox. Love of travel and a penchant for dumpster diving and garage sailing a plus. Candidates should send a 99-word introduction and photo of their favorite pair of dancing shoes to:

(just a wink of a moon)  
a mantis devours  
her mate

## Tangerine

Carol Pearce-Worthington, New York, New York

I take the tangerine pit to the roof garden and plant it in an empty stone pot then I plant the orange seeds beside the tangerine wondering about the long winter to come and then I sit on a bench to tame my willful thoughts that think they should obey nothing and I search for my own quiet for my own seed words and the sun moves closer as if to hear although I know it is only the movement of the tremulous earth spreading warmth across my knees and I stand to stretch to where airplanes glide higher by far than birds and I reach until I can feel the blue.

today sky  
makes way  
for a sparrow

## The Soundless Crow of a Rooster

Charles Baker, Mineral Point, Wisconsin

Nothing like this has happened before or since. Gigantic heads billow up out of an abyss, shape shift, awake before dawn. Vivid eyelids open, close, nostrils flare. Images visible to my inner mouth form noiseless words. An eye is projected, these wisps of granite roll, dissolve, rematerialize in vapors iridescent under razor-sharp shadows, indecent, foreboding, a fright.

At the edge of a precipice, on a ledge nearby, I look out over to a wooden rooster, painted with red, green and spangles of gold, which skitters around the horizon under rotating, corroding, concrete trees. Above, nuclear suns explode in an ink-black sky. Black holes suck in.

snowflakes filter  
emerging light . . .  
a nurse checks my i.v.

## Essays

### **Magic–Mystery–Music: The Persistence of 5–7–5 in Haiku** Charles Trumbull, Santa Fe, New Mexico

As I was working on this essay I had NPR on in the background. They ran a feature about someone gathering haiku to send to Mars. “Just as a reminder,” the announcer said, “haikus are written in five syllables, seven syllables, then five.” *Mirabile-dictu*, she did the whole text of her story in “haikus.” I winced, of course, and couldn’t bear to listen to the contest-winning haiku that she read out. Sending haikus to Mars. Interplanetary bursts of 5–7–5. What could be more typical of the status of haiku today?

Ask anyone: the 5–7–5-syllable form is a must for haiku. Having seen my license plate “HAIKU,” a woman pulled over one day and asked me, “What are the rules for haiku again? Seven . . . five . . . ?” The 5–7–5 form *defines* haiku. This belief is pandemic among that unenlightened 99 and <sup>40</sup>/<sub>100</sub> of the population that has not devoted its life to haiku. The belief in the magic, mystery, and music of a 5–7–5-syllable count was derived from a faulty understanding of Japanese haiku form that evolved through early translations into English. It has been perpetuated by grade-school teachers, glorified by early practitioners and journals, utilized by weekend poets and pseudo-literary wits, and sanctified by composers of music. How can we explain the entrenched dedication to the 5–7–5 syllabic structure? We’ll discuss how 5–7–5 came to English-language haiku and look at this question from several angles and see if we can explain what’s going on and suggest what, if anything, we can do about it.

### **Haiku Form in Japanese**

As Westerners came into contact with Japanese poetry, most attention was paid to the ancient *waka*, or *tanka*, but to British

gentlemen scholars such as W.G. Aston and Basil Hall Chamberlain, the tiny *hokku* had a certain fascination as well. What we now call Japanese haiku were typically each written in a single vertical line, top to bottom. They were composed in a combination of kanji—Chinese characters—and *kana*. *Kana* are characters from one of the two Japanese syllabic alphabets representing a single vowel sound (*a*, *o*, etc.), a consonant + a vowel (*ka*, *he*, etc.), the nasal *n*, or a doubling of a consonant (as in *hokku* for example). Such a Japanese “syllable” is properly called a mora (plural, *morae* or *moras*) by linguists; in Japanese they are called *on* (音), or more usually, at least in English-language haiku studies, *onji* (音字), where *ji* means “character” or “symbol.” So if Japanese haiku were written in *kana* only they would typically number seventeen *on*—sound-symbols or characters that would correspond to seventeen *morae*.

The English scholars noticed that Japanese verses fall naturally into phrases of five and seven *on*—in fact, these patterns are very natural for Japanese speech in general, much as iambic pentameter is considered a standard pattern for English speech. Thus, the 5–7–5 *on* pattern can be called typical for classical Japanese haiku—say, haiku written before the 20th century—though it was not by any means an ironclad rule and even the masters not infrequently wrote haiku that were hypersyllabic (too many *on*) or hyposyllabic (too few). In 1965 Harold Henderson estimated that 1 in 25 Japanese haiku did not use the 5–7–5-syllable structure.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the preponderance of haiku written in Japanese today are 5–7–5.

You will have noticed that the Japanese *on* is quite different from the English syllable. Observing monosyllabic English words such as “through” or “borsht,” Japanese haikuist Uchida Sonō wryly remarked that English words contain too few syllables. “Christmas”—two syllables in English—is transliterated into five *on* in Japanese: *ku-ri-shi-ma-su*. This means that syllable-for-syllable English packs in more meaning than Japanese, so a 17-syllable English translation of a Japanese haiku seems wordy to a Japanese.

## Translation of the Haiku Form from Japanese

When I began researching this essay I assumed that the roots of 5–7–5-syllable structure in English haiku would be found in the early translators of Japanese haiku into English. I was very wrong. As they groped to define haiku in relation to Western poetry, these scholars tried about everything *but* 5–7–5. Aston is most responsible for dividing haiku in English into three lines.<sup>2</sup> His 1899 history of Japanese literature contained haiku examples that used the three-phrase, three-line form, and, though he did not always attempt to follow the 5–7–5 pattern, he did use it sometimes.<sup>3</sup>

Why present Japanese haiku in English in three lines? Some have suggested that the three-line format fits better than a single long line on the page of a Western book. More likely, though, the translator is dividing the Japanese text into its three Japanese phrases, and usually that is the case. At the same time, however, this probably rules out the possibility of breaking the haiku neatly into lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables in English. In fact, few translators have tried to capture exactly the Japanese syllable count in English. R.H. Blyth, for example, was frequently one or two syllables off in his translations, often even more.

Some early translators apparently decided that since haiku were poems, albeit exotic ones, they should be dressed up to look like poems that Europeans would understand. Verses in 5–7–5 syllables may be common and comfortable to Japanese, but not to Westerners. These translators sought to bring to these strange Japanese verses poetics and aesthetics, starting with format, that would be familiar to non-Orientals. Such were Basil Hall Chamberlain, who in 1902 called the haiku a “Japanese poetical epigram” and translated them as couplets<sup>4</sup>—an influential characterization that muddied the critical waters for decades to come.

Another influential early translator, this time a Japanese, was Asatarō Miyamori. Beginning in the 1930s, he picked up the epigram idea and used it in his English renderings of

thousands of haiku into couplets, usually adding a title.<sup>5</sup> Three decades later the Australian expatriate Harold Stewart pursued the couplet form, then went a step further and turned Japanese haiku into titled English-language rhymed iambic pentameter couplets, an act that has horrified English-speaking haikuists ever since.<sup>6</sup>

### **The 5–7–5 Form in Early English-language Haiku**

So we can't really say that the origin of 5–7–5 in English was the work of the early translators. English-speakers who began to write haiku of their own in the first years of the 20th century soon divided themselves into two categories: the 5–7–5ers, who imitated the Japanese form as best they could, and those who did not, the free spirits who found other aspects of the haiku more engaging and interesting.

Harold Henderson was the first to consider in a systematic way the composition of haiku in English. In his earliest treatises on haiku he talked only of Japanese haiku, but in his 1965 work *Haiku in English*, he set down some guidelines for English as well. Henderson's appraisal of the situation is so prescient that it warrants repeating here at length:

It is generally taught that the form should be 17 English syllables divided into three lines of 5, 7, and 5. A few modify this by adding "about" or "approximately." Almost all specify that a haiku should be unrhymed.

The advantages, for beginners, of using a strict form are two-fold. First, it makes for simplicity. Second, it is excellent practise, not only for haiku, but for every kind of writing. As one college professor put it: "Before attempting flexibility, learn to submit to controls."

One danger of insisting on a strict 5–7–5 form is that a beginner may get the idea that form is all-important—that any conglomeration of words in 5–7–5 form is a haiku, and that every haiku must have that form exactly. It is a real danger, as this idea is already far too prevalent.

Another danger is that an English verse can have a strict 5–7–5 syllable count and still not sound right. However, such verses seem to occur rather rarely in actual practise. When they do, they can usually be quite easily corrected by a competent teacher.<sup>7</sup>

Henderson does not say why he thought 5–7–5 was appropriate for English-language haiku. “Just so,” we suppose. Just because Japanese haiku are written that way, more or less, and this format in English honors and reflects the Japanese. Henderson wrote a few haiku under the pen-name “Tairō.” They were 5–7–5, or close.

Most haiku poets of the mid-twentieth century fell into line. James W. Hackett, America’s first haiku “superstar,” put together his “Suggestions for Beginners and Others,” two of which were “Express your experience in syntax natural to English. Don’t write everything in the Japanese 5, 7, 5 form, since in English this often causes padding and contrivance,” and “Try to write in three lines, of approximately 17 syllables.”<sup>8</sup> Though these principles seem slightly contradictory, Hackett was consistent in that he practiced what he preached.<sup>9</sup>

Another prominent early haiku critic and teacher, Lorraine Ellis Harr, issued an influential document titled “The Isn’t of Haiku” in which she dealt with the 5–7–5 problem:

1. Haiku ISN’T a prose sentence divided into 3 lines of 5–7–5 syllables, nor a “dribble of prose.”
2. Haiku ISN’T always divided into 5–7–5 syllables. The 5–7–5 count refers to the Japanese *onji* (symbol/sound) not to English language syllables. It IS usually in a short/long/short form. It ISN’T “padded” with modifiers to make the count come out right.<sup>10</sup>

In her own haiku, however, Harr did write in the 5–7–5 template, although her lines were occasionally one syllable short or long.

In the 1930s and ’40s Kenneth Yasuda studied haiku for his doctoral dissertation and later expanded his scope to consider the possibility of writing haiku in English. On the question of form in English-language haiku he wrote:

If the intent of haiku is understood, then its form, at once so different from any Western one and so curious in its allusiveness, is seen to be the only one in which the haiku moment can be realized. Its length of seventeen syllables corresponds to the length of the haiku

moment. Its structure of three lines, comprising five, seven, and five syllables each, contains through its balanced grace the moment of resolution of insight, of order.<sup>11</sup>

For Yasuda, 5–7–5 is categorically the only appropriate form for haiku, but he too, like Henderson, seems simply to port the form over from Japanese and asserts rather than proves the suitability of 5–7–5 for poets writing in English. Yasuda’s own experiments were all 5–7–5 with rhyming first and third lines that emphasized his rigid form.

Sr. Joan Giroux, in her book *The Haiku Form* from 1974, supplies some rationale for using the classic Japanese form:

The 17 syllables provide the breath-long expression needed to represent the haiku moment. The 5–7–5 grouping supplies artistic proportion, symmetry and asymmetry. It has been noted that the conditions and techniques for attaining brevity in the Japanese haiku are not inconsistent with similar conditions and techniques in English. Finally, the possibilities of the couplet and the quatrain as forms for haiku have been examined, and generally the three-line form has been seen to have advantages over the other forms.

Giroux goes on to quote Blyth on the subject:

The haiku form is thus a simple and yet deeply “natural” form, compared to the sonnet, blank verse, and the other borrowed forms of verse in English. The ideal, that is, the occasionally attainable haiku form in English, would perhaps be three short lines, the second a little longer than the other two.

The method of achieving the ideal line length might well be to count haiku syllables in English in a manner similar to the Japanese. At least an awareness of the Japanese method is valuable in encouraging greater flexibility in the writing of English haiku. Considering what has been said of the haiku form, it seems, therefore, that the direct, austere, three-line form of Japanese haiku is also the most suitable form for English haiku.<sup>12</sup>

Decades later, in 1997, *haijin* Clark Strand added another argument in favor of 5–7–5 in haiku. He uses haiku in his meditative practice and teaching. In a chapter of his book *Seeds for a Birch Tree* titled “Counting Syllables,” he writes:



The place to begin is counting syllables—five-seven-five. . . .

If we have no interest in using haiku as a spiritual practice, it is unnecessary to count syllables at all. We would, for instance, write a haiku in any form—one line, four, or seventeen—and include the season or not as we pleased. But I doubt we could take much long-term satisfaction from this kind of haiku. I doubt if haiku would endure beyond a few decades in America if it were practiced this way.<sup>13</sup>

In actual practice, most of the pioneering haiku poets of the early 1960s, publishing in places like the journals *American Haiku*, *Haiku Highlights*, and *Haiku West*, wrote in 5–7–5, at least at the beginning. Some, such as Frank Ankenbrand, O Mabson Southard, Clement Hoyt, David Lloyd, Matthew Louvière, Gustave Keyser, Kay Mormino, Larry Gates, and Robert Spiess, kept close to 5–7–5 throughout their careers.

Early English-language haiku contests, too, defined haiku in terms of a standard form. You'll recall that James W. Hackett, in order to enter this haiku in the Japan Airlines Contest in 1964, padded up the version that had been published in the first issue of *American Haiku* in 1963:

Bitter morning  
sparrows sitting  
without necks.

to 5–7–5 such that it read:

A bitter morning:  
Sparrows sitting together  
Without any necks.

I can think of no other reason he would have done this but to accommodate his idea of what the Japanese judges expected in a haiku. Hackett's haiku was the National Winner, but significantly, all the runners-up in that contest—by Lorraine Ellis Harr, Robert Mainone, and Robert Spiess, were also 5–7–5.<sup>14</sup>

By the late 1960s, people who were serious about their haiku began to deviate from 5–7–5 form and concentrate on other

aspects of haiku. In fact, the new journal out of Toronto, Eric Amann's *Haiku Magazine*, which began in 1967, was a controversial eye-opener for publishing haiku that concentrated on the haiku moment and depth of meaning rather than adherence to the classic haiku form. This was a watershed in English-language haiku history. Most serious haiku poets began to look differently at haiku now and, by and large, left 5-7-5 to beginners and dilettantes.

### Teaching Haiku in Schools and Colleges

Schoolchildren and students, by definition, number among those beginners. Haiku has long attracted schoolteachers. The very brevity and the necessity to have each word count make the haiku an appealing pedagogical tool, and its main topic—nature—makes it particularly appropriate for children. The Web is full of pedagogical suggestions and lesson plans for a unit on haiku in grade school or junior high. Here is an example, one of the better ones, by Gloria Chaika, a teacher of gifted middle-school students in New Orleans:

As a teacher, first explain the haiku's rigid structural format of five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third. Read several to the class. There are some wonderful Japanese haiku available. . . . Establish a mood. To do so, use visual imagery and/or music or pictures of pastoral scenes, and when the students seem to have some glorious scene in their mind's eye, challenge them to record it—in seventeen syllables. Do not break the mood until poetry is produced.<sup>15</sup>

So 5-7-5 is the cardinal rule. This is haiku as it is almost universally taught in American schools—a poem about nature written in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables. It has become a cliché or joke in the haiku community. It is an invidious joke, however, because it serves to perpetuate a mistaken impression of what a haiku is and has been and totally misses what it might offer to young minds. Rather than learning to use their fingers and thumbs, pupils could learn what an image is and how putting two images together can create an interesting resonance.

Hoping that schoolteachers will abandon their dedication to 5-7-5, however, is a lost cause. I'm sure that 95 percent of primary and secondary schoolteachers simply accept the syllabus of the school board or whatever authority dictates the curriculum and lesson plans that define writing haiku in terms of counting syllables. Some of these children's haiku are assuredly of good quality, but perhaps not the best, shackled as they are to the 5-7-5 form. No surprise, nearly all scholastic haiku contests—as well as popular contests on the Web for children and adults alike—ask for submissions in 5-7-5, with the exception of the Nick Virgilio Haiku Contest for junior high and high school students. None of the twelve prize-winning haiku in that contest in 2012 and 2013 were 5-7-5<sup>16</sup> and almost all were written by students of English teachers and advisers who were haiku poets themselves. So we see a situation in which the schools are adding to the 99 percent of mediocre 5-7-5 haiku, while the other one percent, under the guidance of knowledgeable haikuists, are writing solid, innovative, and prizewinning haiku.

The extent to which haiku are included in standard college poetry textbooks and anthologies—and the sections in which haiku are studied—provide another measure of the status of haiku. A 1973 textbook, *Modern Poems: an Introduction to Poetry*, edited by Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair, included only a nine-haiku sequence by Etheridge Knight, all 5-7-5.<sup>17</sup>

Another popular introductory literature textbook, *Western Wind*, edited by John Frederick Nims and David Mason (4th edition, 2000),<sup>18</sup> uses only two haiku, both by Bashō, and discusses haiku in the “Form” section. The very popular Norton anthologies of poetry also all but ignore haiku as a serious literary form. Their textbook, *The Norton Introduction to Poetry* (7th edition, 1998), however, includes a significant section on haiku in the chapter titled “Literary Tradition as Context.” This compendium includes four haiku by Bashō, plus comparative translations of his “old pond” haiku; two haiku by Buson; four by Issa; two by Chiyo-ni; four others by classic Japanese poets; and finally one each by American

authors J.W. Hackett, Etheridge Knight, Allen Ginsberg, and Richard Wright—all 5–7–5ers but the Ginsberg, which is also 17 syllables.<sup>19</sup>

*An Introduction to Poetry*, edited by X.J. Kennedy, contained a respectable selection of haiku as early as its seventh edition (1990) and perhaps earlier.<sup>20</sup> It had the distinction among college course books of approaching haiku as a serious genre per se, including sensible commentary and—most remarkably—treating the haiku in the chapter on images rather than the one on form. Thus liberated, the haiku in this textbook are not all 5–7–5. Poets included in the seventh edition were Buson, Bashō, and Issa, as well as John Ridland (“The Lazy Man’s Haiku”), Richard Brautigan (“Haiku Ambulance,” his parody of a haiku), Paul Goodman, Gary Snyder, Kenneth Rexroth, Richard Wright, Nicholas A. Virgilio, Raymond Roseliep, Penny Harter, and Virgil Hutton. The ninth edition of this textbook in 1998,<sup>21</sup> now under the general editorship of Dana Gioia, added works by Moritake, Michael B. Stillman, Jennifer Brutschy, Hayden Carruth, and Etheridge Knight (while dropping those by Goodman, Rexroth, Virgilio, Roseliep, Harter, and Hutton—probably a net loss in terms of quality of haiku).

So if weaning schoolteachers off 5–7–5 seems impossible, there is some hope in the teaching of haiku at the college level, where other aspects seem to be gaining ground. In this regard we need to mention college haiku classes by prominent haiku poets such as Steven D. Carter, Randy M. Brooks, and Bill Pauly.

### **Haiku Numerology**

Some poets—mostly in the poetry mainstream to be sure—have become intoxicated by the magic of the numbers in haiku form. Two very prominent “longpoets” who have published books recently both hew closely to 5–7–5, for metrical if not mathematical reasons. Billy Collins occasionally ventures into 5–5–7 or some other line arrangement of 5 and 7 syllables.<sup>22</sup> Paul Muldoon has published two books of haiku that are strictly

5–7–5.<sup>23</sup> Moreover the first and third lines rhyme, often in most ingenious ways, and—here’s the killer—the end word of a verse is used as the rhyme of the first and third lines of a verse five haiku down.

In 2011, for another example, *Modern Haiku* published a “Huge Haiku” by David McAlevey that described the latter’s book of poems composed of “17 sets of 17 poems each with 17 lines each with 17 syllables, all divided up into groupings of 5–7–5 (syllables and lines).”<sup>24</sup> To be sure, this is not a trivial accomplishment, probably something like writing a book of sestinas, but it seems about as far from essential haiku as we can get. Sort of “hyper-haiku” I suppose.

Setting haiku to music is a popular pastime for composers. Many of them get caught up in the numbers game and apply 5–7–5 to their compositions in ways that approach the mystical. Take, for example, the German composer Hans Zender. According to his album notes:

During the 1970s and 1980s Zender wrote a series of pieces bearing the title »Lo-Shu«, the ancient Chinese designation for a square divided into nine parts. The ideas behind *Five Haiku*, so [writes] the composer himself, was his »quest for the further abbreviation of his language. The seventeen syllables of the haiku correspond to the seventeen large measures of a musical movement. Each of these measures is an autonomous musical unit in the sense of tempo and harmony, comparable to the ›phrase‹ of our classical music (it lasts between six and about twelve seconds). The division 5–7–5 of the haiku is made clear by two long rests. The measures themselves are not joined together in the sense of a developmental form but bear their center in themselves, so that their ordering follows on the basis of associative criteria.<sup>25</sup>

I’m afraid this explanation sounds like complete mumbo-jumbo to me.

American composer Mark Winges, who seems to know quite a lot about haiku, has written three sets of *Haiku Settings* on texts by top-flight American haiku poets. Winges writes,

The Haiku used in Haiku Settings cover a broad range, from the traditional 3-line, 17-syllable single moment/image poem, to the “heightened” individual words of Marlene Mountain. All of the texts are minimal, however, both in their use of few words to achieve their effect, and in their presentation: text surrounded by a lot of blank space on the page. . . . [One] element is the use of Haiku patterns in the music, specifically the 5–7–5 pattern (the syllabic division of the traditional 3-line Haiku), and the use of 17 as a “unit.” This element is like the scaffolding for a building—not visible, but a necessary part all the same.<sup>26</sup>

A concert reviewer provided additional information: “The piece hung together quite well, in part due to the use of a reference sonority (not a tonic, but a point of reference). This reference sonority was based on fourths and fifths derived from the 5–7–5 numerology of the haiku structure.”<sup>27</sup>

The numerology of haiku. Well!

### Conclusions

Well, about all I can offer by way of a conclusion is a non-conclusion: that as we slouch into the 21st century, some people write their haiku in 5–7–5, some do not. Most people who come to haiku casually, as on the Web, will choose the “classic” haiku form because of its ubiquity there. Serious longpoets are divided in their approach to haiku: some stick to 5–7–5, some don’t. Nearly all schools teach haiku as a 5–7–5 nature poem, but some college professors and textbooks present a more catholic view.

I originally posed myself the question, “What can we do about the persistence of 5–7–5?” I now think that there is probably nothing to be done: 5–7–5 is ingrained in a certain segment of the haiku-writing population, folks who learned it that way, or who can’t recognize as haiku a poem that does not look like its Japanese forebear, or who relish the exoticism of something that looks like a koan, or who simply enjoy the challenge of writing in strict form. Beginning in the 1960s, however, most serious

haiku poets chose to focus on aspects of the haiku other than form, specifically the importance of the haiku moment and the mechanism of juxtaposing concrete images.

I suspect that we will just have to grin and bear it and keep on answering questions from the public like “what are those rules for writing a haiku again?”

### Notes

1. Harold G. Henderson, *Haiku in English* (New York: Japan Society, Inc., 1965).
2. Charles Trumbull, “Research Note: W.G. Aston,” *Modern Haiku* 39.3 (autumn 2008), 59–63.
3. W.G. Aston, *A History of Japanese Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1899).
4. Basil Hall Chamberlain, “Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, XXX (1902).
5. Asatarō Miyamori, trans. and annotator, *An Anthology of Haiku, Ancient and Modern* (Tokyo: Maruzen Company Ltd., 1932), and other works.
6. Harold Stewart, *A Net of Fireflies: Japanese Haiku and Haiku Paintings* (Rutland, VT, and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1960); Harold Stewart, *A Chime of Windbells: A Year of Japanese Haiku in English Verse* (Rutland, VT, and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1969).
7. Henderson, *Haiku in English*, 26.
8. Cited in Henderson, 35.
9. Hackett discusses this issue in Section 3, “Haiku Form” of his long essay, “That Art Thou: Part II—The Haiku Poem” Section 3, retrieved Oct. 13, 2013, from <http://www.hacketthaiku.com/TA-ThaikuPoem.html>.
10. Harr’s checklist, “The Isn’t of Haiku,” was published widely in the 1970s and 1980s. One version is available online at [http://english.agonia.net/index.php/poetry/195654/The\\_ISN'Ts\\_of\\_Haiku](http://english.agonia.net/index.php/poetry/195654/The_ISN'Ts_of_Haiku).
11. Kenneth Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English, with Selected Examples* (Rutland, VT, and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1957), 180.
12. Joan Giroux, *The Haiku Form* (Rutland, VT, and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1974), 92–93.
13. Clark Strand, *Seeds from a Birch Tree: Writing Haiku and the Spiritual Journey* (New York: Hyperion, 1997), 24, 26.

14. Japan Air Lines, ed., *Haiku '64* (Tokyo: Japan Air Lines Foundation, 1964).
15. *EducationWorld*, retrieved Oct. 13, 2013, from [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/curr052.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr052.shtml).
16. Contest results are reported in *Frogpond* 35:2 (Spring/Summer 2012), 132 ff., and *Frogpond* 36:2 (Spring/Summer 2013), 163 ff.
17. Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair, eds., *Modern Poems: An Introduction to Poetry* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973).
18. John Frederick Nims and David Mason, eds., *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry*, 4th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages, 2000).
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21. X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia, eds., *An Introduction to Poetry*, 9th edition (New York: Longmans, 1998).
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23. Paul Muldoon, *Sixty Instant Messages to Tom Moore* (Lincoln, IL: Modern Haiku Press, 2005); Paul Muldoon, *Hopewell Haiku*, 1st edition (Easthampton, MA: Warwick Press, 2008).
24. David McAleavey, "Huge Haiku," *Modern Haiku* 42.1 (winter-spring 2011), 66.
25. Thomas Sick (trans. Susan Marie Praeder), album notes for Hans Zender—*Fünf Haiku for Flute and Strings (Lo Shu IV)*. Hans Zender, conductor. Saarländischer Rundfunk cpo000 485-2.
26. Mark Winges, performance notes for *Haiku Settings, third set*, retrieved Oct. 3, 2013, from <http://www.innova.mu/sites/www.innova.mu/files/liner-notes/573.htm>.
27. David C. Meckler, "The Bay Area Bursts Out Singing" [review of a concert on May 10, 1998, by the San Francisco Chamber Singers], *20th Century Music*, Aug. 1, 1998, retrieved Oct. 13, 2013 from [http://home.myastound.net/~dcmeckler/rev\\_bacm.htm](http://home.myastound.net/~dcmeckler/rev_bacm.htm).



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## A New Era for Haiku\*

Toshio Kimura, Tokyo, Japan

I would like to discuss certain issues inherent in haiku, not only from just the conventional point of view, but from the vantage point of a new era for haiku around the world. In 1957, a haiku poet and some critics had a round-table discussion on the future of haiku.<sup>1</sup> When critic Hideo Kanda said, “I don’t want to make haiku live any longer by force,” haiku poet Kusatao Nakamura replied, “I’d like to keep it alive till it comes to a conclusion.”<sup>2</sup> From their discussion, we can imagine that the haiku situation in the middle of the 20th century was that the leading figures in haiku felt this unique poetry form would fall into a decline sooner or later.

snowfalls—  
the Meiji era  
gone far

Kusatao Nakamura

降る雪や明治は遠くなりけり<sup>2</sup>

中村草田男 (1901–83)

Poetry forms which cannot adapt to the times now exist only in collections of past masterpieces. Today few poets try to adopt, for example, the alliterative verse form of brave Beowulf, or rhymed poems in stanzas like those by delicate William Wordsworth. In the previous century when everything around us had been modernized, a number of Japanese poets thought haiku would join such past poetry forms before long. However, this hasn’t occurred. Now haiku seems to be more popular than ever both in Japan and around the world.

The reason haiku has survived seems to lie in its innovative substance. In fact haiku has transformed itself to respond to circumstances in various times. I would like to mention here the distinctive features of haiku especially from its reformative point of view.

## What Is Haiku?

### Shortness

Haiku poets ask themselves, “What is the essence of haiku?” About this question, Akito Arima, president of the Haiku International Association (HIA), said in a haiku symposium in the International PEN Congress Tokyo 2010<sup>3</sup> that the most important characteristic of haiku lies in its “shortness.” I agree with his assessment.

a kitten  
however it is called  
it answers back

Akito Arima

猫の子のどう呼ばれても答へけり<sup>4</sup>                      有馬朗人 (1930–)

(English translation by Emiko Miyashita & Lee Gurga)

From fixed-form rhymed lyrics to present-day free verse, detailed description has been the important characteristic of Western poetry. The essence of haiku, on the other hand, lies in the fact that even this fragment-like poetry can express something poetic. Why are Western poems longer? The simplest explanation for it might be that all of those lines are needed to convey the poet’s ideas to readers. That is to say, even a thousand-line epic or a dozen-line lyric would not have any unnecessary lines.

Now, why can haiku be so short? The explanation is this: although it is short, it can convey a profound poetic meaning. How then can haiku convey meaning in spite of its brevity? I think it is because, historically, Japanese people have been able to gain almost the same impression from one word or phrase. Critic Shōichi Watanabe mentioned that the reason haiku can convey meaning is because it is written on the basis of a common association of ideas between the poet and readers.<sup>5</sup> When one word has exactly the same meaning for both, then they may come to a mutual understanding on the basis of just that one word. As you know, “flowers/blossoms” in haiku mean

“cherry blossoms” when used without any other modifiers. Watanabe said that short poems like haiku came into existence presupposing the same, strong association of ideas. In Japan since the time of the *Man'yō-shū*, the ancient poetry anthology (from the 7th to 8th century), poetry has become shorter and shorter as these common associations of ideas have become stronger and stronger.

The common association of ideas seems to owe much to Japan's centralization of government. The Imperial Court and then the Shogunate were not only the center of politics, but also of culture. After hundreds of years of their government, people came to share the same language, culture, and history. As a result, sharing the common association of ideas, people could communicate with each other in only 17 syllables. Japan's *sakoku* (the national isolation policy) during the Edo period would have reinforced this tendency.

### The Fixed Form

This 17-syllable short Japanese verse has a well-known important characteristic: the fixed form. However, most Japanese poets do not recognize haiku as 17-*on* verse (*on* literally means “sound”; in English, a kind of “syllable”), but as a whole poetic rhythm of 5–7–5. Japanese poets almost never count the number of *on* (i.e., the number of syllables) when composing haiku; the haiku fixed form lies in the poetic rhythm itself, not in the number of syllables. Bashō's famous frog pond haiku goes like this in Japanese:

Furuike ya / kawazu tobikomu / mizu no oto                      Matsuo Bashō

古池や蛙飛こむ水のをと<sup>6</sup>    松尾芭蕉

When we consider “what haiku is,” its short structure is closely linked with the fixed form, particularly in the Japanese language. However, when we look outside of Japan, the fixed style often disappears, and only its shortness emerges as a distinctive factor, as Arima said.

## Humor

Humor is another characteristic of *haikai*/haiku. *Haikai* literally means “humor,” and it is what separates *haikai* from *waka*. *Waka* was written mainly by nobles and had conventional poetic subjects of serious aristocratic taste. When composing it, deviation from the poetical tradition was basically not accepted because such a thing was thought to be unrefined. On the other hand, *haikai* (*-no-renga*) developed among common people who attended haiku meetings for making collaborative poems since around the 16th century. It was to some extent a parody of serious *waka*, and people considered this comical nature to be important rather than the traditional subject, because most of the attendees, who may not have understood much of detailed conventional literary connotation, could understand humor. By composing *haikai* together, the common people resisted the political and cultural establishment—not by rioting, but by laughing off the conventional aristocratic poetry. Even today, humor still remains one of the characteristics of haiku.

meow meow the violin  
kicking the moon  
and there goes moo

Toshio Kimura

ミャーミャーバイオリン月蹴ってモー<sup>7</sup>

木村聡雄 (1956–)

## Haikuness

You can find many short poems or fragmented phrases around the world, but such poems would not always be recognized as haiku. We may sometimes ask ourselves, “Is this haiku or not?” Once a female haiku poet, Sonoko Nakamura, told me as a young student that when a poet decides his/her poem is haiku, it can be haiku. An interesting interpretation, isn’t it?

in the other world  
still combing my hair  
—alone

Sonoko Nakamura

黄泉に来てまだ髪梳くは寂しけれ<sup>8</sup>

中村苑子 (1913–2001)

However, sometimes other people might not recognize it as haiku, so the problem may not be so easy. We ask ourselves again, “What makes haiku essentially haiku-like?” About this, I have not yet heard a definitive answer. All the same, if a haiku poem has such “haikuness” in it, not only traditional haiku, but also free form *jiyūritsu* haiku and non-seasonal avant-garde haiku could be recognized as haiku. This may be like a Zen riddle. In a sense, it may be Japanese psyche or mentality, a kind of national cultural sort of thing. Japanese haiku poets probably feel it in their hearts, even though they do not have any idea how to explain it.

### **Haiku and Zen**

There was an Englishman who spread haiku around the world in the mid-20th century. I suppose you know his name well: R.H. Blyth (1898–1964). Blyth made one primary assertion about haiku: “Haiku are to be understood from the Zen point of view.”<sup>9</sup> Concerning this insistence, I think that while people admire his contribution to the development of haiku around the world, some still feel that he connected haiku to Zen too much. I also thought at first that haiku is one thing and Zen Buddhism another. Each aims for a different goal; haiku, toward a poetical peak, Zen, a religious one.

As I pondered what haiku is, however, I came to realize that Blyth’s statement on haiku and Zen can be understood as a kind of rhetoric meant to evoke the poetical truth. I guess that in his statement, the term “Zen” could suggest what you might call a method of “Zen riddles” here, rather than Buddhist faith as such. And through these riddles, his words may hint at a “haiku moment” when the poet is in contact with the poetic truth.

In both Zen riddles and haiku, no explanation is required: they rely on “intuition,” which surely seems to be inconsistent with minute descriptions in longer poetry forms like some Western ones. Avoiding lengthy explanations, a poet might even—with

an instant inspiration—reach universal truth. I think this kind of “grasp by intuition” may be the essence of haiku and the virtue of its shortness. I imagine that in this galaxy of haiku intuition various haiku techniques and methods, like Bashō’s *wabi/sabi* (elegant simplicity), Shiki’s *shasei* (sketches), Kyōshi’s *kachō-fūei* (nature themes), *jiyūritsu* (free-verse style), and even “non-seasonal avant-garde haiku” are revolving, like planets, around the axis of poetic truth. This would be the line that divides haiku from other general short poems.

a boy—  
just like spring  
after 60 years

Kōi Nagata

少年や六十年後の春の如し<sup>10</sup>

永田耕衣 (1900–1997)

only two blades  
of grass growing  
—time

Kakio Tomizawa

草二本だけ生えてゐる 時間<sup>11</sup>

富澤赤黄男 (1902–1962)

## Cutting

Another conventional haiku technique is *kire*, or cutting. We sometimes use *kireji* (cutting words like *-ya*, or *-kana*); however, without cutting words, a haiku poem can be cut into mainly two parts: you can simply call it “juxtaposition.” And if such juxtaposition is given unexpectedly in haiku, we may see an image evoking modern surrealism:

Beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissection table.<sup>12</sup>

*Kire* is, in fact, an ideal technique that allows for multiple images within haiku’s short form. When we consider *kire* as a kind of device with which we can reach insight without

explanation, the role and significance of it can be better understood. Here again we could recognize that this technique can be related to Blyth's insistence about haiku and Zen from the intuitive point of view. Thus, I argue that the essence of haiku lies in its shortness with associations of ideas and intuition.

my friend—  
one of my arms  
already a demon

Shigenobu Takayanagi

友よ我は片腕すでに鬼となりぬ<sup>13</sup>

高柳重信 (1923–1983)

## The Problem of Seasonal Images in Haiku

### Haiku and Nature Themes

Haiku is often said to be a poetry form with conventional nature subjects. Undoubtedly, you have already heard arguments along that line. Here I would like to discuss seasonal themes from a different point of view, so that we see another side of this issue.

In Japan and other places, haiku may be thought to have developed as the only poetry specializing in season. However, this interpretation does not seem to be accurate. When you examine the history of Japanese poetry, you realize that before *haikai*/haiku was born, nature themes were already included in most ancient Japanese poetry and developed as one of its main subjects. When *haikai* appeared, it shared those seasonal subjects with other Japanese poetry.

Kenkichi Yamamoto, a leading critic of the traditional school, said, "Concerning a rule that haiku has season words, you would never convince all the people of the reason."<sup>14</sup> Though Bashō basically composed haiku with seasonal themes, he once told his disciple Kyorai that if *hokku* didn't have seasonal subjects, other subjects could be used:

The subjects of *hokku* include not only “the four seasons,” but also “love,” “travels,” “noted places,” and “the separation of people”; and non-seasonal haiku would be good.<sup>15</sup>

Here is one of Bashō’s famous non-seasonal haiku:

if on foot . . .  
on the Tuetsuki-zaka hill  
falling from my horse! Bashō

歩行ならば 杖つき坂を落馬哉<sup>16</sup> 芭蕉

### Subjects in *Waka*

In ancient and medieval times, most poetry in the world would have been written following conventional themes. Needless to say, a poet’s original thoughts or private feelings as a focus in poetry are products of the self-consciousness of modern times. *Waka*, a direct ancestor of *haikai*/haiku, had some conventional regular subjects and Bashō’s words quoted previously were conscious of them. Among several subjects, *waka* poets preferred subjects of “love” and “season,” and we can imagine such poetical themes were essential in all times, especially in Japan. Thus seasonal subjects originally developed as conventions in *waka*.

It is said the reason that ancient poetry like *waka* included nature themes lies in the climate in Japan. People there have always enjoyed the changes of the four seasons. Another reason is the agrarian lifestyle: the Japanese people subsisted mainly on a vegetable diet. Growing crops is influenced by weather, and as a result people came to be very conscious of climate. For them, nature was not just something to be conquered as in the West, but to get along with. These situations contributed much to the seasonal themes in *waka* from ancient times. For example, the moon was one of the most popular nature themes: since the Japanese depended on the lunar calendar, when they saw the moon, they knew the date of the month.



in the sea of heaven  
waves of clouds,  
the ship of the moon  
into the forest of stars  
rowing in and out

Kakinomoto no Hitomaro

天の海に 雲の波立ち 月の船 星の林に 漕ぎ隠る見ゆ<sup>17</sup>

柿本人麻呂 (c.660–c.720)

### Seasonal Subjects as Abstract Ideas

Even though Japan is a much smaller country than the U.S., the climate in the north and south is different: in September Tohoku (the northern district) is already cold, but in Kyushu (the southern district) it is still hot. The sense of the season in Japan will be felt considerably differently from end to end, and there are different plants and animals in those places. Such differences of weather may be compared to those between Chicago and Miami, for example. Some poets may wonder whether it might be inconvenient to share the same seasonal subject in the north and the south areas when they write seasonal poems.

Traditionally people would not have been troubled by such things when writing *waka*, because the ancient and medieval poets did not make sketches of things in front of them in their poems. Historically seasonal subjects in *waka* developed as “ideal abstract concepts.” That is to say, before modern times, when you composed a poem, a subject you were going to write about was often given in advance by a master of a salon and you were expected to follow custom or the precedents of famous poems. One poet from the north and another poet from the south could employ the same abstract poetic subject at the same time.

Where, then, was the point between them that would set the standard for the season word? It was the place of the centralized government, Kyoto, and later, Edo. Kyoto was the capital when *waka* thrived, and was the center of the seasonal ideas. At that time, people who wrote *waka* were mainly nobles and many of them were living in Kyoto. Unlike the U.S., which has multiple cultural centers, Japan is small enough to have one

central spot. Even today, Japanese youth from the provinces try to imitate the newscasters' standard Japanese pronunciation or like to mimic the fashion trends in Aoyama or Harajuku, Tokyo. This center-oriented spirit among Japanese people has been nurtured from ancient times. Cultural matters in Kyoto became the model for associations of poetry subjects. Powerful regional nobles tried to follow the standard Kyoto mode. If you did not follow the conventional Kyoto manners on seasonal subjects in *waka*, you may have been considered to be uneducated, and if you were nobles in that time, you would surely have wanted to avoid that.

Again, individualism and localism are the products of modern times. When you write *waka* on the subject of *ume* (apricot) flower, whether it is in bloom or not in front of your eyes, you should praise (or mourn for) the flower in the style following that of the famous ancient poets. The point is not its originality, but how well you can do it in the conventional way. It is homage to those preceding masterworks.

all the apricots  
blossom forth,  
as spring not far away—  
How vain am I  
not awaiting?

Ki no Tsurayuki

梅もみな 春近しとて 咲くものを まつ時もなきわれや何なる<sup>18</sup>

紀貫之 (c.872–c.945)

*Haikai* adopted those subjects used in *waka*, especially the seasonal themes, probably because even for the common people the changes of seasons were much clearer than other sophisticated conventional literary manners. After a while “season words” came to be established in *hokku* (the first stanza of *haikai*).

### **A Reason for the Existence of *Kigo***

In the late 19th century (the Meiji Era), *waka* was transformed into modern poetry and its name was changed to *tanka*, though the 31-syllable (5–7–5–7–7) structure was not altered. This

change also meant that the tanka form threw away the whole system of conventional subjects in *waka*, including seasonal ones. Thus tanka was reborn as a modern fixed-form poetry, which is not restricted by any traditional rules or subjects, except its 31 syllables (usually five lines in English).

On the other hand, haiku took over the seasonal subject from *haikai* even after “the haiku reformation” by Shiki in the Meiji period. About this, critic Shigehiko Toyama observed, “Haiku was modernized incompletely.”<sup>19</sup> I believe the reason for this may lie in its shortness, as I argued in the previous section: haiku is so short it needed some common poetic associations to convey meaning. If so, that also means that any subject (including non-seasonal ones) could have been used in haiku as long as it evoked common associations. Seasonal themes may have been more familiar at *haikai*/haiku meetings since such subjects were usually used as seasonal greetings, and because they can evoke a similar “association of ideas” among people. Tanka form, on the other hand, is long enough that it does not always need such an association of ideas to be understood.

I think that today this “incomplete” modernization of haiku is actually felt as traditional and thus authentic and, as a consequence, exotic to people around the world. However, concerning that incomplete evolution, there remains the possibility of arguments by innovative poets that haiku must be “completely” modern in our 21st century. One of the vital points for its modernization seems to lie in the problem of non-seasonal themes.

Regarding the existence of season words, haiku poet and critic Bansei Tsukushi says, “the only grounds for the existence of season words in haiku is that haiku was ‘*daiei*’ (that is, the poetry form ‘with given themes’).”<sup>20</sup> I agree with the gist of this remark.

falling cherry blossoms:  
if sea is so blue  
falling onto it

Sōshū Takaya

ちるさくら海あをければ海へちる<sup>21</sup>

高屋窓秋 (1910–1984)

## A New Haiku Era

### Metamorphosis in New Haiku

Some transformation in reading and composing haiku seems to be occurring outside Japan with the globalization of haiku in the 20th century—and this is related to the “common association of ideas” that has been said to be a part of the essence of haiku shortness. When people other than Japanese read Japanese haiku, in translation or not, they might not be aware of the traditional association of ideas. I understand that most HSA members, for instance, understand such connotations well, but I suppose that most readers in the world do not care much about Japanese *kigo*, for example.

Japanese readers always call up connotations from Japanese culture when reading *waka* or haiku; however, for non-Japanese readers the same expression may often be interpreted without this traditional association. That is to say, even if part of a haiku poem remains blank (with almost no connotation of *waka/haikai* conveyed), they can still enjoy haiku by Bashō or Issa, or any other Japanese poets. Indeed, these readers might fill the blank with their own imagination. Although this fact seems to contradict the suggestion by Watanabe, I should say that from the historical view of haiku development his opinion is correct. This metamorphosis in reading which allows for a blank part in haiku seems to have occurred in the 20th century after haiku spread around the world.

If some words in a haiku poem don't bring up a traditional association of ideas, and still the poem can be understood as haiku, then the complicated connotations behind the conventional *kigo* might be no longer necessary in haiku in the 21st century. For many haiku readers in the world, “flowers” may no longer be “cherry blossoms,” nor a spring thing, but might just be flowers, as the French Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé suggested:

I say: a flower! and outside the oblivion. . . , there arises musically, as the very idea and delicate, the one absent from every bouquet.<sup>22</sup>

Here, a new way of reading haiku could develop further. Because Japanese people cannot help reading haiku without getting some association of ideas from season words, the Japanese reading style might tend to be limited to a conventional base. However, outside Japan I suppose new chemical reactions may be occurring between a haiku poem and non-Japanese readers. Readers around the world might enjoy a kind of “blank” part in and of itself, imagining just as they like in the absence of Japanese traditional background ideas.

In addition, poets other than Japanese might write their own haiku with their own “blank” parts in them. Again, such haiku could be understood just as they are without conventional connotations, and still be enjoyable from the point of poetic insight. In this way, haiku from around the world are transformed into newer haiku, which convey new poetic meaning without traditional association. New haiku could open up new territory of the future of haiku in ways that conservative Japanese poets have never imagined.

elm tree—  
you show your back  
with your noble feeling  
Ikuya Katō

楡よ、お前は高い感情の後ろを見せる<sup>23</sup> 加藤郁乎 (1929–2013)

### **Toward a New Era—Conclusion**

The concept of “nature poetry” is surely a tradition of great interest. However, if haiku today is no longer *daiei* (the poetry form with given themes) but one of the universal short poetry forms, we should not be bound by old season subjects any longer. I know that some modern haiku poets enjoy writing haiku following only their own poetic imaginations, employing subjects other than seasonal ones—actually we have many non-seasonal haiku both in Japan and in the rest of the world. When considering haiku in a new era, we have to examine both positions: one to keep the tradition; the other

to search for new poetic possibility in reforming the old style. Bashō's point, that "the subjects of *hokku* include not only 'the four seasons' . . . and non-seasonal haiku could be good," is still valid in this very 21st century.

returned—  
just bending the head  
as a flower

Toshio Kimura

帰還せりただうつむいて花として<sup>24</sup>

木村聡雄

### Notes

\*This essay was first presented as a keynote speech at the Annual National Meeting of the Haiku Society of America, in Evanston, IL, September 28, 2013. All English translations of poems and quotations cited are by the author, except as mentioned.

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*Born in 1956 in Tokyo, Japan, Toshio Kimura is a haiku poet and professor of comparative literature at Nihon University. His haiku collections include In the Distance (2001) and Little Brier Rose (2010) [both in Japanese], as well as Phantasm of Flowers (2002) [in English].*

## Haiku and War<sup>1</sup>

Paul Miller, Bristol, Rhode Island

In 2012 I read a haiku about the war in Iraq that left me uneasy. The more time I spent with the poem the more convinced I became that it was technically a good poem. I could see how the parts worked together nicely, yet something about it still bothered me. A month or so later I read an equally good haiku about Hiroshima by a different poet that had the same effect upon me, so I decided to research war haiku to discover why a technically good haiku could still feel problematic.

In the first part of this essay I will examine the landscape of war haiku. I will look at its history, discuss why poets might choose haiku instead of other genres for their impressions of war, look at who is writing war haiku, and point out some major themes. Additionally, since a haiku's small size often means that its specific war is left unmentioned, I will discuss the sometime use of particular referents—and how those can help build a vertical axis.

In the second part, to be published in the next issue of *Frogpond*, I will move from the landscape of war haiku into the important questions that the poems and poets themselves raise. I will discuss the differences between the haiku of war participants and those who comment from the sidelines, look at haiku that take a moral stand, ask questions concerning authenticity—including creating a definition of authenticity that extends beyond war haiku, and examine the thorny question of historical revision. I will also discuss why any one of these issues can potentially cause a haiku to fail.

For the most part I will be examining war haiku from outside Japan. However some haiku were written by Japanese and other nationals, so I should mention upfront that I am not a reader of Japanese, Croatian, Serbian, or any other language but English, and am reliant on the translation work done by many others. It is a fair argument that this limits the available examples of war haiku and, at the same time, my analysis of



the subject. So be it. In the words of Euripides: “The god of war hates those who hesitate.”

### **Introduction**

All civilized men agree that war in the abstract is undesirable and should be avoided for its human, spiritual, and material costs. Robert E. Lee, in a letter to his wife, wrote:

What a cruel thing is war: to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world; to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world.<sup>2</sup>

A hundred years later Dwight D. Eisenhower added,

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.<sup>3</sup>

And more recently the Dalai Lama wrote:

War is neither glamorous nor attractive. It is monstrous. Its very nature is one of tragedy and suffering.<sup>4</sup>

Yet if war in the abstract is monstrous, the necessity of a specific war is debatable. Without the American Civil War, slavery might continue to be a viable institution, and the continental United States divided into two hostile and closely adjacent, economic foes. Future conflicts would be inevitable. Similarly, without World War II, Europe would be dominated by the Third Reich and the Japanese Empire would be spread across the South Pacific. And I would argue that by Tibet’s lack of preparation for war, and by no other country’s military intercession on its behalf, Tibet lost much of its culture. The Dalai Lama himself sees the occasional necessity for war when he says:

It is plain to all of us that the Second World War was entirely justified. It “saved civilization” from the tyranny of Nazi Germany . . . The Korean War was also just, since it gave South Korea the chance of gradually developing democracy.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly war and its morality are complex subjects and we would expect any dialogue or art about war to be equally so.

Haiku on war have been looked at previously both in anthologies and standalone essays. In the several anthologies on the subject, it seems to me that little analysis has been attempted except to suggest that war is bad in the few brief introductions to the collected haiku. In fact, in some cases, the only criteria of a haiku’s worth (meaning inclusion in the anthology) seems to be that it pointed out the horror of war. Some essays address the question of why more poets don’t write war haiku. And while this is certainly an important question—considering that many poets view haiku as an expression of our engagement with the world, and it can be easily argued that war is seemingly ever present in our culture—they don’t address the effectiveness of the poems compared to non-war haiku. The essays are more concerned with providing strategies for making poets comfortable writing war haiku.

My goal in this essay is to do more than point out that war is bad. I want to examine war haiku from all sides—historically, thematically, and morally—to determine, more importantly, how war haiku can succeed or stumble.

## History

Haiku have been written on many wars. However, tracing the origins of war haiku is a tricky business, because war was considered an unsuitable topic for haiku during much of its history. Bashō, apocryphally, is reported to have said “You shall not carry a smidgen of steel on your hips,” an injunction which many took to mean that the master considered such haiku “unbefitting *haikai* sensibility.”<sup>6</sup> So whoever wrote the first war haiku most likely didn’t share it with the public.

That said, two of the earliest known haiku that reference war were by Bashō—both from his travel diary *The Narrow Road to the Interior*. They both reference famous battles. Bashō, of course, wasn't a soldier himself, and was writing 500 years after these battles. Both haiku are from 1689.

summer grasses  
where stalwart soldiers  
once dreamed a dream<sup>7</sup>

how piteous!  
under the helmet  
a cricket<sup>8</sup>

Given the high literacy rate of the Japanese warrior class, we might expect to find war haiku in the death haiku of some samurai. We know of death haiku from some of the 47 Ronin from around 1703. They were a famous group of samurai whose master was compelled to commit ritual suicide for assaulting a court official. Two years later they avenged their master by killing the same court official. Found guilty of murder, they were allowed to commit ritual suicide themselves rather than be executed because they had proved themselves to be loyal retainers, and the embodiment of *bushidō*. But none of their death haiku were on war. We also have other non-war-related, death haiku from some combatants who participated in the Meiji restoration in 1868. Given that haiku was practiced by these samurai and Meiji combatants—at least as far as death haiku—it is conceivable that haiku were written by them about individual battles. However, I and some translators of Japanese were not able to find any.

The shift away from this taboo was perhaps facilitated by the emphasis on realism that Masaoka Shiki brought to the genre at the turn of the nineteenth century, as well as the Meiji restoration's new focus on the individual. Shiki himself, in youthful fashion, wrote martial haiku as early as 1893 and volunteered as a war correspondent for the newspaper *Nippon* during the first Sino-Japanese war of 1894. However, by the

time he had arrived in China the war had ended. He wrote this haiku during his brief stay in China.

Pears in bloom—  
a wrecked house  
left from the battle<sup>9</sup>

Some of the earliest poets to write haiku outside of Japan were the French. Julien Vocance in 1916 used the form to write *Cent Visions de Guerre (A Hundred Visions of War)*, a book of one hundred haiku on his experiences in the trenches of World War I.

White wooden crosses  
Surging from the soil,  
Each day, here and there<sup>10</sup>

All night in a hole  
facing a giant army  
two men<sup>11</sup>

Japan had gained a foothold in China with the first Sino-Japanese war. In 1931 they invaded Manchuria, and in 1937 Beijing. Two haiku from that conflict:

Young men march away  
The mountain greenness  
Is at its peak<sup>12</sup>

Santōka

This is cold rain: two or three carry the bones on their chests

Katayama Tōshi<sup>13</sup>

The Katayama haiku was written on the Chinese front. Some soldiers would carry the ashes of their fallen comrades in boxes strapped to their chests in order to return them to family back home.

As may be expected, I can only find poems written by Japanese—either national or expatriate—about World War II. A few examples:

spring snow  
purifies earth and heaven—  
our enemies perish

Mizuhara Shūōshi<sup>14</sup>

Singapore has fallen: the spring lamp suggests morning

Watanabe Suiha<sup>15</sup>

Nation victorious: with cold smoke high the train departs

Yamaguchi Seishi<sup>16</sup>

A machine gun  
In the forehead  
The killing flower blooms

Saitō Sanki<sup>17</sup>

air-raid  
the single well-sharpened  
pencil

Kaneko Tohta<sup>18</sup>

War was standing at the corridor's end

Watanabe Hakusen<sup>19</sup>

Confident of peace to come  
not looking up  
at woodpecker

Shintomi Deisha<sup>20</sup>

for a while  
resting under the shade of a horse  
a mother and child

Kikue Izutsu<sup>21</sup>

I lay her dead body on the roadside    night dawns early

Shimomura Hiroshi<sup>22</sup>

Some explanatory comments. The Mizuhara haiku was written about Japan's conquest of Singapore in 1942. For the Watanabe haiku, according to Hiroaki Sato, "spring lamp" was a relatively new *kigo*, and referred to a warm sensual atmosphere. Sato added, "[This] haiku . . . probably won hearty approval from the military and police censors."<sup>23</sup> Mizuhara was not alone in supporting the war. The well-known haiku master Yamaguchi Seishi's haiku is clearly pro-empire. Kaneko Tohta, another Japanese master, served as an accounting lieutenant on the Truk Islands during the war. He penned many haiku about his time stationed there. Unlike Mizuhara and Yamaguchi, he was critical of the war. Shintomi was a Japanese-American interned at Rohwer Relocation Camp in Arkansas. This haiku is from the collection, *May Sky*. Kikue was a Japanese settler in Manchuria. She, like many other women and children, was abandoned by the Japanese Army in their retreat from the invading Red Army. Shimomura was a Nagasaki survivor.

In 2000 Ernest J. Berry published *Forgotten War*, a book-length haiku sequence on his experiences in Korea. Jerry Kilbride, another Korean War veteran, contributed a closing haibun. The fact that fifty years later Berry could put together a collection of more than 100 poems demonstrates the lasting emotional toll that war imposes on soldiers.

lull in the fighting  
I crush a butterfly  
for no reason

Ernest J. Berry<sup>24</sup>

killed in action:  
recalling the way he pulled  
a book from his pocket

Jerry Kilbride<sup>25</sup>

Likewise, American poets Ty Hadman, Robert D. Wilson, and w.f. owen used haiku to describe their experiences in Vietnam. Hadman in his book *Dong Ha Haiku*, Wilson through his *Vietnam Ruminations* series, and Owen primarily in several of his haibun. Additionally, Nick Virgilio wrote several poems on the death of his brother in Vietnam. In 1984 Edward Tick published *On Sacred Mountain*, a collection of haiku inspired by veterans he worked with. In addition, through his work, some veterans themselves have written haiku. And in 2006, John J. Dunphy put out his book *Old Soldiers Fading Away* containing haiku that dealt with veterans' issues.

no enemy seen  
but I get a good look  
at myself

Ty Hadman<sup>26</sup>

twilight—  
soldiers and the jungle wear  
the same uniform

Robert D. Wilson<sup>27</sup>

combing  
the military beach  
a crab with one claw

w.f. owen<sup>28</sup>

Haiku were also written about the 1990 Gulf War. Lenard D. Moore, an ex-soldier himself, wrote haiku about his brother's experiences as a marine in Desert Storm. Additionally, Michael Dylan Welch and Christopher Herold edited *The Gulf Within* in 1991, which gave stateside, non-combatant poets a voice in the conflict.

dust drifts  
where the duffle bags were  
the white-hot sun

Lenard D. Moore<sup>29</sup>

moonless night—  
in the streetlamp's brightness  
a yellow ribbon

Adele Kenny<sup>30</sup>

The dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, and its several civil wars, produced a great many haiku. Anthologies included *Haiku iz rata (War Haiku)*, edited by Marijan Čekolj; *A Piece of the Sky*, edited by Dimitar Anakiev; *The Third Bank of the River*, edited by Nebojša Simin; and *Haiku from an Air-Raid Shelter*, edited by Dragan Ristić. Additionally there were some individual collections.

Spring time—  
in the national flag  
a mere three colors

Dimitar Anakiev<sup>31</sup>

On the wheat fields  
bomb craters  
are sprouting!

Marijan Čekolj<sup>32</sup>

after the bombing  
ruins of a bridge  
linked by the fog

Nebojša Simin<sup>33</sup>

A stray bomb  
has fallen upon the  
cemetery.

Nikola Madžirov<sup>34</sup>

Serbian-born Anakiev is the most prolific of these writers. For ten years he resided in Slovenia without passport or other official identification upon the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Many of his haiku deal with the war-torn region, particularly his books *Rustic* and *Kosovo Peony*. He most recently edited the 390-page *World Haiku Anthology on War, Violence, and Human Rights Violation*, an anthology on war in general.

Kylan Jones-Huffman, an intelligence officer in Iraq, published several haiku before he died in Iraq in 2003.

gaunt children  
selling old bayonets—  
noonday sun<sup>35</sup>



And Rick Black, a former news correspondent in Jerusalem, put out a poignant chapbook titled *Peace & War* on the complexities and contradictions of his posting in Israel.

just buried soldier—  
too soon for his mother to  
notice the crocus<sup>36</sup>

While the above is hardly an exhaustive history, it should be apparent that war has achieved a strong foothold in haiku poetry by poets with many different viewpoints on the subject.

### Why Haiku?

Why did these and other writers choose haiku as the form for their war poetry? Japanese poets aside (since haiku is such an ingrained part of their literature), we might instead ask: why not haiku? Poems on war in world literature have been written in all forms: metered Greek works such as the “Iliad,” Tennyson’s “Charge of the Light Brigade” with its repeated lines, the World War I sonnets of Rupert Brooke, the irregularly rhymed “The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner” by Randall Jarrell and “I Have a Rendezvous with Death” by Alan Seeger, and the free verse of Denise Levertov’s anti-Vietnam poem “Life at War” . . . among numerous others. Haiku, with its emphasis on the here and now, provides a poetic vehicle perfect for expressing a writer’s immediate perceptions and emotions. Equally important, since haiku usually present an image without interpretation, haiku let readers re-experience the moment themselves. Edward Tick nicely sums it up:

As a poetic form, it is uncanny that haiku appears in key ways to be similar to the experience of war itself. Both the haiku and the war experience present as spontaneous, fragmentary, non-conceptual, imagistic and immediate. Both cut into the psyche through the impact of their imagery. Neither gives us time to breathe or recover. We are hit or not.<sup>37</sup>

One specific characteristic of haiku that gives it this ideal impact is its brevity. Because of a haiku's focus, for the most part, on a moment, a haiku on war isn't about a complete war—like say, the "Iliad." Instead it is often about a single explosion, or a single bullet. A haiku is a single moment of fear, dread, or excitement . . . a single emotion. A longer poem is often about understanding the poem, rather than feeling it. There's an immediacy to haiku. Additionally, by focusing on small moments, the poet can avoid the harder—if not impossible—questions about war's meaning and motivation. It brings the moment to the individual's level.

Another characteristic of haiku is objectivity or realism. Haiku tend to focus on what is, rather than what could be, or some abstract version of it. Likewise haiku tend to provide just the facts—without interpretation. This is in contrast to poems like "The Charge of the Light Brigade" with its final lines that direct the reader to "Honour the Light Brigade." These are lines that tell the reader what to think and how to interpret the charge, and by extension the poem. The poem intends to teach the reader, to actively persuade, and has elements of propaganda. The St. Crispin's Day speech in "Henry V" works the same.

The combination of brevity and objectivity produces a suggestiveness to haiku that is often missing in other genres. Where other poems "tell" us how to feel, haiku suggest it—and ultimately, the best haiku leave the interpretation to the reader. As perhaps an unfair exercise, compare the first few lines from Denise Levertov's famous poem, "Life at War," to a haiku by Ernest Berry. First Levertov:

The disasters numb within us  
caught in the chest, rolling  
in the brain like pebbles. The feeling  
resembles lumps of raw dough

weighing down a child's stomach on baking day.  
Or Rilke said it, 'My heart . . .

Denise Levertov<sup>38</sup>  
*To Stay Alive* (1971)

Note the language Levertov uses: the vague word “disasters,” the simile “like pebbles”; she doesn’t tell us the “feeling” in line 3, but rather that it resembles something else. Later in the poem she speaks of eyes that are like flowers, the laughter of dogs, and “the scheduled breaking open of breasts whose milk / runs out over the entrails of still-alive babies. . . .” Note the abstractions, which are clever, but—like the fantastic language—also keep us safely removed from the action. She introduces the poet Rilke, which takes us even further away from the scene at hand. Despite all the horrors she presents, the quick shuffling from scene to scene actually keeps the reader safely disengaged—except intellectually. One might argue that the introduction of phrases like “a child’s stomach on baking day” brings in other senses, and in this case perhaps obliquely introduces ideas like Agent Orange and deforestation, but it does so at the expense of immediacy and makes the poem too large and complex to easily hold.

In contrast, a haiku by Ernest Berry doesn’t allow the reader to step away.

frosty morning  
migrating geese  
and refugees

Ernest Berry<sup>39</sup>

This haiku paints a scene of refugees presumably on a road. Like the geese they only have the possessions on their backs. But unlike the geese, they may not be able to fully flee the war zone.

In contrast to the Levertov poem, once we are engaged with the scene, Berry doesn’t shift us away from it. Haiku’s brevity means that there is nowhere else to go. The reader is forced to stay with the scene—to face it. In this way, its emotional meaning stays with the reader. Additionally, because of haiku’s emphasis on showing verses telling, it is the reader who discovers meaning in the poem. And it is their personal meaning, not one that is told to them.

A tangential question to “why haiku?” as a format for war poetry, one that Ruth Yarrow asks in her essay “Haiku Awareness in Wartime,”<sup>40</sup> is why haiku poets don’t write more war haiku. After all, haiku are poems of engagement, war has clearly permeated our daily culture, and many poets have strong feelings about it. Yarrow notes the difficulties around writing war haiku: many poets may want to avoid the strong emotions it evokes, many may lack direct experience with the subject, and many may prefer not to engage in what may be perceived as political writing. But, strong emotions have been handled successfully many times in haiku (especially loss—I’d direct people to Robert Epstein’s excellent anthologies on the subject), and Yarrow notes that lack of direct experience with a subject didn’t stop many poets from writing about 9-11 or Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as we’ll see in the next installment.

Regarding the possible politicizing of haiku, Yarrow quotes Robert Bly, who claims that “political concerns and inward concerns have always been regarded in our tradition as opposites, even incompatibles.” However, he and Levertov go on to refute that notion. I’d add that when we consider haiku’s historical past as part of the social, shared game of renku, and now the commonly understood notion of the reader as completer of a haiku, opposition to political haiku doesn’t make sense. But Yarrow warns, “It is a challenge to write from particular experiences related to war so that the poem doesn’t shout like a bumper sticker but reverberates like haiku.”

### Themes

In looking across the large population of haiku on war, it is tempting to think such haiku will be limited thematically to war and destruction. But I found that themes of all kinds prevailed, including some I didn’t expect. I’d like to focus on a few of the main ones.

An obvious theme is the horror of war.

liberated village  
the survivor holds out  
his severed hand

Ernest Berry<sup>42</sup>

night heat  
the blown-off arm  
still in fatigues

Lenard D. Moore<sup>43</sup>

Another theme is the indifference of war. War, in its modern form, in which killing can be done from a distance, is often incapable of distinguishing targets: friend or foe, military or civilian.

Spring evening.  
The wheel of a troop carrier  
Crushes a lizard.

Dimitar Anakiev<sup>44</sup>

one hundredth day  
Red Cross ship flaming  
where the sun rose

Lenard D. Moore<sup>45</sup>

Another theme is the dehumanization of the participants. In another set of circumstances Anakiev's poem below could easily mirror Bashō's question of how his neighbor lives. But during a war, there is a fine line between wonderment and spying—and its consequences.

the start of the war—  
through bare branches I spy on  
my neighbors' houses

Dimitar Anakiev<sup>46</sup>

End of Tet—  
the marks on her back, a letter  
I'd rather not read

Robert D. Wilson<sup>47</sup>

Another theme is war as a machine, where soldiers are seen less as people and more as commodities that are ultimately replaceable and disposable.

war was standing at the corridor's end

Hakusen Watanabe<sup>48</sup>

autumn morning  
two veterans shoulder  
their brooms

w.f. owen<sup>49</sup>

Owen's poem, which we can assume takes place post-war, speaks to how the machine has no need for people after the fact.

Yet another theme is the cost of war.

combing  
the military beach  
a crab with one claw

w.f. owen<sup>50</sup>

A fallen soldier.  
How loud the ticking  
of the watch.

Enes Kišević<sup>51</sup>

Additionally, the ever-shifting atmosphere of war creates uncertainty for the soldier and for the civilian.

Lights in fog  
A truck  
Full of refugees

Rujana Matuka<sup>52</sup>

sugarcane fields  
the beautiful countryside  
swarming with snipers

Ty Hadman<sup>53</sup>

The unnaturalness of war is often shown through the juxtaposition of nature and some element of war. The Machiko haiku below is a favorite of mine because it subverts expectation so well.

In a spring field  
I am polishing  
machine guns

Machiko Kishimoto<sup>54</sup>

On the wheat fields  
bomb craters  
are sprouting!

Marijan Čekolj<sup>55</sup>

In contrast, at some point, war becomes commonplace, even natural.

Shells falling  
into the river—  
it's flowing . . .

Željko Funda<sup>56</sup>

A child's drawing.  
Of the same colour are tank  
and soldier and sun.

Marinko Španović<sup>57</sup>

The Španović haiku is especially powerful (and sad) with its observation that this is perhaps all natural to a child; that this is all he knows.

Politics can enter the poetic realm, as in the two following haiku. Bilankov is a Croat. His poem seems to suggest that no matter how battered they are by the Serbs, they will rise again.

New blades of grass  
Will be growing higher  
On fire-scorched land.

Smiljka Bilankov<sup>58</sup>

National Foundation Festival—  
the enemy base falling  
burns and burns

Mizuhara Shūōshi<sup>59</sup>

The Mizuhara haiku is from a class of haiku known as holy war haiku, nationalistic propaganda written primarily during World War II. Such haiku include nationalistic code words, such as: “holy war” (which frames the war in a religious/righteous tone), “National Foundation Festival” (which celebrates the anniversary of the first emperor), “chrysanthemum” (the imperial seal), and “kamikaze” (the name of the storms that repelled the Mongol invaders in Japan's past).

Finding humor in war haiku was something I didn't expect, although humor is often a human reaction to horror.

tactical retreat  
through the wheat field  
a platoon of quail

Ernest Berry<sup>60</sup>

concertina wire  
a water buffalo  
wiggles through

Ty Hadman<sup>61</sup>

Nor did I expect the theme of beauty. It quickly becomes  
apparent that any emotion is available in war.

A starling  
vivaciously slips through  
a shell fragment.

Luko Paljetak<sup>62</sup>

Vietnam  
during the firefight  
a rainbow

John J. Dunphy<sup>63</sup>

Because of the baggage of war, found here in the shell  
fragment, how much more vivacious is the bird? And how  
much more beautiful is the rainbow?

### Particular Conflicts

Most of the haiku I've presented so far do not reference any particular war. Meaning that if I hadn't identified them as such, you might not know which war the poem was written in response to. This, I think, speaks to the often universal experience of war. However, as Hiroaki Sato pointed out in a book review of *World Haiku Anthology on War*, a lack of context can also be frustrating. Because of their briefness, haiku often rely on context to fill out the unsaid details—and often the emotional context. Without those details, a haiku can still be powerful (as we have seen so far), but perhaps not as powerful as one whose context we know.

Many haiku, however, do reference particular conflicts. Some contain an overt reference to a particular war within the poem itself. This can be achieved by naming a battle's location or, as in some Japanese poems, by using a phrase like "holy war"—which references World War II.



Vukovar—  
destroyed town. Croatia's soul  
bleeding . . .

Marijan Čekolj<sup>64</sup>

just an olive tree  
and a peeling mural are left  
yitzhak rabin square

Rick Black<sup>65</sup>

Vukovar refers to Vukovar Hospital, a Croatian hospital in which patients were massacred by a Serb militia group, and Rabin Square is where the 1995 assassination of the Israeli prime minister occurred. Classical Japanese poetry often contained what are called *utamakura*, which are locations whose mention in a poem invokes strong emotion based on some historical event. A good example is Bashō's use of Sado Island in his *Narrow Road to the Interior*. The haiku, as many readers will recall, is:

the rough sea—  
flowing toward Sado Isle  
the River of Heaven

Sado Island's remoteness made it the perfect place for the Japanese government to send difficult or inconvenient persons. Such persons included artists, a former emperor, and when gold was discovered, homeless people sent to work the mines. None of these exiles were expected to return. So Sado Island, when encountered in a poem, should bring to mind the sorrow and loneliness of those who have been exiled there.

Locations such as Vukovar or Rabin Square, when included in a haiku, have the ability to do the same thing. In the first poem, the phrases "destroyed town" and "Croatia's soul bleeding" shouldn't be needed, since mention of Vukovar should be enough to impart those feelings. It is often said that haiku outside of Japan need to build their own vertical axis—an axis that bridges the immediate moment with the larger historical past. Subjects such as these might be a place to start.

Additionally, a particular conflict may be referenced by information external to the poem, such as the name of the poet (if the reader knows that the poet was in a particular combat zone), or how the poem is presented (such as in a particular book, anthology, or website). Anthology poems are often collected for the purpose of speaking about a particular conflict. Many of the poems wouldn't be identified with a particular war without the title of the book or website.

Here ends my review of the landscape of war haiku. Up to this point I haven't made a differentiation between poems written by participants in the various conflicts, and those written by commentators. This, in fact, is where I will pick up my argument in Part 2 of this essay, to appear in the next issue of *Frogpond*. For the poet's experience of war, and the reader's understanding of the poet's experience, has much to do with a haiku's impact—above and beyond technical quality—and the reasons why certain war haiku may linger uneasily in the mind.

### Notes

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## Haiku and the Beatific Vision of Jack Kerouac

Albert Battistelli, Kent, Ohio

In his 1958 autobiographical novel, *The Dharma Bums*, Jack Kerouac (through the voice of the narrator Ray Smith) details his quest to understand and master a Buddhist way of life. Living in suburban California in the mid-1950s, Kerouac (who would have been 92 years old this coming March) struggles to wrench himself free of Western ideology and embrace a way of living that seems not only foreign but almost impossible in the culture of his time. Still, Kerouac's narrator has a vision, a goal for his life and the lives of others. This vision, as described by a black Christian preacher in *The Dharma Bums*, is of a "new field," or as Smith describes it, "a new Buddha-field" and "Whole Buddha-fields in every direction for each one of us."<sup>1</sup> These fields are representations of the openness, expanse, and freedom that come from the awareness or "direct knowledge" of God.

In his twenties, Kerouac immersed himself in a "beat" environment—a lifestyle that values eastern religions and rejects the materiality and wealth of Western culture.<sup>2</sup> In her introduction to his most famous work, *On the Road*, Ann Charters writes that Kerouac's concept of "beat" is "linked in [his] mind to a Catholic beatific vision, the direct knowledge of God enjoyed by the blessed in heaven."<sup>3</sup> Catholicism played an important role in Kerouac's life during his formative years and he would have been familiar with the concept of a relationship between God and humanity. Charters argues that this familiarity is what helped him to shape his beatific/beat vision.

The further Kerouac delved into a Buddhist, beat lifestyle, the more he struggled to make sense of his Catholic upbringing. This struggle is manifest in his haiku.

Shall I heed God's commandment?  
—wave breaking  
On the rocks—<sup>4</sup>

Shall I break God's commandment?  
Little fly  
Rubbing its back legs.

These haiku are reflections of Kerouac's internal tumult over the roles of Buddhism and Christianity in his life. The first, "Shall I heed" channels the inner storm raging within the poet. The second, "Shall I break," includes an overt reference to both Buddhist ontology and the early haiku poetry of Issa, who wrote:

Do not hit the fly  
It is praying with its hands  
and with its feet.<sup>5</sup>

Issa's haiku reflects the Buddhist theory of transmigration of the soul that exists within both human and nonhuman entities, a belief that haiku scholar R.H. Blyth claims "gives value (gives equal value) to the most trivial objects, and lays a foundation for a spiritual and practical democracy that Christianity as such could never afford."<sup>6</sup> This inner religious conflict was a barrier between Kerouac and his beatific vision, which had been so influenced by the Catholicism of his childhood. Kerouac's beatific vision could only be achieved by reconciling the differences between Christianity and Buddhism.

### **Suppression and Schism**

To understand Kerouac's beatific vision, it is necessary first to examine how he developed his desire for this vision of a perfect, new field. One must turn to a particular scene in *The Dharma Bums* where Kerouac expresses his frustration with the separateness of Christianity and Buddhism. This scene in turn informs how Kerouac tries to work through the issue of separateness by exploring themes and images of unity in his haiku.

Blyth argues that Buddhism stems from "a strong desire to find a way of escape from the world of suffering."<sup>7</sup> Kerouac, a

student of Blyth's work, would have been very familiar with this idea, for he saw suffering everywhere and even experienced it himself. At one point in *The Dharma Bums*, Kerouac's character, Ray Smith, discusses with Japhy Ryder (a substitute for Kerouac's good friend, Gary Snyder), the difficulty he is having as a Christian trying to embrace Buddhism. This discussion takes place immediately following the suicide of their mutual friend, Rosie, an instance that caused great suffering for both of them. The problem, Kerouac argues, is not inherent within the religions, but stems from widespread belief that they cannot exist alongside one another. Smith explains, "What's wrong with Jesus? Didn't Jesus speak of Heaven? Isn't Heaven Buddha's nirvana?"<sup>8</sup> He goes on to say "Japhy, there were things I wanted to tell Rosie and I felt suppressed by this schism we have about separating Buddhism from Christianity, East from West, what the hell difference does it make? We're all in Heaven now ain't we?" Smith wanted to invoke Christian ideas while talking to Rosie before she killed herself, but felt as though he wasn't able to because of this "schism." Like his narrator Kerouac, too, strove to break Christianity, and specifically Catholicism, free of the "dogma and sentimentality" of its typical, religious practice.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, Buddhism alone wasn't fulfilling all of Kerouac's desires for his beatific vision. Blyth describes Buddhism as being neither "personal nor impersonal."<sup>10</sup> Kerouac hesitated to subscribe to this Buddhist concept. Towards the ending of *The Dharma Bums*, Smith, sitting at the top of Mt. Desolation, claims that he would "go out and sit in the grass and meditate facing west, wishing there were a Personal God in all this impersonal matter."<sup>11</sup> Smith's longing for a personal God reflects Kerouac's strong connection to his Catholic roots and the Christian emphasis on viewing God or Jesus as a personal Lord and Savior, or even a friend. Neither Christianity nor Buddhism alone could help Kerouac realize his beatific vision. He needed to bring them together in order to achieve this realization. The schism and suppression, however, were preventing him from being able to do so.



Kerouac tried to work out the “suppression” he felt in his haiku. The following haiku appear early in his *Book of Haikus* and are indicators of the initial issues he had with the separateness of his two religions.

Juju beads on  
Zen manual—  
My knees are cold<sup>12</sup>

Prayer beads  
on the Holy Book  
—My knees are cold<sup>13</sup>

With these two haiku, Kerouac is making a statement about the role of religion in his life. These haiku are almost the exact same. Kerouac simply exchanges words, retaining the structure and context of the haiku. He is clearly interested in Christianity and Buddhism and practices the forms of prayer unique to both. These haiku show that Kerouac was not elevating one religion over the other, but saw them as equally important in shaping his life and potentially the lives of others, like Rosie in *The Dharma Bums*.

### Unity

The sense of religious separateness pervaded Kerouac’s life. His Buddhist friends could not understand his Catholic roots, and his Catholic family did not support his desire for a Buddhist lifestyle. Feeling incomplete, or split between the two, he was on a near constant search to unite these contrasting elements. When examining Kerouac’s haiku, it becomes apparent that he was interested in uniting disparate elements of Buddhism and Christianity.

2 traveling salesman  
passing each other  
On a Western road<sup>14</sup>

A black bull  
and a white bird  
Standing together on the shore<sup>15</sup>

In the first of these examples, two men traveling east and west represent the eastern/western conflict within Kerouac himself. By having them pass each other, Kerouac eliminates the competition aspect and paints them as simply two men traveling. He focuses on their similarities rather than their differences (or, what they are trying to sell).

The second haiku is a more obvious scene of unity. The contrasting elements of black and white, bull and bird, big and small, are neutralized by the harmonious act of standing together by the shore. These two animals share the view of the sea, an invocation of nature purposefully included by Kerouac as a place of unity or togetherness.

### Aesthetic Principles

How Kerouac used haiku to express themes of unity, nature, and religion has much to do with how he utilized certain aesthetic principles of the form. While there are several aesthetic principles in haiku, for the purposes of this argument discussion will center on his use of the principles of *yugen* and *mu*.

*Yugen* is a Japanese aesthetic principle that exudes an aura of mystery or uncertainty. *Yugen* is primarily used to accentuate the profundity of a work, or, in Kerouac's case, haiku. It can be most easily identified in haiku by shrouded images. This is often accomplished through cloudiness or mist, making the full intention of the work unclear, but alluding to a powerful image just beyond the shroud. The following are examples of *yugen* in Kerouac's haiku:

Dusk—The blizzard  
hides everything,  
Even the night<sup>16</sup>

The mist in front  
of the morning mountains  
—late Autumn<sup>17</sup>

Arguably the most important aesthetic principle (more of a life principle, really) that Kerouac engaged in his haiku is *mu*. At its core, *mu* is nothingness, emptiness, or complete lack of thinking. It is a spiritual, aesthetic principle centered on the idea of simply existing in the universe. *Mu* is not just a haiku aesthetic, but can be found in many forms of eastern and Buddhist art. Kerouac, having studied Blyth, would have been well informed on the role of *mu* in art and life.

There's no Buddha  
because  
There's no me<sup>18</sup>

In this haiku Kerouac equates himself with Buddha in that, through *mu*, they are both reduced to the self-less state of nothingness. This isn't to imply that Kerouac sees himself as dead or no longer existing in the world, but to suggest that the presupposed ideas, prejudices, and intellectual learning that he has gained in life are wiped away and he is now free of all worldly, subjective influence. He exists as a mountain or a tree or God or Buddha would exist.

### **Religious Imagery in Nature**

The aesthetic principles of haiku are pervasive in Kerouac's work and are particularly relevant to his use of Christian and Buddhist imagery. In essence, he defines beatific vision by linking nature with spiritual awareness and images.

Beautiful summer night  
gorgeous as the robes  
of Jesus<sup>19</sup>

Using words like "beautiful" and "gorgeous," Kerouac relates the celestial beauty of nature to Christianity, as he does in yet another one of his haiku:

The new moon  
is the toe nail  
of God<sup>20</sup>

This image suggests that the beauty of the moon is only equal to a toenail compared to the full beauty of God represented in nature. It also serves to humanize God by giving him physically human features, like a toenail. This haiku is a prime example of Kerouac using the natural world as a means of finding his beatific vision in the direct knowledge of God.

### Loneliness

Kerouac also engaged God and nature through loneliness, often separating himself from society and spending long periods of time alone. Blyth describes the loneliness of haiku as “not that of the poet as a recluse, not that of desolate places and forgotten men . . . it is above all in a nameless realm where the human and the non-human, love and law, meet and are one.”<sup>21</sup> Kerouac seems to engage both ideas of loneliness. Not only does he separate himself from society for long periods of time, but in his haiku he often reflects on beauty, loss, joy, sorrow, and humanity, examples of a more mindful loneliness not reliant on physical separateness. The following are a few examples of some of Kerouac’s more lonely haiku:

The fly, just as  
lonesome as I am  
In this empty house<sup>22</sup>

The other man, just as  
lonesome as I am  
In this empty universe.

In both these haiku, there is an apparent connection between *mu* and loneliness. Kerouac’s use of the word “empty” implies a freedom or nothingness that he is experiencing. Western lifestyles tend to view loneliness as a negative experience, often conflating loneliness with unpopularity or notions of undesirability. In eastern philosophy, and haiku in particular, loneliness is a neutral state, neither positive nor negative, allowing one to simply exist in the universe without comment or influence from outside parties, or as Blyth puts it, “the individual is not swamped, but still stands clear and distinct.”<sup>23</sup>

Loneliness is an objective act, free of the subjective qualities of societal interaction. It is in this state of loneliness that Kerouac is able to free himself of his friends who are hostile toward Christianity and his family who don't understand Buddhism. In loneliness, Kerouac can engage one or both religions without reservation.

### **Prayer and Meditation in Nature**

Kerouac's intentional loneliness often led him to remove himself from the influence of society and to immerse himself wholly within nature, where he was able to more effectively ponder concepts of Buddhism, Christianity, and the direct knowledge of God. Woods and mountains provided him with an atmosphere conducive to private prayer, and became holy places for him to engage God directly. Again, these ideas show themselves throughout Kerouac's haiku.

Dusk in the holy  
woods—  
Dust on my window<sup>24</sup>

In this haiku Kerouac describes the woods as a mysterious, maybe even mythical place of worship, a temple of sorts. His use of *yugen* is essential in establishing the atmosphere and aura of the setting. The dust on his window suggests that he is unable to see clearly the woods beyond his room, but he knows that they are holy and he can "see" that holiness even through the dust.

I went into the woods  
to meditate—  
It was too cold<sup>25</sup>

This haiku, more straightforward than "Dusk in the holy," tells of Kerouac's inability to pray and meditate effectively, an issue that is evidenced many times in both his haiku poetry and prose. Kerouac couldn't properly engage in meditation because he was unable to move beyond his own comfort.

The frustration this created is apparent in the following haiku, perhaps the most direct evidence of his struggle to pray:

Praying all the time  
talking  
To myself<sup>26</sup>

The poem suggests that Kerouac isn't sure who he is praying to, and simply ends up talking to himself. Or perhaps he is just not very good at praying. Either way, prayer is a theme that recurs many times in Kerouac's haiku and *The Dharma Bums* and is a crucial element in the realization of his beatific vision.

### Answers in Silence

Kerouac eventually overcomes this struggle to pray through a revelation apparent in his haiku.

The sound of silence  
is all the instruction  
You'll get<sup>27</sup>

Kerouac sees the silence as instruction and he learns to wait for answers. Significantly, his use of silence implies a nothingness or *mu*. Given that *mu* is a goal of Buddhism, recognizing that *mu* in the silence would indicate an answer to his prayer.

In *The Dharma Bums*, Smith, while visiting his family one evening, has a breakthrough in prayer. He prays, "Tonight . . . I sleep tight and long and pray under the stars for the Lord to bring me Buddhahood after my Buddhawork is done, amen."<sup>28</sup> Smith's prayer suggests that he is coming to a realization that, for him, the beatific vision cannot be achieved without Buddhahood, and Buddhahood cannot be achieved without help from God. This is supported by another revelation that Kerouac's narrator experiences immediately following the prayer. He says, "Everything is possible. I am God, I am Buddha, I am imperfect Ray Smith, all at the same time, I am

empty space, I am all things. I have all the time in the world from life to life to do what is to do, to do what is done, to do the timeless doing, infinitely perfect within, why cry, why worry, perfect like mind essence and the minds of banana peels.”<sup>29</sup>

Through these prayers and meditations, Smith (and Kerouac) recognizes that he is both God and Buddha in himself. He is spiritually revitalized after this realization and determines to engage himself in more prayer and meditation. This leads him to Mt. Desolation, the place where he comes the closest to achieving his beatific vision. It’s on the lonely mountaintop that Smith finally receives an answer as to how to achieve direct knowledge of God and instill it within others. He recalls, “One night in a meditation vision, Avalokitesvara the Hearer and Answerer of Prayer said to me ‘You are empowered to remind people that they are utterly free.’”<sup>30</sup>

### Conclusion

What is a rainbow, Lord?  
A hoop  
For the lowly<sup>31</sup>

This haiku is unique in that readers are given a special look at its birth. Towards the end of *The Dharma Bums*, Kerouac details the origins of this haiku by describing the moment when he (as Smith) wrote it. “It hooped right into Lighting Creek, rain and snow fell simultaneously, the lake was milkwhite a mile below, it was just too crazy. I went outside and suddenly my shadow was ringed by the rainbow as I walked on the hilltop, a lovely-haloed mystery making me want to pray.”<sup>32</sup> For Smith/Kerouac, this rainbow is a sign or message from God harmonizing Buddhism and Christianity. All the lowly people, regardless of religious practice, see the rainbow.

High in the Sky  
the Fathers Send Messages  
From on High<sup>33</sup>

Inspired by his newfound knowledge, Smith prays, “God, I love you” and looks up to the sky and really means it. “I have fallen in love with you, God. Take care of us all, one way or the other.”<sup>34</sup> Smith, by removing himself in loneliness, recognizes that God is found in nature and that Buddhism and Christianity, while entirely separate, can work together in nature through prayer and meditation. Nature becomes Kerouac’s holy place, his temple of worship, where the direct knowledge of God is not held captive by any one religion, but is found in the harmony of the natural world as explored and expressed in his haiku.

### Notes

1. Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1958), 114.
2. It is well known that Kerouac struggled with alcoholism, excessive drug use, and sexual repression. Rather than retread these issues, this essay focuses on Kerouac’s spiritual struggles and how he creatively works through them in his haiku.
3. Ann Charters, “Introduction.” In Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Penguin, 1957), viii.
4. Jack Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*. Ed. Regina Weinreich (New York: Penguin, 2003), 109.
5. Translation by Yoshinobu Hakutani, Kent State University.
6. R.H. Blyth, *Haiku: Eastern Culture* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1981), 21.
7. Blyth, *Haiku: EC*, 18.
8. Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 114.
9. Blyth, *Haiku: EC*, 21.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 237.
12. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, 7.
13. *Ibid.*, 13.
14. *Ibid.*, 6.
15. *Ibid.*, 20.
16. *Ibid.*, 38.
17. *Ibid.*, 67.
18. *Ibid.*, 75.
19. *Ibid.*, 30.
20. *Ibid.*, 52.
21. Blyth, *Haiku: EC*, 166–67.



22. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, 181.
23. Blyth, *Haiku: EC*, 164.
24. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, 69.
25. *Ibid.*, 72.
26. *Ibid.*, 67.
27. *Ibid.*, 97.
28. Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 122.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, 239.
31. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, 89.
32. Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 241.
33. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, 169.
34. Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, 244.



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## *In Memoriam*

*John Carley*  
(1955–2013)

John Edmund Carley, virtuoso *haikai* poet and theorist, died on the last day of last year, following a long battle with mesothelioma. He was 58. During the last 15 years he led hundreds of linked-verse sequences and translated a significant number of Edo-period *kasen*, breathing a new life into traditional collaborative verse forms in English. His central contention was that *renku* is not a Japanese art form, but an art form that arose in Japan.

Carley was a multifaceted man who was easily approachable and never stood on his learning. He will be greatly missed by the many people who had the good fortune to cross his path, from the Bengali and Pashtun poets of Lancashire in the 1990s to writers of *renku* on every inhabited continent since the turn of the century. I count myself lucky to have been able to number him among my friends.

Raised in the north of England, he lived for a time in France and Italy, and spoke French, Italian, and Piedmontese fluently. As a percussionist and sound engineer, he was a key figure in the Bristol music scene during the late 1970s and early 1980s, performing and recording in such bands as the Spics, the Radicals, and *Scream and Dance*. He would later muse that his experience as a musician, together with the fact that his dyslexia forced his aural experience to centre stage, played a major role in his focus on phonics and rhythm in poetry, an area receiving scant attention in English-language *haikai*, especially haiku.

In his 20s, Carley's interest in *haikai* was awakened when he first opened Nobuyuki Yuasa's translation of Matsuo Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi* (*Narrow Road to the Deep North*). Remembering the occasion later, he said,

I recall as if it were yesterday my shock at hearing Bashō speak. The sensation is there still: how could this long dead bloke from an alien culture communicate so directly when most poetry in my own language left me cold?

In the field of *haikai* aesthetics Carley acknowledged Professor Yuasa as Master, and the latter's influence remained a constant in his work.

In the 1990s Carley began editing the poetry magazine *Pennine Ink*, and during this period he developed an interest in work in minority languages, promoting poetry readings in languages such as Farsi and Urdu. This culminated in the publication of his translation from Bengali of Ala Miah's *Light of Keshob Pur* (Big Lamp Press) in 2000.

In 1999, in response to the fierce but inconclusive debate around English-language haiku prosody, he proposed the "zip," a short, flexible fixed-form stanza designed to show the natural cadences of English to best advantage. As an analogue to Japanese *teikei* haiku, it encompasses 15 syllables in two lines, each of which is split by a mid-line caesura. The zip approach would later be adapted to renku with some considerable success. An example from the inventor's pen:

had I the strength I'd blow away  
the last of the willow-herb

At the same time, his interest in collaborative poetry was growing, and in 1999 he published *What a Performance* (Big Lamp Press), a book of performance poems for more than one voice, with two other poets. In 2002 he launched the Young Renga Project, whereby he visited schools throughout Lancashire and Manchester, teaching the principles of linked verse to students and collecting a body of work which he published on his *Villa Rana* website. In the same year, he established the first listserv forum dedicated to linked verse, *The Renkujin Palace*, where he hosted numerous collaborative compositions.

This interest brought him into contact with Japan's Association for International Renku (AIR) and resulted in a long and fruitful collaboration with Eiko Yachimoto. Her influence in the area of current Japanese practice is evident in Carley's work from this period onwards, and the two would collaborate on numerous translations of Bashō-school *kasen*, several of which found publication in *Frogpond*.

With the launch of *Simply Haiku* in 2003, Carley joined the editorial board as *renku* editor. In this capacity he was successful in promoting new thinking and breathing new life into an art form which had been to some degree misapprehended in the West. In addition to publishing collaborative work by new poets, he was the first to publish and promote new Western *renku* formats such as the "triparshva." Leaving *Simply Haiku* in 2006, he took up the position of *renku* coordinator at *Moonset* where he continued his pioneering work.

As well as those poets well known in the world of English-language *haikai*, such as William J. Higginson and Paul MacNeil, Carley went on to engage in collaborations with leading academics in the field of Japanese literature such as Herbert Jonsson, Chris Drake, and Cheryl Crowley. When in 2005 he was invited by Nobuyuki Yuasa to participate in a landmark *kasen* to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the death of Bashō's disciple Takarai Kikaku, he felt he had in some way come full circle. Little had he imagined when his eyes were first opened to the magic of *haikai* some 30 years earlier by Yuasa's *Narrow Road*, that he would one day participate in a linked verse session led by this Master. The resulting *kasen* was published in the booklet *Springtime in Edo* in 2006 (Keisuisha).

A name engraved on a beach  
One summer day long ago                      Sosui [Nobuyuki Yuasa]

The heather-lined road  
To Scarborough fair,  
The purple of her lips                      John

In searching ever more deeply for the essence of Shofu, or Bashō-school renku, Carley eventually reached back to the Chinese Tang-Dynasty four-line form of *jueju* or “puzzle poem” (known as *zekku* in Japanese), concluding that the aesthetic values and techniques advanced by Bashō could be successfully encompassed in a poem of just four stanzas. This ultimate distillation of renku he called *yotsumono*, or “four things.” In 2012 he published *The Little Book of Yotsumonos* (Darlington Richards Press), which contained, in addition to an introduction to the principles of renku and to his new form in particular, 60 examples of the yotsumono, ten each penned by Carley with six different poets including Hortensia Anderson, Carole MacRury, and Sheila Windsor. Said Sonja Arntzen upon reading the book: “This form of four short verses can compass an astonishing amount of ground, time and emotion, while the resonating space between the verses and between the voices reaches to infinity.”

Lingering Heat

lingering heat— chrysanthemums drop from her kimono	Hortensia Anderson
some men say the scarab worships moonlight	John
once again the exterminator comes to pay a call	Hortensia
who will weep upon this pauper’s grave?	John

On Christmas 2011, Carley’s son gifted him a copy of the famed *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* by Utagawa Hiroshige, a series of *ukiyo-e* woodcut prints inspired by the artist’s travels along the coast road between Edo and Kyoto, published in 1833–34. The gift so inspired Carley that he

immediately began composing a *hokku* to accompany each image, and the resulting combination of image and poetry was published as the delightful *nothing but the wind* in 2013 (Geon Tree Press). To accompany Hiroshige's snowy depiction of Kanbara, Carley wrote:

a winter's night  
held fast beneath the snow  
a deeper silence

Carley published essays on renku theory in periodicals such as *Journal of Renga & Renku*, as well on his own *Renku Reckoner* website, which was regarded as a resource of exceptional value to renku poets, both beginners and advanced. During his last year, he revised and expanded his body of theoretical essays, and prepared what he referred to as his "haikai manifesto." It comprises 19 chapters on renku theory and practice, including a series of carefully planned exercises, as well as descriptions, seasonal schemas, appraisals, and full example poems of 12 traditional and modern renku forms, including his new adaptation of the *hankasen*, to which he gave the name *demikasen*. Entitled *Renku Reckoner* (Darlington Richards Press), this authoritative work will be available shortly and will stand as a lasting witness to the author's genius.

Carley was tireless in his efforts to promulgate the writing of renku in English. Subsequent to his early activities at *The Renkujin Palace*, he engaged ceaselessly in collaborations with poets the world over, by email as well as in specialised forums such as *The Renku Group* and *Issa's Snail*. Rather than a Japanese art form, he regarded renku as an art form that happened to have originated in Japan. He did not see renku as an esoteric practice tangled in a myriad of rules and prohibitions, but as readily comprehensible and governed by a small number of key principles. His position was that all aspects of Shofu renku aesthetics and technique may be understood in any cultural context and emulated in any human language.

Those many fortunates who worked with him will remember him as endlessly patient, always ready to take the time to explain the finer points of any argument. His deep knowledge was always tempered with a self-deprecating humour and an endearing sense of the absurd. Nor was his gift with words confined to his poetry. Here is how he signed off an email to me a few short months ago:

The sun is well nigh over the horizon, let alone the yard arm, and the insidious muezzin of beeriness calls from the minaret of The Griffin Inn.

Let's all raise a pint of Sunshine (his favourite tippie) to the memory of a great man!

~Norman Darlington, Bunclody, Ireland, January 2014.



*Norman Darlington is co-editor of Journal of Renga & Renku and was one of the judges of the HSA's Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Contest in 2013. He is one half of Darlington Richards Press, and lives on a hill in rural Ireland, raising vegetables, chickens, and children.*

## Reviewed

**Gabriel Rosenstock. Edited by Mícheál Ó hAodha. *Where Light Begins: Haiku*.** Dublin: Original Writing, Ltd., 2012, 116 pp., softbound. ISBN 978-1-908817-47-1. Ebook available at Amazon (US\$7.95) and Barnes & Noble (US\$8.49).

by Rimas Uzgiris, Brooklyn, New York

The greater part of haiku and senryu in this superb collection are rendered in English (some having been published originally in Irish), but there are also some Irish-language haiku paired with the author's own English translations. It may be strange to think of an Irish poet writing haiku—especially in Irish—but we have lived with borrowed forms for a long time now. Why should Irish be any different? Besides, Gabriel Rosenstock is pleased to point out that the ancient scribes of Ireland would often rest from their laborious task of copying the Latin Gospels to pause and look out the window and jot down intense nature lyrics in Old Irish, taking their inspiration from what they could see. Perhaps we may consider Rosenstock the new haiku scribe of Ireland. Whatever we consider him to be in the labyrinths of tradition and categorization, with lines like the following his writing earns our attention:

there must be light  
where they came from—  
chestnut blossoms

We have here the ingredients of great haiku: simple observation, sensitivity to nature, self-effacement, and a merging of the cosmic with the mundane. There is great mystery to the poem as well. On the surface, it could be read as saying nothing more than that the sun makes chestnut trees bloom. Yet, it is saying so much more than that—urging us to see the sublime beauty of existence, the mystery of creation itself.



Formally, Rosenstock can be experimental, but he also shows his mastery of more traditional themes, as in this minimalist poem that plants itself squarely in Zen Buddhist literary soil:

sickle moon—

reaping

emptiness

Rosenstock likes to play with line spacing, not always with equal effectiveness, but more often than not, form and meaning are perfectly tuned:

green green green

the pines

seconds before snow

Even though many poems are animated by the close observation and spiritual response to nature that is so central to Japanese haiku, rarely do we find adherence to the seventeen-syllable rule. In fact, perhaps the only poem that sticks exactly to the traditional syllable count is wildly irreverent in its own way:

ants ants ants ants ants  
antsantsantsantsantsantsants  
ants ants ants ants ants

That's a lot of ants! As we can see from this example, Rosenstock also likes to imbue his nature poems with humor. Often, this humor points to a more cosmic significance, as in the following haiku, where the Buddhist reverence for nothingness is juxtaposed with a bird's bewilderment:

three stabs at nothing!  
the heron shakes its head  
in disbelief

Later in the book, stand-alone haiku give way to sequences, or *rensaku*. Some of these take the form of travelogues, which can produce intriguing juxtapositions, as from this sequence from Kerala, India:

heat shimmers  
an old cyclist  
rides into infinity

scrawny dogs  
on the road before dawn  
going nowhere

Another *rensaku* from islands in Bangaram reveals this philosophical gem:

into a hole in the sand  
something too quick  
to be named

In some *rensaku*, Rosenstock also gives readers a taste of Irish-language haiku, followed by his English translations. Most American readers (like this reviewer) will find the Irish as impenetrable as Japanese, although it is tantalizing to wonder how haiku translated by the author actually work together side by side with his originals. Are they mirror images of one another? Are they in dialogue?

The book concludes with two essays. One is a short afterword by Sasumi Takiguchi, chairman of the World Haiku Club. Takiguchi argues that Rosenstock “is one of the few non-Japanese poets who have a feel for haiku almost instinctively” and that “the haiku root” from which his poetry springs “is fundamentally correct . . . vindicated in the following haiku”:

outside the Guggenheim  
the shape  
of real trees

The final essay is Rosenstock's own appreciation of the poet Issa, whose reputation he seeks to rehabilitate in response to those who consider him "a sentimental, country bumpkin." Rosenstock argues persuasively that we should, instead, valorize Issa's open-hearted compassion. In addition, he thinks we should appreciate the subtlety with which Issa draws the universal out of the seemingly simple and mundane, as in this example:

my favourite cormorant  
the one who surfaces  
with nothing

Indeed, many of Rosenstock's haiku reflect how much he has incorporated Issa's keen eye and compassionate soul into his own work:

blossomless  
but not unloved  
the old magnolia



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Allan Burns, ed. *Where the River Goes: The Nature Tradition in English-Language Haiku*. Ormskirk, Great Britain: Snapshot Press, 2013, 479 pp., hardbound, 5.25 x 7.25. ISBN 978-1-903543-36-8, US\$45 (includes shipping & handling with 50% discount) from the publisher at <http://www.snapshotpress.co.uk>.

by Scott Mason, Chappaqua, New York

Burns has done it again . . . only better.

Allan Burns is an excellent haiku poet, but he may be known best in haiku circles for his acclaimed work as an anthologist and commentator, most notably with the serialized *Montage* feature he developed on behalf of the nascent Haiku Foundation five years ago and subsequently published, in an augmented edition, as *Montage: The Book* (Haiku Foundation, Winchester, VA, 2010). *Montage* artfully juxtaposed selected haiku from featured poets in a variety of themed “galleries,” each with its own thought-provoking introduction, in a novel approach praised by Peggy Willis Lyles as “one of the finest projects ever to focus on English-language haiku.”<sup>1</sup> He also co-edited, with Philip Rowland and editor-in-chief Jim Kacian, the highly anticipated *Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), launched with much fanfare aboard the Queen Mary at Haiku North America in Long Beach, California this past August.

For his latest act Allan Burns has produced yet another haiku anthology, one that returns us to the genre’s original source of inspiration: the natural world. *Where the River Goes* proves a journey well worth taking, especially with poet-naturalist-scholar-editor Burns as our expert guide.

That journey begins with a thoughtful introduction orienting us to the strategic choices behind the book and the critical issues related to its chosen subject matter, “the nature tradition in English-language haiku.” The first strategic choice is one of definition: what exactly qualifies as a “nature haiku” and what

doesn't? Not surprisingly the answer is anything but exact since English-language haiku poetry exists on a continuum of nature (and non-nature) content. Undaunted, Burns makes effective use of a haiku typology suggested by George Swede in 1992, selecting as his primary focus "nature-oriented haiku with no reference to humans or human artifacts."<sup>2</sup> Such poems may have represented a large share, if not the majority, of haiku published in 1963 at what Burns calls "the identifiable beginnings of the English-language haiku movement" coincident with the first issue of *American Haiku*. (1963 seems a plausible enough date for the start of that movement even though, as Burns readily acknowledges, individual English-speaking poets made forays into the genre in the years before.) Today such poems represent a distinct minority—perhaps just ten percent—of published haiku, the decline corresponding to "a kind of anthropocentric creep that mirrors an accelerating alienation of humans from the natural world." So Burns explicitly identifies *Where the River Goes* as "a specialty or themed anthology rather than a general one."

Another key strategic choice was to limit the number of featured poets to just forty "crucial 'voices,'" all with "substantial bodies of self-effacing haiku oriented principally toward nature" and each represented in the book by no fewer than 15 haiku. Based on Burns's stated criteria, one could hardly gainsay most of his poet picks. Furthermore, his decision to limit the roster to forty was a propitious one, affording readers an in-depth examination of each poet's work instead of only the tantalizing peek offered in most haiku venues . . .

Shooting the rapids!  
—a glimpse of a meadow  
gold with buttercups

Robert Spiess

The critical subject-related issues addressed in Burns's introduction include such heady matters as the nature of Nature, the nature of haiku, and how both have changed across cultures (Japan and the West) and the centuries. These subjects might prove elusive in lesser hands, but Burns could wrangle

eels. He braids these subjects into a lucid and engrossing narrative that treats the spiritual underpinnings of classical haiku, the origins of Western nature consciousness, and a host of other related topics, in the process marshalling an impressive volume of relevant source material. If his lengthy cataloging of adverse human effects on the natural world tilts towards the polemical (he devotes five full pages to the subject), Burns does not allow his obvious passion to occlude his intellect. Quite the contrary: it soon becomes clear that he sees the type of nature sensitivity fostered by an appreciation of nature-oriented haiku as the best hope for a shift in human perceptions and attitudes more conducive to the preservation of our fellow species and planet. One can certainly hope he's right.

Nature haiku, as defined, might indeed be "self-effacing" in nearly every case. Still, it takes a human to make a haiku. Burns is quick to state as much: "Only a human can convert observations of the natural world into poetry." One of the pleasant paradoxes of this nature haiku anthology is the amount of "human interest" contained in the headnotes, or what I will call here its poet profiles, appearing before each featured poet's selected haiku. Scrupulously researched, those profiles offer interesting and relevant biographical information, but also much more: intriguing philosophical takes; the recognition of cross-poet influences; and perceptive discussions of haiku craftsmanship.

In the first category, it's illuminating to hear, and see applied, snippets of "color commentary" such as Michael McClintock's admonition about the misuse of nature in haiku "as a kind of toy, pet, or stage prop for some banal moment or human activity."<sup>3</sup> In the second category, it can be fascinating to compare work of poets where an influence is suggested or openly acknowledged, as by the latter poet here:

a snowy owl  
swoops in and turns  
the snow gray

John Wills

dark waters  
the snowy egret  
having flown

Jim Kacian

Burns proves especially adept in his treatment of haiku craftsmanship. His serious interest in cinema—amply demonstrated through his *Montage* initiative as well as in an essay published by this journal in 2007<sup>4</sup>—figures into his evocation of the “zoom” and “match-cut” film editing techniques in his discussion of the images from these two poems:

overgrown pasture:  
the feathered talon of a dead owl  
clutching a weed stalk

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

Milky Way  
a stream of termites  
from the woodpile

Lorin Ford

Burns also takes note of how special sound effects often play a vital role in the best nature-oriented haiku: “Perhaps the idea of being ‘in harmony’ or ‘in tune’ with one’s surroundings translates itself, naturally, into the language of the poems themselves.” He extolls the first of the following two haiku for sound patterns that arise “from original experience,”<sup>5</sup> and the second for how “the last two lines form a perfect iambic pentameter unit, the alternating unstressed and stressed syllables suggesting the steady wing beats of the approaching osprey.”<sup>6</sup>

lifting mist . . .  
a flock of knots fans out  
across the creek

Matthew Paul

thunderheads offshore  
the osprey coming early  
to its nest

Peggy Willis Lyles

In a similar vein, each of these two poems “echoes” its subject through onomatopoeia, in the first instance with the word “coo” cleverly embedded in “coolness.”

mourning dove  
answers mourning dove—  
coolness after the rain

Wally Swist

tropical night surf  
each crash and hiss  
phosphoresces

Ruth Yarrow

Superb as its introduction and poet profiles happen to be, *Where the River Goes* must ultimately sink or swim on the basis of the work it anthologizes. Here, too, it does not disappoint. While Burns may choose to classify his volume as “a specialty or themed anthology,” I believe it could appeal to a broader swath of the reading public than pure nature lovers, even with its liberal seasoning of specialized nature references (usually well worth a quick search engine query).

These are haiku that not only reward individual attention but also invite a poetic “dialogue” with one another. Consider, for instance, the half dozen pairings presented here:

November field  
a bird dog sculptured  
by the scent of a quail

Charles B. Dickson

quail eggs!  
my foot  
in mid-air

Marian Olson

white wind the eyes of a dead seal missing

Carolyn Hall



forest skull's  
sockets hold  
my eyes

John Martone

Autumn colours  
breaking through the haze  
a wood duck settles

vincent tripi

autumn sunset  
a wood stork's pink feet  
stirring silt

Ferris Gilli

Deep within the stream  
the huge fish lie motionless  
facing the current

James W. Hackett

steppingstone  
a hiker rests  
in the river's wind

Paul MacNeil

rucksack  
in the tall grass  
the scent of honeysuckle

Allan Burns

flattened grass  
where the bear slept  
stink of salmon

Billie Wilson

gosling following its neck to the bug

Marlene Mountain

the mountain path  
winding up  
at a snail

Peter Yovu

Towards the end of his introduction, Burns declares: “The best nature haiku from across the English tradition transcend *shasei* [sketches from nature] and attain genuine resonance.” The nearly nine hundred poems that follow not only prove his point but also match or surpass in quality that of any general interest compilation of haiku to appear since the third edition of Cor van den Heuvel’s *The Haiku Anthology* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

Elegantly designed by John Barlow of Snapshot Press and brilliantly conceived and executed by Allan Burns, *Where the River Goes* represents a welcome “homecoming” celebration for the natural world in English-language haiku. Any serious student of the genre should find this volume indispensable; its introduction alone stands out as the best piece of haiku scholarship I’ve encountered since Haruo Shirane’s landmark *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford University Press, 1998).

All things considered, I regard *Where the River Goes* as the finest book of and about English-language haiku to emerge so far this century.

Self-effacing nature-oriented haiku may have lost “market share” in the last fifty years, but *Where the River Goes* offers heartening evidence that they still represent a vital current in the overall English-language haiku movement.

fields flooded—  
beneath the surface, somewhere,  
the river bends

Christopher Herold

### Notes

1. From the Foreword to *Montage: The Book* (Winchester, VA: Haiku Foundation, 2010).
2. From the Introduction to *Where the River Goes: The Nature Tradition in English-Language Haiku* (Ormskirk, Great Britain:

Snapshot Press, 2013); all subsequent quotations are from the Introduction (pp. 9–68) unless otherwise noted.

3. Allan Burns (ed.), *Where the River Goes: The Nature Tradition in English-Language Haiku* (Ormskirk, Great Britain: Snapshot Press, 2013), 137.

4. Allan Burns, “Haiku and Cinematic Technique,” *Frogpond* 30:3 (Autumn 2007), 55–64.

5. Burns, *Where the River Goes*, 300.

6. *Ibid.*, 164.



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**David H. Rosen. *Clouds and More Clouds*.** Northfield, MA: Lily Pool Press, 2013, unpaginated (68 pp.), perfect soft-bound, 5.25 x 5.5. ISBN 978-1-628908-0-77. US\$24.95. Available at Amazon.com.

by Robert Epstein, El Cerrito, California

As I’ve gotten older, I’ve become more and more attached to the sun. I shamelessly depend on it. Cloudy or rainy days have a depressing effect on me. Not so for David Rosen, Jungian analyst and author of *The Tao of Jung* as well as *The Tao of Elvis*. He has befriended the clouds and just about everything else. I admire this about David: the older he gets, the more inclusive he has become, with respect to the vicissitudes of nature as well as the vagaries of this human life we are thrown into. The single haibun at the end of *Clouds and More Clouds*, in which the author shares a shocking revelation, informs and colors the haiku that precede it. Above and beyond all the trials and tribulations, the author of *Transforming Depression* is very much at home in the world; it shows in each and every poem in *Clouds*.

To be at home could very well be a means of experiencing God's presence in one's life. Is that what Rosen intimates in this startlingly spare poem?

Wild . . .  
no further proof  
of God

Rosen's haiku harkens back to Henry D. Thoreau's quest for God in Nature. The 19th-century transcendentalist author of *Walden* was "to be always on the alert to find God in nature, to know his lurking places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas in nature."<sup>1</sup> And it was Thoreau who famously declared: "In Wildness is the Preservation of the World."<sup>2</sup> Clearly, Rosen has come to this sacred truth on his own.

There is a quality of wholeness in these pages, which are a reflection of the poet's innocence and sensitivity—qualities he has managed to retain, rather than repress like so many men do, and I applaud him for it. It is this very innocence and sensitivity which have enabled him to access a love that transcends time and space, as the following poem makes clear:

Thank you  
for keeping me warm  
without being there

Gratitude is but one way we know we are tuned in to the God channel; enthusiasm is another—a word whose root is *theos*. Thus, to be enthusiastic is to be in or with God. *Clouds* abounds in enthusiasm:

Leaving academia  
I join my friends  
birds, trees, and wind

I know of someone who held a prestigious academic post at an Ivy League university and the occasion of his retirement

plunged this outwardly successful person into a crisis of meaning. Not so for Rosen, a longtime professor of psychiatry. Loss, when held within the larger perspective of being-at-home-in-the-world, reflects a fresh opportunity to commune with Nature without resort to surrealism.

I found myself deeply moved—and inspired—by the self-loving way in which Rosen faces the deaths of his parents. His heart is as wide as the world:

Mother dying . . .  
full moon over  
Kansas City, the world

The loss of one's own parents is unique to each son and daughter; yet death links us all, as Rosen poignantly recognizes. From the vantage point of the full moon observed the world over—a symbol of enlightenment in Buddhist haiku literature—we are brothers and sisters, we are one family.

Included in the book is a haiku sequence or “riff” titled, “On Mother Earth.” Rosen begins each poem, “On mother earth,” followed by a new realization or observation. He touches giant oaks, a puppy wanting to play, moonbeams and the capping poem:

On mother earth=  
Each step Gentle  
and measured

The book's depth is greatly enriched by numerous light and delicate illustrations in red ink provided by Alec Formatin Shirley. His depiction of the fawn in Rosen's haiku perfectly mirrors the latter's sensitivity:

First spring day  
the fawn startled by  
everything

Even the Foreword to *Clouds* calls for mentioning. Addressing the author as “Dear David,” longtime Thoreauvian and Buddhist Vincent Tripi encapsulates the heart of this beautiful book of haiku with his own keen insights. Of the fawn poem, Tripi observes: “There is an intimacy in the exchange between fawn & world that becomes our intimacy.” In the last analysis, perhaps this is what haiku is about: intimacy; the love of life—all life beyond notions of good/bad, right/wrong.

Tripi ends his “letter” to the author with words that reverberate. They deserve to be repeated here, for if ever there was a book of haiku to hold near to one’s heart, *Clouds and More Clouds* is it: “So I say thank you David for this collection. Thank you for a well-needed resting place. A place proportionate to our need for Origins.” By the end of Rosen’s fine collection, I found myself looking out the window for—dare I say it?—a cloud or two to write home about.

#### Notes

1. Henry D. Thoreau; quoted in Robert Epstein and Sherry Phillips, eds., *The Natural Man: A Thoreau Anthology* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1978), 2.
2. *Ibid.*, 51.



*Robert Epstein is a licensed psychologist, haiku poet, and anthologist. He has written a book of death awareness haiku titled, Check-out Time is Noon, as well as A Walk Around Spring Lake.*

## Briefly Reviewed

by Michele Root-Bernstein, East Lansing, Michigan  
& Francine Banwarth, Dubuque, Iowa

**Marlène Buitelaar, ed. *The Scent of Music, Haiku with a touch of music.*** Den Bosch, Netherlands: 't schrijverke, 2013, 74 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 7. ISBN 978-94-90607-8. US\$16 plus postage from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com) or [max@verhart.org](mailto:max@verhart.org).

This boutique collection “is dedicated entirely to haiku referring in one way or another to man-made music.” A first volume was devoted to Dutch haiku poets; this second volume features 194 haiku written by English-language poets or translated into English from the Dutch. The introduction by Marlène Buitelaar and Max Verhart offers three categories of musical reference. In the first, music functions as “décor” or background for the poem; in the second, it functions as metaphor; in the third, as subject. Readers decide to which group each haiku may belong. The game is an enjoyable one, as is the eccentric choice of many splendid examples of musical haiku. *Chopin nocturne— / the lower octaves warm / from the sun* (Hortensia Anderson); *night rain— / the small serrated song / of a frog* (Ferris Gilli); *after the shooting star— / a single note / from the wind chime* (Michael Dylan Welch).  
~MRB

**Carolyn Hall, ed. *The Color of Water.*** Santa Rosa, CA: Two Autumns Press, 2013, unpag., stapled, 5.25 x 7. No ISBN. US\$8. Available from the publisher. To order, contact [jwrobello@hotmail.com](mailto:jwrobello@hotmail.com).

This handsome chapbook features haiku by the four poets invited to the 24th annual (September 2013) Two Autumns

reading sponsored by the Haiku Poets of Northern California: Gregory Longenecker, Eve Luckring, Carolyn Rohrig, and Ce Rosenow. Carolyn Hall's selection of twelve representative poems for each (from among many more read) includes not a single miss. There is enough of excellence here to give the reader a decided taste for the style, concerns, and particular genius of these poets, whose work runs the gamut of traditional, contemporary, and experimental approaches to a wide range of natural and human matters. Beyond the appreciation of distinctive and compelling differences, the reader may seek and find commonalities of experience and expression that lend haiku in all its forms transcendent power. *he rereads / her last text message / footprints on the moon* (Gregory Longenecker); *words / / still pink / close to the bone* (Eve Luckring); *corner bar / I drink to the last drop / of your intention* (Carolyn Rohrig); *a few crumbs / on the tablecloth . . . / she says maybe* (Ce Rosenow). ~MRB

**Marco Fraticelli. *Drifting*.** Catkin Press, 2013, 86 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 6.75. ISBN 978-0-9880784-4-4. US\$10 plus postage from [claudiaradmore@gmail.com](mailto:claudiaradmore@gmail.com) or [kingsroadpress@hotmail.com](mailto:kingsroadpress@hotmail.com).

This extraordinary little book features selected entries from the diaries of one Celesta Taylor, a widowed woman living in rural Canada at the turn of the 20th century, and what amounts to an extended haiku meditation on her life by Marco Fraticelli, the man who discovered the diaries years ago in an abandoned cabin. Although the endeavor bears resemblance to haibun, it is something other—a kind of call and response—or more accurately, call and empathically imagined equivalence. Fraticelli notes in a brief preface that he wrote the haiku “as I imagined Celesta might have,” for despite constraints of gender and history, “there are experiences and emotions that are universal and timeless. It is into these that I tried to tap.” And, indeed, he does. Celesta’s first entries, as selected by Fraticelli, record her many chores and the comings and goings of her widowed cousin, by whom she is employed to care for his children and household. Her direct references to the natural world beyond her door are few: quarts of strawberries picked,



the weather, the presence of crows or the good sound of “birds.” Yet, knowing that Celesta works the garden, wanders the woods in search of the herbals with which she makes medicines, and at times wishes she “could fly,” Fraticelli intuitively finds a fuller poetic response to her environment. Then, as the diarist grows into self-awareness, more ready to use the writing to note dreams, desires and the emotional turmoil of her relationship with her cousin, Fraticelli channels the undertow too. Page by page, diary entries and haiku take on separate currents that cross and recross into a rising torrent that is dammed at the last to a trickle. Throughout, the haiku do an excellent job of speaking the unspoken with authenticity—only a few struck this reader as too “modern” and self-referential for the historical Celesta’s voice. On balance, these hardly mar Fraticelli’s unusual and yes, experimental, achievement. The haiku bring as much depth to the diary as the diary to the art. *I sprinkle ashes / from the woodstove / onto the compost pile; new year’s eve / behind the jars of preserves / a broken cocoon; night of no moon / I light every lamp / to read your letter.* ~MRB

**Jay Friedenberg. *One Rock Out of Place.*** Uxbridge, UK: Alba Publishing, 2013, 40 pp., perfect softbound, 5.75 x 8.25. ISBN 978-0-9575265-5-6. US\$12. Order from [info@alba-publishing.com](mailto:info@alba-publishing.com).

In this fine first collection, Jay Friedenberg organizes some 60 haiku in two kinds of place: “Town and Country” and “City and Street.” In the first, he visits many of the more conventional themes in haiku—moments of attention to the great outdoors, the weather, the flora and fauna that inspire and intrigue—and in self-effaced style. In the second, his lens zooms inward, as if self-awareness were more of a premium when pressed on all sides by the strangers, the noise, the choices, the endless information of city life. The stark juxtaposition of these two kinds of spaces makes for a read both charming and compelling. *morning downpour / at my doorstep / a small frog; morning shave / my memory of the dream . . . / cut short; her rant an express train speeds through.* ~MRB

**Robert Epstein, ed. *Now This: Contemporary Poems of Beginnings, Renewals, and Firsts*.** Shelbyville, KY: Wasteland Press, 2013, 187 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 978-1-60047-895-6. US\$17.95 from [www.wastelandpress.net](http://www.wastelandpress.net).

Fourth in a series of poetry compilations focused on the stress points of human existence, this volume celebrates beginner's mind and the ability to see the present moment as if for the first time, as a new start on life—all as expressed by a wide range of haiku poets. *the long day you leave as it begins* (marlene mountain); *commencement / all eyes turn toward / the hummingbird* (Robert Epstein); *meadowlark— / all you'll ever need to know / about sunrise* (Chad Lee Robinson); *themomentwhenmoonlightbecomesbirdsong* (Sandra Simpson).

~MRB

**Claudia Chapline. *Bird Watch*.** Stinson Beach, CA: Red Comma Editions, 2013, 104 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 7. ISBN 0-9653569-8-1. US\$18 from [www.claudiachapline.wordpress.com](http://www.claudiachapline.wordpress.com).

In this first collection of haiku, remarkable for its evocation of the northern California sand spit and salt water estuary where the writer-artist makes her home, over 150 poems take us through the four seasons on land and sea, in mind and heart. *harvest moon / noctaluca swimming / my own light forgotten*.

~MRB

**Jane Reichhold. *A Dictionary of Haiku*,** second edition. Gualala, CA: AHA Books, 2013, 328 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 0-944676-24-3. US\$18 from [www.AHApoetry.com](http://www.AHApoetry.com); \$16.20 at Amazon.com.

A reprised collection from the formidable and prolific Reichhold, in its first instar (1992) *A Dictionary of Haiku* won the Haiku Society of America Merit Book Award. Readers may expect a new selection of over 5000 poems written (or revised) since 1993, “arranged according to the five seasons and seven traditional *saijiki* categories of Japan.” SUMMER: *Animals: lizard: rented cabin / the lizard hisses me / off his porch*. ~MRB

**Kala Ramesh, Johannes Manjrekar, and Vido Jyoti, eds.** *First Katha Book of Haiku, Haibun, Senryu, & Tanka*. New Delhi, India: Katha Publishers, 2013, 116 pp., e-book. ISBN 978-93-82454-19-9. US\$2.99 from [www.magzter.com](http://www.magzter.com).

Thirty-five voices from a country that “draws much of its sustenance from nature and her transient seasons” are featured in this e-book of haiku and its related forms. One recognizes an immediacy in the treatment of diverse nature and human settings and themes, with “dream spaces” suggested by the artwork of Surabhi Singh. In the afterword poet and writer Tracy Koretsky guides the reader through the use of *kigo* to unlock meaning in a variety of the poems included on the pages of this engaging and delightful collection. *stalled traffic / a cow picks flowers / off the wedding car* (Johannes Manjrekar); *thunderclap— / the sleeping newborn / throws up her arms* (Chitra Rajappa); *temple ruins / only the wind still / offers flowers* (Rohini Gupta). ~FB

**Marian Olson.** *Moondance*. Santa Fe, NM: Deep North Press, 2013, unpag. (52 pp.), perfect softbound, 5.5 x 7. ISBN 978-1-929116-19-5. US\$18 from [www.modernhaiku.org](http://www.modernhaiku.org).

Of all the themes and images treated in poems written through the ages, the moon must be at the top of the list. This planetary body in all of its phases is a constant companion. It is the *sabi* and *wabi* of our musings and most often inseparable from our deeper feelings, especially those of love and longing. As a symbol for fulfillment and emptiness, we are often pulled under its spell. The author has taken great care to bow deeply to the moon, both through her haiku and the art and design by Lidia Rozmus. Paper stock is midnight blue and like satin to touch, as if passing a hand through the summer sky. Pages are fittingly sparse, with a single haiku on each accompanied by a degree of the moon placed strategically in an upper corner so that when the reader flips quickly through the pages the eye catches the moon waning and waxing. Fifty-two pages, one for each week of the year, with 39 haiku that reach for the heart. *moon shadows / luring me deeper / into the dream; full of mischief / the old devil moon / between us*. ~FB

**Graham High, ed. *Barbed Wire Blossoms: The Museum of Haiku Literature Award Anthology 1992–2011***. Essex, U.K.: The British Haiku Society, 2012, 91 pp., perfect softbound, 5.75 x 8.25. ISBN 978-1-906333-01-0. £7.00 from [www.britishhaikusociety.org.uk](http://www.britishhaikusociety.org.uk).

A well-composed and comprehensive anthology of haiku selected from the British Haiku Society's quarterly journal *Blithe Spirit* to receive the Museum of Haiku Literature Award. The BHS and *Blithe Spirit* were launched in 1990 and the first MHLA for an issue was presented in 1992. Over 80 haiku by 58 writers are included with each selector's informative commentary. As would be expected in a collection that spans 20 years, the poems contained within vary in style and content. Readers may also be interested in comparing these award-winning haiku with haiku currently written by others in the global community for commonalities and differences. *Snow bent branches / moonlight / slides to the ground* (Natalia L. Rudychev); *Willy-nilly / through her ashes / mother's daffodils* (David Leather); *Singing the storm / our words / / hurl / in the spinning drift* (Arwyn Evans). ~FB

**Scott Wiggerman & Constance Campbell, eds. *Lifting the Sky: Southwestern Haiku and Haiga***. Austin, TX: Dos Gatos Press, 2013, 100 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 978-09840399-3-7. US\$15.95 from [www.dosgatospress.org](http://www.dosgatospress.org).

*Lifting the Sky* is a collection inspired by the landscape, seasons, and human connection to the beauty and flavor of the American Southwest. A variety of voices, some more seasoned than others, deliver lines teeming with mountain and mesa, cactus and canyon, saguaro and snakeweed, lizard and luminaria, hoodoo and horno (a brief glossary is provided for terms unfamiliar to the reader). Many of the haiga are photographs that illustrate a sense of place, of time past and present in a region of the U.S. that is both wild and tamed. *lifting the sky / high over Arizona / saguaro arms* (Lesley Anne Swanson); *city lights— / counting constellations / to find where we are* (Bryce Emley); *hiking / the highest peak / I fold the map* (Carolyn Tourney Floreck). ~FB

## Other Collections Received

**Carolyn Giles Banks. *Tigers, Temples and Marigolds.*** Minneapolis, MN: Wellington-Giles Press, 2013, 16 pp., hand-crafted, limited edition, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN 978-0-9645254-5-0. US\$17 + \$3 postage from wellingtongilespress@gmail.com.

This beautifully designed chapbook contains 6 haiku and 12 haibun that record the author's travels in India in 2013. The haibun journey begins in a Minneapolis airport and ends on the Ganges where the author scatters her late husband's ashes. Engaging prose and well-imagined haiku. *Ayurvedic spa / a cow's moo / ends meditation.*

**Satoru Kanematsu. *Hazy Moon: Haiku Diary.*** Nakagawaku, Nagoya: Gakuhōsha Publishing Co., 2013, 83 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8. ISBN 978-4-9907320-0-4. US\$15 from the author at 4-23-13 Yobitsugi, Minami-ku, Nagoya 457-0014.

A collection of haiku by Kanematsu published in *Asahi Haikuist Network* from 2000 to 2012, with comments by David McMurray, editor of *Asahi*. Kanematsu is assistant editor of the haiku journal *Kō*, writes on a variety of themes from nature to family to war, and adheres to a 3-5-3 syllable count. The haiku are dated and serve as a kind of diary, as in: April 15, 2011—*Hazy moon / thousands of souls lost / in the quake.*

**Saeed Abbasi. *My Haiku/Mis Haikus.*** Self-published, 2012, 266 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 7. ISBN 978-1-62847-188-5. US\$25 from saeedabbasi33@hotmail.com.

Haiku in English, Spanish, and Persian, most nearly at the full 17-syllable count. Seasonal and personal themes with a poetic feel to a variety of lines: *The November wind / around midnight has a sound / no one can ignore.* In the last section of the collection, the lines become tighter and the haiku more concise: *From now on / the certain distance / for writing.*

## Re:Readings

### From *Frogpond* 36:3

**Bruce H. Feingold**, Berkeley, California, on Jim Kacian's haiku:

Few haiku use wilderness challenge activities and their inherent risks as the major image, but Jim Kacian's

pacific paddle the wave bigger than my fear

places us squarely in a kayak (or perhaps a canoe) in the Pacific Ocean. The first phrase, "pacific paddle," suggests an idyllic adventure, maybe on a windless day on the California coast or in tropical waters.

In the second part of the haiku, "the wave bigger," the mood changes quickly as a large and presumably threatening wave disrupts the serene scene. The abruptness of this shift replicates how a tranquil sea may suddenly become ferocious and dangerous. The poem taps directly into our amygdala or the fear response in our primitive brain center.

The first two phrases present us with a basic human dilemma: will the frightening waves of life overwhelm us or will we be able to master our fear? The third, albeit brief, part of the haiku, "than my fear," beckons a second reading of the phrase "wave bigger." The realization of the "wave bigger than my fear" gives the reader relief. The kayaker masters his terror and survives the rough seas.

Regarding haiku form, this is a modern one-liner and characteristic of much of Kacian's current pithy style, but the first phrase could be a first line of a traditional 5-7-5 haiku and is based on an image of a person in nature. However, the second phrase compares the person-nature image with an

internal, human state (fear), thus relying on a verbal, psychological mechanism to induce the experience of fear and relief. Also, the need to re-read “the wave bigger than my fear” has become a hallmark and rationale of one-liners. Finally, perhaps Kacian is subtly alluding, consciously or unconsciously, to Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*. I grant you that this may be more my poetic musing than the intention of the poet.

Kacian’s haiku also addresses a fundamental experience of nature. In my doctoral dissertation in the 1970s I studied the psychological effects of natural environments, specifically the experiences of backpackers. The results are relevant to Kacian’s haiku. I found that wilderness experiences were uniquely rewarding in two ways. First, many find that being in natural environments is an opportunity to lose one’s self in beauty and quietude, i.e., a pacific paddle. For many this has a spiritual or religious overtone. However, the backpackers also thrived on the challenge, immanent danger, and ultimate mastery of being in the mountains.

Kacian’s haiku spoke to me for several months after reading it. It reminded me that our lives flow between gentle days on quiet seas and the unpredictable threats to our well-being. Once we realize the waves are not as large as we thought we may continue on our journey with more confidence and tranquility.



*Bruce H. Feingold published his first collection of haiku, A New Moon, in 2004, and Red Moon Press published his second volume, Sunrise on the Lodge, in 2010. Bruce publishes regularly in haiku journals, such as Modern Haiku, bottle rockets, Mariposa, and Frogpond. His poems reflect his work as a practicing psychologist and his passion for family, traveling, yoga, hiking, and Buddhism.*

## Corrections

From *Frogpond* 36:3

**p. 113**

Our apologies to Jackie Hofer for our mistake in gender, which should have read “his haiku.”

**p. 121**

Our apologies to the authors of “Down the Line,” honorable mention in the 2013 Einbond renku competition, for our error in line break. The correct version is:

her stockings  
over the chair

Tom Clausen

scrolling down  
to savor  
the x’s and o’s

Hilary Tann

## *Call for Designs*

Help stock this pond with frogs! We welcome frog designs in black and white for inclusion in the pages of this journal. We hope to choose a different frog design for each issue, so please e-mail your submission of high-quality .jpeg or .tiff files to the editors of *Frogpond* at [frogsforthepond@gmail.com](mailto:frogsforthepond@gmail.com).





# 2013 Kanterman Merit Book Awards

*For Books Published in 2012*

## **Judges**

Paul MacNeil, Ocala, Florida  
Paul Miller, Bristol, Rhode Island

## **First Place (\$500)**

**Carolyn Hall ~ *The Doors All Unlocked***

Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2012. 102 pages, perfect-bound, 4.25 x 6.5 inches. ISBN 978-1-936848-16-4. \$12.00.

Hall's latest collection of haiku confirms her appreciation and expression of both her emotional and natural worlds. On page after page we find strong poems mixed with a few just "very good." This is a high standard. This is art from an English-language haiku master.

## **Second Place (\$100)**

**Rebecca Lilly ~ *Yesterday's Footprints***

Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2012. 66 pages, perfect-bound, 4.25 x 6.5 inches. ISBN 978-1-936848-17-1. \$12.00.

Landscape is important to Lilly; her relationship to it, equally so. Her poems examine the past and present, and look inwards at how they all connect. The reader will recognize many of her questions as their own.

### Third Place (\$50)

#### Stella Pierides ~ *In the Garden of Absence*

Afterword by Michael Dylan Welch. Neusaess, Germany: Fruit Dove Press, 2012. 76 pages, perfectbound, 5 x 7.5 inches. ISBN 978-3-944155-00-5. \$10.00.

A charming collection in which the poet revisits childhood loneliness (although one-liness might be more appropriate), yet “located within adult concerns, uncertainties, anxieties, as well as pleasures.” This intersection of the past and present is within all of us, and Pierides mines it well. A very satisfying read.

### Honorable Mentions

**Victor Ortiz.** *Into Borrego Valley.* Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2012. 20 pages, saddle-stapled, 4 x 5.25 inches. No ISBN. \$10.00.

**Bruce Ross.** *Spring Clouds.* Bangor, ME: Tancho Press, 2012. 150 pages, perfectbound, 5.5 x 8.5 inches. ISBN 978-0-9837141-1-8. \$14.95.

**Michael Henry Lee.** *Against the Grain.* Saint Augustine, FL: Eleventh Hour Press, 2012. 56 pages, spiral bound, 5.5 x 8.5 inches. No ISBN. \$8.00.

### Best Anthology

**Robert Epstein, ed.** *The Temple Bell Stops: Contemporary Poems of Grief, Loss and Change.* Baltimore, MD: Modern English Tanka Press, 2012. 256 pages, perfectbound, 6 x 9 inches. ISBN 978-1-9353983-0-1. \$19.95.

Epstein’s interest in the multiple sides of loss isn’t an interest in masochism; rather, he is interested in the courageous ways

people confront a part of life that is completely natural. There are many kinds of loss, from simple goodbyes to the death of a loved one, and everything in between, and this volume contains them all. Life-affirming rather than morbid.

### Honorable Mentions

**Jim Kacian, et al., eds.** *Carving Darkness: 2012 Red Moon Anthology*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2012. 176 pages, perfectbound, 5.5 x 8.25 inches. ISBN 978-1-946848-10-2. \$17.00.

**Patricia J. Machmiller, ed.** *Bending Reeds: 2012 Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members Anthology*. San Jose, CA: Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, 2012. 94 pages, perfectbound, 6 x 9 inches. ISBN 978-0-9850972-1-9. \$14.00.

### Best Criticism

**Stephen Addiss.** *The Art of Haiku*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 2012. 384 pages, hardbound, 6.3 x 9.2 inches. ISBN 978-1-59030-886-8. \$24.95.

An excellent introduction to haiku that takes the reader from its humble beginnings through Shiki and a few contemporaries. Not only does it discuss the path of haiku's development in Japan, but also how haiku work—and the volume contains numerous examples. The perfect book to give someone with an interest in haiku.

### Special Award for Fiction

**David G. Lanoue.** *Frog Poet*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2012. 184 pages, perfectbound, 5 x 7.25 inches. ISBN 978-1-936948-03-4. \$17.00.

The capstone to a wonderful quartet. Not only a wonderful way to learn about haiku, but a fun story as well, in which Old Japan appears alongside present-day New Orleans, both full of poets and poetics. And a frog.



*Paul MacNeil has been an associate editor of The Heron's Nest since 2000. He is a member of teams winning a number of the HSA Einbond Renku Competition prizes and was awarded an engraved river boulder, one of 41 haiku stones in the Katikati Haiku Pathway, New Zealand. His haiku have been anthologized in a variety of publications and most recently in Haiku in English: The First 100 Years, 2013, and Where the River Goes: The Nature Tradition in English-Language Haiku, 2013.*

*Paul Miller is the editor of Modern Haiku. His haiku and essays have been widely published and anthologized. He most recently won the Haiku Society of America Mildred Kanterman Award for his latest collection, Few Days North Days Few (Red Moon Press, 2011).*

***The Haiku Society of America  
Annual Contests***

Thank you to the judges and contest coordinator, Michael Dylan Welch, and congratulations to the winners of the 2013 Mildred Kanterman Merit Book Awards. The deadlines for HSA-sponsored contests are:

- Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Contest: February 28, 2014
- Nicholas Virgilio Haiku Contest: March 25, 2014
- Mildred Kanterman Merit Book Awards: March 31, 2014
- HSA Haibun Contest: July 31, 2014
- Harold G. Henderson Haiku Contest: July 31, 2014
- Gerald Brady Senryu Contest: July 31, 2014

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The HSA gratefully acknowledges a \$50 donation from Carolyn Noah Graetz to honor David Lanoue and Johnette Downing as the founders of the New Orleans Haiku Society.



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## From the Editors

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes,  
but in having new eyes.*

~Marcel Proust

A brand new year! Where did you begin? We hope with a good measure of health, peace, and happiness; inspired writing; and time for contemplation, resolution, and first preparations for renewal. Many of us have spent the winter months snowed and iced in like never before. Others might welcome a cooler, wetter clime, especially in areas that are under siege of drought and wildfires. Either extreme can curtail travel on the paths usual to us—sidewalks, streets, bus lines, railway tracks, airways, the Internet. Yet Proust reminds us there is one road to discovery that is always open. Real discovery begins within, born of alternate sight lines onto old landscapes and conventional vistas. Our most profound voyages do not simply involve “being there,” but depend on “becoming here.”

Whatever the season or climate, beauty is all around us, as Chris Patchel illustrates in another stunning cover design. Beauty stops us in our tracks and, in an instant, connects us to the greater universe. We think you’ll find evidence of this deeper connection in *Frogpond* 37:1, which offers new lookouts on old and perennial landscapes—war, religion, 5–7–5—as well as into the inner lands of haiku, haibun, and linked forms. Ignatius Fay’s “Grim” also seems to have found a home on the pages.

Once again our deep gratitude to Charlie Trumbull and Bill Pauly, whose eyes caught many of our errors before going to press. We will miss Angela Terry and Michael Dylan Welch on the HSA board, as well as the regional coordinators who have stepped down, and we welcome those who have stepped up to take their places (see p. 179). *Frogpond* wouldn’t exist without the support of the HSA and its hardworking officers and coordinators. We look forward to another year as your editors, we thank our contributors, and we wish our readers a winter’s “voyage of discovery.”

Francine Banwarth, Editor  
Michele Root-Bernstein, Associate Editor