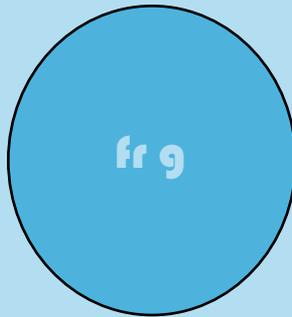


# **frogpond**

**The Journal of the Haiku  
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3. Up to three (3) rengay or other short sequences
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5. One (1) essay
6. One (1) book review

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**From Issue 34:3**

after she leaves  
the weight  
of hanging apples

***Marsh Muirhead***  
Bemidji, Minnesota

\*

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# Haiku & Senryu

Inn and Out Motel  
filling the empty lot  
the cop car at noon

Marian Olson, Santa Fe, New Mexico

a rush of wind  
bows the bluestem  
horsetail clouds

breakfast special  
eighteen-wheelers  
in half light

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

the scent of tarmac  
from an empty court  
...fifteen love

Helen Buckingham, Bristol, England

first kiss  
marram grass stubbles  
the dunes

Susan Richardson, Cardiff, Wales

scale the toddler asks what he costs

deep yawn  
the soft clack  
of a spoonbill beak

William E. Cooper, Richmond, Virginia

having left today  
you are no longer a man  
only a fragrance

Alanna C. Burke, Santa Fe, New Mexico

weary weary  
until the sunset's clouds  
sprout wings

William Scott Galasso, Issaquah, Washington

evening chant  
a ripple  
in the prayer flags

Michael Ketchek, Rochester, New York

wisteria infusing twilight's warm breath

come fall with me languor's slant

Susan Diridoni, Kensington, California

sun  
with a chance of clouds  
family reunion

Stephen A. Peters, Bellingham, Washington

walking on the mountain's back   tenderly

fish scales on table planks   this night fear

now and now and now   meadow stream forming its self

William M. Ramsey, Florence, South Carolina

Spanish guitar—

the sound of your fingers  
through my hair

Deborah Barbour Lundy, Dubois, Wyoming

pristine pillow  
on his side of the bed  
cold snap

Diane Judge, Durham, North Carolina

evening bus stop  
eyes  
that have seen enough

Glenn Coats, Prospect, Virginia

the round trips  
from my house to yours  
Möbius strip

gray clouds  
as the relatives arrive  
...lumpy gravy

Barbara Snow, Eugene, Oregon

Someone wrote  
“lávame”  
on my car

Alguien escribió  
“wash me”  
en mi coche

Bruce England, Santa Clara, California

first  
cicada husk

not her last  
unanswered  
question

wind chimes

the neighbor’s argument

builds  
&  
breaks

Peter Vanderberg, Lynbrook, New York

though morning lead us  
down opposite roads  
memory foam

Gary Eaton, Port Moody, British Columbia

opening the silence morning glory

Ann K. Schwader, Westminister, Colorado

blackbirds braid the sky woodsmoke morning

Andrea Grillo, Randolph, New Jersey

especially  
nevertheless  
hello

Stephen Addiss, Middletown, Virginia

moonlit estuary  
a warm current enters

the conversation

Lorin Ford, Melbourne, Australia

snowdrifts  
now we go  
to separate beds

Elizabeth Moura, East Taunton, Massachusetts

downsizing  
guitar to ukelele  
my life

Carole Evelyn, Bellingham, Washington

embitterment  
wind-weathered on the branch  
the last chokecherry

Autumn Noelle Hall, Green Mountain Falls, Colorado

darkness...  
the reassurance  
of a nightingale

Grace Galton, Somerset, England

perhaps next year  
she says...  
autumn mist

John Kinory, Steeple Aston, England

market  
she weighs a year of labor  
in her hand

Seánan Forbes, New York, New York

Autumn warmth  
all the kittens  
find a nipple

Gregory Hopkins, Weaver, Alabama

popping one last beer —  
a bit of sunrise spills  
into the ocean

Collin Barber, Memphis, Tennessee

last piece of wood  
in the pile  
winter widow

Anita Guenin, San Diego, California

hot  
a gnat caught  
in her lip gloss

Alicia Hilton, Wilmette, Illinois

magnitude 6-point-9  
the toll of the bell  
no one struck

Alan Bridges, Littleton, Massachusetts

the old ache seeps downhill beneath the ferns

Mark Harris, Princeton, New Jersey

gathering light,  
frost paisleys  
on the window

John Shiffer, Ithaca, New York

family dinner  
siblings feed the elephant  
in the room

Julie Warther, Dover, Ohio

maybe an ant  
next time...  
maybe this time

John Stevenson, Nassau, New York

tide rising  
this full moonlight...  
his pale thighs

Pris Campbell, Lake Worth, Florida

potlatch bowl...  
so much  
to remember

Angela Terry, Lake Forest Park, Washington

feathered dinosaurs  
a wood duck floats  
on its bright colors

Robert Mainone, Delton, Michigan

azure sky  
through bare branches  
included in the bouquet

Brent Partridge, Orinda, California

after a fall  
the old man's bruises  
speak of sunset

Tom Tico, San Francisco, California

where I used to play...  
airconditioned storage units  
for memories

Bob Lucky, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

flecked with cobwebs—  
mildew  
and old love

my boat's nose  
parting the reeds  
spring haze

Michael McClintock, Clovis, California

yes  
I said your name  
sofa cat

Michelle Tennison, Blackwood, New Jersey

back to school  
vetch seeds rattle  
in their pods

Katrina Shepherd, Dublane, Scotland

her skin through thin cotton sunrise

John Hawk, Columbus, Ohio

oil  
his sideways glance  
vinegar

Joyce Clement, Bristol, Connecticut

last leaves  
juddering  
long shadows

Neal Whitman, Pacific Grove, California

one red aster  
in full sunburst  
love so near

Maxianne Berger, Montreal, Quebec

dead seas  
of the moon  
plainchant

Roland Packer, Hamilton, Ontario

Christmas eve—  
I mull the wine  
with my thoughts

hortensia anderson, New York, New York

F walking O through G

Cara Holman, Portland, Oregon

four crows the sound of death in Chinese

Christina Nguyen, Hugo, Minnesota

the barley dries—  
whiskey colors washing  
stones in the burn

Colin Stewart Jones, Aberdeen, Scotland

chilly dawn  
the colors seep  
from my dreams

autumn tide pools...  
dreams of people  
I no longer see

Gregory Longenecker, Pasadena, California

cloudy night  
places starlight goes  
in our lifetime

Gary Hotham, Scaggsville, Maryland

mating dragonflies—  
my overuse  
of dashes

Aubrie Cox, Muncie, Indiana

all day blizzard  
the old armchair  
growing deeper

Ernest Wit, Warsaw, Poland

Dad's melancholy streak  
strong in me  
black tea

Mary Ahearn, Pottstown, Pennsylvania

six month anniversary  
the white noise of cicadas  
turns to snow

Mary Kipps, Sterling, Virginia

the weight  
of the briefcase  
I no longer carry

Carlos Colón, Shreveport, Louisiana

fifty years of marriage  
the shape of the wind  
in the old oak's gnarl

Eric Houck, Deltona, Florida

we exchange  
medical advice  
summer fog

J. Zimmerman, Santa Cruz, California

sheep shearing—  
a small indiscretion  
forgiven in time

false indigo—  
the way a lie  
colors the day

Michele Harvey, Hamilton, New York

caught up in your story the tai chi of gnats

Dan Schwerin, Waukesha, Wisconsin

autumn chill  
the acorn  
missing its cap

Jeff Hoagland, Hopewell, New Jersey

fog on the mountain  
the first day they sent her  
to work in the mill

Bonnie Stepenoff, Cape Girardeau, Missouri

the apiarist  
arrays his vegetables  
gentle hum

Quendryth Young, Alstonville, Australia

sound of rain  
on newly-fallen leaves—  
your untended grave

Doris Lynch, Bloomington, Indiana

# gOLDen LEAVES

LeRoy Gorman, Napanee, Ontario

paper cut  
another day  
comes and goes

Robert Epstein, El Cerrito, California

something  
for those who have time  
the side in shadow

Greg Piko, Yass, Australia

misty and somewhat  
worn around the edges—  
the used bookseller

Barry George, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

over pruning the tree last night's argument

w.f. owen, Sacramento, California

green corn silk  
my father wanted to live  
forever

jeans  
that fit last year...  
fall creek rising

Carolyn Hall, San Francisco, California

train track clatter  
the conductor's punches  
contrapuntal

Scott Mason, Chappaqua, New York

secrets...  
the moonlight  
in her voice

deep autumn...  
knowing there is nowhere  
I have to be

William Kenney, Whitestone, New York

lime pickle—  
the tang  
of an afternoon kiss

the crow's flight...  
a brushstroke on  
the falling dusk

sanjukta asopa, Karnataka, India

meet me there  
behind your eyes  
horizonless

Eve Luckring, Los Angeles, California

third trimester  
the seed heads heavy  
with summer rain

lifelines  
the baby's hands  
trace mine

John Barlow, Ormskirk, England

summer rain  
some of you in  
some of me

lossified

Melissa Allen, Madison, Wisconsin

it's you I think of—  
biting into the heart  
of the fig

Cynthia Cechota, Dubuque, Iowa

last hot night  
the trumpet's valves up  
and down

persimmons  
in the colander  
sunburst

Lenard D. Moore, Raleigh, North Carolina

what a grump  
I've become...  
fields of goldenrod

shorter days  
I skim  
the obituaries

below zero  
denial is way  
underrated

Christopher Patchel, Metawa, Illinois

down millions of years  
in the shale-lined gorge  
this waterfall splash

Ruth Yarrow, Seattle, Washington

sudden shadow—  
minnows gather  
in a big-fish shape

Kristen B. Deming, Bethesda, Maryland

ants  
massing  
in a wall socket  
the mystery  
of desire

Sheila Sondik, Bellingham, Washington

ashes in the flowerbed...

the last thing  
he could do for me

Bud Cole, Ocean City, New Jersey

between any two points on a line  
— the Mojave —

Nancy Carol Moody, Eugene, Oregon

all bundled in the gauze of my child dreaming

Paul Pfeuger, Jr., Chiayi, Taiwan

imaginary  
in the glare of tidal flats  
tracks in cypher

so imaginär  
die Chiffren der Geläufe  
im gleißenden Watt

Klaus-Dieter Wirth, Viersen, Germany

the ping pong sound snug inside the patter of rain

Daniel Liebert, Maplewood, Missouri

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# Revelations: Unedited

## Writing From the Present, Past, and Future

by *Penny Harter*, Mays Landing, New Jersey

When asked why I write haiku, I've answered:

Each haiku I write is like breathing out, giving back to the earth recognition, affirmation, and gratitude. I am reminded of how seldom we really notice what is going on around us, and how important the most ordinary things can be. Writing haiku is one way of translating the Earth—honoring what the mountain, the dragonfly, the neighbor, and even the dirt under our feet mean to our existence. Whether we know it or not, we are one with them. The writing and sharing of haiku can bring us together as we celebrate our connections with the larger world that we share, while at the same time affirming the particular times and places of our lives and our human responses to them.

beekeeper  
humming  
back

Although I affirm everything I've said above as being true to why I write haiku, for me there are other sources of haiku besides honoring the present moment of physical experience. Yes, I have written haiku, haibun, tanka and free verse poems based on the present moment, but also haiku and those other genres based on memories, fantasies, and dreams.

I've even written poems from images and connections that come to me when I "tune in" on someone or something I really have no access to—like an ancient Japanese wandering poet or place I have never been—in the flesh, anyway. During those times, perhaps I am tapping into a larger reality that something in my psyche receives and translates: poems from old Japan, for instance, like those I will be sharing from my chapbook of haiku *From the Willow*. These moments, experienced vicariously but intensely, also feel like I am capturing a particular time and place of my life—one previously unknown but feeling strangely familiar and "true". I suppose some would call that source of inspiration "the muse," but I just think that we can all access more than we consciously "know."

I think of Indra's net, the Hindu concept carried into Zen, of the in-

terconnected nature of all “reality”— whatever that is. The past (my own and “other”), present, future, actual, possible, remembered, invented—all these are one, simultaneously unique and the same. And all feel true to my experience.

In this essay I’d like to share with you a number of poems that have come from my fantasy and dream worlds, and others that have come through on what I call my “FM channel”— perhaps accessing other dimensions of experience besides the here and now that I happen to be living in.

One can find inspiration for fantasy-haiku from contemplating works of art, dance, music, and other works of literature. Some years ago while I watched Sachiyo Ito, an exquisite Japanese dancer, (<http://www.dancejapan.com/>), dance in the performance space at Tenri in New York City, I found myself seeing the following scenes to accompany both the music and the dance:

### **Listening to Sand**

*written during Sachiyo Ito’s dance to “Chieko: the Elements” (Chieko: Genso)*

pouring sand  
from one palm to the other—  
she listens

foam slips  
from a clam shell, sand  
draining with it

carried out above  
the sea, sand drops from  
a gull’s cry

at the sea’s edge  
her feet slap the sand—  
breaking waves

listening to sand  
she remembers night wind—  
dune grasses yielding

Obviously, I was not on the beach when I wrote the sequence above. But I have been on beaches in the past, and as I watched Sachiyo dance, those images began to flow through me, and I wrote them

down as they did so, scribbling on the edge of the performance program.

Shortly before Bill [my late husband, William J. Higginson] and I moved to Santa Fe in 2002, I began work on my book *Stages & Views*, poems written to the woodblock prints of Hiroshige (*The Fifty-Three Stages of the Tokaido*) and Hokusai (*Thirty-Six Views [of Mount Fuji]*). I had experienced a brief satori-like moment in the late eighties, and wanted to write a collection in which “I” got out of the way entirely. Of course I knew that my consciousness would decide what to include and what to ignore in the prints, but I felt the best way to express that momentary glimpse was to write poems with no first person singular in them. And those prints had long fascinated me.

Both sections of the book (“Stages” and “Views”) contain haiku-like short poems. In a renku-like process, I linked the pieces in the “Views” half of the book with haiku, and I also tried to similarly link the haiku to one another. All the poems arose from my meditating on each of the prints—entering them imaginatively, and animating them in some way, starting with the present landscape, then often giving the characters and/or scenes a past or future. Here is a sequence of three poems from “Views”:

20. FUJI FROM GOTEN-YAMA IN SHINAGAWA ON THE TOKAIDO

On Palace Mountain, the cherry trees  
blossoming, blossoming,  
each bloom laughing  
in a cloud of pink.

People have come to laugh with them,  
unfurling fans beneath bright boughs,  
delighting in one another.

Between two leaping branches,  
Fuji’s laughing too.

*evening rain—  
in the froth of the waterfall  
pale petals*

21. IN THE WAVE OFF KANAGAWA (“THE GREAT WAVE”)

A mountain of water erupts from the sea,  
thrusts white tentacles toward the sky,  
engulfs the small boat angled in its foothills

spews flecks of foam, blanched as the faces  
of the frightened sailors.

Among the swells  
Fuji is just another wave,  
cresting on inky depths.

*the cat's eyes glitter  
as the lizard plays dead  
in its mouth*

## 22. THE TAMAGAWA IN MUSASHI PROVINCE

A rider stands beside his horse  
holding the reins while the animal drinks  
from the sunlit Tamagawa.  
The river flows swiftly across his tongue.

Beyond a skein of clouds,  
Fuji drinks too, slowly savoring  
the cerulean sky.

*lunar eclipse—  
the shadow moves on the watcher's  
upturned face*

Another instance of responding vicariously to visual images, very different from those above, occurred when I watched the first showing of the TV program *The Day After*, shown in November of 1993. It depicted conditions in the U. S. after a nuclear attack.

### **For the Days After**

blinded  
the boy stares at  
the light

a baby's cry—  
sifting  
the rubble  
ash settles on  
the lips of  
the dead child

sunlight  
through the blanket  
fallout

tonight's wind  
without  
the barking dog

hands  
searching for someone  
they used to know

blood  
in the lap of  
her white dress

near the makeshift camp  
the field of corpses  
grows

his dead eyes—  
the rifle  
discharges

melted watch

charred wrist

Some of what comes through that “FM door” makes me really wonder about the nature of time and spirituality. As I said earlier, I do believe that “it” is all one. I had a compelling dream years ago—one of those dreams one knows is unique and meaningful—a lucid dream, perhaps: I was hovering over a long, narrow table, both ends of which were lost in a kind of misty vagueness. As I looked down on it, I noticed that it was compartmentalized, each of its divisions a slice of reality full of people living a life—so the table, itself, was a pun on the word “timetable.”

And in this dream, I “understood” that each of those compartments represented a time and place—a life that some aspect of “I” was living, as if reincarnation were, indeed, possible—except that these “lives” were all happening at once; I sensed that what we call “time” was an illusion we had manufactured to try to make sense of it all.

Then, a voice in my dream announced, “To die is to move backward or forward in time to be with those you love.” As you might suspect, this dream astounded me and even contradicted my religious upbringing. My dream understanding was that what we call “the soul” is the director of a number of simultaneous lit stages on which various facets of what we call “self” are acting out a life.

So, maybe that's how I wrote the following sequence when I was reading about the Eleusinian Mysteries while teaching a novel called *The King Must Die*. As I wrote it, I seemed to be seeing and living it. But clearly the self that I identify with has never participated, thank goodness, in the Eleusinian Mysteries in ancient Greece.

### **For the Eleusinian Mysteries**

after the sacred drink—  
the size  
of the moon

blood on her bruised lips,  
she bends to eat  
the pomegranate

we swallow seeds—  
clouds darken  
the stars

the priest  
breaks the wheat—  
chaff on his hands

at the mouth of the cave  
the torch  
burns brighter

as we walk naked  
into the earth, the smell  
of water

fire on the mountaintop—  
the drumming  
of our feet

Here are two more sequences that just came to me when I opened that door. They feel old, perhaps in an earlier Japan.

### **Ceremony Over**

ceremony over  
the bride bends  
to rub her feet

holding his bowl  
of fresh-cooked rice  
the grandfather smiles

letting the horses go  
the servant boy runs  
with them

unpinning her hair  
the old woman  
opens her window

in the garden  
blossoms moving—  
his still face

moonlit water—  
the carp  
opens his mouth

midnight rain—  
her pillow  
grows wet

puddles on the path swept smooth last night

### **Rainy Season**

rainy season—  
I move the empty nest  
to a higher limb

flood waters  
just below  
the snail

in the garden  
petals drift  
above the mud

pulling loose  
the dog paddles  
toward the hen house

open gate—  
leaves float in on  
the rising tide

When I wrote this next sequence, I was meditating on this Buddhist nun, about whose life I knew nothing. And suddenly I felt myself in the monastery, seeing, feeling, and hearing the things I detail below.

**For the Nun Chigetsu, 1622-1706**

the farmer's rooster  
farther away  
this misty morning

storm coming—  
light shines  
in the rice fields

under this rock  
moist dirt  
and my fingerprints

hands deep  
in the garden—the sun  
on distant hills

tea cool now  
I stare into the dark  
green leaves

cold night—  
the moon on my bed  
where you were

all night  
geese crossing  
my quiet breath

on the way  
to the toilet—suddenly  
wide blue sky

One night in the early 1980s, when Bill and I lived in Scotch Plains, NJ, he was researching an ancient Japanese wandering poet, one who took to the road long before Bashō. There wasn't much information about him, but as Bill was talking, I closed my eyes and "saw" the following, which I captured in haiku and tanka. Again, these poems detail feelings and experiences I have never seen or experienced in actuality. They became the content of my chapbook *From the Willow*, published by Wind Chimes in 1983. In the "Pref-

ace” to that tiny book, Bill wrote:

As Penny Harter and I sat discussing the first of Japan’s great traveling poets one evening, she picked up a pad and began writing. Over the course of the next two days these poems came to her—given, not struggled for. While they are mostly in the mode of haiku, rather than the waka or tanka in which our subject wrote, these poems speak of things which Penny has never experienced, and contain images more appropriate to ancient Japan, about which she knows very little, than to contemporary American suburbia.

Takechi no Kurohito (700 A.D.) traveled all over the Japan of his day, usually in service to and sometimes accompanying the Empress Jito and the Emperor Mommu. What we know of him derives directly from his poems and the brief prefaces to some of them recorded in the Manyōshū. He is revered as the first of Japan’s traveling poets, progenitor of the likes of Saigyō and Bashō. The following is a good representative of his straightforward, highly imagistic waka.

as we row around its jutting beaches  
in the scores of inlets of Lake Omi  
cranes in the marshes cry

Here are a few of my poems:

beneath the hill  
an ancient bell  
rusts

dried fish  
hanging in strips  
from the willow—  
beside the road  
dead wood

casting away  
the dead girl’s  
seashells

stumbling  
my lame foot  
straightens

sand blows  
on the grave  
of the ancestors

And here are two tanka, not from that tiny chapbook, their images coming from who knows where:

your words in my pocket  
cranes fly across  
the mountain's face—  
in the distance  
a waterfall

in the pass  
the roots of pines—  
remember walking  
hand-in-hand  
across the stones?

The following haiku make up the sequence “Over the Autumn Garden,” published in my chapbook *The Monkey's Face* (From Here Press, 1987). Again, these just came to me whole as I sat down to write.

over the autumn garden  
the crows' harsh cries—  
no word from you

pulling wild onions  
my fingers smell  
like mother's

in the shadows  
the child squashing insects  
smiles

blue mountains—  
how slow the moon  
from there to here

opening the door—  
the visitor's feet  
so much like yours

empty teacup—  
I scrape the leaves  
into my palm

first winter rain—  
remembering how long  
I've slept alone

Sometimes, a piece arrives that has no basis in fact but reflects an emotional truth. I am not clear what I was feeling when I wrote the following haibun. Pieces of the imagery are taken from my some of my own real observations (red warning flashes, icy road, hazard lights, etc.), but I did not lose control of my car on an icy road by a convenience store. In a way, the haibun is a collage of real images in an imaginary context.

### **The Meaning of Life**

I sit in my stalled car by the side of the icy road, hazard lights blinking and all the doors locked. I am savoring the meaning of life that burst behind my eyes as I drove down the highway into the setting winter sun. My pulse beats in time with the red warning flashes. I have not tied a soiled white handkerchief to my door handle. I deliberately let my hands leave the steering wheel, allowed the car to skate sideways across black ice.

*convenience store—  
half the letters dark  
on the neon sign*

The following haibun also combines the real and the imagined. Canada geese do settle on the playing field next to my condo complex, and I have crossed that field when they were there. However, I did not do what I have myself doing in this haibun—except imaginatively.

### **White Goose Dream**

Late afternoon. Canada geese wander toward me as they explore a marshy field, their gray feathers mottling the green. Sunlight stoning their backs, they sink into the coarse grasses. At the flock's edge, a white goose, the only white goose, turns her head to stare at me.

Staring back, I enter the field, lie down on my stomach among them, and begin to make the noise one makes between tongue and palate when calling a cat or chattering back at a squirrel.

*Tick Tick Tick*, I call to this bird who has singled me out. *Come to me*. Holding my gaze, she stands, shifts her weight from leg to leg, then lowers her breast to the rank and fecund Earth again and looks away.

*stuck to my face  
that strand of gossamer  
I didn't notice*

Now I want to share a free verse poem that depicts a mythical ex-

perience. It reflects my childhood fascination with coming down a mountain road and seeing the lights of a village twinkling in the valley—perhaps harking back to coming down the mountain into South Orange, NJ, where my grandparents lived. And I had the same feeling again and again when coming down from the mountains of northern New Mexico into Santa Fe, which is aptly sometimes called “Fanta Se,” as is New Mexico called “the Land of Enchantment.” I also wrote this one at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts last January.

### **In That Far Haven**

In childhood, I often visited a village at twilight—  
a village twinkling in the gloaming sky, floating there  
like some far haven of the fae come down to bless us.

I was welcome then, invited to a feast set out on silver  
plates, and sat at table with the rest—cloaked like them  
in strange diaphanous and haloed flesh.

Mild-faced wolves, curled like faithful dogs at our feet,  
laid their silky heads upon our laps as we slipped them  
roasted scraps of a wild beast brought in from the dark

uncharted forests far beyond us. Some sacrament was  
being acted out in those hallowed rooms, some festive  
celebration of the bond between us all—and I, the guest,

craved to stay among their kind, to live forever in that  
sphere of light and laughter, drinking ambrosia with the  
ancient ones who’d come here long ago—ancestors of

earth, air, fire, water, who deign to come among us now  
and then, crossing the threshold of our mortal coil; who  
kindly let me join their festal rites—and taught me well.

And here is a section from a multi-part new poem called “Keep,” one of a series in which I am riffing off of words that fascinate me. When I chose this word, I was first thinking of the medieval keep—the stronghold or castle/fort. And while I was writing, I “saw” the following and even chose to question it in the poem:

### **Keep**

*n. a stronghold, castle; prison, jail; one who keeps or protects*

From what memory do I pluck this noisy barnyard,  
white fowls running amuck, pigs snorting in the mud,

and I, barefoot, shaking my apron free of dusty grain?

Mountains surround this keep; mated swans  
drift in a moat behind stone walls

I wonder whom or what this keep enfolds.  
That which bars the other keeps us in.

Who is the keeper of this castle?

Among the most startling series of poems to come through that “FM” door occurred back in the 1970s when I was teaching American literature in a New Jersey high school. I’d been teaching the poems of Emily Dickinson and playing the recordings of Julie Harris reading Dickinson’s letters. I had left class to go monitor the English Independent Study Center off the library.

Immediately, I felt compelled to grab a pad of paper and begin writing. The following poems fell out of my pen so fast I could hardly keep up with them. This might be explained by the fact that I had been immersing myself in her work. However, I don’t know how to explain that this happened on the anniversary of her death (I was not consciously aware of that!). Here are the poems as reproduced on my web site at: <<http://www.2hweb.net/penhart/dickinson.html>>.

### **Five for Emily D.**

1.

I saw a spirit hover.  
It floated on my sill  
And whether it was wanting  
Or only passing still,

I found the hands were open,  
Birds slept upon the hair,  
And silver wreaths of moonlight  
Descended like a stair

Until a perfect circle  
That soul and I were one,  
And all the evening’s chatter  
Was over with—and done.

2.

If you would seek a fortune  
Or plot to pirate gain,

Look upon your neighbor  
And seek to plunder pain.

Your fortune will be heavy,  
Your take a sorry lot,  
But it will shine more sweetly  
Than any gold you've got!

3.  
Yesterday is finished.  
Today is bare begun  
Tomorrow is a spectre  
Upon the circling sun—

All the endless hours  
Compressing into one.

Yesterday is fallow.  
Today is fruited full.  
Tomorrow is the sower  
Without a field to till—

All the endless harvests  
One farm upon the hill.

4.  
The trouble with a wave  
Is that it needs a sea  
Or rolls the same direction  
Into eternity.

The trouble with a wave  
Is that it needs to be  
Connected to another  
In fluid harmony.

A wave might push forever,  
A solitary wall—  
But there must be an ocean  
For it to rise at all.

5.  
We come from far beyond the stars,  
We rise from deeper seas  
Than any you have visited  
Or sought upon your knees.

And though the mouth be stopt with mud,  
the fingers wed to air,  
the breath that echoes in the skull  
can sing from anywhere.

I believe we are all much more than we consciously know. I am fascinated with the possibilities of parallel and/or multiple universes, multiple dimensions—and with the elasticity of time, psychic energy and our ability to manifest. Here are some free verse poems in which I explore those possibilities:

### Half-Life

Some physicists say we are blinking  
on/off, on/off, always this rhythm of  
here/not-here, here/not-here . . .  
whatever here is . . . along with  
the whole flickering show,

like we're foam on a wave  
that wants to be particle wanting  
to be wave, foam that knows nothing,  
only scurries for its life like those  
poor blind mice, that trinity made flesh  
running after the farmer's wife  
until chop-chop her carving knife—  
its sharp blade melting even then  
into a stew of tails and gore and gone  
and there again.

We sputter into metaphor, mutter words  
like *universe, quantum, cosmos, chaos*—  
those spells our tongues have learned to shape  
against the thing that has no name  
we visit now and then

in the wind of no place where we live  
only half our lives, or live out our half-lives,  
racing toward some finish line that isn't  
after all.

### Dissolving Clouds

Unknown energy flows from us  
on breath we neither name nor measure  
as it courses through our flesh.

One must think of heat, the yogis say,  
must send it pulsing from the forehead  
like a mantra, aimed at the chosen

cloud from that site the ancients called  
another eye, a tiny gland buried in a cave  
within the skull's calcium architecture.

Transient vapors, clouds do shape-shift  
by themselves, torn pieces of the caul  
around this planet, adrift in the camouflage

we've named the heavens. Is it hubris  
to believe that thinking makes it so—  
that one can shift the balance, tilt

the alchemy of star and sea, cause  
a cloud to thin until transparent,  
or shred to fragments and be gone?

Perhaps we need to practice this  
old way of entering the sky, hoping  
to learn again what we once knew—

how that rhythm beats behind  
our eyes, and how, when focused on  
a random cloud, it all dissolves.

### **Déjà vu**

The future lives on the other side of the neighboring  
field or waits around the next bend—the one with no  
center line—at an intersection fixed on a map.

What has already happened there wraps itself firmly  
around our flesh like a rope hauling a climber up  
the slippery scabble of a nameless mountainside.

The future is a static landscape—not a spool of flickering  
stills, their singularity revealed so fast we can't decipher  
boundaries, but an infinity of the already been there and

done that, which we daily wander through, sometimes  
stumbling into déjà vu, that familiar shiver raising the fur  
on our arms and chilling the napes of our necks, as if

ghosts were drifting back into the rooms we call  
*Now*, wanting to tell us how it is or was or will be  
since they think they have been there and know.

I believe that we are all more than we consciously know. Whether our inspiration for haiku and/or other poems comes from our actual, physical experience of a moment “keenly perceived” or a moment perceived because we can access other layers of experience, whether imaginatively or actually, from time past or time to come, doesn’t really matter. It is all one, and I encourage those haijin who think that haiku can only come from the “here and now” to reexamine just what the “here and now” really is.

## Notes

Paragraph from “Why I Write Haiku,” from *The Unswept Path* in essay “Seeing and Connecting.” White Pine Press. 2005.

“Listening to Sand,” privately published by From Here Press in a handful of copies. June, 2008. Copy given to Sachiyo Ito.

“Fuji From Goten-Yama in Shinagawa on the Tokaido”; “In the Great Wave off Kanagawa”: and “The Tamagawa in Musashi Province”, from *Stages & Views*. Katydid Books, Santa Fe. 1994.

For the TV documentary, *The Day After* <<http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/D/htmlD/dayafterth/dayafter.htm>>.

“For the Days After,” *In the Broken Curve*. Burnt Lake Press. 1984.

“beneath the Hill,” “dried fish,” “casting away,” “stumbling,” and “sand blows,” from *From the Willow: Homage to Takechi no Kurohito*. Wind Chimes Minibook # 1. 1983.

“Over the Autumn Garden,” *The Monkey’s Face*. From Here Press, 1987.

“The Meaning of Life,” *Modern Haibun and Tanka Prose*, Issue 1. Summer, 2009.

“White Goose Dream,” *Haibun Today*. Volume 5, Number 1. March, 2011.<[http://haibuntoday.com/ht51/Harter\\_WhiteGooseDream.html](http://haibuntoday.com/ht51/Harter_WhiteGooseDream.html)>.

“Five for Emily D.” Poems 1-4 first published in 1975 in *The Higginson Journal of Poetry*, No. 12. [Note: The journal is not connected with my husband, William J. Higginson.] Poem 5 is published on my web site <<http://www.2hweb.net/penhart/dickinson.html>>.

“Half Life,” from *The Night Marsh*. WordTech Editions. 2008.

**Editors’ Note:** For Harter’s biography, see p. 179

# Tan Renga

## Deep Winter

by

Pamela A. Babusci, Rochester, New York  
Paul Smith, Worcester, England

deep winter  
i find your last letter  
covered in dust

*between the folds  
promises, promises*

# Renku

## A Perfect Fallen Camellia: A Spring Shisan Renku

by

Kris Kondo, Kanagawa, Japan  
*hortensia anderson*, New York, New York

1. gently i offer a perfect fallen camellia to the dōsojin
2. *on the way home the softness of spring rain*
3. just a hint of the taste of espresso on the tongue
  
4. *strains of a cello carried on the breeze*
5. cool moon a slender shadow glides down the stairs
6. *we drift on the river in each other's arms*
  
7. *over and over their scents mingle in silk sheets*
8. cloudy sake forgetting no easier
9. *crimson sky as leaves swirl ceaselessly*
  
10. volunteers in Tohoku shovel tsunami mud
11. *kindergarten dinosaur origami shine in a mirror*
12. seven nesting-doll owls on the tour bus dashboard

**Authors' Note:** *Dōsojin* stone markers may bear only inscriptions, but often they depict human forms, in particular the images of a man and woman—the latter manifestation is revered as the *kami* (deity) of marriage and fertility. In some localities, the *dōsojin* is worshipped as the *kami* of easy childbirth.

## In the Hallows

A Twelve-Verse Junicho Renku

by

Melissa Allen, Madison, Wisconsin

Aubrie Cox, Muncie, Indiana

1. flickering porch light  
I offer candy  
to the ghost
2. *a bottle of pumpkin ale  
from the cellar*
3. home sick from school  
he reads a book  
about buried treasure
4. *popsicle stick pirate ship  
beached in the laundry basket*
5. the glint of the moon  
off her sharpened  
skate blades
6. *solo dance down  
the dark sidewalk*
7. *carvings in the pine  
fill with sap  
that will harden*
8. my dog and his  
romping through the sprouting lettuce
9. *weeds creep  
between cracks  
in the concrete*
10. we try speaking French  
to the tourists at Versailles

11.            *an arguing couple  
                  breaks bread  
                  at a riverside cafe*
12.            at day's end  
                  a frog leaps from lily to lily

## Haiku Sequences

### After the Funeral

by  
*Mary Kipps*, Sterling, Virginia

a week without water  
African violets

pantry shelf  
jar after jar  
of her spiced peaches

way to a man's heart  
Nana's notes  
in the margins

worn cover  
marking her place  
a prayer card

fallen son  
letters home  
bound with yellow ribbon

-  
black forest clock  
silent cuckoo

## A Crowd in Cleveland

by

*Cor van den Heuvel*, New York, New York

for his photo  
the old photographer sits on the bed  
in a rundown hotel

wet, drizzly dawn  
in front of the closed bar  
a parked Harley

dripping with rain  
he hands the teller a note  
and does a brief soft-shoe

waiting for the boarding pass  
his roll-on bag's extended handle  
wears his baseball hat

winner's circle  
a breeze ripples the jockey's  
blue-dotted silks

rumpled bed  
morning light on the pillows  
sounds from the motel pool

in the wooded park  
on a bench, some fallen leaves  
and a grey fedora

from the crowd  
a man is looking at us  
rainy day in Cleveland

## Sleet and Ashes

by

*Marilyn Sandall*, Seattle, Washington

snow-dusted foothills  
scattering her ashes  
where we hunted shrooms

sleet spatters the salal  
the echo of ashes  
returning to earth

rising wind  
deep in the forest  
a woodpecker drums

home again  
flecks of ash brushed  
from boot into garden

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## So Much of Life

by

*Renée Owen*, Sebastopol, California

making art  
at your bedside  
the vibrancy of blue

faint footprints  
all I love  
in shadows

planning a trip  
her food bag & tubes  
portable

each breath  
I hold for you  
shavasana

your old quilt  
sleeping with the stars  
between us

sweat bees  
must I give up  
everything

stream bubbles  
...so much of life  
about choices

## swaying branches

by

*Lucas Stensland*, Minneapolis, Minnesota

wine stain  
a cover letter  
tells it all

same bartender  
different bar  
same me

cut off  
three times this week  
swaying branches

Cheshire moon  
the cabbie knows  
my address

if a tree drinks  
alone in the woods—  
hangover?

pouring  
a nightcap  
autumn rain

drinking 'til  
I see the island—  
back porch

## Lady Sings the Blues

by

*Marian Olson*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

rags of clouds  
drift past the moon  
night with Lady Day

*Why Was I Born?*  
“Why am I livin’?”  
scent of gardenias

dark eyes see  
deep into shadow  
*Gloomy Sunday*

*God bless the child*  
the child  
she never knew

without a man  
to get through the night  
*The Blues are Brewin’*

her open wound  
when her lover strays  
*Don’t explain*

life and pain  
too much too soon  
Billie Holiday blues

blossom world  
where everything dies  
*Good morning, heartache*

*Willow weep for me*  
it does, Lady, it does

# Haibun

## Preprimary

by *Glenn Coats*, Prospect, Virginia

The apprehension began on Monday and lasted until Friday. It was in the quiver in his voice as he recited items from the lunch menu: pizza, macaroni, and pink ice-cream. His eyes welled up as he described the brain freeze from the ice-cream and how there was nothing hot enough to stop it. The child goes on to tell of being a line leader for the first time. He held his finger to his lips to quiet his classmates. A hand on his hip was a second signal, but he wasn't sure what that meant. "You don't bust through the cafeteria doors like a bunch of soldiers," the teacher said.

he strums the broom  
like a guitar  
autumn breeze

One night, he falls apart on the bottom step. It is all too much. The book is just too big to read alone. He has three rows of manuscript letters to practice with a finger space between them. And his name. Five times. He cannot do it. There are seven letters in Braedon and it is too long. "I want a different name," he sobs. "Can you call me Tim or Tom?"

The boy's mother reads the left hand pages and Braedon reads the right. He has settled down for the evening. She coaches his handwriting, "You start with your pencil here, then pull it down, and say around and close the window." The boy likes that and he is almost content. Still hopes for a new name. "How about Ed?" his mother asks.

September rain  
soft squeak  
of rubber boots

## Heat Lightnin’

(a fictional haibun featuring JT Blankenship)

by *Terri L. French*, Huntsville, Alabama

Heat lightnin’ is what daddy called it. It dances behind the clouds over the mountain, no roll of thunder to accompany it. We sit out back in raggedy lawn chairs swattin’ at skeeters and drinkin’ lemonade, just watchin’ the lightnin’ like it was a fireworks show put on special for us, even though the Fourth of July is more than a month away. Me and Betty Ann run around the yard with Mason jars tryin’ to catch fireflies so we can have our own light show up close and personal.

in the fruit cellar  
unsealed peaches  
growing fuzz

After awhile it starts to sprinkle. Daddy folds up the lawn chairs and mama hollers for us to come inside so the angels can commence to bowlin’. Angels don’t never make no gutter balls neither. It’s a strike every time. You can hear the crack of ball on pins all the way from heaven.

thunder storm  
the dog’s tail tucked  
between his legs

That night I put my jar on the bathroom counter. I tell mama it’s in case I have to go in the middle of the night I’ll be able to see and won’t pee all over the seat. When I wake up in the mornin’ only the bright sunshine lights the sky. The angels have gone to sleep and alls that’s left in my jar is a mess of dead black bugs that I flush down the commode.

growing pains  
kudzu covers  
the old see-saw

*Author’s Note: The haibun features a fictional character, JT Blankenship, a young southern boy that I have featured in some poems I had published in the Dead Mule School of Southern Literature. I started thinking that some of these poems could lend themselves to haibun and “Heat Lightnin’” is the first of what I hope to be several that I will write.*

## On the Farm as a Four Year Old

by *Joan Vistain*, Antioch, Illinois

“I’m going to run away,” I threaten. Mother’s reply surprises me. “Go ahead,” she says. So I surprise her.

long dusty road  
wet pants  
never again

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## Senseless

by *Michael Ketchek*, Rochester, New York

The trouble is that it just doesn’t make sense. The universe, I mean. Something doesn’t just explode out of nothing. And saying God created the universe doesn’t help, because then the question just becomes, “where did God come from?” Either way, God or no God, it just doesn’t make sense. Something doesn’t come from nothing. Except it did, a billion billion stars worth.

Rembrandt’s night watchmen  
or Dali’s melting watches  
which is more real?

## The Night Other Men Walked On The Moon

by *John Soules*, Wingham, Ontario

It was the summer of 1969 if I remember correctly. We'd been drinking and smoking all evening and Walter Cronkite hadn't slept for days.

Neil Armstrong had just taken his small step and was setting up a wind machine so that everyone on the moon could salute the U.S. flag.

Down here everyone was locked in their own private orbits. The wind was blowing and no one was looking up.

full moon  
the face  
you never show

\* \*

## Reveries

by *Steven Carter*, Tucson, Arizona

A morning's conjuring(s): vanished by noon....

The California cult that booked window seats on the Hale-Bopp comet....Calvin and Hobbes, bless their hearts, going to Mars, encountering a Martian who promptly freaks out and scoots in the other direction. "He's as afraid of us as we are of him," Hobbes remarks. Calvin: "Yeah, but we're just ordinary earthlings, not weirdos from another planet like he is."

And Earth, bluer than the sky and the oceans closer up, floating in space, seen by astronauts too professional and preoccupied to be moved to tears.

...Light chasing light around the rim of my water glass....A Bach Fugue....Music of the spheres....

leaving the moon's dark side—  
lost once again  
all lost things

**Space Junk & Spider Webs**  
by *Ray Rasmussen*, Edmonton, Alberta

The headline reads “Space Junk Keeps Fallin’ on My Head” reminding me of a favourite song and so I read on. I’m warned that “if you knew what was going on above your head, you probably wouldn’t sleep at night.”

I was already having problems sleeping, with spiders spiraling down for a midnight snack, the cat jumping on the bed at odd hours, nightmares from those horror flicks I shouldn’t have watched and rehearsing what I might have said in that argument with her.

I now have more to worry about. There are “a whopping 1, 217, 000 objects including whole spacecrafts” ready to plunge to the earth and possibly into my home. Even a small grain of space dust will be moving so fast that it can punch through the ceiling and shatter my cup of coffee, if not something more important.

I call NASA to ask whether they can direct one of the objects at the spider who hides every time I reach for the broom. They abruptly inform me that the objects fall at random, and hang up.

don’t worry,  
spider,  
NASA has poor aim

dusk  
the moon dangerously  
close to the horizon

Notes:

The song’s title and first line is “Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head,” by B.J. Thomas.

The haiku “don’t worry” is after Issa’s *don’t worry spiders / I keep house / casually*, trans. Robert Hass.

## Proof

by *Jody Stoddard*, Craftsbury, Vermont

I am educated. I know all warmth begins with our sun. I know plants store the warmth as sugar and color, blossom and leaf. I know sheep eat plants and save the warmth as wool. I know that shears and cards, washvat and dyepot, spindle and bobbin and loom, can make the warmth portable, foldable, wearable.

I know this and proved it with my own hands, because sunlight warming my farm last year grew plants that fed my sheep whose wool I made into an arasaid, a woman's plaid, a modern echo of Irish and Scottish forebears who shepherded and sheared, washed and dyed, spun and wove on their farms under the same sun, three hundred years younger.

Homegrown clothing: their necessity, my luxury. The doing is what matters to me, but why? I have more to learn.

Taken, cleaned, twisted,  
Colored, wound, woven, donned—  
I'm getting warmer

\*

\*

## Bucket Hat

by *Ann K. Schwader*, Westminster, Colorado

I begin wearing it on walks this summer, on the hottest mornings and then routinely. Neither new nor stylish, its floppy brim and ventilated crown just make sense. As my sunglasses do. As my work-out capris did when I gave up on shorts.

On the long street down to the railroad tracks, there are other women walking too. Sometimes we wave. Sometimes greet each other, though we do not know each others' names. Most walk in pairs, cheerful in their pastel capris and silver hair. And bucket hats.

dog days  
a swallowtail's  
faint breeze

## Melancholy Truths

by *Barbara S. Taylor*, Mountain Top, Australia

waning moon  
dappled casuarina shadows  
on golden sands

When last I went to the beach I failed to run naked into those glinting waters. For me, this was the harbinger of growing old. I'm happy now just to sit, listen to the roar of waves, the squabbling seagulls. Watching bright kites fly, I drown sad thoughts in salty air.

morning yoga  
focused on the breaks  
beyond the blue

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## Pelage

by *Carol Judkins*, Carlsbad, California

At the table with Sunday's crossword puzzle, a cup of pumpkin spice coffee this early morn. The wet dirt smell hits me as I see the first descent of drizzle through the window—not enough to wet the street. *56 across—love personified*. Now, splatting. Sharp taps on the window, little stings that get my attention... no answer. The street is doused, transformed to a funhouse mirror. Dull plunks sluice down from the roof. *88 across—code word for "I."* If I close my eyes, I can hear the crackle of frying bacon, a good rain sound. *4 down—certain poetic output*. I wiggle, a bit bemused; I am always uncertain. The rain now up tempo, stepping up the volume, pelting the street—the window an opaque, grey pointillist picture of varied-size drops. *32 across—pelage*. New word, good one.

the warmth  
of a rainy day coat  
pea soup

## Talking to Myself

by *Bob Lucky*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

waiting for nothing  
my toes in the sunlight  
knees in the shade

The rainy season has ended and now in the mornings I sit on the porch and listen to the birds sing. The October winds have started, and everything appears to be dancing—the dahlias, the pomegranate tree, the rose bushes. The ragged fronds of a banana plant snap in the wind like prayer flags. A hornet bobs along the underside of the rain gutter. Yellow and white butterflies come and go, blown up and over the wall by gusts. A skink on the steps, frozen in sunlight, disappears.

27th anniversary  
the puppy brings  
my missing sock

\* \*

## Leaving Dreamers Cove

by *Carol Pearce-Worthington*, New York, New York

I watch the cars ahead and coming in. Green signs overhead spell out the names of passing towns. I square my back against the inflatable cushion, glance at the speedometer, and maintain a speed of 65. Grey clouds form in the distance. I turn off the radio. West Route 495. Cars feed in, race off. I keep my speed steady. He dozes in the seat beside me. I am this car, him, the highway. Rain spatters the windshield. Still he sleeps, his eyelashes moist with fatigue. I glance quickly to make sure he is breathing. My husband of 27 years, my friend. Father time picking his pocket.

after the hurricane  
a smell of salt  
braces the wind

## The Whitecaps

by *Bruce Ross*, Bangor, Maine

A golden larch holds the last island light. An essay on the new philosophic renaissance rehashes Spinoza on the mind and body. I think of the long centuries of Continental thought and the even longer centuries of Oriental thought. Also the *Zohar* on the making of Adam—the four elements, the directions, the soul. This late autumn depression on this remote island confounds me. Even the small whitecaps have stopped. How will I be at peace in my body in my mind or the reverse?

darkening dusk . . .  
the current passes through  
the channel weir

\* \*

\*

## St. Paul Bathroom

by *Lucas Stensland*, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Standing in the shower and looking down at the drain, I'm suddenly reminded of an odd phone call I received last Saturday night. It was Erica Heaton. Our connection was tenuous. She was a high school friend's sister's friend. I knew her little, and we hadn't spoken in nearly twenty years. She said she got my number off Facebook and then asked if I wanted to go dancing at some club in Minneapolis. I said I had plans. We made awkward conversation and promised to stay in touch. Still studying the drain, I think I hear a voice in the living room, yet I know no one is there. The plot, like my hair, thins.

a box marked  
"halloween"  
where we end up

## All That Remains

by *Ray Rasmussen*, Edmonton, Alberta

The email is from college friends with whom I've not had contact for 30 years. They write:

*For some reason that we cannot entirely explain we decided to try and find you. We were just at lunch with friends, some of whom are quite a bit younger, and we found ourselves telling them a bit about the 60s. Some of our experiences with you came to mind, the anti-war marches, the sit-ins, the Fillmore concerts, Joan Baez singing "We shall overcome," the hippies and drug scene. So here we are contacting you.*

What to say? marriage, children, divorce, affairs, friendships, successes, failures, regrets ...

And why say anything beyond how difficult the telling is?

peony in winter  
roots somewhere  
beneath the crust



## apparitions

by *Al Fogel*, Miami Beach, Florida

I can see the house yet, with perfect clarity, I can see all its details, the family room with a sofa couch in one corner and a wooden bookshelf in another—a bookshelf that housed huckleberry memories—and the open fireplace, piled high, on cold winter nights, with flaming logs—and if you look closer, you will notice my two brothers wedged between mama and myself—even the lissome cat spread out between us—the shiny oak floor mirroring the fluid-moving fire—as we all sat close, oh so close, and recounted stories of the day's events until dark

old negatives  
held to the light. . .  
smiling ghosts

## Retirement

by *Steven Carter*, Tucson, Arizona

all these years—  
still  
the hands of a rancher

Eighty years old, he shares this with me:

“We had an 800-acre farm—ranch—when I was growing up, down near Drummond. I worked baling and stacking hay, milking cows, candling eggs, harvesting what wheat and barley we grew, while my no-good older brother snoozed in a haystack behind the barn. My father wanted me to stay on the ranch and eventually take over from him. When I said, ‘Will the ranch be mine?’ he said, ‘No. You have to share it with your brother.’”

“That’s when I joined the army and went to Korea. Pop was infuriated, but I’d made up my mind never to go back. Best decision I ever made.”

“So what did you do?”

“I drove truck for forty years.”

cloud-shadows—  
two graves  
no one visits

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## Next Of Kin

by *Michele Harvey*, Hamilton, New York

First he gave up on work, then shaving, then his teeth.

psych ward  
an exit lamp  
above each door

## Responsibility

by *Ignatius Fay*, Sudbury, Ontario

He was —  
a math whiz  
an eager student  
a music lover  
a drummer in a band  
a fine tenor  
an exceptional jitterbugger  
the oldest of eleven  
the son of a drunk

### *The Great Depression*

To help his mother, he quit school in Grade 11 to work in the logging camps. It was a job and she had a lot of mouths to feed.

### *World War II*

The war effort needed miners. He was helping his country. Besides, the pay was better and he wanted to get married. He hated mining, but it was a job.

### *The fifties*

He got his chance to sing professionally. By now, he had a wife and three children. The risk was too great and he couldn't do that to his family.

### *The sixties*

After his wife died, leaving him with five children, he panicked. He couldn't raise them properly on his own. His new wife was a widow with three children, essentially doubling his burden.

### *The later years*

At the camp, he only swam after dusk to wash up. Between the house and the new cottage, renovation projects and maintenance, he had a lot of demands on his time. He retired after forty-one years in the mines, having hated every minute.

He died at seventy-eight, a cynical, unhappy, but responsible man.

spring convocation  
I finally tell dad  
he's full of it

## Glint

by *Renée Owen*, Sebastopol, California

glint (*glint*)—*n.* 1. the luster of sun in the front parlor window as it streams across grandma’s bursting with blue hydrangeas. 2. a tiny sparkle off a dime peeking from the Virginian dirt in tin can alley. 3. the gleaming brightness in my small eyes as she places the coin on the shopkeeper’s rusty red cooler for my coca-cola. 4. the trace of burnish left on grandpa’s rusted tools, row after row in the dirt-floored workshop beneath their house. —*v.* 1. morning light strikes the dint in the gold pocket watch dangling from a chain on cousin’s pants. 2. the naked bathroom bulb glares atop his white sailor’s cap, reflecting in the gun he holds. 3. beams glance off the mirror, as with one fluid motion, he places the barrel against his Old Spiced temple.

*one two three stars  
i become stillness  
then night*

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## choices

by *Renée Owen*, Sebastopol, California

houseguests, hospital visits, unsent birthday cards...suicidal clients, late bills, overdue books, unreturned calls, an overflowing septic...downed apples, dead finches, hurt feelings, pulled muscles, neighbors knocking, soup burning, dirty dishes, peeing in a bucket...late night arguments, short showers, work deadlines, moldy coolers, empty suitcases, unwashed sheets, ripped shirts, forgotten lunches, road construction...misplaced keys, broken promises, too many choices...

letting in  
the stillness  
night crickets

## Spots

by *Margaret Chula*, Portland, Oregon

All my life, I have tried to make things clean. Washing Pop-sicle sticks to build houses in the sand, sweeping up ashes from burnt-up wood, polishing Mother's silverware, cleaning blood spots off the floor after my roommate slit her wrists. I called the ambulance to save her when all she wanted to do was die. It's all your fault, she screamed as I wrapped my arms around her. And when they had taken her away, I spit out my anger in the immaculate kitchen sink.

again, that metallic taste  
the doorknob I licked  
to make it shiny

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## Out From Under

by *Michele Harvey*, Hamilton, New York

Her mother had dictated her life. Chosen her clothes; chosen her career; chosen her husband.

local soil  
the pastor hands her  
the shovel first

**muse**

by *Roberta Beary*, Bethesda, Maryland

no one knows where he found her. she just showed up one day  
from who knows where. a real workhorse. bringing him his  
meals on a tray. getting him another beer. then on her knees  
pulling up the ivy. his red bandana tied to her neck. a collar  
that doesn't need a leash. but since he met her he's written 3  
books. all bestsellers. go figure.

steady rain  
the rescue cat  
on alert

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**What's for Supper**

by *Bob Lucky*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

“How about a piece of ass?” my wife suggests. It’s our running  
joke about a restaurant in Hangzhou that features donkey on  
the menu. I let her know I’m always hungry. “In your dreams,”  
she laughs, meaning, I think, both the culinary and the carnal  
options.

chance of rain  
crumbling crackers  
into my chili

## Dried Mud on the Sole of My Boots

by *Scott Larson*, Carrboro, North Carolina

“Could you cut the lawn tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow’s Sunday... I was going to go for a hike.”

“Steve and Naomi are coming over; I told you Wednesday.”

“I forgot, I don’t want to see Steve and Naomi or anybody else for that matter.”

“I suppose that means me?”

“No I didn’t mean it that way, I just need to get away.”

“And what do you think I need? I ask you for one little thing and you choose the Goddamn chipmunks and squirrels over me. Fine. Go on your precious hike; just try and be back for dinner.

“Fine. Night.”

morning air  
heavy with  
last night’s rain

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## Lost Canyon

by *Ray Rasmussen*, Edmonton, Alberta

Everything here moves toward the canyon's edge—boulders, cobbles, pebbles, grains of sand—and once having dropped over will be swept by flash floods into the Colorado. The river's massive flow will carry all as silt into the Pacific.

I can't resist nudging a cobble. Seconds later, there's a barely audible "plunk!"

I too am slipping toward an edge—an imperceptible bit at a time—toward my companion sitting next to me, our feet dangling over the edge. I'm afraid to let go, afraid of the free fall into the complexities of relationship—lusting, bonding, loving, declaring—afraid of those everythings we carry with us.

almost sunset  
shadows mingling  
on ancient stone

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## tea for one

by *Al Fogel*, Miami Beach, Florida

Having broken off a long-term relationship, I find myself alone in my room. A sad moment for some—but on this cold starry night, I welcome the solitude.

the warmth  
of my own hands. . .  
winter moon

## Madly Sobering

by *David H. Rosen*, Eugene, Oregon

I'd fallen, so I was referred to a specialist. Having had a similar dream image that same morning, I asked my neurologist, Dr. Joan Jensen, "What are all those white spots in the MRI of my brain?" In her direct, yet kind way, she said, "Those are scars." "Scars?" She responded, "Yes, sclerosis means scar." I nearly fell off the chair. Then she added, "MS is not a death sentence." That was two years ago and I started taking medication and drastically changed my diet and life style. I recall the accurate and shocking response of my New Zealand poet friend, Ralph Woodward, "Madly Sobering." Comforting were the wise words of James Hillman, "A scar is the mark of soul in flesh." Hence, it's contact with the ancestors : Multiple Souls.

Light  
in the darkness  
the black sun

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## Hulene Dump

by *Shelly Chang*, Oakland, California

Forty-three acres of landfill in the city of Maputo. Towering waste piles. Perpetually burning fires. Constant smoke clouds. Home for flies, rodents, and humans.

ash-fall  
the scavenger's plastic sheet cape  
flaps in the wind

## Footprint

by *Alexander Ketchek*, Rochester, New York

### Day 1

I walk across the same ground I did yesterday. I know because the grass doesn't grow there anymore. Nothing does. My footprints have stripped it bare.

leaving nothing  
but itself  
my footprint

### Day 2

Today I told myself I wouldn't walk on the path. I would walk next to it, away from it. I would let the grass come back and I would start again on new ground, new grass, new footprints.

the beetle  
tries to climb  
out of the footprint

### Day 3

I walk across the same ground I did yesterday and the day before. My footsteps fall where they always have, and always will. They fall in the footprints of yesterday, just as they did yesterday, just as they will tomorrow.

the next step  
still uncertain  
standing in footprints

by *Mark Harris*, Princeton, New Jersey

### **Beside the canal**

dug by men with rags for shoes, we turn for home. Late sunlight rakes the sugar maples; their tops are a blaze of gold. Reds and browns gather below. The current carries a throng of living things through a place once dry. On the water, wavering trees flank a strip of sky. Carved stones curve into the murk below. The blood of those who laid them has long since washed away.

graves under grasses an old carp eats the sun

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### **Land of Plenty**

by *Renée Owen*, Sebastopol, California

Another big family meal, this one without tears, or screams, or the slamming of doors. Much indeed, to give thanks for. My mother and aunt shovel remnants from last night's dinner into the trash to make room in the fridge for today's leftovers. Groaning from too much turkey, we say our goodbyes and head across town. At a red light, an ageless man in tattered pants crosses the road, a bedroll slipped under his slim arms. With jittery fingers, I peel back layers of dry cuticles, catch the last rays of sun before dusk steals my warmth away.

*this sunset  
like every other  
and yet, and yet...*

## Airing Society's Dirty Laundry

by *John J. Dunphy*, Alton, Illinois

In Madison County, Illinois, where I live, at least 61 people have died since 1996 as a result of domestic violence. That number includes 18 children.

The Madison County Clothesline Project has been displayed at various locations in this region. It consists of t-shirts that have been decorated by victims of domestic violence to reflect what they've experienced. One t-shirt reads in part: *This is my home. You're old and fat—who would want you?* Another lists the *Top 10 Ways To Show Me You Don't Care*. Written by a child, this list includes: *Get thrown out of my ball games* and *Make me eat out of the dog dish because my manners aren't perfect*. Yet another child wrote on a t-shirt, *My daddy thought we were asleep when he burnt our house down. My puppy didn't wake up*. More than 80 percent of battered women report that their abuser has threatened, harmed or killed a family pet.

The most poignant t-shirt is one that features the drawing of a woman's bruised, scarred face. The caption reads: *If this is love, then I hate*.

backyard clothesline  
a woman's t-shirt  
still blood-stained

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## Hot Pursuit

by *Tom Painting*, Atlanta, Georgia

In the rearview mirror dust settled behind the Plymouth. I spotted the trailer, set back from the road surrounded by a thicket of mesquite. I rolled down the window, scanned the property with binoculars and thought of a scene right out of *Deliverance*. The trailer sat on a patch of red dirt. The few windows looked to be covered with filthy bed sheets. A screen door hung askew on a single hinge. The yard was littered with several old gas cans, a rusted washing machine, an assortment of broken bicycles piled in a heap. Then I heard the raucous call of a brown jay. I followed the sound to a feeder hung on a clothesline strung a short distance between the trailer and a metal pole set in a bucket of concrete. There was my bird. I'll be damned, I said and reached for a celebratory beer, having forgotten the cooler was empty.

Texas sky  
wind turbines  
stir the heat

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## In Acadia

by *Ruth Holzer*, Herndon, Virginia

The coast road passes through the heart of Acadia, through Grande Anse and Caraquet, with their festival pennants and imposing stone churches. Baie des Chaleurs is a misty gray expanse, the thin line of Quebec just visible on the other side. Painted in bold Acadian red, white and blue are cottages, boats, benches, lobster pots and fire hydrants. On the farthest tip of land, a locked lighthouse. Seals bob in the dark waves. The deserted beach is strewn with driftwood and smooth streaked stones.

Miscou Island—  
*ne buvez pas de l'eau  
de la toilette*

## Remains of the Day: Zihuatenejo, Mexico

by *Marian Olson*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

In the late afternoon, the fishermen drag the magnificent tuna out of the boat and lug it across sand to the workbench. They look happy with their luck, knowing the fish will be worth good money on the market. A thread of bloody beads trails the blade as it slices through silver scale and passive muscle that earlier this morning flexed with life through the cool Pacific waters.

her red mouth  
as she chews the raw flesh  
yellow fin tuna

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## Changing Seasons: Socorro, New Mexico

by *Marian Olson*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

The Bosque del Apache welcomes wintering birds, among them thousands of snow geese each year. They come in webby billows through the blue November sky, gabbling with excitement above the preserve. Wave after wave of them drift to the ground, bouncing feet first, wings up like parachutes that turn the fields white.

Near the end of winter when nothing but field stubble remains, they grow restless and gather into flocks, as they prepare for the long journey home.

March winds  
the scent of spring  
calling geese back

## For stringed instruments

by *Al Fogel*, Miami Beach, Florida

Having returned from the valleys and vast expanses of the Colorado Rockies, I can't help but notice the varying pitches of water—the close trickling of small brooks, finding their way down from high altitude snow, left over from last winter. This sound is brittle, and disappearing as fast when you walk by. Sometimes you may discover a deep murmur from some undetermined direction, just suddenly apparent as a deep pitch. Then you know you're approaching a big mountain stream. A somewhat higher pitch, ever-present—or present for a long while (perhaps for hours)—is the pitch from waterfalls on the other side of the valley, cascading down from on high in a mighty roar that is diluted when passing across great distances across the valleys, reaching you like a steadfast background pitch. When there are several waterfalls present, they all appear in different pitches, and you can imagine the vividness of these on passages of the hike when all these different water pitches mix.

Caged Sonata—  
The *I Ching* of  
Sixth avenue traffic

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## Autumn in Japan

by *Michael Fessler*, Kanagawa, Japan

Dear George and Anita,

It's starting to feel autumnal here in the Tokyo area. I walk along the local river in the evenings and last night I saw lots of golden cosmos along the way. Some must have leapt the path during the last seed time, because there are now bunches of cosmos flowers growing along the river bank as well.

Japan has a new Prime Minister, and he appears to be a reluctant one. Knows the earthquake-nuclear problem is huge and that no matter what he does, abuse & criticism will be heaped on him. I suppose I've lived through about twenty PMs. They come and go. Raise a few toasts. Commit a few gaffes. And sayonara. The three I remember best have been Nakasone ("Yasu" to Reagan), Hashimoto (looked like Elvis), and Koizumi (leonine hair & a good speaker).

We're still having quakes pretty regularly, say, every week or so. They're punch-jolt types, and feel as if a prize-fighter had jabbed the building with his fist. Last week we had an earthquake during a typhoon. Mo Nature likes to vary the agenda.

Chi & I took a nice trip to Matsuyama in August. Shiki's hometown. The Shiki Museum there was packed with info & exhibits. The town is proud of its native son and there are many sites to visit. It was blazing hot, though. The sidewalks were like frying pans.

By now Chi & I have been to a good many of the haiku memorial sites in Japan. That would include the Bashō Hakubutsukan in Tokyo situated along the Sumida; the Issa Museum in Nagano (we went there about a year and a half ago); and not to forget the Shiki An in Tokyo, which is more or less on the site of the actual house in which he lived for the last decade of his life. It's a creaky little structure.

Buson is the only one of the big four, or big little four, who »

doesn't really have a museum dedicated to his work, as far as I know. At one point Buson lived in Yuki shi in Ibaraki (which we visited—it's not too far from Tokyo) and the city has lots of explanatory plaques and haiku-stele, but no museum. Buson's gravestone is in Kyoto, and we have visited that as well. Quite a few of his paintings have been preserved, but they are not in one place. When we were in Yuki, we visited a temple that had a screen which he had decorated, but it was not on view. We also saw some Buson panels at Ginkakuji the last time we were there.

That's about it for now. I hope you're having clement weather.

the old cherry trees  
upended by the typhoon  
roots at the sky

Mike

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## Hope:A Haibun Sequence

by Wende S. DuFlon, Antigua, Guatemala

Ferris Gilli, Marietta, Georgia

Ron C. Moss, Leslie Vale, Tasmania

We raise tropical cocktails in congratulations for a job well done, take long sips and settle into the plush couches. It takes a nanosecond to notice that the rumbling is not a truck outside, that the violent jolt instantaneously becomes an earth wave, that every inch of the nine stories of concrete and iron is moving under us. My body clenches and I look out the window imagining a fall through the treetops into the lap of the stone statue below. I jump up to escape but am yanked back. The creaking and shattering sounds mingle with screams. We brace for another wave. The piano player flourishes the end of his piece.

lightning flickers  
through the anvil cloud  
. . . windcalls

*With our palms pressed to the dormer window's panes, we feel them bending. Looking past the smokehouse and corncrib, beyond the corrals, we watch the new barn fly apart, unpainted boards falling like pick-up sticks. After the storm's roar, after the darkness that came at noon on a bright spring day, we walk in sunshine through the yards. Water flows from the pond over the front lawn, a catfish flops in the azaleas. In the back, a bluetick hound licks the side of bacon that hangs impaled on a harrow's tooth.*

*toes squish in red clay  
a fresh chorus of cackles  
from the henhouse*

**A fast-moving fire has broken out on a declared Total Fire Ban day. Brigades are being called in from all over the district as the hot, dry conditions worsen, giving this huge blaze a terrible potential. We're chasing the smoke as it races across the skyline and into the valleys. I'm blinded »**

by it as I struggle to keep the truck on the road. We take up a position defending a house in the direct path of the fire-front. A frail elderly couple are attempting to cool the walls with a garden hose. I scream at them to go inside as a blast of searing heat slams us from the flames in the gully below. Thick smoke chokes and stings my eyes as I open at the branch to send jets of water onto the dwelling.

I realize I'm alone—I've been cut off from my crew member. For an instant I panic as the thunderous noise becomes surreal and burning debris twists and curls in the blackness of smoke and ash. I drop low on my haunches, gasping for air . . .

between heaven and hell  
the touch of a friend's hand  
on my shoulder



## From Internment Camp to Contemporary Landscapes: A History of Haiku in Canada\*

by *Terry Ann Carter*, Ottawa, Ontario

Vancouver was the heart of Japanese Canada. According to *The Politics of Racism* by Ann Gomer Sunahara, during the years prior to WW II, the city was home to nearly 40% of the Japanese-Canadian population, of which the great majority was concentrated in the small area along Powell Street, forming an ethnic enclave known as Nihon-machi (Japantown), or “Little Tokyo.” Political, economic, educational, and religious institutions thrived here. Smaller communities were also formed throughout the province: Steveson and other fishing villages, sawmill towns along the Pacific coast and on Vancouver Island, and agricultural communities in the Fraser and Okanagan valleys.

Sunahara describes how, immediately after the Pearl Harbour attack on December 7, 1941, all persons of Japanese descent, even Canadian citizens, were identified as “enemy aliens.” Within hours, the entire fleet of the 1,200 fishing vessels was impounded. Automobiles, radios, cameras were confiscated and a night-time curfew was imposed. All Japanese Canadians were required to register with the newly formed British Columbia Security Commission; relocation camps were established in the interior of British Columbia and elsewhere. Nearly 5,000 Issei (first-generation Japanese Canadians) and Nisei (second-generation) were sent to the Slocan Valley Internment Camp.

*Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei* by Keibo Oiwa records the diaries, letters and poems of many of these “prisoners.” Haiku circles were formed to help normalize the conditions of extremity. In the chapter “Slocan Diary,” Kaoru Ikeda portrays a life of cooking, gathering food, being surrounded by nature, and family health. This diary

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\*An expanded version of a paper given at Haiku North America, Seattle, August 6, 2011.

shows a way of collective living where friends and family members, young and old, gathered to exchange their knowledge, console one another, and put their feelings into traditional Japanese poetic forms. These haiku from Ikeda's diary are perhaps some of the first examples of haiku (translated into English) to be found in Canada.

picking berries  
I happen on a bear print  
in the Slocan mountains

mountain life  
gathering fallen wood  
the right job for an old one

In her diary marked "March 5, 1941," she writes: "Clear and sunny. Today is the day of sekku, Girls' Day. A while ago I decided to make dolls for my grandchildren, to celebrate sekku. I used rags and anything else I could find. Here is my haiku I attached to a doll."

Hatsu-sekku  
a beaming newborn  
peach blossom

On her 68th birthday, Ikeda wrote of her accumulating years: "I'm grateful that I'm not sick and therefore a burden on everybody."

arranging chrysanthemums  
silently  
I celebrate this day

Slocan Valley was also the internment camp of Canadian iconic educator, environmental activist, and author David Suzuki and his family.

In French Canada, Simone Routier was the author of a first poetry collection containing fourteen haiku. Published in 1928, *L'immortel adolescent* won Quebec's Athanase-David prize.

mon coeur qui t'attend/ toujours le silence/ et l'immense effeuillement

my heart awaiting you/ silence still/ and the vast falling of leaves...  
(translated by Janick Belleau)

In the late 1950s / early 60s, Leonard Cohen published what is likely the first haiku by a leading Canadian poet. The haiku-like poem was titled and dedicated to Frank and Maria Scott. It appeared in his collection *The Spice-Box of Earth*

Summer Haiku

Silence  
and a deeper silence  
when the crickets  
hesitate

In English Canada, Claire Pratt, daughter of eminent poet and educator E.J. Pratt, published *Haiku* in 1965, the first English-language collection. She contracted poliomyelitis when she was four years old, and suffered with this disease her entire life. She had to give up her prominent position as editor-in-chief at McClelland & Stewart, Canada's premier publishing house, to work freelance. Her articles and poems were published in several literary reviews, and her woodcuts were exhibited in various galleries. An artist of many talents, it was her interest in Japanese prints that brought her to haiku. She illustrated many of her own poems which also made her a haiga enthusiast. Two of her haiku sequences from *The Music of Oberon* (1975) inspired Canadian composer Euphrosyne Keefer to compose two works from these poems: first for soprano and flute, and eight years later for soprano and piano. Claire Pratt published a final small collection of haiku *Black Heather* in 1980. She died in 1995.

The following examples were reprinted from her landmark collection *Haiku* by the Haiku Society of Canada, later to be known as Haiku Canada.

The fog has settled  
around us. A faint redness  
where the maple was.

green is the wet night  
and fingers at my casement  
linger crookedly

In 1969, Rod Willmot published Canada's second all-haiku collection also titled *Haiku*. As an undergraduate literature and music student, Willmot's devotion to haiku and the haiku community would allow his friends and followers to see a developing talent. Later he would publish *The Ribs of Dragonfly* (1984) and *Sayings for the Invisible* (1988).

dawn  
suddenly nude  
the lake shivers

now the spade  
sinks by itself  
the fireflies turning the dark

coffee grounds  
wash up on my tongue  
still I think of her

Willmot speaks of *Ribs of Dragonfly* in this way:

One day I thought of writing haiku for each rib of my canoe. The idea led further than intended, for in time, there were characters with me, with a story, told in the nine-month season in which (where I live) a canoe can be put into the water. The haiku had doubled, accounting for the ribs and the spaces between them. The result may be considered a novella with haiku; it is a form of what the Japanese call—haibun.

And so, the publications of Pratt and Willmot, Eric Amann's critical essay *The Wordless Poem*, the published haiku of the celebrated Beat poets, Cor van den Heuvel's *The Haiku Anthology* (1974) which was the first collection of English-language haiku by a major publisher (Anchor Books/Doubleday) were influences which soon led to the formation of the Haiku Society of Canada. The group was founded on the night of October 21, 1977, at Nikko Gardens, a now defunct Japanese restaurant in Toronto's Chinatown. The three haiku poets at this meeting were Eric Amann, Betty Drevniok and George Swede.

Amman was given the duties of the first president and newsletter editor, and Drevniok volunteered to be the treasurer. During this fall of 1977, Amann encouraged Swede to edit a strictly Canadian anthology of haiku; after approaching Three Trees in Toronto, a press already interested in Swede's work, the *Canadian Haiku Anthology* was born (1979), featuring twenty poets from coast to coast with work ranging in style from 5-7-5 to visual haiku. The anthology received significant recognition for haiku; it was launched in May 1980 in Toronto's prestigious Harbourfront, Canada's premiere literary festival and reading venue. After a day-long haiku festival with related art displays and calligraphy demonstrations, ten poets read to a sold-out audience.

At the 1981 annual general meeting at Betty Drevniok's home in Combermere, Ontario, on Canadian Thanksgiving weekend in October, the idea for another anthology was born. After a reading of exceptionally fine erotic haiku by Cor van den Heuvel (up from Manhattan), George Swede, Rod Willmot, André Duhaime, Marshall Hryciuk, and Margaret Saunders, Swede suggested to Willmot that he edit a collection of erotic haiku. In two years, Black Moss Press in Windsor, Ontario published *Erotic Haiku*. Although two-thirds of the contributors were from the United States, the idea, the editor and the publisher were Canadian.

In May, 1983, this anthology was also launched at Harbourfront. and it continues to be one of a kind in English-language haiku.

leaving my loneliness    inside her                      George Swede

slowly, together  
on the unmade bed  
willow shadows    Ruby Spriggs

in the raw  
she eats an apple  
first    LeRoy Gorman

Both with our feet  
In this freezing river  
Our eyes touch

Marco Fraticelli

In 1985, a third landmark collection appeared. It was the brain-child of Quebec poets Dorothy Howard and André Duhaime: *Haiku Anthologie Canadienne/Canadian Anthology*. An ambitious book, it included 65 poets from both English- and French-speaking Canada, as well as poets from the Japanese community. Every haiku was rendered in French and English, and in the case of the Japanese contributors, in Japanese as well. As if these innovations weren't enough, the anthology also contained illuminating histories of the English-language haiku in North America by Elizabeth Searle Lamb, and the French-language haiku in Quebec and France by Bernadette Guilmette.

gammes interminables  
de la flûte du voisin  
ma mère repasse

endless scales  
on the neighbour's flute  
my mother's ironing

Dorothy Howard

in every puddle  
the after-storm-sky reflecting...  
all the quiet

Betty Drevniok

shaded by the crisscross  
of expressway overpasses  
the sun tanned billboard girl

LeRoy Gorman

November nightfall  
the shadow of the headstone  
longer than the grave

Nick Avis

the newly widowed woman  
watering her lawn  
in the rain

Marco Fraticelli

By this time, the Haiku Canada Weekends had moved to the monastery in Aylmer, Quebec, and were organized by Dorothy

Howard and later, by Ruby Spriggs. Prominent attendees during the monastery years included Marianne Bluger, Marco Fraticelli, LeRoy Gorman, Marshall Hryciuk, anne mckay, Grant Savage, Keith Southward and George Swede. Bluger was instrumental in bringing a constitution to Haiku Canada, working with Muriel Ford (Toronto) on the writing and advocacy of this important document. She also brought an aesthetic to the meetings in Aylmer and then later, at Carleton University. A first-class gardener, she always arrived with boughs — sometimes entire branches of blossoms in her arms—tulips, daffodils, and other spring flowers for the Haiku Canada Weekends which were held on the long weekends in May.

With Betty Drevniok, Margaret Saunders, Muriel Ford, Dorothy Howard, anne mckay, Sandra Fuhringer, Ruby Spriggs and Anita Krumins, Bluger was an important female voice in the development of English-language haiku in Canada, and by the 1990's was a strong influence on newer female poets. Krumins was a catalyst for discussions far into the night, especially during the 1991 renga composition about which she wrote a milestone article for the *Haiku Canada Newsletter* (later reprinted in *Lynx*), "Battle of the Renga." Later, Karen Sohne added her voice to the Canadian chorus when she made a permanent move north.

Well-known French-Canadian haiku voices include Jocelyne Villeneuve (1941-1998) who will be honoured by Haiku Canada with the Jocelyne Villeneuve Award for French-speaking haiku poets (the first winners will be known in 2012), Micheline Beaudry, André Duhaime, and Janick Belleau who publishes in French with translations into English.

Haiku Canada is a well-run organization with a constitution, a list of officers, a publishing branch that first produced the *Haiku Canada Newsletter* edited by LeRoy Gorman. An online version of the newsletter is offered with Marco Fraticelli at the helm. *The Haiku Canada Review*, still with its legendary editor LeRoy Gorman, is produced twice a year (a winter/spring issue and a summer/fall issue). Since 2007, the *Haiku Canada Review* has dedicated some of its pages to French

haiku; this section is coordinated by Micheline Beaudry. *The Haiku Canada Members' Anthology*, introduced at each Haiku Canada Weekend, is now edited by Claudia Coutu Radmore.

Perhaps the most influential figure in the formative years of the haiku movement in Canada was Toronto medical doctor and poet Eric Amann. In 1967, he founded the magazine *Haiku* and was its editor for three years. Under Amann's editorship, *Haiku* rapidly became one of the most influential North American periodicals, publishing experimental as well as classical work. After a hiatus of seven years, during which he engaged in other kinds of writing, Amann returned to haiku with a new magazine, *Cicada*, which immediately achieved a similar status.

In 1982, Amann curtailed his haiku activities once again. During this year, Toronto poets Keith Southward and Marshall Hryciuk inaugurated *Inkstone*, which appeared irregularly over the next ten years. The periodical became known for its hard-hitting but well-reasoned reviews. Although *Inkstone* ceased publication in the early 90s, Dorothy Howard's *RAW NerVZ HAIKU* continued to provide a place for Canadian and international poets to publish their edgier poems.

The graphic influences of both Howard and Ruby Spriggs enhanced early publications and newsletters. Spriggs was well known for her line drawings and small doodles; she also created large canvasses with acrylics to enhance her haiku. Both Marianne Bluger and Ruby Spriggs died of breast cancer, within two years of each other. It was a great sorrow for those in the Haiku Canada community.

George Swede is another significant pioneer in the early days of haiku development in Canada. Born in Riga, Latvia, Swede came to Canada with his mother and stepfather following the Second World War. After earning degrees in psychology from UBC and Dalhousie, Swede settled in Toronto for an academic career at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, now Ryerson University. It is the numbers around George's contribution to the development of haiku in Canada (and the world) that always

astonish. Since 1968 he has published over 2,000 poems in over 7,000 places and they have been translated into 21 languages. He has edited seven anthologies (three of them haiku only): *The Canadian Haiku Anthology* (Three Trees Press, 1979); *Cicada Voices, the Selected Haiku of Eric Amann* (High/Coo Press, 1983); and with co-editor Randy Brooks, *Global Haiku 25 Poets Worldwide* (Iron Press, 2000). Swede was consulting editor for nine anthologies (eight of them haiku only); he has written 94 articles on poetry and 17 on psychology; he has written 13 children's books and two psychology texts; he has had five gallery shows for his visual poems; and he is the current editor (with Anita Krumins as assistant editor) of *Frogpond: The Journal of the Haiku Society of America*. The following examples give a glimpse into his humour and precise eye.

Paris pond  
a frog Picassos  
my face

again, the bald barber  
cuts my hair  
too short

thick fog lifts  
unfortunately, I am where  
I thought I was

Betty Drevniok, also a major contributor to the early development of haiku in Canada, was born in the United States, and relocated to Toronto as a nurse shortly after World War II. She discovered haiku in the late 60s through her work with sumi-e brush painting. In 1976, under her haiku name Makato, she published *Inland – Three Rivers from an Ocean*. In 1980 she organized the first International Haiku Society of Canada meeting in Toronto. Several Festivals of the Falling Leaves followed in Combermere where she lived. Drevniok was the secretary of the society for the first two years, and president for the next three. In 1993 she published a final individual collection *Thoughts of Spring* (Hexagram Series, King's Road Press, Montreal). Since 2002 (five years after her death), Haiku Canada honours

her memory through the Betty Drevniok Award.

harvest moon:  
cutting the pie  
into six pieces

brilliant sunshine through autumn maples a glimpse of the lake

Another early luminary, Marco Fraticelli, travelled from Montreal to join the like-minded poets at Combermere. Writing haiku for over thirty years, Fraticelli has published poems in many anthologies and publications. In 1988, he inherited money from his grandmother and (in Fraticelli's words):

Instead of blowing the money or paying off some bills, I started the Hexagram Series and King's Road Press. I was distressed by the terrible haiku that were appearing in print. I decided to seek out poets whose work I admired and asked them to send me their entire body of work. From these, I selected 20 or so best ones. The point was to provide a series of inexpensive (\$2.00) books that one could offer to anyone new to haiku as a model to work from. The first one in 1991 was by LeRoy Gorman, *glass bell*, followed by Alexis Rotella. Other poets include: George Swede, Nick Avis, Ruby Spriggs, Dorothy Howard, Karen Sohne, Jean Jorgensen, Marshall Hryciuk, Dee Evetts, Michael Dylan Welch and others.

Fraticelli was instrumental in the holographic (written by hand, as in holographic will) anthologies to commemorate anniversaries for Haiku Canada. The first Holographic Anthology appeared in 1987 (for the 10th anniversary), then 1992, 1997, 2004 (with Philomene Kocher), and 2007 (with Philomene Kocher). In 2012 for the 35th anniversary, he will edit the sixth Holographic Anthology with Marshall Hryciuk. In 2006, he founded the Haiku Canada Electronic Newsletter and continues to be its editor. In 2008 he was English co-editor (with Terry Ann Carter) and Francine Chicoine (French editor) of *Carpe Diem: Anthologie canadienne du haïku / Canadian Anthology of Haiku*, a collaborative publication of Borealis Press and Les Éditions David.

Dorothy Howard, illustrator, calligrapher, editor, translator,

educator, book maker, former co-president (1985-1988) and President (1988-1990) of Haiku Canada, was an active contributor to early Haiku Canada events and publications. As already stated, she organized Haiku Canada Weekends at the monastery in Aylmer, and co-edited with André Duhaime, the *Anthologie canadienne HAIKU Canadian Anthology* (Éditions Asticou). From 1994-2007 she edited *RAW NervZ HAIKU*, and *casse-pieds* since 2006. In November 2006, she published Amann's *The Wordless Poem* translated into French by Daniel Py. Howard is the memory of Haiku Canada as she remains its archivist to this day. Volumes of books, pamphlets, newsletters, broadsheets, art works, line the walls of her home in Aylmer, Quebec. Her collection *the photographer's shadow* was published in the Hexagram Series (King's Road Press, 1999).

transferring the rent  
electronically  
raking real leaves

divorce papers  
i put a new battery  
in my clock

Making his mark as an outstanding editor of national as well as international fame, LeRoy Gorman contributed to the growth and interest of haiku in Canada with his own haiku moving into the aesthetics of the experimental, the concrete, the visual poem. His minimalist poems have been appearing in print for over thirty years. Gorman has published poetry with Guernica Press, Éditions Asticou, Nietzsche's Brolly, Proof Press, King's Road Press, and Timberline. Over the years he has assumed or written under at least 50 pseudonyms. Since 1996 he has been editor of the Haiku Canada publications: *Haiku Canada Newsletter*, 1996-2006, the *Haiku Canada Review*, beginning in 2007, as well as annual broadsheets for Haiku Canada members. In 1998 he began to publish poetry leaflets and postcards under his pawEprint imprint.

first haircut of the year  
the barber and I have snow shoveled  
before it falls

appointment calendar  
a coffee ring joins  
one day to the other

could sell you anything  
his coffin has a shine  
not even snow sticks to

Toronto poet and book marketer, Marshall Hryciuk, was president of Haiku Canada from 1990-1997. At the Haiku International Association symposium in Tokyo (2009) he presented his collection *Arizona to Crete* (2008). The poems were translated into Japanese and posted on the HIA website. Other publications, among many, include *Singed Leaves: A Book of Haiku Poetry* (1990) and *Persimmon Moons* (1998). His partner, Karen Sohne, operates Red Iron Press which publishes haiku in small handmade, folded broadsheets. Together they organize the late night renku parties at all Haiku Canada Weekends, with Marshall serving as renku master.

in moon light  
a brown pine needle  
spinning above the ferns

(First place in the Third Annual Croatian International Contest.)

Haiku in Canada began to grow regionally in the late 1990's, and by early 2000, groups were springing up across the country. On the Pacific coast, a chapter of Haiku Canada called Pacifi-kana was founded by Alice Frampton. The group still continues to meet three times a year and maintains a web site. Members include Frampton, Winona Baker (who traveled from Vancouver Island for meetings and who was publishing haiku and attending Haiku Canada meetings in central Ontario long before the Pacific group was established), her daughter Helen Baker, Allan Brown, Elehna de Sousa, Melissa Dixon, Ava Kar, Carole MacRury, Naomi Beth Wakan, Vicki McCullough, Edward Zuk, Sherry Zhou, and other local poets. Michael Dylan Welch, who lived in Canada at one time, also joined the meetings.

For the past ten years, Naomi Beth Wakan (who lives on Gab-

riola Island with her sculptor husband, Eli) has hosted an annual haiku retreat at her home. Over the years, participants have read and work-shopped countless poems, given numerous readings and presentations, and enjoyed the annual ginkgo to nearby Drumbeig Provincial Park. This year the Gabriola crew gathered poems and essays into a collection edited by Michael Dylan Welch titled *Tidepools: Haiku on Gabriola* (Pacific-Rim Publishers, 2011). Here are selections from this anthology.

wild geese in flight  
suddenly the sky  
so wide

Helen Baker

the ferry shakes  
into my spine—  
the whale's wake

Michael Dylan Welch

summer tide  
water over water  
till the tidal pool disappears

Naomi Beth Wakan

end of summer  
a hermit crab caught  
between homes

Carole MacRury

nanoparticles this tree's and mine

Vicki McCullough

The mid-western branch of Haiku Canada, a group calling themselves the Magpie Poets, meets regularly in Calgary, Alberta to share and promote haiku. Their collection *A Piece of Eggshell* (2004), includes poets Patricia Benedict, DeVar Dahl (the current President of Haiku Canada) Jean Jorgensen, Joanne Morcom, and Tim Sampson. Here is a sampling from this collection:

prairie wind  
snow fills the mouth  
of the badger hole

DeVar Dahl

after rain  
two magpies take turns  
preening themselves

Patricia Benedict

they seem to drift  
out of waning moonlight  
snow clouds

Jean Jorgensen

Bruce Ross also joined the Magpie Poets for a period of a year and a half when he lived in Alberta. He wrote the preface to their anthology.

In Toronto, the birthplace of Haiku Canada, the group called Haiku Deer Park met for monthly meetings 96 times from February, 28, 1998 to September 27, 2008 at a branch of the Toronto Public Library (from which the group took its name). The gatherings never exceeded fifty, and sometimes only three or four would show up for a January meeting. Besides five annual broadsheets of members' haiku, the group composed six renku in various lengths and published two newsletters. Poets included Marshall Hryciuk, Karen Sohne, Hans Jongman, Ann Goldring, Nancy Prasad, Frances Mary Bishop, Dina E. Cox, Sandra Fuhringer, Arch Haslett, Sonja Dunn, Terra Martin, Vivian Wong, Marilyn Potter, and Muriel Ford among others.

In Canada's capital city of Ottawa, Marianne Bluger and Terry Ann Carter founded KaDo Ottawa in 2001. Bluger, having been involved with Haiku Canada for many years, wanted to revive haiku meetings in the area and invited Carter to join her in setting up a small gathering of like-minded poets. Poets from the "golden years" included Dorothy Howard (from across the river in Quebec), Grant Savage and Guy Simser, who had been writing and studying haiku during his years in Japan. And the new kids on the block: Claudia Coutu Radmore, Philomene Kocher, Terry Ann Carter, Margot Gallant, Heather A. MacDonald, Sheila M Ross, Melanie Noll, Pearl Pirie, and also Mike Montreuil who brings his French translations to the primarily English group. KaDo Ottawa meets seasonally and each spring launches a broadsheet at the Embassy of Japan. Last year the poets were invited to prepare an evening of poetry for the Embassy's cultural program. Three small chapbooks were created for that occasion: *Leaf Shadows* (haiku of the seasons) *Me and You* (haiku of love and loss), and *Smell of Coffee* (urban haiku). The books were

edited by Terry Ann Carter and Guy Simser. Heather A. Mac Donald assisted with *Me and You*. KaDo's current president and organizer is Claudia Coutu Radmore. Here are some poems that were read that evening:

from reed to reed  
a blackbird follows  
its song

Grant Savage

each lilac showing me  
what I do not know  
about lilacs

Claudia Coutu Radmore

breakfast  
in bed  
your raisin cinnamon kiss

Terry Ann Carter

using the mirror  
my mother gave me  
the other side magnified

Philomene Kocher

midnight  
another ping  
from the empty pop can

Mike Montreuil

a hazy face  
in the sleet mirror  
granite tombstone

Guy Simser

widow for a year  
now his hat missing  
from the hook

Pearl Pirie

In Montreal, two haiku groups coexist: a collective of Haiku Canada poets including Marco Fraticelli, Angela Leuck, Maxianne Berger, Ellen Cooper, Pamela Cooper, and others; and a French-speaking collective, founded by Micheline Beaudry in May 2005, which includes Haiku Canada members Jeanne Painchaud, Janick Belleau, Huguette Ducharme, Diane Descôteaux, Liette Janelle, Luce Pelletier, and others. When Angela Leuck and Maxianne Berger edited *Sun Through the Blinds: Montreal Haiku Today* in 2003, they encouraged Rod Wilmot and André Duhaime to join the anthology. Here is a sampling:

at the antique store  
deep in the empty dresser  
the sun's rays  
(translated by Maxianne Berger)

Micheline Beaudry

your beard  
soft against my neck  
sun through the blinds

Maxianne Berger

spring  
melting  
us

Marco Fraticelli

drifting over  
the waterfall  
sound of a gong

Angela Leuck

trottoir verglacé  
à petits pas  
sur d'autres pas

icy sidewalk  
step by step  
in another's footsteps

André Duhaime

Duhaime has also completed four books of haiku for children published by Winnipeg's Les Éditions des Plaines.

Present on the international scene, Montrealer Janick Belleau has presented papers at Haiku Canada, Haiku North America, and at conferences in Japan and France. She has won international awards for her writing. In 2006, Belleau and Micheline Beaudry edited the first erotic haiku collection in French, *L'Érotique poème court / haïku*; half of the poets (many Haiku Canada members) originated in Canada; others were from Francophone countries, mainly France. Belleau's historical research into the lives and poetry of female haiku poets in Canada is renowned.

Haiku Quebec, founded by Abigail Friedman in 2005, meets in Quebec City on the second Tuesday of every month at the Morrin Centre or the Library and History Society. Poets write

in French and English; however, most of the discussion is in French. Occasionally, the group invites guest speakers for talks and workshops, but French is a must (translators are available). Members include organizers Jeanne Grégoire and Jeannine St-Amand plus poets Geneviève Rey, Jean Deronzier, Hélène Leclerc, André Vézina and Donna MacEwen.

In eastern Canada, it is a one-man show with Nick Avis in St. John's, Newfoundland at the helm of the Haiku Canada boat. Avis was present at some of the early meetings in Combermere and the monastery, and served as President of Haiku Canada for six years. His poetry has been published nationally and internationally for thirty years; his chapbook *footprints* from the Hexagram Series (King's Road Press, 1993) won a Haiku Society of America award.

blooming on both sides  
of the rusted railway line  
new dandelions

separating yolks we talk of men and women

drifting  
in and out of sleep  
snow turns to rain

This past year, Avis singlehandedly organized the Haiku Canada Weekend at Memorial University in Saint John's which also included a trip on a fishing boat to Cape Spear. Imagine twenty haiku poets, three Newfoundland fishermen, and the boat's owner, out on the sea admiring puffins, northern and western sea eagles, gulls, hawks, ospreys, albatross, to name but a few. Later, there was a gathering at Avis's home for drinks, late night snacks and renku. A Newfoundland "house party" he called it. Marco Fraticelli commented that it reminded him of "the early years" at Combermere.

This year, Haiku Canada will be celebrating its 35th anniversary in Toronto—where it all began. Festivities will include a new haiku anthology (edited by Marco Fraticelli and Claudia Coutu Radmore), a new holographic anthology (edited by

Fratlicelli and Hryciuk), readings, papers, ginkgo walks, presentations, workshops, and late-night parties orchestrated by Hryciuk and Sohne. Please join us! And even though it will not be a Festival of Falling Leaves, it will be a warm and congenial gathering. Join Haiku Canada for the biggest party yet! For many of you who might have to cross a border to get to this weekend, here's a haiku to remember...

passport check  
my shadow waits  
across the border

George Swede

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Terry Ann Carter has published four collections of haiku, the most current: *Now You Know* from King's Road Press, Montreal. She is the author of *Lighting the Global Lantern: A Teacher's Guide to Writing Haiku and Related Literary Forms* (Wintergreen Studios Press, 2011) and four collections of lyric poetry. *Day Moon Rising* (Black Moss Press) and *Hallelujah* (Buschekbooks) are forthcoming. She was the Random Acts of Poetry poet for the city of Ottawa (2005-2010).

**Haiku's American Frontier\***  
by *Paul Miller*, Bristol, Rhode Island

A few years ago, the editor of *Modern Haiku*, Charles Trumbull, discussing a particularly modern and abstract haiku, posed the question: how far can a haiku be stretched and still be called a haiku? This may sound like an overly theoretical question—one that academics might debate on a lonely Friday night—yet we call what we write “haiku.” Many of us belong to the Haiku Society of America, Haiku Poets of Northern California, Haiku North West, or some other “haiku” related organization, so clearly the term means something. And if it means something, then something else can clearly not be it. That dichotomy creates a frontier between what we in the United States consider a haiku and that which we don’t. This definitional distinction is important not only because haiku is different than say free verse, but because American haiku is different than Japanese haiku; which is different from British haiku, Croatian haiku, or Russian haiku—which are all reflections of how the individual countries view the genre.

Defining American haiku is a slippery slope that ranges from the traditional Yuki Teikei (5-7-5, kigo, kireji) to “anything I call a haiku is a haiku”—the last being especially problematic in that it would require us to recognize *War and Peace* as a haiku if Tolstoy had so insisted. Rather than spend pages debating the merits of each school of thought, I will instead rely on a normative definition of American haiku that approximates the haiku found in most American journals. When I say American journals I am primarily referring to journals such as *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *Acorn*, or *The Heron's Nest*. To borrow liberally from Hiro Sato: we know an American haiku when we see it.<sup>1</sup>

The question I want to examine that is inside the question Trumbull asked is this: how far can a haiku be stretched that we in the United States will accept it as a haiku? This question is in response to an awareness of a new-to-us movement in

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\*An expanded version of a paper given at Haiku North America, Seattle, August 6, 2011.

Japanese haiku that challenges American traditional notions of haiku. As working poets, we should always be examining (both personally and communally) our own poetics.

American haiku sensibility was largely formed by translations of the four classical masters—Bashō, Buson, Issa, and Shiki—as translated by Yasuda, Henderson, and Blyth. And strangely enough, to this day, we continue to see new translations of these same classical, long-dead poets, and even of the same poems. Yet this understanding ignores a contemporary Japanese haiku community that is much more diverse.

Over the last several years we've been made aware of a very different movement in Japanese haiku: gendai haiku, which literally means “modern” in Japanese. It is a movement that is not just modern in terms of timing, but also in style and content. An example below is by Sayu Togo<sup>2</sup>. Surprisingly, despite its modern-to-us tone, it is nearly eighty years old!

The face of a toad  
enters the dream  
of a typhoid patient

Perhaps even more surprising, especially to American readers, is that there is no doubt among Japanese poets that this poem is a haiku. Yet, because this poem is so far outside the implied American definition of haiku, I suspect if this poem were submitted to most American journals it would be rejected.

The first hint of gendai haiku to reach American shores occurred with Makoto Ueda's underrated anthology *Modern Japanese Haiku*<sup>3</sup> published in 1976 in which he translated twenty Japanese poets beginning with and after Masaoka Shiki. However, the volume wasn't strictly a gendai anthology, and in fact included some poets who were opposed to what would later become known as gendai—such as Shiki's successor Kyoshi Takahama. The anthology instead was an attempt to give voice to modern poets perhaps unknown of in English. Of the twenty included poets only a handful were born after nineteen hundred. Inspired perhaps by the few poets whose work could be called gendai, several American and Canadian

poets tried their hand at gendai haiku; however, these efforts were short lived.

It wasn't until the 2001 and 2008 anthologies of the Modern Haiku Association (Gendai Haiku Kyôkai), which contain hundreds of modern Japanese haiku—translated into English!—that Americans finally took serious notice. It is important to keep in mind that gendai haiku is not wholly representative of all contemporary haiku in Japan, yet the scope of the poems and poets in these anthologies speak to a significant movement. Perhaps equally important for discussion purposes is that the movement speaks to a level of diversity concerning what a haiku can be that is arguably lacking in our country.

More recently, we've seen published an important book from Richard Gilbert, *Poems of Consciousness: Contemporary Japanese and English-language Haiku in Cross-cultural Perspective*, a significant part of which discusses gendai haiku and includes interviews with several prominent Japanese gendai poets. Additionally, through Gilbert's work with the Kon Nichi Translation Group, we've received a couple of volumes that focus specifically on gendai poet Totha Kaneko<sup>4</sup> with a third and fourth volume in the works.

Interestingly, we are also seeing gendai's effect on some of our own homegrown poets: Peter Yovu, Jack Galmtz, John Sandbach, and Scott Metz, who are exploring similar territory. If such haiku have a champion in America it is the online journal *Roadrunner*,<sup>5</sup> although it doesn't call itself a journal of gendai haiku. In fact it perhaps wisely skirts the issue by calling itself a journal of haiku and "short poetry inspired by haiku."

Still, these (and Japanese gendai poems) are very different kinds of poems than what we see in *Frogpond* or *Modern Haiku* or any of the other standard bearers of American haiku. In fact, I think few if any of these attempts would be accepted at those other publications. I'll add that most of the poems in the Modern Haiku Association anthology wouldn't make the cut either.

Of course this kind of poetry is not new to Japan. Gendai be-

gan as a movement in the early 1900s as an alternative to the traditional poetics of classical haiku. But it is new to Americans raised on the haiku of objective realism, on Shiki's sketch from nature, and on Blyth and the Beats' Zen-infused work. If anything is going to make us question the "haiku-ness" of a particular poem it will probably come from that frontier of gendai work.

Modern Japanese haiku began with Masaoka Shiki in the late 1800s. Shiki felt that haiku at the time were stale and its practice incestuous and he advocated for greater freeness. He also embraced the trend of realism recently imported from Europe. North Americans tend to think of his "objective sketch" as the end-all of his poetic theories, but as Japanese poet Totha Kaneko makes clear, Shiki was more adventurous than that.<sup>6</sup> However, it wasn't until his death in 1902 that haiku really broke free, as Shiki's disciples and then later poets took the genre through a succession of innovations. Some changes included haiku without a center of interest, without kigo or season word, without a syllabic count, in colloquial language, and more freedom concerning topics.

Of course, such changes weren't popular with all poets and one of Shiki's main disciples—Kyoshi Takahama—advocated a return to the basic Shiki model of objective realism. Since he was the succeeding editor of Shiki's haiku journal *Hototogisu*, this revisionist thinking had a lot of sway. He also suggested that birds and flowers were the only suitable topic for a haiku. Sadly, during the war years, poems that deviated from this tradition, or were critical of the government or the war were an arrestable offense.<sup>7</sup> After the war, haiku continued its diverse expansion—particularly in terms of topics. As a reaction to the clamp-down by authorities in the war, socialist and other left-wing haiku began to be written, as well as poems about other social concerns. Additionally, some poets wrote avant-garde, abstract, and haiku from the unconscious.

A topic for another day is the question of why North American haiku in the main is essentially the objective realism of Shiki and Takahama. Why we haven't followed along with the

Japanese on their exciting journey? A short answer might be in how haiku was introduced to the Americas, primarily through the volumes of Blyth, with his emphasis on Zen, and his dismissal of haiku after Shiki. However, it is also worth asking if perhaps some poets in America did indeed understand what was happening in Japan, but just chose to continue on a more traditional path. As mentioned earlier, with the publication of Ueda's *Modern Japanese Haiku*, some poets did write what would be considered gendai poems; yet these poems as a style never took traction.

Before a discussion of the unique characteristics of gendai haiku, the characteristics out at that frontier of "haiku-ness," it is important to mention briefly the similarities to American haiku. Gendai and American haiku are in the main structurally similar. They usually have two parts and a cut, like traditional haiku. Haiku in Japan, with its master/pupil relationship, has always had more restrictions on what haiku is or could be, than we in master-less America ever conceived of. Much of gendai haiku is simply a reaction to tradition and rules. So when early gendai haiku ignored syllabic count or season words, or the shape of the poem on the page, that was very modern (gendai), very reactionary. In America, that isn't the case. Despite talk of the "haiku wars" in American haiku's early days, "wars" over 5-7-5, form, etc... poets here never struggled with these issues as the Japanese did. Americans are far too individualistic and it is thus easier for aberrance to take hold.

Most often, as we'll see, what defines gendai haiku is subject matter. For example, this poem was probably very shocking when it was written.

In a spring field  
I am polishing  
machine guns

Machiko Kishimoto<sup>8</sup>

In particular, and I am speaking of the Haiku Persecution Incident here, writing such poems during World War II got you imprisoned and/or tortured. Yet poems of social commentary or

social criticism fit easily in the American haiku tradition. Everything from war, to feminism, to poems on the economy has been fair game. And while there are obviously editorial preferences, pretty much everything is allowed. In fact the Kishimoto poem would not be out of place in any of our standard bearers.

What are worth examining are gendai poems that don't fit into the American tradition—and by extension the American definition of haiku. How they don't fit the tradition should be pretty obvious, but I'd like each reader to think about why they don't fit.

When we try to understand anything, we tend to put such things into categories, which is probably not the best approach, especially with poetry. However, I think it might be the only way to begin looking at the larger characteristics of a category of poems as opposed to individual poems. Obviously, I don't intend these categories to be all-encompassing.

### **Category 1: Haiku that are Direct Similes/Metaphors**

Several poems in the Modern Haiku Association anthologies use outright similes that wouldn't be acceptable in an American journal. That they are in the Modern Haiku Association anthologies validates the poems and says that such techniques are permissible. Two examples:

A hundred peonies  
moving  
like boiling water

Sumio Mori<sup>9</sup>

A bonfire  
in the morning  
as if finding happiness

Tatsuko Hoshino<sup>10</sup>

It has been argued that many haiku are simply disguised similes or metaphors, which is a fair statement. Haiku often compare two things side by side. For example, Bashō's famous "on a bare branch / a crow has alighted / autumn nightfall" can be read as "on a bare branch / a crow has alighted / like the autumn nightfall." So is the Mori poem such a bad thing? And, more importantly, why don't we write our haiku as direct similes or metaphors?

I suspect the main reason is the idea that while a haiku is written by the writer, it is completed by the reader. A haiku has been compared to a car's spark plug where the reader is the spark between the two parts of the poem. This forces the reader to engage more deeply with the poem, to solve it in a sense. A direct simile or metaphor takes that reader participation away. The poem becomes a statement, and all the reader can do is agree or disagree, and pass a judgment on the writer's creativity. That in and of itself is probably not a reason not to write such poems, but they are lesser poems from a reader's perspective. To discourage these arguably inferior poems, beginning haiku poets are often told: show, don't tell. A few more examples:

The sound of a shot  
rings out in the marsh like  
a board being struck

As a single drop  
of moonlight  
I am walking

Seiho Awano<sup>11</sup>

Shoshi Fujita<sup>12</sup>

Like a weasel  
from behind a mountain  
comes the winter

Tomio Maeda<sup>13</sup>

## Category 2: Haiku that are Fantastic Transformations

Perhaps the greatest difference between the two movements is America's unwavering embrace of realism. In fact we like to say that haiku show the ordinary in a new or different light, and American haiku bear this out in primarily natural or urban scenes. In contrast, gendai haiku often show the extraordinary in a first light.

A classic haiku technique is the subversion of expectation. It is through this technique that gendai can be very interesting or shocking. One of the best examples is by Totha Kaneko.<sup>14</sup>

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

This is a poem where the fantastic usurps the realistic, and I defy any reader to say that they saw the third line coming. From this poem we get a real sense of emotion. We can feel this poem: its anger and its frustration, its transformation. There is heat, noise, and direction. There is also something of the poet's mechanical response. While the notion of becoming a motorcycle is fantastic, it is, more importantly, understandable. However, our feelings might be different if the shift was purely abstract, such as "I go out to the street and become... an algebraic Trojan Horse" or "I go out to the street and become... a red colored blue."

Peter Yovu, in a posting on the Haiku Foundation blog, has off-handedly ventured three categories of transformations: psychological (Kaneko's motorcycle), mythological (Yagi's scales; see below), and spiritual (Fujita's walk; previous page).<sup>15</sup> Of the mythological, he intends physical, bodily change, not necessarily into a mythological creature. In a follow-up post on the same blog entry, Don Baird rightly pointed out that Kaneko's motorcycle may be only psychological, or both psychological and mythological. Some other examples:

The palms of warm hands  
one by one turn into  
shooting stars

Minako Kaneko<sup>16</sup>

Veiled in mist  
heavy industry  
sticks out its stomach

Futoshi Anai<sup>17</sup>

The falling leaves—  
rushing underground I notice  
scales on my skin

Mikajo Yagi<sup>18</sup>

I am cold, mother—  
an acetylene torch on the ground  
cries in the wind

Fujio Akimoto<sup>19</sup>

Without a doubt, the last poem would be singled out by many American editors as a poor haiku. "Torches don't cry," the poet would be told. "You are personifying the torch." Despite

numerous personifications in the poetry of Japanese master Issa, one of the rules of American haiku is that personification is not allowed. However, it is but a short step from a transformation of the self to the personification of the other. I don't see how only one can be allowed.

Peggy Lyles, in her essay “Haiku and Western Poetry,”<sup>20</sup> suggests that the reason for the ban on personification is that “haiku poets place high value on the creatures and things of this world just as they are, each unique in its essential nature and worthy of unobscured attention. Comparing one thing to another often seems to diminish both.” Yet often in haiku things are placed side by side so that they can be enlarged by the presence of the other. I'm not sure how this is different. She also quotes Christopher Herold who references the famous “jeweled finger” of such poetic devices, arguing that such devices distract us from the real subjects of the poem. That sense of distraction is I think a more persuasive argument. However, rules are made to be broken. In this particular case, the crying of the torch is necessary to hear the crying of the poet.

### **Category 3: Haiku that are Fantastic Metaphors**

For many gendai poems, the subject matter itself is fantastic, and this is where things get interesting. As mentioned earlier, perhaps at their simplest, haiku can act as indirect metaphors. Compare Bashō's poem in which a crow landed on a branch, to this poem by Sanki Saito.<sup>21</sup>

Autumn sunset—  
bones of a gigantic fish  
drawn into the sea

The color of the sunset reflected in the water, and perhaps staining the clouds, shrinking to a singularity—juxtaposed with a hardness of bone; the bones of a giant, dead fish—is a wonderfully imaginative metaphor.

As mentioned earlier, one of gendai's goals was to use haiku to comment on social issues. The following poem by Kineo

Hayashida<sup>22</sup> is a good example of a poem that speaks out against war.

The color of a warship  
sunk under the sea:  
a nursing bottle

However, as with the direct metaphors we saw earlier, the risk this poem takes is in telling the reader too much. In this poem's case the punctuation seems to be adding an authoritative "is" to the poem, making it more of a statement. My opinion is that this poem sits on the fence between succeeding and not. Uniqueness of the images offsets some of the "telling."

#### **Category 4: Haiku that are Simply Fantastic**

Most gendai haiku work in the same manner that most American haiku do: as juxtapositions, oppositions, complements, misreadings, etc.—all the techniques normally spoken of. An example:

I am pregnant  
with the clown  
of a snowy day

Hiroko Takahashi<sup>23</sup>

The Takahashi poem is wonderful. It doesn't break any of the "rules" Western haiku editors share, with the exception of being naturalistic. While I can't say with certainty what it "means" (something I can also say of many American poems), I am able to take the poem's pieces and create my own feeling for the poem. There is the heaviness of pregnancy, the heaviness of snow; things hidden by skin and a skin of snow; things that will be given birth to. The clown reference is interesting. I read it as a tumbling, acrobatic clown like the ever-shifting child inside her. The poem relates an interesting apprehension, yet excitement not uncommon to impending mothers. It would be hard to find fault with a poem like this. The voicemay be quirky, like that of a crazy aunt, but I, the reader, completed the poem—and importantly, it transferred emotion and meaning to me. Here is another:

A victim of lung disease  
a firefly from the underworld  
lights up his hand

Hakko Yokoyama<sup>24</sup>

The Yokoyama poem also has internal pieces that I can use as a reader to create meaning—my own meaning! Internal organs and an underworld; cancer and the pseudo-heat/color of a firefly. Is the light a messenger... or guide? More importantly, how do we view the firefly's arrival? Acceptance seems to ring true. Two more:

A field of skylarks  
where father's brow was  
hit and cracked

Onifusa Sato<sup>25</sup>

Human beings  
are made up of tubes—  
the daytime short

Tenko Kawasaki<sup>26</sup>

So why don't we write similar poems? I don't have a good answer, because to me, these poems satisfy my requirements for a haiku. But I wonder if it is because these are clearly what we would call "desk-ku" or made-up poems, and there is a prejudice against such work. Is this prejudice because of Blyth and others' fixation on haiku as Zen? That somehow a haiku isn't a poem, but rather a spiritual journey, my spiritual journey, so it must relate to my actual life?

Another possible explanation may be related to the notion that original experience is somehow superior to any intellectualized version of it. An oft-quoted teaching from Bashō says that "You can learn about the pine only from the pine, or about bamboo only from bamboo. When you see an object, you must leave your subjective preoccupation with yourself; otherwise you impose yourself on the object, and do not learn."<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Robert Spiess, longtime editor of *Modern Haiku*, wrote in one of his "Speculations" that "A haiku's coherence lies in its being aesthetic, not intellective,"<sup>28</sup> in another, "The best haiku are barefoot; next, the sandaled; and least, those with shoes,"<sup>29</sup> and, "a genuine haiku poet is aware that every entity has to be the way it is and could not possibly be any other way."<sup>30</sup>

Admittedly, Bashō and Spiess saw haiku in a Zen context. Yet these are clearly directives to not tamper with the original experience, which is something gendai poets do to great effect.

Gendai poets would be hard-pressed to insist that their poems exactly represent their original “barefoot” experience. Clearly they have been poetically tampered with. But I believe they would defend their poems as decisively emulating that original experience, or in some cases of exacting or expanding it. Kaneko’s “motorcycle” poem is possibly a good example. After leaving a “heated argument” he could have merely listed his impressions (heat, noise, a rushing away, perhaps a realization that he was reacting mechanically), but instead he chose a representative object—a motorcycle. Perhaps one passed him on the street at that moment. I am of course guessing here. But more importantly, his edit both crystallized and intensified the poem. How much stronger is the reader’s reaction to the original poem when compared to a more objective rewrite such as: After an argument— / the heat and noise / of a motorcycle. The original is much more immediate and at the same time leaves more to the reader’s imaginative findings.

Patrick Gallagher, in an essay in the Yuki Teikei 2011 anthology, *Wild Violets*,<sup>31</sup> makes an interesting point in defense of gendai haiku when he suggests that “the argument may be made that gendai haiku is more representative than classical haiku of one essential element of the Japanese artistic sensibility—the use of the stylization of nature and humanity in place of an objective view. Japanese literature and art consistently represent nature in a subjective context. By incorporating the subjective elements of the imaginative and the unreal, so does gendai haiku.”<sup>32</sup> Japanese gardens and work by artists such as Katsushika Hokusai are good examples of this stylized revision of nature. In this context, Kaneko’s poem seems natural.

Something that should be mentioned here is a distinction between the writer’s and reader’s poetic experience. Clearly they are two separate events. In my above scenario as to how Totha Kaneko’s poem came about, I am of course assuming that this was an actual event that happened to him. While

Kaneko is a poet who believes in experiential haiku, not all poets are so inclined. In fact, I suspect many gendai poems, like many Western ones, are wholly or at least partially made up for effect. That this is the case should have little bearing on the reader's experience. After all, as far as classical or traditional haiku goes, the reader has no way of knowing if a poem is fictitious. They simply have to trust the material. And as long as an authentic idea or emotion is passed from writer to reader, we should consider a poem from that perspective successful.

This transmission of meaning, however, is less important if haiku is viewed from a writer's perspective, as perhaps in a "Way" of life such as the Way of Tea, Way of Bushido, or, in this case, the Way of Haiku. Bashō's comment that without direct experience you "do not learn" leads in that direction. Yet who is to say that such imaginative forays don't equally contribute to our learning? In the *Wild Violets* essay, Gallagher promotes the use of imagination as a creative writing exercise, and finds through the resultant gendai poems further "appreciation of the world."<sup>33</sup> I am reminded of Michael Dylan Welch's *Neon Buddha* series, Chris Gordon's *Chinese Astronaut* series, and similar series by other American writers. Welch, in particular, has written hundreds of *Neon Buddha* poems! I have argued elsewhere that they are not as satisfying as a whole due to their often mysterious, intangible, and often only intelligible-to-Welch understanding of them.<sup>34</sup> Yet some are clearly a kind of writing exercise and have value (to Welch) as such. However, it is hard to know how effective these poems are to any reader beyond the poet who created them.

If we keep the above in mind, then most gendai haiku seem to fall into this category in which a moment is refigured imaginatively using a traditional haiku structure, and where communication between writer and reader is valued. A few more examples:

The full moon—  
the sound of a waterfall  
ten thousand feet underground

Nana Naruto<sup>35</sup>

Since I was born a human being  
many years have passed—  
an evening primrose

Goro Wada<sup>36</sup>

A mountain  
gazing at another mountain—  
summer vacation

Shigeharu Otsubo<sup>37</sup>

The rough sea—  
inside the skipping rope is  
completely empty

Niji Fuyuno<sup>38</sup>

### Category 5: Haiku that Directly Tell

All poets have had an idea or thought at some point in time that they wished they could put directly into a haiku, and then tried to craft a poem around it. This one by Mutsuo Takano <sup>39</sup> seems to be just that:

The tree becomes bare  
in order to talk  
with the sun

This is an interesting idea, and I will admit to probably remembering it this coming fall when the trees lose their leaves—which is a sign of something. However, as with the direct metaphors mentioned earlier, I am less engaged as a reader. It is simply a statement, although a fantastic one. Two others:

Inside my heart  
the Judas too begins to wake  
from hibernation

Akito Arima<sup>40</sup>

My friend, I confess  
one of my arms is already  
given to the devil

Shigenobu Takayanagi<sup>41</sup>

Both of these poems do little but tell the reader what the poet thinks. Yes they are clever, but is that enough?

## Category 6: Haiku that are Private Discourse

Haiku have their origin in renku, a party game, where one poet links to another poet's verse. The result is a larger public poem. "Public" is a key word in regards to haiku. Haiku have always been about sharing. Additionally, there is the notion that haiku are supposed to be completed by the reader, so we would expect all the information needed to understand a poem to be available in the poem. Yet some poems resist understanding. An example from Yasumasa Soda:<sup>42</sup>

When the frozen butterfly  
finally reaches its end:  
a hundred towers

I can visualize a migrating butterfly arriving somewhere. I can even visualize a hundred towers. But how do those parts relate? I appreciate the need to express individualism, and from the pro side of the pro/con list, that can create unique images and ideas. We want poets to feel free to go in any direction they choose. We want to be exposed to fresh images and perspectives, but I think it's fair for poets to feel restricted by certain traditions. While this is an exciting move, and really... really frees a poet up, is that freedom at the expense of sharing?

On the con side: these are not private diary entries. These are shared poems published in a journal, or in this case an anthology. A reader has a right to expect to be able to engage them somehow, and to be given the information to do so. I am reminded of art exhibits in which placards have been placed next to the pictures to tell the viewer what they need to know to appreciate the painting: its history, perhaps what the painter was trying to say, what the painter felt, that the red triangle in the corner represents the Vatican.

Richard Gilbert, in a discussion on the blog of the *Haiku Foundation*, wrote that readers in Japan are expected to know something of each poet, and to bring that knowledge to the poet's work.<sup>43</sup> But what can we realistically know of anyone, especially of their innermost thoughts? Toshinori Tsubouchi<sup>44</sup> is, I

think, a good example. He is probably best known for poems such as:

Cherry blossoms fall—  
you too must become  
a hippo

In fact he has written a number of poems where he takes on the persona of a hippopotamus. Now let me step back and say that I think this is a fascinating approach to haiku. It allows him to view the world from an entirely new perspective. He is no longer Tsubouchi the man, or possibly even a poet, but a hippo. I am reminded of Ban'ya Natsuishi's *Flying Pope* poems which serve a similar purpose. In fact, if I encountered this hippo poem with other hippo poems as part of a series or collection, it would admittedly be a different story. But what about Tsubouchi's poem:<sup>45</sup>

You are now  
an enormous hailstone,  
so I hug you

And let's pretend I know all about him. I know where Tsubouchi went to school and what his favorite ice cream flavor is. I know that he likes to pretend he is a hippo. Is he a hippo in this poem? Is a hippo hugging me? Or is he a field of grass, or just himself? We can't expect the poet to stand next to the poem to explain it. To me the strength of haiku is that public sharing of a moment, or emotion, or idea. Poems this private can't be shared, just admired for their cleverness. A question we have to ask ourselves: Is that enough? Two more:

Inclining the water  
within my body, I cut  
a piece of glass

Toru Sudo<sup>46</sup>

Inside the dream  
of the napping bindweeds  
there is a window

Nana Naruto<sup>47</sup>

### **Category 7: Haiku that Contain Abstract Language**

While the previous poems are mysterious, I can at least imagine them. For Soda's poem, I can picture a migrating butter-

fly reaching its destination, and even the mysterious towers. Yet some gendai poems resist imagination and it is primarily because of their language. An example I have mentioned in another paper is Hoshinaga's:<sup>48</sup>

Twenty billion light-years  
of perjury:  
your blood type is "B"

I think a fair objection to this kind of haiku is the one mentioned earlier by Christopher Herold, when he referenced the distraction of the jeweled finger. Yes, "twenty billion light-years of perjury" is interesting and clever (if not inaccurate since a light-year is a measurement of distance); but it seems to distract from what is the poet's very simple idea: that someone has been lying to you for a long time.

Additionally, and frustratingly, the abstraction in the first half of the poem has no relation to the second half of the poem. If we look back at previous poems, in particular Kaneko's motorcycle, Takahashi's clown, and Narito's moon, those were poems where the two halves were relatable. There was heat in Kaneko's "heated argument" as well as in the "motorcycle" through its exhaust. The shifting of Takahashi's baby can be seen in the tumbly clown. In the Narito poem, there is fluidity as well as distance in both halves. This relational unity is missing in Hoshinaga's poem, which compounds the abstraction's irrelevance.

A white peach...  
nihilism, which is to say  
humanism

Koi Nagata<sup>49</sup>

Another objection to poems such as these is that such abstract language is intellectually unfinished. The reference to "humanism" in the Nagata poem is vague. What kind of humanism? To a neighbor? To refugees on another continent? As a political process? The word can mean one of any number of things, so why make the readers spin their wheels with all

the other possible meanings, rather than just come out and say what the poet means. There is a lyric in a song by the band X that reads: “There are seven kinds of Coke / five hundred kinds of cigarettes. This freedom of choice in the USA / drives everybody crazy.”<sup>50</sup> I think what is forgotten in the composition of these kinds of poems is the reader. Of course, this presupposes that poetry, or at least haiku, is a shared activity (which is debatable). However, taking the stance of the reader, I want to read a “Totha Kaneko” poem, or a “Hiroko Takahashi” poem, or a “Lee Gurga” poem. I want something of a particular author. We are in a conversation after all.

When poets are trying to get poems across to the reader, they only have language as their tool, so why does Nagata hide meaning within abstracted language? After all he is trying to share a unique experience/idea/feeling with the reader. Why cloud that idea with vague language? The poet should be doing the opposite. Will such poems get to the point where one abstraction stands for another abstraction that stands for another, until the original moment of the poem is long lost—and all we have left are the jeweled fingers?

Another abstract poem, also by Fumio Hoshinaga:<sup>51</sup>

Squid peppermint  
Red-detective arson  
marigold

This last example is simply a selfish poem. Each word can have numerous meanings, and when combined one after the other could mean infinitely anything. The reader could just have easily picked six random words out of the dictionary with nearly the same effect. In a post on the *Haiku Foundation* blog Scott Metz defends Hoshinaga, writing of the poem:

It’s like a little labyrinth laid down by James Joyce of stream of consciousness-like sounds, rhythms, colors, onomatopoeia and cultural associations unique to Japan. A little orgasm of words that act as just enough to create a cosmos for the reader to do some experiencing.<sup>52</sup>

Yet each reader has a different feeling for word pairs such as “Red-detective” or “Red-detective arson.” It is mathematically ludicrous that the poet’s idea of this pairing is anywhere near the reader’s. Unless of course sharing isn’t important.

At the end of the day each reader has to make up this or her own mind about where the haiku frontier is, because although a country-specific definition of haiku can be intuited from its published poems, that definition is the result of a thousand individual poets personal definitions. For me, I think it is clear that I primarily value two things in haiku: reader participation and the conveyance of an emotion or idea. For the first, this means that I reject poems that are direct similes or metaphors, or poems that directly tell a poet’s message. And I want no overly abstract language to get in the way of that message. I believe readers should discover the significance of a poem by themselves, so I don’t want obstacles in the way of my understanding.

For the second, I don’t want to struggle futilely through private poems. Leave them in the poet’s notebook or diary. Poems can’t be so personal that readers can’t enter them. This isn’t to suggest that such poetry doesn’t have value to the writer, just that readers want a shared experience; they want a transference of meaning. On this last point, I don’t mean literally “solvable;” any transfer of meaning or emotion will do. Takahashi’s poem about the “clown of a snowy day” is a good example. While I can’t logically put the pieces together, the poem does transfer meaning and emotion to me. Additionally, I don’t want to wade through pointless abstractions.

Because I only require these two things, I’ll happily accept fantastic poems into the American canon if they are grounded in some kind of reality, or can be tangentially understood. Poems such as “becoming a motorcycle” or “clown of a snowy day” or “a field of skylarks” are good examples—also known as categories 2, 3, and 4. Frankly, I’d like to see examples of this kind of creativity in the United States. However, it is important to remember that we inhabit our own soil and need to make our own poems. In a review of Gilbert’s *Poems of Consciousness*, Allan Burns makes an important point: that “English--

language haiku is certainly richer than any reductive portrayal of it would lead one to believe.”<sup>53</sup> As a poet who continues to work in the American tradition, I certainly do not intend such a reductive portrayal. Yet, I wonder if the American haiku literature wouldn’t benefit from a wider diversity, where realistic and unrealistic poems can stand side by side.

The frontier gate that stands between what we comfortably call American haiku and what others might think and write should be battered from both sides. I’m thankful to the editors of the Modern Haiku Association anthologies, editors of other translated work, as well as both gendai and American poets for making us constantly rethink what we consider haiku to be—or to return to my original question: to help us think about what we will accept as a haiku here in America. From our side of the frontier, we should continue to test that frontier gate by taking chances in our own work. Who knows, perhaps the frontier isn’t as fixed as we think.

#### Notes

1. “The HSA Definitions Reconsidered,” in *Frogpond*, 1999, XXII:3, p.73. Hiro Sato famously suggests that “Today it may be possible to describe haiku but not to define it.”
2. Modern Haiku Association (Gendai Haiku Kyōkai, eds.), *The Haiku Universe for the 21st Century*. Tokyo, Japan: Modern Haiku Association, 2008, p. 19.
3. Makoto Ueda (ed.), *Modern Japanese Haiku*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1976.
4. Kon Nichi Translation Group (eds.), *Ikimonofuei* and *The Future of Haiku*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, both 2011.
5. <<http://www.roadrunnerjournal.net>>. Accessed October 30, 2011.
6. Kon Nichi Translation Group (eds.), *Ikimonofuei*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, p. 28.
7. Ito Yuki, *Simply Haiku*. Winter 2007, Volume 5, Number 4 <<http://simply-haiku.com/SHv5n4/features/Ito.html>>. Accessed October 30, 2011.

8. Modern Haiku Association (Gendai Haiku Kyōkai, eds.), *The Haiku Universe for the 21st Century*. Tokyo, Japan: Modern Haiku Association, 2008, p.101.
9. Modern Haiku Association (Gendai Haiku Kyōkai, eds.), *Japanese Haiku 2001*. Tokyo, Japan: Modern Haiku Association, 2001, p. 151.
10. Ibid., p. 95.
11. Modern Haiku Association (Gendai Haiku Kyōkai, eds.), *The Haiku Universe for the 21st Century*. Tokyo, Japan: Modern Haiku Association, 2008, p 49.
12. Ibid., p. 83.
13. Ibid. p. 187.
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43. <<http://www.thehaikufoundation.org/2009/12/08/7th-sailing/comment-page-2/#comments>>. Accessed October 30, 2011.
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53. Allan Burns’ review of Richard Gilbert’s *Poems of Consciousness* in *Presence*, 20 Volume 39, p. 43.

Paul Miller is an internationally awarded and anthologized poet and essayist. He is an executive committee member of the Haiku Society of America, Haiku North America, and book review editor for *Modern Haiku*. His latest collection, *Few Days North Days Few* (2011), is available from Red Moon Press.



## A Renku Experiment

by *John Stevenson*, Nassau, New York

After five days in Maine, much of which was spent in writing renku with Scott Mason and Paul MacNeil at Paul's camp on Onawa Lake, Yu Chang and I drove back to our homes in upstate New York. As we reached the final leg of our journey, entering the Massachusetts Turnpike, we began to compose haiku in the "exquisite corpse" style. While I drove the car, Yu wielded his laptop. The process involved dividing the composition of lines between players. Initially, for instance, we started with Yu thinking of a second line while I thought of a first and third. Without sharing what we were thinking, Yu typed his middle line and then I dictated my first and third. He then read aloud the entire poem. The first one came out:

behind the garden (J)  
between the lines (Y)  
turning inward (J)

We then switched assignments – I thought of a second line, while Yu typed out his first and third offers:

puffs of clouds  
from separate clouds  
on the way home

We wrote two more, alternating again, as follows:

a fast car  
the shortest distance  
with eyes closed

clear blue sky  
with an aching back  
there is nothing in my mind

Primed by this experience, plus the days of renku practice, we decided to compose a twelve-verse renku in this manner. We did not make any agreement about the subject for each verse, leaving this to chance. But it must be acknowledged that our renku experience was evident here and there. It is obvious,

for instance, that we both thought a blossom verse was due when we got to the eleventh verse. Here, un-retouched and featuring the original grammar issues and repetitions, is our collaboration with chance.

### **Man Overboard: An Exquisite Corpse Renku**

by *Yu Chang*, Schenectady, New York

*John Stevenson*, Nassau, Nw York

1.                   end of summer  
                      a few cars at the pee stop  
                      when the bell rings
  
2.                   rushing out of the house  
                      with a snapping turtle
  
3.                   at the water's edge  
                      a commercial message  
                      the smell lingers
  
4.                   look at the moooon  
                      crosses the state line
  
5.                   there's never enough  
                      dipping her toes  
                      the missing sock
  
6.                   man overboard  
                      left to imagination
  
7.                   the sinking feeling  
                      on the shortest day  
                      in the produce section
  
8.                   apples and oranges  
                      at Starbuck's

9.                   cowboys and indians  
                      there is not a soul  
                      playing “old maid”
10.                   a view of the ocean  
                      a first planting of wheat
11.                   plum blossoms  
                      expecting cherry blossoms  
                      someone beat me to it
12.                   a soap bubble  
                      picks up speed

John Stevenson is a former president of The Haiku Society of America, former editor of *Frogpond*, and currently the managing editor of *The Heron's Nest*.



## Humor in Bashō's Letters

by *Jeff Robbins*, Fukuoka, Japan

Assisted by *Shoko Sakata*, Fukuoka, Japan

Bashō wrote many hilarious haiku and some very funny prose, but in this article are the funny parts from his letters.

Bashō scholar Eizo Kon includes 229 letters confirmed to be authentic in his *Bashō Letter Anthology*<sup>1</sup>; many of these are longer than one page. This is a vast pool of knowledge about Bashō's life and thought, yet only a very few snippets of the letters have been translated into English. In the letters we discover a new world—new to us, but actually there for centuries—the world of Bashō's humor and affection for his close friends. The letters are full of personal details, and Kon has annotated every significant point from his decades of accumulated knowledge, enabling us to understand who and what Bashō is writing about.

In the following, the title to each letter includes the number of the letter in Kon's anthology which is also the source for the information given. Even with Kon's commentary, I still could make no sense out of the letters until my research assistant Shoko Sakata, an Instructor in Japanese language, translated them into English as best as she could, which was good enough for me to get the point. Sakata helped me understand the implications in the letter and in Kon's commentaries, the subtle messages that only another native speaker can see.

Throughout this article, **bold print** is used for Bashō's actual words and ordinary print for commentary translated from Kon's commentary or written by myself. I break the letters into sections, with the commentaries to each section immediately following. Whenever you cannot understand, look below to find a clue. If you wish to read the letter whole as Bashō wrote it, simply hop over the ordinary print to **read only the bold face**. In translation, each clause is given on its own line, with all lines neatly centered; I find this makes the meaning remarkably easy to see. Thus I have turned Bashō's letters into free verse; this is what they feel like to me.

The lunar calendar followed in Bashō's time began with the Chinese New Year in what the West calls "February." The dates given in the letters have been "translated" to the date it was in the West according to correspondence charts available in major libraries in Japan.

In the translations, as well as in the commentaries, the present tense is used for the time of Bashō's writing, the past tense for what he looks back to, and the future for what lies ahead of him. (Comments from modern time are given in parentheses.) Thus, as we read, we travel with Bashō within his Time.

(Bashō in Edo writes a long letter to his follower Kyorai in Kyoto; Here is a brief section near the end.)

Letter #140 to Kyorai, July 21, 1692

Kagami Shiko joined the Bashō school two years ago, and has struggled to catch up with followers who have been with Bashō for over a decade, such as Kikaku, Bashō's senior follower and the leader of the Edo group of Bashō poets.

**Early in March Shiko went to the northern provinces  
and has not yet returned.**

**That guy is good for nothing.**

**Starting with Kikaku, all my followers hate him,  
and that is all there is to it.**

**When he drinks he makes a fool of himself  
and dances to the Tune for Throwing Things.**

**At my hut he cannot contain himself.**

*Koitsu* is gutter Japanese for "this guy." The "Tune for Throwing Things" (*nage bushi*) was first sung in the 1650s in the Shimabara Pleasure Quarters of Kyoto, and by the 1680s was popular throughout the pleasure quarters of Japan.

**I am sure that when he returns  
he will go to Kyoto and visit you,  
so you should make up your mind what to do,  
which is why I am telling you this secret tale**

Actually, after his pilgrimage to the North, Shiko came to Edo to consult with Bashō about a thesis he had written on Bashō poetry, *Kuzu no Matsubara*. In Autumn he went to Kyoto and published it, the only such work published during Bashō's lifetime. Shiko seems to have gone through a personality change on his pilgrimage and from 1692 becomes Bashō's close friend, one he can joke with, and his companion in the final month of Bashō's life.

A letter to Bashō's woman follower Uko ends with this post-script.

From Letter #158 to Uko, February 23, 1693

**p.s.**

**With those jerks in Nagoya,  
all lines are down, so it appears.  
Much unfinished business.**

Bashō calls his followers in Nagoya *yatsubara domo* which Sakata says is a swear word, maybe the equivalent of "those assholes." I think "jerks" is strong enough. Shirane Haruo<sup>2</sup> describes how the Nagoya group of Bashō followers were in 1684, "the primary force in first establishing the Bashō style" but from 1691, "they turned their backs on Bashō," so, by 1694, "almost all the Owari/Nagoya group had become estranged from Bashō." Bashō says communication with them is *futsū*, as when telephone lines are down after a storm or earthquake.

**However, the hip cushion you presented me—  
this winter, I wrapped it around my head  
and it kept out the cold.**

A year and a half ago Uko wove the fabric and sewed a cushion for Bashō to keep his hips warm while sitting—well, this past winter, he liked wrapping it around his head. This is the real Bashō, not some saint or Buddhist hermit, but as Sakata says, "Dear Uncle Bashō," a bit strange but still a pretty good guy.

On June 3rd 1694, Bashō, along with his teenage grand-nephew Jirobei, left Edo on journey west. From Shimada Bashō sends

a letter to Sora, his companion on the journey to the Deep North, who has a hut in Fukugawa near Bashō's. Again here is only the p.s.

From Letter #193 to Sora, June 8, 1694

**p.s.**

**Well now, Old Soha has in his possession Sodo's book  
I asked him to return it quickly.  
Would you tell him again?  
And please give the same message to Jokyu.**

(Things have not changed much in 300 years.)

Bashō and Jirobei stop off at Kamo, a village near Nara, the hometown of Ihei, Bashō's neighbor in Fukagawa.

Letter #199 to Ihei, July 13, 1694

**On July 8th we went to Kamo  
and stayed one night at Heibe's house  
I met your mother and Genza and your older sister.**

Heibe is Ihei's older brother who stayed in Kamo as head of the household while Ihei went to the Big City—same as Bashō and his older brother Hanzaemon. Genza is married to Ihei's sister. Bashō twice uses that expression for "mother" that always surprises Westerners: "Your Honorable Bag" (*o-fukuro-sama*) or, for one's own mother, *ore no o-fukuro*, "my Bag," which modern Japanese men in informal situations do say. But, the Japanese advise us that the word does not really mean "bag" although it is written with the Chinese character for "bag." Okay, it's a metaphor, however, completely factual. A womb is a bag.

**Your mother is without sickness,  
however as she has grown older than she was four years ago  
her hearing has gotten worse.  
With your sister, the two of them, pleading only for "dear Ihei,"  
imploing again and again how good it would be to see you,  
I had some difficulty.**

Bashō's sketch of Ihei's mother and sister is one of his small comic masterpieces, however the comedy is without disrespect. My friend Chiyuki observes that the letter is not so comical until the final line makes the whole letter funny. The two details about the old woman—that she is losing her hearing and that she talks a lot—fit together. Of course they want to see Ihei again; what's the point of saying so again, and again? As we grow old we start to lose it.

Bashō and Jirobei are now staying at Kyorai's cottage in Saga, west of Kyoto. In 1691 when Bashō stayed here he said:

(From *At the House of Fallen Persimmons*<sup>3</sup>)

**This Kyorai is a really lazy guy  
and the grass stands high before the window,  
while several persimmon trees stick out over the roof.  
Summer rains leaking everywhere,  
the tatami mats and sliding paper doors smell of mold,  
and finding a place to lie down is not so easy.**

Now, three years later, Bashō is back here; however, in one letter Bashō reports that Kyorai has done some renovation.

Once every three to five years, an extra 29-day period is added to one of the 12 Moons, to bring the lunar calendar into accord with the solar year. On the 23rd day of the Intercalary 5th Moon of the year Genroku 7—July 15, 1694—Bashō writes a letter to Shiko, the one who danced to the Tune for Throwing Things.

Letter #200 to Shiko, July 15, 1694

**The two things you sent with your best wishes  
will be most valuable, especially on a journey.  
Today Kyorai was cleaning the pipe for me.**

One of the presents Shiko sent was a *kiseru*, a long thin pipe with a bamboo shaft and metal mouthpiece and bowl. The bowl is tiny, only big enough for two or three inhales. Wikipedia says, "*Kiseru* were used for smoking a fine, shredded

tobacco, as well as cannabis.”<sup>74</sup> (Really?!) Since tobacco is usually smoked in large quantities, the tiny bowl of the *kiseru* is not quite suitable; but for smoking something more concentrated, it may be perfect. If Bashō was smoking cannabis there in Kyorai’s hippie cottage, that helps to explain his bizarre sense of humor.

**And this being the first time in his life he did this,  
I have made “pipe cleaning”  
a seasonal reference to the Intercalary 5th Moon.**

When something momentous occurs in a season, that event, or some part of that event, can become a seasonal reference. Bashō makes the absurd suggestion that we make “cleaning the pipe” a reference to the Intercalary 5th Moon because the illustrious non-smoker Kyorai cleaned a *kiseru* for the very first time during this Intercalary 5th Moon. So when the next Intercalary 5th Moon comes in thirty or forty years it will be remembered as the season Kyorai cleaned the *kiseru*. How ridiculous!—but then that’s par for the course in this letter.

**You sent your other present in the wrong season,  
so from now on, it too will refer to this season.  
Always remember what you have learned here.  
This evening why don’t you come visit me?  
Bashō**

**p.s. In fact, by chance, at this time last year in Bufu,  
I forgot my gaiters, so now shall “gaiters” set the season?**

As for Bashō’s p.s., “Bufu” is just the characters for Musashi Province where Edo is, but “Bufu” sure sounds funnier. Westerners think of gaiters for holding trouser legs in place, but under his robes Bashō’s legs are naked. Gaiters (*kyahan*) made out of straw or cloth, are worn to protect the lower legs while travelling; their support of the leg is said to make walking easier.

I do not think Bashō wrote any haiku on gaiters, or on pipe-cleaning.

## Notes

1. Kon, E., *Bashō Shokan Taikai (Bashō Letter Anthology)*, Kadokawa Gakugei Shuppan, Tokyo, 2006.
2. Shirane, H., *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1998, p. 282.
3. Iimoto, N, et al., *Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshu (Complete Anthology of Japanese Literature)*, Shogakukan, Tokyo, 1997; volume 71, p. 314
4. Wikipedia, *Kiseru*, accessed in 2010

Jeff Robbins has lived in Japan for 24 years where he builds and sells play equipment for children. Having studied Bashō for 30 years, his mission is to show the world the ignored, un-translated, and unknown Bashō—his devotion to women and children and friends, hilarious parodies and warm caring letters.

Shoko Sakata is a certified Instructor of Japanese Language, living in Fukuoka. She has two small daughters who call Jeff “Basho Ojisan.”

Jeff has a homepage where you can see more of these works:  
<[www.basho4women2youth.join-us.jp](http://www.basho4women2youth.join-us.jp)>.

He hopes you will mail him your response to this Bashō at  
<[basho4women2youth@yahoo.com](mailto:basho4women2youth@yahoo.com)>.



## Research Note: Shiki and Buson—A Case of Déjà-ku?

by *Charles Trumbull*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

The phenomenon of “déjà-ku” has always fascinated me, and I have had that awkward experience myself. I enjoyed John Stevenson’s account in *Frogpond* 34.2. It was especially interesting that John used the example of Shiki’s

*yuku ware ni todomaru nare ni aki futatsu*

I am going  
you’re staying  
two autumns for us

to cap his piece. For many years I had believed that this haiku itself was a case of déjà-ku on Shiki’s part.

In his *An Introduction to Haiku* (hardcover edition, 1958, 105) Harold Henderson attributes this haiku to Buson:

### *Parting*

For me who go  
for you who stay —  
two autumns.

and gives the identical rōmaji text as that for the Shiki poem (in kanji, 行く我にとどまる汝に秋二つ). The attribution of the “two autumns” haiku to Buson was picked up by Harold Stewart in *A Net of Fireflies* (1960, 84), Robert Hass in *Essential Haiku* (1994, 81), and X.J. Kennedy for his college textbook *Introduction to Poetry* (at least by the 7th edition, 1995, 73; Henderson cited as translator). Later, other researchers attributed the haiku to Buson as well.

Intrigued, I went searching for this haiku among Buson’s works. I don’t have access to the major collections of Buson’s work in Japanese, nor the language skills to read them, but I discovered that no such poem appears in the major collections of Buson translations by scholars working from the Japanese sources: Yuki Sawa and Edith Marcombe Shiffert’s *Haiku*

*Master Buson* (1978), Makoto Ueda's *The Path of Flowering Thorn* (1998), Takafumi Saito and William R. Nelson's *1020 Haiku in Translation* (2006), or Leon Zolbrod's *Reluctant Genius: The Life and Work of Buson, a Japanese Master of Haiku and Painting*, serialized in *Modern Haiku* in the 1990s.

I have to conclude that this is not a case of *déjà-ku* at all. Apparently Henderson got a wire crossed somewhere and included this haiku in his chapter on Buson when he intended it for the one on Shiki. Some later researchers uncritically picked up Henderson's work, "retranslated" the haiku, and propagated the error.

If this conclusion of mine is wrong, of course, I would be very interested in seeing additional evidence.

Dr. Charles Trumbull is retired from editing and publishing positions at the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Encyclopædia Britannica. A past president of the Haiku Society of America, since 2006 he has been the editor of *Modern Haiku*. His haiku chapbook, *Between the Chimes*, was published in 2011.

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## **Axle Contemporary's Haiku Roadsign Project**

by Matthew Chase-Daniel & Jerry Wellman, Santa Fe, New Mexico

This project started for us well over a year ago. Matthew was working on a photo series of artists at work. As the photo shoot of friend and fellow artist Jerry progressed, so did a conversation. As coincidence had it, we both had been thinking of repurposing a motorized vehicle into... perhaps...an art gallery. Axle Contemporary, retrofitted from an aluminum-bodied 1970 Grumman-Olson stepvan soon became this mobile gallery, and a collaborative forum to explore dynamic ways of placing art in the public sphere. Born from a wild yet determined inspiration it was met with the kind of enthusiasm that can only promote more wild and determined inspirations.

Then, last spring, Matthew, while driving his son to school, noticed a forlorn and unused sign leaning against a shed in rural Pojoaque, New Mexico. Over the course of several weeks of repeated sightings, this dented and faded remnant of another time transformed into a shining beacon of creative energy. Matthew brought a kernel of an idea to Jerry and with little hesitation we created the Haiku Roadsign Project. We issued a statewide open call for haiku and invited Santa Fe's poet laureate Joan Logghe to jury the entries. The open call yielded over 230 entries by 96 poets. The blind selection process led to haiku from a Pulitzer Prize winner, several published poets, a never before published judge, a high school student, and many others. Soon after the selection was complete and the poets notified, we placed the sign on the streets of Santa Fe from early June through late September, 2011. We moved it weekly, displaying a total of 32 poems at 16 different locations including museums, a teen center, motels, a café, a U-Haul rental/auto shop, and a chile roasting concession.

When we decided to curate a series of haiku on our roadside sign, it wasn't born from a deep knowledge of haiku as an art form. The sign was built for text, and had very limited space available. We were looking for something that could be appreciated while driving by and would fit; haiku were an obvious choice. Reflecting on haiku as a poetic form one can't

help but think how little did the strolling Bashō anticipate the day of Twitter, our contemporary society's decreased attention spans, and the rapid speed of car travel. What a perfect literary vehicle for our age of rubber and metal and what better way to present modern day haiku than a roadside sign. We began to look deeper into what haiku actually are. We learned that they are far more than poems in a simple 5/7/5 syllabic structure; we learned of other criteria that are much more interesting and complex, including kigo and kireji.

And now, having completed our 16-week series of sign placements, it is clear that what we chose was perfect. Haiku contain some ineffable qualities of surprise and immediacy and connection to place and time that parallel the act of placing art on an old sign on the side of the road. Haiku are short poems, for sure, but barely short enough to read while driving by. The nature of the sign and its placement on the roadways is playful. We like to, in many of the projects we produce, experiment and tickle boundaries. Just as the audience at our mobile art gallery is expecting something besides art (tacos, perhaps), so the audience for Haiku Roadsign is expecting an advertisement, and not a poem. This surprise creates an opening and a sense of wonder, similar to the effect of the kireji in a haiku. As Lewis Hyde wrote in *Trickster Makes the World*, "The agile mind is pleased to find what it was not looking for."

Inspired by our understanding of kigo, we worked to pair the poems with the locations. Where the poems referred to the moon, we exhibited them during the time of the full moon. Spring poems were shown as early as possible, autumn poems as late as possible. N. Scott Momaday's poem, which refers to a couple walking, was placed in a pedestrian area, while Marguerite Wilson's poem about chiles roasting on Cerrillos Road was placed at a chile roaster's lot on Cerrillos Road. Drinking poems were placed by a liquor store during Santa Fe's Fiesta.

The Haiku Roadsign Project is based on our belief that personal expression is empowering to both individuals and their communities. When the doorway of our own voice is cracked open, we may contribute to our culture and society in great ways.

We all were embraced by the community of Santa Fe during the run of this project. Businesses were delighted to be able to offer their properties to display art and poetry in order to support, in a simple direct way, a cultural project for everyone. The New Mexico Museum of Art came forward to host a reading by the participating poets. Attendance was high, as was a sense of community and playfulness, along with deep respect for the creative act and the written word. By the close of the reading, the division between the poets and the audience had dissolved. A long line formed as people lined up for their turn at the podium, reading haiku they had just written in the museum's galleries, recited from memory, or invented on the spot.

We have published a small book with 32 photos of the poems in their locations, as well as essays by Joan Logghe, Laura Addison (curator at the museum), and us. The book is available for purchase at [www.axleart.com](http://www.axleart.com). The sign is resting for the winter in Matthew's driveway, waiting for us to decide what to use it for next. We are continuing to work to engage innovative methods to display art and poetry in unusual venues around New Mexico.

### Photos of the Haiku Roadsigns



axle repair—  
from under the chassis  
the full moon

John Brandi



slow down  
mañana still  
under construction

Lauren Camp



Under the pinon  
that blue shadow  
left behind again

Dara Mark



the old couple walk  
through the gardens of their youth  
with no thought of time

N. Scott Momaday



art is in the street  
gallery walls are barren  
this is just a sign

Skip Rapoport



you tell me these ducks  
don't always mate for life — are  
you flirting with me? Miriam Sagan

#### Note

Hyde, L. *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth and Art*. New York: North Point Press, 1999, p. 131.

Born in 1965 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Matthew Chase-Daniel earned a B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College in 1987. His explorations in art have taken him from his grandmother's knee (abstract expressionism) to the coasts of the Pacific Northwest (native carving), and Paris, France (filmmaking at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes). He has lived with his wife, Julie, in Santa Fe, New Mexico since 1989, making things ranging from photography to sculpture, drawings, fireplaces, and a son. He is the co-founder of Axle Contemporary, a mobile gallery of contemporary art whose mission is to expand audiences for and definitions of art.

Jerry Wellman's background is in visual and cross disciplinary art forms. He has published several illustrated books, exhibited paintings, produced video works and most recently co-founded an alternative arts venue, Axle Contemporary Gallery. His interest in poetics is evident in all his work. Exploring, expanding and sharing that interest along with expanding the definitions of art is central to his production as an artist. Currently he lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico with his wife and daughter.

## Reviews

**Fay Aoyagi.** *Beyond the Reach of My Chopsticks: New and Selected Haiku.* San Francisco: Blue Willow Press, 2011, 135 pp., hand-sized perfect softbound. No ISBN. \$15.00 USD. Order from: 930 Pine Street, Suite 105, San Francisco, CA 94108

**Paul M** (Paul Miller). *few days north days few.* Winchester, VA: Soffietto imprint, Red Moon Press, 2011, unpag. (approx. 102 pp.), perfect softbound, 4.25 x 6.5. ISBN 978-1-936848-06-5. [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com) \$12.00 US.

by *Michael W. Thomas*, Stourport-on-Severn, England.

It could be argued that the best haiku collections offer two books in one. There are the individual pieces, which the reader reads, ponders, returns to. But there is also the collection as a whole, which reads like a single poem in which patterns and motifs appear, disappear, reappear in forms which engage the attention in new ways. In this respect, they perhaps resemble an extended piece of music—an Indian raga, say—in which improvisation is actually born of long familiarity with particular scales and figures. The two collections here certainly carry the invisible tag, Buy one, get one free (a crude image, for which this reviewer apologizes, but Christmas is coming and it's hard to escape the prevailing atmosphere).

Fay Aoyagi, a poet of Japanese heritage, offers a collection which includes selections from previous books, *Chrysanthemum Love* and *In Borrowed Shoes*. Together, they present a meditation on key themes: among them, emotional displacement and the tensions of history. The haiku are filled with tiny details of West Coast life; pulling against these, however, are the rituals and anniversaries of her own culture. The consequent effects can be arresting, largely because, in best haiku tradition, her observations are measured, not strident:

Nagasaki Anniversary  
the constellation  
we never see from here

“Constellation” most obviously refers to the look of the stars in the skies of home. Shadowing this reference, however, is the image of another constellation, brief and literally earth-shattering, which the rest of the world “saw” in papers and newsreels but never experienced, and which is now commemorated in this anniversary.

Elsewhere, Aoyagi’s sense of separateness is expressed more sardonically:

New Year’s Eve  
an invitation  
to be Japanese

You can almost imagine the speaker, tongue in cheek, thinking, “Phew, great, now I can blend in.” Such haiku are markers along the way and also indicators of other separations: personal and familial ones, for example, which transcend cultural borders:

Father’s Day  
he introduces  
his stepdaughters

and

Thanksgiving dinner  
none of us on this side  
are parents

With such pieces, Aoyagi uses her cultural otherness as a means of exploring, to memorable effect, the numerous other instances of social apartheid which, usually unconsciously, are practised every day.

But such issues do not form the sole focus of the collection. Other markers appear, imaged by persimmons, plum blossom, chrysanthemum, each of which evokes a moment of percep-

tion, longing or stress. Where the fruit or flower has not been naturally cultivated, something awkward is involved:

forced hyacinth  
a congresswoman  
steals my pen

(Thus do western authorities save on stationery bills.)

Like the tug of a current, however, the collection draws the reader back to Aoyagi's divided sense of self: American by place and habit, Japanese by nurture and temperament—for whom, in the end, anniversaries define time's passing:

Hiroshima Day—  
I lean into the heat  
of a stone wall

In *few days north days few*, another welcome publication from Red Moon Press, Paul M similarly charts anniversaries and the pulse of the seasons. Many pieces here show a fascination with how the natural can casually impinge upon and enrich human awareness:

small visiting birds...  
a second church  
on this block

Possibly, church number two is more frequently, busily patronized. Elsewhere, however, nature becomes a metaphor for disintegration as much as for kinship:

into the silence  
after an avalanche—  
same sparrow song

Thomas Hardy haunts this haiku's sentiment. As he illustrated, nature's beauty is tempered by its indifference. Tragedy or not, the roses bloom anyhow.

On occasion, Paul M's speakers lift their heads from the earthly round to startling effect. The sky and moon have long been touchstones for haiku-ist meditation, but the mind cannot help straying beyond:

with a cheap beach towel  
I change the tide  
on a distant planet

“Cheap” adds humour without lessening the poem's impact. With such bargain basement purchases can great changes be effected. No butterfly has been obliged to clap its wings to bring this one about.

When others enter the speakers' landscapes, the consequences aren't always positive. The haiku on this theme are among the strongest in the collection. For example,

bird sanctuary  
she hopes we can  
remain friends

shows a skilled deployment of haiku strengths. The scene is redolent of a hundred moments on film and in novels, but the brevity of the form increases its power. It could be annotated as “neutral visit, awkward talk, end of love”—and, from a technical viewpoint, the falling away of syllables, five to four to three, formally articulates the situation's finality. Elsewhere, while not wholly negative, human connection focuses on transience and a season at its faintest:

a few dried cranberries  
shared with a thru-hiker  
low autumn river

The final line, which would itself be a worthy collection title, encapsulates the fleeting, underpowered moment: the cranberries dry, the hiker with some elsewhere in mind.

Also of note are those haiku in which far and near are bound

tightly together and thus vivified:

solstice  
the winter sun aligned  
with a beaver slide

and (one of the most powerful pieces in the collection):

thin moon  
a harrier hawk  
working the field

This is, of course, a familiar haiku strategy, using the unreachable to define an intimate feeling or enlarge a detail caught near ground-level. Because of their beguiling simplicity, however, such strategies can go badly wrong. Paul M ensures that they do not; as a result, these haiku (and others like them) earn their place in a collection where imaginative flight and poetic control are carefully balanced. *Golden hour*, runs another piece, *a nuthatch pauses / partway down the trunk*. Of such moments—time stilled, nature poised—are some of the best haiku made.

Michael W. Thomas's writing has appeared in *The Antioch Review*, *Under the Radar*, *Magazine Six* (Key West, FL), *The National Gazette* (Tirana), *The Boston Globe* (Mass), *Stand Magazine* and *Poetry Salzburg Review*, among others. His latest novel, *Pilgrims at the White Horizon*, is forthcoming in 2012, as are a new poetry collection and pamphlet. He can be reached at <[www.michaelwthomas.co.uk](http://www.michaelwthomas.co.uk)>



**Jack Barry.** *After the Eclipse.* Ashfield, MA: Down-to-Earth Books, 2011, 72 pp., perfect softbound, 5 ½ x 7 ¼, ISBNs 1-878115-34-0 and 978-1-878115-14-0, 14.95 USD, <[http://spinninglobe.net/spinninglobe\\_html/allbooks.htm](http://spinninglobe.net/spinninglobe_html/allbooks.htm)>.

by *Nick Avis*, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

This is a well produced book, Barry's third, and maintains the high standard of quality set by most haiku publications. It consists of just over a hundred previously unpublished poems and, although Barry calls all of them haiku, there are around twenty senryu. The vast majority are written in three lines with one line and vertical variations, and one two-liner.

The formal characteristics of the poems follow the established norms of contemporary Western haiku; and there are one or two poems placed in the upper two-thirds of each page giving them the space they need to breathe in notwithstanding the oversized page numbers.

The poems are carefully arranged to flow with the seasons from spring to spring. Throughout there are sequences or narratives, repeated images and themes, related or juxtaposed poems on the same page or opposite each other; all of which add to the work as a whole.

Barry is good with language particularly sound, rhythm, cadence and lineation. In the three line poems he varies line length, although the longer middle line is, as always, dominant. Similarly, the short-long rhythm (one line then two), which is the most common rhythm in contemporary Western haiku, is the one he uses the most. However, there are enough poems with a long-short rhythm and other variations, such as the one-liners, that prevent the inevitable monotony that results when an identical form or structure is endlessly repeated. On the whole, the book reads well from cover to cover although the similarity in subject matter, mood and tone does, at times, become repetitive.

Around half of the poems are weak, light and/or familiar: too many in one collection and too many to be sustained by the work as a whole, even though in the remaining poems Barry maintains a high standard and a number of them are excellent. The problem is that he chooses to write traditional haiku with its long history to be measured against in which freshness, let alone originality, is hard to achieve; and he restricts the scope of his work by focusing on suchness (*the thing as it is*) as the underlying principle of his poems as if it were an end in itself rather than just one of a number of Japanese aesthetic principles that inform technique.

Regardless of the cause, too many poems are mere description, trite, obvious and momentary at best, such as these senryu: *wedding day / wrinkles in the groom's / white tux; boy Marine wipes a tear it was just the wind; almost midnight / circles under / the waitress's eyes; straightening the picture / your crooked smile*; or these haiku: *a patch of blue / between clouds / the newborn's eyes; daylight moon / the grazing cow's / tight udder; screen door hangs open summer wind; empty chair rocks itself winter wind*.

Barry writes senryu that stand well on their own but gain from belonging to a particular season, which means they can be read as haiku, and from being part of some narrative or larger context. This senryu occurs in the winter funeral sequence. Based on the preceding poem, it is a moonlit night at precisely “zero degrees,” the temperature at which water changes its physical state to ice but in nature tends to exist as both:

washing the body  
dust floats in the empty room  
upstairs

While writing about dust floating in empty (winter) rooms and death may not be that original, the cleansing of the body, the third line with its touch of humour, the Biblical and Buddhist allusions with their metaphorical, symbolic and metaphysical implications, and the writing itself, make this an excellent poem. It has that deep mysterious ineffable quality making it

an especially good example of yugen. It is also an excellent example of suchness since the poem is a pure physical description that gives rise to thoughts, ideas and emotions—although

in this poem, as in most of them, Barry’s emotional responses are rather subdued—typical of most traditional haiku. Only once does he directly express his emotion. It is in the last poem in the book, a senryu, modern to contemporary in style, and preceded by three spring haiku concerning the arrival of spring, a boy on a bicycle and a newborn child:

still in love clattering silverware

Barry uses all but one of his senses (taste) in his images and often more than one in a given poem, which is all too rare in haiku; and this poem involves no less than three: sight, sound and touch. The poem also demonstrates his skill with sound. Although domestic love is a common theme and “still in love” potentially trite, this is a very fine poem and a fine ending to the book, especially since the poem is both a beginning (spring) and an end.

If we compare this poem with Alexis Rotella’s: *Trying to forget him/stabbing/the potatoes*,\* we can see why it is more effective to make the reader feel emotion rather than to state it. Also, Barry never comes close to such intensity in his work and he never deals with the negative or darker side of things: both familiar criticisms of traditional haiku.

Despite the familiarity, sameness and detachment in his work, and the rather large number of failed poems, Barry is a good writer and it is the quality of the rest of the poems that make this a book worth reading. The following are some of my favourites:

water snake winds  
across the whole pond  
the catbird’s endless song

rain on new leaves  
the homeless woman  
holds out her hand

tiny bird tracks  
the trickle deep inside  
the frozen stream

two widows laughing  
sunset lingers  
in the yellow birch

closing the garden gate  
the swallows are  
already gone

*The Haiku Anthology*, Cor van den Heuvel, ed., W. W. Norton and Company, NY, 1999, p.172.

Nick Avis has been publishing haiku and related poetry internationally for over three decades. He was president of Haiku Canada for six years and has written reviews for *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *Inkstone* and the *Newfoundland Quarterly*. He has also published a number of papers on haiku..



## Briefly Reviewed

by *George Swede*, Toronto, Ontario

**Jerry Ball & J. Zimmerman.** *Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members Anthology 2011*. Sunnyvale, CA: Patson's Press, 2011, 70 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 978-0-9745404-9-8, US \$12 + US \$5 postage (\$10 for Canada, Mexico & Europe; \$12 for the rest of the world) Send check to YTHS Treasurer, 6116 Dunn Ave., San Jose, CA 95123. The editors have taken unusual care with the aesthetics of book production, from the cover to the layout to the brush and haiga paintings that occur throughout (several times in foldouts). The well-wrought content includes the winning haiku from the 2010 Kiyoshi and Kiyoko Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest as well as member haiku, haibun and essays. While the top three prize-winning haiku all follow the 5-7-5 format, most of the other haiku do not and resemble those in other journals. Clearly, the organization, founded in 1975 to preserve 5-7-5 in English, is in a state of healthy transition.

**Bouwe Brouwer.** *berichten uit het verleden / messages from the past* (Bouwe Brouwer, Norman Darlington & Max Verhart, trans.). Hertogenbosch, Netherlands: 't schrijverke, 2011, unpag., perfect softbound, 3 x 4. ISBN 978-94-90607-06-7, US \$12, + postage <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)> or €8 + postage <[www.haikuschrijverke.nl](http://www.haikuschrijverke.nl)>. Another tiny treasure from Max Verhart's press in Holland that manages to showcase 66 haiku and five haibun in two languages while maintaining high standards for book design. As for Brouwer's work, it deserves such an ingenious production: *traffic jam / sharing / a sunset; laundry day / a September wind / wears my shirt; short circuit / the words in the dark / still to be felt*.

**Janice Bostok.** *never really mine: postscript series volume 19*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, unpag., stapled, 5.25 x 4. No ISBN, US \$7 + postage, <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>. With each death of a prominent haiku poet, Red Moon Press publishes a commemorative chapbook, this being the 19th and

most recent. Australian Janice Bostok (1942-2011) stepped on the haiku world stage when she edited and published her country's first haiku periodical, *Tweed*, from 1972-1979. As a result of her vigorous promotion of the magazine, she got submissions from poets the world over. I vividly recall the thrill of getting her snail-mail acceptance from the other side of the world. (The onset of e-mail has taken away the sense of the exotic created by the postage stamps of a faraway land.) To the very end, Bostok was a major contributor to world haiku as a writer, editor and publisher. All of the 19 haiku in this collection ensure she will be remembered: *envelope my thumb slips open the seal of his tongue; pregnant again / the fluttering of moths / against the window; stationary bus— / talking we visit places / within each other.*

**Steven Carter.** *Snow Moon: Haiku and Haibun.* Uxbridge, England: Alba Publishing, 2011, 48 pp., perfect softbound, 5.75 x 8.25. ISBN 978-095512544-7, US\$12 / UK£8, <www.albapublishing.com>. A retired professor of English, former Senior Fulbright Fellow and two-time winner of UNESCO's *Nuove Lettere* International Poetry and Literature Prize as well as the Eric Hoffer Foundation's Montaigne Medal for his essays, Steven Carter brings impressive credentials to his first collection of haiku and haibun. However, his hand with haiku is a tad heavy. Of the 57 pieces, 25 involve the moon in ways done too often in other English-language collections going back 50 years. The haiku without moon connotations tend to have a more sensitive touch: *our silences— / the right words / only words; one star tonight— / before we leave / our journey begins; another death-day / cold fireplace / the cat staring in.* But, the haibun make this book worthwhile. Strongly evocative prose combined organically with resonant haiku are sure to deeply involve most readers.

**Terry Ann Carter.** *Now You Know* (edited by Angela Leuck). Pointe Claire, QC: King's Road Press, 2011, unpag., stapled, 5.25 x 8.5. ISBN 978-1-895557-27-5, US \$2 + postage <kingsroadpress@hotmail.com>. This chapbook is the 24th in the "Hexagram Series." Carter is a mainstream Canadian/American poet who branched into haiku over a decade ago and has successfully established herself, not only as a writer of haiku, but al-

also as an editor and historian (see pp. 82-101 of this issue). The 30 haiku are representative of her range: *endless rain / in my mother's kitchen / the snap snapping of beans; water urn / a candle's flicker / drowns itself.*

**Bruce H. Feingold.** *Sunrise on the Lodge* (Eona, illus.). Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2010, 68 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN 1-978-893959-70-5, US \$12 <www. redmoonpress.com>. Feingold's second collection involves a number of clearly delineated topics: his occupation as psychotherapist; his travel experiences that include mountain-climbing and surfing; and, being a parent. A fine sense of humor shines through as well as acute perceptions: *Friday night shower— / burdens of a hundred patients / between my angel wings; cloud wisps on Everest— / after my stories... / then what?; almost autumn— / her stuffed bear's first night / in the dorms.*

**Jörgen Johansson.** *wishbone*. Lidköping, Sweden: River Man, 2011, unpag., stapled, 6 x 6. ISBN 978-91-633-9325-9, US \$10 includes postage <tracksonwax@tele2.se>. Johansson, who hails from Sweden, is among those Europeans who are able to not only speak, but also write well in English, their second or third language. A relative newcomer he has made a big splash since 2002 when he started publishing his specialty, senryu. Of the 46 pieces (counting two included in a one page “supplement”), many are not much more than witty remarks heard during a social get-together and then forgotten: *postponed... / the executioner / killing time*. Others, however, are in the long tradition of senryu that go beyond puns or jokes, that is, are poetry: *crowded beach / nothing written on / the man's plaster; snapping / the wishbone / autumn depression*.

**Hans Jongman.** *The Melancholy Accordionist* (edited by LeRoy Gorman). Pointe Claire, QC: King's Road Press, 2011, unpag., stapled, 5.25 x 8.5. ISBN 978-1-895557-23-2, US \$2 + postage <kingsroadpress@hotmail.com>. The 22nd title of the “Hexagram Series” contains 26 poems. Jongman was a long-time Treasurer of Haiku Canada and continues to be very active within the organization. The collection nicely displays his wry perspective: *lingerie display / long strokes of the squeegee; pet store / the unsold pup / growls at its reflection.*

**Jim Kacian.** *palimpsest*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, unpag. stapled, 3 x 4.5. ISBN 978-7-936848-05-8, No charge + postage <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>. A palimpsest is a page from which the text has been scraped off and which can be used again. In Kacian's well-designed mini-chapbook, the pages are paired in the following manner: on the left-side page a one-line haiku and on the right-side page a prose statement (often enigmatic) in the form of a title followed by three lines. The title, "palimpsest," comes into play on the right-hand page where, if one looks closely, another one-liner is barely visible, presumably a remnant left after the scraping away of the original text. Thus, every set of facing pages has, in fact, three different texts. Here is an example: (left page) *clouds over mountains i can't reach what's real*; (right page—clearly visible) *otherness* (title) *is not what is / but what is not / not is but i*; (right page—barely visible) *fire scorches the earth to ash*. The three texts are meant to engage one another and to generate atypical associations in the reader.

**Jim Kacian, Bruce Ross & Ken Jones** (eds). *Contemporary Haibun Volume 12*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, 112 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 8. ISBN 978-1-893959-99-6, US \$17 <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>. With no frills (an intro or preface) the compilation of the best haibun (67) and haiga (28) of 2011 forces readers to assess on their own the current crop of writers and artists. Someone new to these genres will have an experience akin to visiting a new city without a map, and making unintended, yet rewarding discoveries while also getting lost. Those familiar with these genres will feel the comfort of knowing the chief landmarks and enjoying them once more.

**Philomene Kocher.** *hearing the silence* (edited by Terry Ann Carter). Pointe Claire, QC: King's Road Press, 2011, unpag., stapled, 5.25 x 8.5. ISBN 978-1-895557-29-1, US \$2 + postage <[kingsroadpress@hotmail.com](mailto:kingsroadpress@hotmail.com)>. Canadian educator/therapist Kocher is well-known for showing how haiku can be effective in treating persons with dementia. The 25th in the "Hexagram Series" holds an accurate sampling of her work: *one red apple / on the lowest branch / evening church bells; the sun / enters my room / tulip by tulip*.

**Oprica Pădeanu.** *Cântecul mierlei / Blackbird's Song* (Vasile Moldovan, trans.). Bucharest: Verus, 2011, 104 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8. ISBN 978-606-8343-05-1, No price <verus@clicknet.ro>. When reviewing books from abroad I have often stated an admiration for the excellent poems of poets writing in English, which is their second or even third language (see the review of Brouwer on p. 151). On the other hand, I have also complained about poor translations into English and I will again in this case. More than 60% of the 181 or so haiku in Pădeanu's collection are marred by spelling errors and/or obvious mistranslations, suggesting that the translator has overestimated his knowledge of English. Nevertheless, among the rest are enough clearly-rendered haiku that indicate Pădeanu is competent: *Field of daisies— / a blackbird enters singing / in my shadow; Empty nests— / in the forest silence / the last icicles; Spring again— / in an album three generations / share light.*

**Charles Trumbull.** *Between the Chimes* (edited by Michael Dylan Welch). Pointe Claire, QC: King's Road Press, 2011, unpag. stapled, 5.25 x 8.5. ISBN 978-1-895557-25-9, US \$2 + postage <kingsroadpress@hotmail.com>. The 23rd in the "Hexagram Series" shows highlights from the haiku canon of one of the most prominent persons in the haiku community, Charles Trumbull. Not only the redoubtable editor of *Modern Haiku*, he is also the chief interpreter of the history of the form in the West (see pp. 135-136 of this issue). Almost all of the 32 poems are what I call hybrids, a mixture of nature and human content (see *Modern Haiku*, 1992, 23(1), 65-72). Here are two high calibre examples: *thinking deeply / about my principles / a wave collapses; dragonflies mating— / an outboard motor / coughs into life.*

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## Re: Readings

### Of 34:2

**Marian Olson**, Santa Fe, New Mexico, comments on the work of five poets:

On a haiku by **Terri L. French**, Huntsville, Alabama compared to a haiku by **William M. Ramsey**, Florence, South Carolina. In contrast to Terri L. French's subtle haiku, *cedar waxwings / sharing yew berries— / I decide to say yes*, which uses a sensitive image to portray a tender love, Ramsey's, *how some things end— / onion flakes / in the market sack*, captures perfectly what many of us know: breaking up is usually a mess.

On a haiku by **Elinor Pihl Huggett**, South Bend, Indiana: *robin / after a long stretch / half of the worm*, leaves me satisfied that image haiku work if they are expertly wrought.

On a haiku by **Anne K. Schwader**, Westminster, Colorado: *when did it start / to be about loss / Christmas lights*, reminded me that Christmas is not the same for those of us who still grieve for family members and friends no longer around. Her poem is poignant with a sense of loss on the most beautiful holiday of the year.

On a haiku by **John Soules**, Wingham, Ontario: *tonight's forecast / a storm brewing / in your glass*, sums up the foreboding the other knows when too much whisky flows; what more is there to say? The poem is terrific.

### Of 34:3

**Joan Vistain**, Antioch, Illinois on an article by **Roberta Beary**, Bethesda, Maryland: I've long been hooked on haibuns, but chicken to try one. Her cleverly written, exceptionally helpful "The Last Weekend" perspective on haibuns, nudged me to try one of my own. One of the many perks of HSA membership!

**Robert Epstein**, El Cerrito, California, comments on the work of four writers:

On a haiku by **Glenn Coats**, Prospect, Virginia: *tree stumps / father never needed / poetry*. Ah, yes, those self-taught men—the children of immigrants—who would come to be heralded as belonging to “the greatest generation.” My father grew up during the Great Depression and I’m sure poetry would have been a luxury he couldn’t afford. Men of his ilk, who during World War II, served in a bomb disposal squad, were far more practical and hands on: felling trees, replacing a roof, repairing the carburetor. When I proudly showed dad my first published haiku, he stared blankly, wordless. I can’t say dad lacked poetic perception; rather, like Thoreau, his life was the poem he would have writ/but couldn’t live and utter it. Now, at long last, I know... and love him for it.

On a haiku by **John Stevenson**, Nassau, New York: *the mist / begins and ends / produce aisle*. Finding myself underemployed after eleven years at my last job, I so wish that the mist of uncertainty could begin and end in the same “aisle.” If only life were so circumscribed or delimited. In reality, uncertainty—even chaos—is woven into the fabric of this existence, and so I continue to braille my way... stumbling, sliding, learning as I go. But, Stevenson has reminded me that, if I need a respite, I can always head for the produce aisle for a little mist and a little clearing, however controlled.

On a haiku by **Melissa Allen**, Madison, Wisconsin: *fireflies / forgiving you / on and off*. I love Melissa Allen’s trust in the natural unfolding of forgiveness beyond conventional prescriptions or the inner critic’s reproaches. Forgiveness is a process, not an event and certainly doesn’t ascend to reconciliation by following a diagonal line. Rather, like the firefly—a Japanese symbol of enlightenment—which finds its way unencumbered by the dark, so too does the wounded ego seek reunion through fits and starts, first with one’s own heart, and then with the offender’s. The poet lays out a truthful path that most of us—if we are honest—will recognize.

On **Terry Ann Carter**, Ottawa, Ontario for *Lighting the Global Lantern* [reviewed in 34:3]: I am thinking about teaching haiku again so I purchased Carter's new book packed with definitions, traditional and contemporary examples, lesson plans and practical suggestions for teaching haiku (and related forms) to high school and college students. I especially appreciated the inclusion of other voices on the teaching and learning of haiku... from educators and contest judges to journalists, students, and accomplished poets. It's a great resource for teachers as well as a source of inspiration to poets and writers. Readers will also value the international perspective Carter has woven into the book which is devoid of doctrinaire tenets. Overall, *Global Lantern* lives admirably up to its title.

**John Stevenson**, Nassau, New York, on an article by **Lynne Rees**, Offham, England (see also "Corrections," p.164): I really like the essay. Line breaks are of the greatest interest to me. Like you, Lynne, I have years of free verse experience—over thirty of it before my first attempts at haiku—and when the end of a line is determined by anything other than the fulfillment of a certain number of metrical feet, a great many other kinds of articulation come into play. I certainly consider alternative line breaks before offering my haiku for publication. An alternative version of the "ground" poem was: *first warm day / the ground gives / a little*.

This was a little too arch for me but it did contain more of my original personal experience, which was to reflect that the arrival of spring was hardly to be taken for granted at that point. Spring was still teasingly close but perhaps not as close as I wished. I readily give over my "that's what happened" for the chance to communicate more effectively. So, the final version took the route you have described very nicely.

Another approach might have been no interior breaks: *first warm day the ground gives a little*.

While I had written haiku without line breaks (one-line haiku) as early as 1993, this was not something I was doing frequently in 2000, when I wrote this one.

Two readers give their views on on a review by **George Swede**, Toronto, Ontario of *Zenosex* by **Marshall Hryciuk**, Toronto, Ontario:

**Joshua Gage**, Brecksville, Ohio: I very much enjoyed the last issue (34:3) but was most intrigued by the brief review of Marshall Hryciuk's *Zenosex*. While I do not disagree with the reviewer (though, as a Naropa University alumnus, wish to correct his spelling of Allen Ginsberg's name), I found it deliciously ironic that a magazine that contained the sentence "most haiku poets seem averse to writing about sex" also featured some very erotic work, including: *licking so far / down your spine / dreams divide* by **Bill Wolack**, Bogata, New Jersey; *sun-warm apricots / overripe just enough / the musk of his skin* by **J. Zimmerman**, Santa Cruz, California and, *cool breeze / in her new summer frock / the woman's nipples* by **Johnny Baranski**, Vancouver, Washington.

All of these point to what I believe the review was pointing to, the difference between the erotic and the pornographic. While I'll admit that there is a certain overlap between the two, where Hryciuk seems intent on being raunchy for the sake of it, these poets seem to capture those warm, even arousing, moments of sexual encounters of all sorts, proving that while the erotic may not be rampant in Western haiku, it certainly isn't dead either. I hope that we see a lot more erotic haiku in 2012, and that *Frogpond* continues to publish and champion such pieces.

**Bruce England**, Santa Clara, California: George Swede's review of *Zenosex* by Marshall Hryciuk started me thinking about the state of sexual haiku writing. It seems that Hryciuk's book, which I have not seen, is full of raw and direct haiku about various sex acts, both homosexual and heterosexual. The few examples provided seem to be some of the best of a hard-core lot. Swede thinks that Hryciuk's agenda might be "to strip to the bare, verbal minimum all the acts he describes . . . in order to allow the reader to fill-in the love, the romance, the fantasy." He also suggests that "one of Hryciuk's goals is to instigate change" because "most haiku poets seem averse to writing about sex" and he "is sending out a wake-up call"

similar “to what Allen Ginsberg did.” Unfortunately, many of his poems supposedly “read like a crass sex manual.” It seems unlikely that very many haiku writers and readers will want to follow Hryciuk’s lead. However, it also seems like they are not all that enthusiastic about following other available sexual content in haiku.

Swede suggests reading *Erotic Haiku*, edited by Rod Willmot, as an antidote to *Zenosex*. I can suggest two other possibilities: *Cold Moon: The Erotic Haiku of Gabriel Rosenstock* and *Erotic Haiku* edited by Hiroaki Sato.<sup>1</sup> However, these books are not a current option for many, because all three are currently out of print. All future anthologists or authors of such books should note that “erotic haiku” is mandatory somewhere in the title. The only exception is Hryciuk’s book.

I don’t have Willmot’s book, but I do have the other books, and if Willmot’s book is the antidote to sex haiku, then I bet Hryciuk’s book is the antidote to erotic haiku. It seems he wants to get to the direct physicality of sex in the moment; erotic haiku does the same, but usually in a more nuanced manner. The haiku in Sato’s book seem to involve two distinctions. The first is discontinuous, that is, the haiku are almost all either serious or humorous. The second is a continuum of gradations that run from a nature presence without a human presence to a human presence without a nature presence. The following haiku attempt to show the two distinctions together. The fourth and fifth haiku are examples closer to sex haiku than erotic haiku.<sup>2</sup>

bumblebee  
deeper into the petunia  
summer heat

Yu Chang

cool dawn  
the warm curve  
of his buttocks

Pamela Miller Ness

love-making  
in the grass  
milkweed oozing

Diana Pandolfo

Entering  
thru a gap  
in her panties

Mike Taylor

blow job  
she kneels  
in Prada

ai li

Climaxing  
to her mother's voice  
on the message machine

John Brandi

Sex is always a dangerous topic to write about in literature especially if it is done badly. The problem for haikuists is the possibility of writing silly haiku, that is, haiku written originally to be serious, but which are unintentionally humorous. This can happen when an author includes images from nature in relation to sex and sexual acts. Here are two examples by Rosenstock:<sup>3</sup>

lightning ripping the dark  
your nakedness  
thunder growls

buzzing of bees  
her vibrator  
nectar stirs

My own preference for sexual haiku includes the physicality of sex in a mostly non-nature context without sounding “like a crass sex manual.” It’s a Goldilocks blend of “just rightness” between being too graphic or being too metaphorical about nature. The first example by the late Janice Bostok<sup>4</sup> is a successful combination of sex with a nature image, and the second is a small intimate moment after sex.

astride you—  
the tree outside the window  
and I sway in unison

Janice Bostok

Resting inside  
her body tightens, eyes close  
slight aftershock

Bruce England

It seems some continuous unease exists between writers, readers and editors concerning sexually-oriented haiku. The topic is not exactly taboo, but not exactly an open topic either. Swede mentioned that a Haiku Canada Weekend audience in Quebec in the 1980s had a generally unfavorable reaction to a reading by Hryciuk. If sex haiku represent one unfavorable extreme of sexual haiku to most, one might think that it would be easier to get erotic haiku published, but there is not an

abundance of erotic material in the journal literature. I speculate that the topic is almost too personal. It's about people you know or have heard about. "O my God, so and so (fill in a name) is writing about having sex!" You become a voyeur; it's almost like watching an amateur, but earnest, porn video, but with words. And it's in my journal! And then, of course, if you submit anything like that, others would be reading your haiku in the same manner.

Given this kind of reticence in the haiku community, it seems the best route for publishing sex and/or erotic haiku would probably be through an anthology of solicited material, which would bypass the network of editors. If you wanted to be included, then you could submit material, and if you're offended by such material you wouldn't have to buy a copy. Sato's book included 60 authors and 130 haiku, of which only about 14 or 11% had been previously published. Sato had to solicit material in order to get enough selections for his anthology. This suggests there is a large inventory of unpublished haiku out there dealing with sex in some manner that is never or rarely submitted for publication. Only the various editors as gatekeepers know for certain how much is submitted and rejected by them. The status quo of low publication of sexual haiku in journals at this time is probably, for all intents and purposes, a satisfactorily situation for most in the haiku community.

#### Notes

1. Willmot, Rod (ed.). *Erotic Haiku*. Black Moss Press, 1983; Rosenstock, Gabriel. *Cold Moon: The Erotic Haiku of Gabriel Rosenstock*. Ennisville: Domhan Books, 1998; and Sato, Hiroaki (ed.). *Erotic Haiku*. IBC Books, 2004.
2. Sato. pp. 34, 44, 76, 32, 10, and 33, respectively.
3. Rosenstock. p. 29 and p. 35.
4. Sato. p. 12.

***Editors' Note:*** We also recommend: *Manu Bazzano (ed.)*. *Haiku for Lovers*. London: MQ Publications, 2003, 256 pp., perfect hard-bound, 5.75 x 5.75. ISBN 9781840724127, £9.99 / \$10.75, available from online booksellers.

# Corrections

## For 34:2

p. 66

Steven Carter wrote:

In your next corrections section—my first name is Steven not Stephen and Tuscon is spelled Tucson;

Also—if I'm not mistook (as my freshmen used to write), according to my records the haibun you accepted was entitled "Playing," not the one which appeared.

Still, a privilege to appear in *Frogpond!*

p. 95

John Stevenson wrote:

I got a note from Klaus-Dieter Wirth pointing out that I had incorrectly attributed the "two autumns" poem that concludes my "Two and Two" essay to Shiki. The poem was written by Buson. I relied upon an inaccurate internet citation. Can we run a correction in the next available issue?

## For 34:3

pp. 6 and 17

Bruce Ross wrote:

In the current FP (34:3) you print my "middle of the night" above my name on page 17. On page 6 you print my "middle of the night" again, but attribute it to Craig W. Steele.

middle of the night  
until I find it there  
late winter moon

John Stevenson wrote:

Wow, talk about dejaku! Is it possible that Brian Tasker and I wrote exactly the same poem— word for word? I'm referring to the following, which appears on page 74 of the new (34:3) issue of *Frogpond*.

first warm day  
the ground  
gives a little

This is part of Lynne Rees's great article about line breaks. The footnote indicates that Brian published this poem in *a ragbag of haiku* in 2004. I published exactly the same thing in *Tundra* Number 2, 2001. I republished it in *Quiet Enough* in 2004. I'm curious to know whether this is an extreme example of dejaku or simply an error.

In reply to John Stevenson's query, Lynne Rees wrote:

It is your haiku. Of course it's your haiku. As soon as I read it in this email I knew it was your haiku. It sounds like you.

And I'm appalled at my mistake. Embarrassed for myself, this being my first essay accepted by George and Anita, and disappointed and angry with myself for letting this mistake pass into the final draft and allowing it to be printed in *Frogpond* and spoiling its high standards.

I am so sorry and I hope I can print that apology and remedy the error in the next issue.

Thank you for being complimentary about the article in the face of this. I've already made the alterations to my file copy and will ensure that any reproductions of the essay appear correctly.

I'll also post a correction to the HSA Facebook page as I'm sure, like me, quite a few people will have recognised your work.

# Harold G. Henderson Haiku Contest for 2011

Judged by

*Jim Kacian*, Winchester, Virginia & *Billie Wilson*, Juneau, Alaska

First Prize (\$150) **Garry Gay** Santa Rosa, California

Navajo moon  
the coyote call  
not a coyote

This is a complex poem that invites the reader to first believe otherwise. The Native American name for a moon phase comes from a non-Anglo sphere of influence, a different view of time and space, different gods and destinies. Into this space comes a coyote call—but it's not a coyote. The easy explanation is that a human, beguiled by the moon just as a coyote might be, is imitating a coyote's call. Left there, this is already a wonderful poem, an interspecies sharing of response to a natural stimulus. But there's more: while the poem says the coyote call is not a coyote, it doesn't specify a human. Yet, what else would respond like this? Another canine, possibly, but it would then be recognizable as hound or wolf. So it must be human. Unless the coyote is not a coyote—but Coyote, the trickster god of the Navajo and other Native American people. It would not be beyond his mischievous nature to simulate the coyote's call, but just different enough to make the listener believe it's not a coyote. This brings the first line into play once again: by setting us in that non-Anglo world space, this reading becomes a possibility in a way that it would not be if it had been, say, Hunter's Moon, or simply full moon. The poem is filled with ineffability and magic: what is, is not what seems, and maybe it's just a human after all...

Second Prize (\$100) **Mark Smith** Keyser, West Virginia

deleting words  
from the eulogy  
falling leaves

The spareness in the wording of this poem beautifully mirrors its powerful message. As falling leaves reveal the tree's essential bareness, as everything is pared down to its essence, the absence of the person being honored becomes even more pronounced. Most of us find ourselves lost for words at a funeral or memorial service. We wonder what to say—or not to say. (For technical reasons, this poem does not quite achieve its full potential: the addition of an em-dash after line two would eliminate a possible interpretation that it is the leaves that are deleting words as they somehow fall on the eulogy.)

Third Prize (\$50) *Cherie Hunter Day* Cupertino, California

calla lily  
the sound of a ladder  
lengthening

The synæsthesia of the sound of the ladder and the image of the beautiful lily work splendidly together with what Bashō called a scent link, almost like snatching it out of thin air. As the lily, in its reach toward the sun, opens to its season, human endeavors open simultaneously.

Honorable Mentions (unranked)

tasting the well  
in the water—  
summer stars

*Marjorie Buettner*, Chisago City, Minnesota

Mother's Day  
the expiration date  
on wildflower seeds

*Carolyn Hall*, San Francisco, California

northern lights...  
the scratchy play  
of seventy-eights

*Michele L. Harvey*, Brooklyn, New York

a recurring escape from my fathers dream

*Christopher Patchel*, Mettawa, Illinois

the big dipper  
no matter where I stand  
mountain sky

summer passing  
the yard flamingo's  
rusty legs

*Michelle Schaefer*, Bothell, Washington

glint of sunlight:  
the respirator carries on  
alone

*Charles Trumbull*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

We found much to like in many other poems, but these stood out for us. The pairing of the background hiss of the aurora with the white noise scratchings of LPs struck us as particularly novel and well-considered in “northern lights.” We felt the first two lines of “tasting the well” were sharp and interesting, though the seasonal tag didn’t do quite enough for us to elevate it into a prize-winning position. For a “big dipper” poem to win a prize it must certainly carve out new territory, and this one doesn’t quite, but is refreshing and enlarging enough to share with you. There is a justesse to “summer passing” that is inescapable, and so we felt we needed to share this one as well. It’s the referencing of wildflower seeds that elevates “Mother’s Day” from the welter of such poems and makes this one worthy of consideration. The mechanical indifference of the respirator is compelling in “glint of sunlight,” and its formal construction is also expertly handled. And finally, “a recurring escape” is a wonderfully formed escape of its own, with the poem moving past us so quickly we hardly notice the möbius-like extrication the poet has managed through a few choice words. It was a pleasure to find ten such worthy poems to be able to bring to your attention.

Jim Kacian is founder and president of The Haiku Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to archiving our first century of English-language haiku and creating opportunities for our second ([www.thehaikufoundation.org](http://www.thehaikufoundation.org)); owner of Red Moon Press ([www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)); former editor of *Frogpond* and *South by South-east*; author of more than a dozen books of haiku; and occasional kayaker and tennis pro.

Billie Wilson first tried writing what she now calls “haiku-shaped poetry” in the 1960s. She credits discovery of the worldwide haiku community in 1997, and encouragement from Robert Spiess, with inspiring a deeper appreciation of haiku and an ever-increasing desire to keep learning. Some of her awards include the Harold G. Henderson Memorial Award, the Gerald Brady Memorial Award, and *The Heron’s Nest* Readers’ Choice Poem of the Year.

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# Gerald Brady Senryu Contest for 2011

Judged by

*Eve Luckring*, Los Angeles, California

*Chad Lee Robinson*, Pierre, South Dakota

First Prize (\$100) *Ernest J. Berry* Picton, New Zealand

undressing the summer wind turns color

Our first-place choice is a chameleon; this poem changes hue due to the way the one line form can be read with a cut in different places. Read one way, there is a harmony created between the vulnerability of revealing one's unclothed body and the freeness of summer expressed in a refreshing, perhaps surprising, breeze that caresses the skin. Is this the sunset of a hot day? Is there passion in the air? Is there a blush on the skin in response to the wind? Is this person in the height of their life-journey's summer season? Read another way, the poem suggests autumn hovering in the air: its crisper, cooler touch unwrapping summer: its greens transforming into golds, the air suddenly spiced with new scents, the changing chorus of singing insects, and the sun softening. For us the sound of the poem (with its short vowels, repeating "s," and punctuating "d" and "t") echoes the anticipatory mood of both of these readings.

Second Prize (\$75) *Susan Marie LaVallee* Kailua, Hawaii

Father's Day—a potato without a face

The unexpected movement between the lines of our second-place choice produces the kind of unexplained blank spaces that the poem stirs in us emotionally. Potatoes have "eyes" and their patterns might suggest faces, or the lack of one. But more strongly, the faceless potato brings to mind Mr. Potato Head, (a plastic toy with attachable eyes, ears, nose with moustache, mouth, shoes, and hat that can be assembled to create a man's physique) and makes us think of a child, perhaps now an adult, who has not known her/his father, whether

through physical or emotional absence. A fatherless child has a huge blank in his/her life. As readers we were moved by the way a deadpan sense of whimsy created a resigned sense of lacking.

Third Prize (\$50) *Sheila K. Barksdale* Gainesville, Florida

stirring my coffee every which way flamenco

To find the flare of flamenco in a cup of coffee! We read this as a morning reverie. The motions of a spoon sweep us into the soulful song, strumming guitar, clapping percussion, and vibrant footwork that might carry us through the day with an emotional intensity “every which way.”

Honorable Mentions (unranked)

a watermelon smile drips off the end of my elbows

*Bett Angel-Stawarz*, Barmera, Australia

We too shared a full body smile with this one which brought to mind a poem by Charles Simic: WATERMELONS / Green Buddhas / On the fruit stand. / We eat the smile / And spit out the teeth. (Simic, C. *Selected Early Poems*. New York: George Braziller, 1999, p. 49.)

Trick-or-Treat a sailboat’s name reflects in the sea

*Alan S. Bridges*, Littleton, Massachusetts

This one has an enigmatic lack of solidity. The first line is a playful invitation into a mysterious world; the whole poem is like a ghost. The lilt and rhythm of the greeting, followed by the quietness of the next two lines, animates the sailboat’s name glimmering in the water—what tricks or treats might the sea offer this vessel?

Martin Luther King Day I readjust my rear-view mirror

*Carolyn Hall*, San Francisco, California

Martin Luther King, with all that he accomplished in his life, still couldn't change everyone's mind about skin color. Since his death, we've had plenty of time to think about all that he worked for, all the wrongs he tried to right. That's where we enter this senryu. A looking back poem, both literally and figuratively, this senryu is a study in word choice. It occurred to us that if "my rear-view mirror" was written as "the rear-view mirror" that this would be a much different poem, indeed. The author has made an important word choice, distinguishing between the personal and the preachy. If the author had used "the" it would seem as though the author is speaking for everyone, had adjusted everyone's point of view/perspective. However, the use of "my" brings this poem into the realm of the personal, which is where this poem gets its power. The repeating "r" sounds add to the senryu's theme of looking back, as though something has been nagging at the author, as though the author keeps returning to some past actions or feelings that have remained unresolved. This ruffling is countered, however, with the repeating "m" sounds that help soften this senryu, perhaps reflecting the author's change of perspective.

Chad Lee Robinson was born in Pierre, South Dakota, in 1980. His haiku and related poems have appeared in more than 40 print and online journals as well as a number of anthologies including seven editions of the Red Moon Anthology, *Baseball Haiku* (Norton, 2007), and *Montage: The Book* (Haiku Foundation, 2010). He has received many awards for his haiku and senryu, most recently a Pushcart Prize nomination from *Modern Haiku*. In 2009, True Vine Press published Robinson's first haiku chapbook, *Pop Bottles*, and a second chapbook, *Rope Marks*, is on the way from Snapshot Press in 2012.

Eve Luckring is a visual artist and poet living in Los Angeles. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals and several anthologies and is included in *Haiku 21*, Modern Haiku Press, 2012. This year she was awarded 2nd prize in the 16th International Kusamakura Haiku Competition. For more, visit her website <<http://www.eveluckring.com/>>.

# First Annual Haibun Contest 2011

Judged by  
**Penny Harter** (PH), Mays Landing, New Jersey  
**Scott Mason** (SM), Chappaqua, New York

## Overview

*If haiku is a portal, haibun is a path.*

*A haiku may open the doors of our perception or reveal some fresh insight, while a haibun may let us walk in another person's shoes (even if only for a brief stretch) or explore the more intimate landscapes of another's soul.*

*As judges for HSA's inaugural haibun competition, we felt privileged to be included on the journey. Many of the ninety entries offered intriguing and rewarding itineraries. The best of them not only invited us to venture forth, they also moved us in some fundamental way. These are presented below with our remarks.*

*As will happen in any co-judged competition, our individual preferences diverged here and there. Yet we reached our joint selections fairly quickly. More remarkably, we arrived at the same top choice independently.*

*On the evidence of this year's submissions, the state of English-language haibun is bright indeed. Join us now in celebrating seven exemplars of the genre. In the words of Robert Frost, "You come too." (PH) & (SM)*

First Prize (\$100) **Lynn McClure** Burnsville, North Carolina

## Some Things That Are Left

It comes down to the tea in the bottom of my cup, an old silver spoon, the way light falls into honey. This is old age, the privilege of life stretched thin and transparent. I crave the sweetness of cream and the bitter joy of a cut orange. I notice the streaks of rust on the bottom edge of my iron skillet. I find them beautiful and have no inclination to remove them. I pre-

fer wool against a chill and can gaze for long periods at knitted stitches. Memories, once held desperately close, are now wisps of fading paper flying from my open hand. I greet wildflowers as dear ones, Joe Pye, Ironweed, Mullein and bow to Queen Anne in her lace. Another summer passing, another autumn presaged in the curled edges of leaves.

late roses  
spill onto my table  
a shameless fragrance

*Here's a love letter to life; a paean to what's still sweet in the bittersweet experience of advancing years; a tribute to what endures in the midst of dissipation. I am humbled and inspired by the recognition and passionate embrace of everyday wonders so beautifully expressed in these words. I witness and experience a level of identification approaching mystical union, culminating in the capstone haiku's stunning last line. (Of all our senses, smell entails the deepest exchange.)*

*This haibun vivifies. With each reading it absorbs and lifts me. (SM)*

*The opening words of this haibun, "It comes down to" echo a universal truth. It does all "come down to" whatever time and place we find ourselves in. For this writer, the things it comes down to are wonderfully given to us in a sequence of multi-sensory and specific images—even to specifying wildflower names. The poet, in old age, celebrates "the privilege of life stretched thin and transparent." He or she richly captures an understanding that we all can hope to reach as we age—that we live in the present and have learned to cherish the luminous and simple gifts each day—even each moment—can offer. Moments like "the sweetness of cream," or the contrasting "bitter joy of a cut orange." There's also a lovely contrast between "streaks of rust" on the bottom of an iron skillet with "knitted stitches"—sweet vs. bitter, harsh vs. soft—all matter. In, "Memories, once held close, are now wisps of fading paper flying from my open hand," the poet's hand is open, not clutching tightly, not greedy to hold on to anything. The poetic prose in this haibun invites us into a timeless meditation, enabling us to experience that slowing down, that transparency of experience we all need to find more often, whatever our age. And the beautifully linked haiku startles us with that word "shameless"—it is a sensual and affirmative*

word, hinting that we must be “shameless” in our celebration of life. (PH)

Second Prize *Renée Owen* Sebastopol, California

### The Great Migration

Black as night they rise in a fury, the quiet cracked open by their sharp caws, by the rustle and flapping of hundreds of wings, the air above the cotton fields flowing in a stream behind their dark bodies, their great migration.

crow feathers  
the canyon fills  
with echo

dirt stained fingers  
knead silver starlight  
a picker’s tunes

*The first striking thing about this haibun is the movement of the prose—the rhythm of its non-stop flow of words echoing the flight of a vast flock of crows. Even the words are noisy and sharp as the poet captures their “sharp caws”, their rising “in a fury.” I love the “rustle and flapping of hundreds of wings”—I can almost hear them! And the wonderful image of the stream of air above the cotton fields flowing behind their dark bodies extends their flight: we aren’t just seeing and hearing the crows; we’re also feeling the wake of wind they create as they move across the heavens.*

*This haibun closes with two haiku, each quite different from the other. The first is closer in to the text in that it’s still talking about crows, but it takes even further what the crow migration leaves in its wake—feathers, and a canyon that “fills with echo.” It is a singular “echo”—not “echoes”—as if as if the migration were one body, one being. The second haiku takes us in a different, but still connected, direction: the “dirt-stained fingers” of the cotton-picker are probably plucking the strings of a banjo beneath the night sky, the “picker’s tunes” both an homage to the silver stars overhead, and an echo of that great “black as night” migration that would have blotted out those very stars. (PH)*

*The truly great migration of this haibun is its Tolstoian scale shift from the panoramic to the personal – all achieved in the less-than-Tolstoian span of sixty words. In the picker’s tunes of the surprising but essential closing haiku I hear the faintest echo of Bashō’s rice-planters’ songs. Those conjured for him the beginnings of art, or of poetry. These speak to me of the long road to freedom. (SM)*

Third Prize *Marjorie Buettner* Chisago City, Minnesota

### Abandoned Houses

My dreams are abandoned houses which let the gold of afternoon light filter in through open windows. There you will find birds nesting in the open rafters and raccoons in the walls. A pump well in the back yard has dried up long ago becoming a prop now for wild flowers and the swing on the front porch is pushed by wind alone. If you are tired, you can rest your body in a field of sunflowers, and watch their faces follow the sun. There you can breathe deeply and shed the dust of your days, breathing in, too, the scent of a distant lake—you can almost see the bubbles rise up where the fish feed. . .

gate ajar—  
a vine of morning glories  
twining around itself

*With this haibun we enter and travel the parallel universe of dreamscapes and the subconscious. The images feel genuine, if haunting, as we pass through virtual wormholes (e.g., to the vividly imagined distant lake) propelled by language that often dazzles (“you can breathe deeply and shed the dust of your days”). What is real and what is dreamt? Here the two entwine like the apt parting image. (SM)*

*This haibun combines a dream-like quality with the use of everyday images that beautifully capture the passing of time. The prose is a dream, itself, the words drifting outward from birds and raccoons within the remains of the poet’s dream houses, to the yard with its pump well and swing, each now fulfilling a different purpose. The well props wildflowers, and the swing is pushed only by the wind. Human life has been here, and passed on, and now the natural world is reclaiming its own.*

*But human life comes back in when we are invited into the dream as it expands its view even further. We can rest in “a field of sunflowers” whose “faces follow the sun,” as our own faces do each day of our lives, where we can shed “the dust of our days.” And then we are carried further yet, to sense the scent of a distant lake—a scent so present that we can “almost see” the bubbles rise up where the fish feed.”*

*The closing haiku leaves the gate open for us, and “a vine of morning glories / twining around itself,” perhaps on the ruins of a porch, both greets us and sends us on our way, reminding us that we and the natural world are one. (PH)*

#### First Honorable Mention

**Priscilla Van Valkenburgh** Liberty, Utah

#### Mother

First the ashes and four sprigs of orchids, then a stream of champagne, then the empty bottle. While leaning over the three foot deep round hole his reading glasses fall in.

grimacing  
the small boy tap dances to  
“Take Me Out to the Ballgame”

*Here we travel not in space but in time via flashback. A solemn ritual devolves into a moment of awkwardness and embarrassment, even humor. Quite unexpectedly (for us), that moment instantly arcs to an earlier, deeper indignity. The title figure—never mentioned again—literally hovers and presides over both sets of proceedings. The initial surprise and ultimate shock of the capstone haiku makes this haibun a tour de force, and unforgettable. (SM)*

#### Second Honorable Mention

**Lynn McLure** Burnsville, North Carolina

#### After the Visit

Summer fields in the distance, the hay cut and left to dry brown and stalky. A dry breeze pushes the wind chimes and leaves turn their backsides seeking rain. The sheep keep to the shade, grazing and resting. Even the crows are quiet. I have

tidied up after a week of grown children who leave a familiar wreckage when they exit. Sheets turn in the dryer and a second load of towels is in the wash. I have remade the beds with clean linen, emptied the dishwasher one more time. Now I sit tired in my porch rocker staring at pond, sheep and fields.

tiny blue butterfly  
on the potted basil  
resting

*In this haibun, it is late summer. Distant hay fields lie fallow after being cut, a dry summer breeze pushes wind chimes, and leaves want rain—earth, air, and water shimmer in sequence. A sense of quiet, of peace in contrast to the burgeoning of earlier summer days, is settling in on a summer afternoon. “Even the crows are quiet.”*

*The poet then leads us from outdoors to indoors. Here again, things are moving from activity to peace. The “familiar wreckage” left behind by the grown children’s visit echoes the cut hay “left to lie brown and stinky” in the field. Towels are in the washer, sheets in the dryer, and the beds have been freshly changed. All is now ready for, perhaps, another visit—another day. Then the haibun returns us to peace, as the poet rests and rocks on the porch, staring at the familiar landscape. The word “staring” is a intriguing word choice there, perhaps connoting a mindless meditative state—a gazing without thought while the poet rocks in now.*

*The haibun nicely echoes the movement in the prose: after flight, the butterfly rests on the potted basil, much as the poet rests on the porch. (PH)*

Third Honorable Mention  
**Tish Davis** Dublin, Ohio

### **Crossing a Small Stream**

gathering branch wood and pine needles old friends

Silhouettes of the Rocky Mountains slowly fade as evening cools into slate gray darkness. We’ve finished the bonfire dinner served on picnic tables across from the main lodge. Now,

the sound of an accordion draws us to rustic wooden stairs. Some of my classmates are wearing cowboy boots, but we're all wearing cowboy hats. We climb in silence through the thinning air and towards the music.

8:00 pm the once wild mustangs run to pasture

*With a parting note of wry humor, this haibun bears witness to the passages of life and the temperaments that often characterize each lifestage, from the rebelliousness and exuberance of youth, to the impulse for comforts (both creature and communal) and the acquiescence of later years. The shift, though profound, can be gradual —just as the prose here presents us with a steady march to conformity, from the merely cosmetic (“we’re all wearing cowboy hats”) to the nearly robotic (“We climb in silence through the thinning air and towards the music”). What a sea change results from “crossing a small stream.” (SM)*

#### Fourth Honorable Mention

**Priscilla Van Valkenburgh** Liberty, Utah

### Cronk

At the Nature Center I'm staring through the bars at the rescued raven. Nearby, handicapped eagles and owls hunch solemnly on their perches. But Cronk, with a mischievous gleam in his eyes, pokes his formidable beak right through the bars and tilts his head from side to side. Then he turns his back to us, stretches his neck up and over backwards until he is looking at us upside down.

is it half full  
or half empty—  
the waiting room

*In this haibun, Cronk, a raven, stares at us. Having been rescued from some injury or other, he is now being held in a cage in the Nature Center. His demeanor is in marked contrast to the other birds—“eagles and owls [who] hunch solemnly on their perches.” He pokes his beak toward us through the bars, tilts his head, turns his back on us, and ends up looking at us upside down. He is clearly*

*playing with us—as ravens are wont to do, being both very intelligent and often mischievous.*

*The haiku that follows this opening narrative is startling in its simultaneous linking to the prose and shifting to expand the meaning. We have all had the experience of sitting in a “waiting room” of one kind or another, a medical or dental waiting room, perhaps. We look around us at the others also temporarily being “held” there, awaiting rescue from illness or concern. It is up to us to decide whether the room, and our feelings about why we are there, are “half full / or half empty” — whether we are ravens or solemn, perhaps even depressed, eagles or owls. The raven might be our role model, having decided on a playful perspective, despite his current captivity. (PH)*

Penny Harter’s work appears in numerous journals and anthologies. Among her many books, six feature haiku and related genres, and she co-authored *The Haiku Handbook*. Recent books include *Recycling Starlight*, *The Beastie Book*, *The Night Marsh*, and *Buried in the Sky*. A featured reader at the 2010 Dodge Poetry Festival, Harter has received three poetry fellowships from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the Mary Carolyn Davies Award from the Poetry Society of America, the William O. Douglas Nature Writing Award, and a January, 2011, fellowship from VCCA. A visiting poet-in-residence for the NJSCA, she leads workshops for students and faculty K-12.

Scott Mason began writing haiku and senryu in 2002. Since then his work has appeared widely and received awards in numerous competitions, including first place honors for Haiku Canada’s Betty Drevniok Award (2003, 2005, 2006), BHS’s James W. Hackett / British Haiku Award (2005, 2008, 2010), the Robert Frost haiku contest (2007), the Suruga Baika Literary Award (2007), the Mainichi Daily News Haiku Award (2009), the International Kusamakura Haiku Competition (2009), and HSA’s Gerald Brady Memorial Contest for senryu (2007). Mason edited HSA’s 2010 members’ anthology, *Sharing the Sun*, and currently serves as an associate editor for *The Heron’s Nest*.

# Old Pond Comics

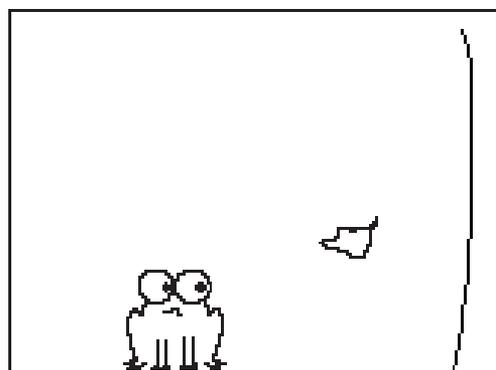
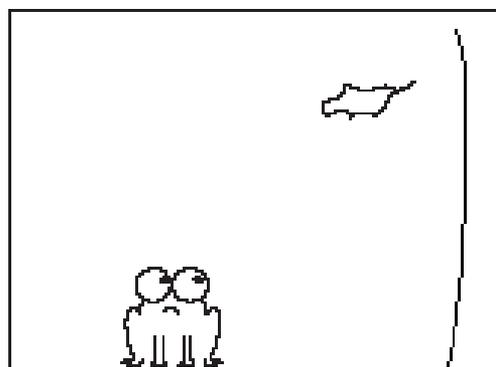
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Jessica Tremblay

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# Farewell From the Editors

Since taking over as editors in January 2008, we've endeavored to ensure that *Frogpond* has a presence in places where everyone—students, teachers, professors, as well as members of the general public—have the opportunity to learn what's current in the genre of haiku and its related forms. Toward this end, we successfully applied to have the journal listed in the scholarly indexes MLA International Bibliography and Humanities International Complete. We were also vigilant about maintaining *Frogpond's* presence in a number of sources that provide information to poets searching for the right places to submit their work, such as *Poet's Market*, *Poets and Writers*, *Duotrope*, *Dustbooks*, etc.

Despite the Internet's vast resources, libraries still play a crucial role in archiving material. They provide the hard copy that constantly remains accessible in spite of ever-changing technologies. A check of the Library of Congress holdings resulted in a surprise—the issues of *Frogpond* in the catalogue went no further than 1994! We are grateful to Sara Striner, Head, Government and Periodicals Section, Library of Congress, for her quick and positive response to our alert about the missing issues. With the help of John Stevenson and Paul Miller, we gathered the missing 49 copies and shipped them to Ms. Striner in November, 2011. They will be bound and available in the spring of 2012. Starting with this issue, each new one will automatically be sent to the Library of Congress so that a gap between publications never occurs again.

We have also been keeping track of where our contributors reside. Across the 12 issues we have edited, submissions have come from almost 100 places: 47 U.S. states, six Canadian provinces, and 44 other countries. In North America, most published were writers from California, New York, Washington, Ontario and Virginia. There were no submissions at all from Mississippi, Montana and Oklahoma—there's HSA work to be done in these states!

With this, *Fp's* largest issue (188 pages), we have accomplished the goals we set for ourselves and the time has come for others to take over. We will miss many things: the excitement of reading new and fresh haiku, linked verses, and haibun; the intellectual stimulation provided by provocative and innovative articles and feature reviews; and, the rewarding exchanges with contributors. What we won't miss is the daily grind. Many readers might assume that we were busy only during the three, two-month submission periods when thousands of items filled our in-boxes and PO box (yes, there are still many snail-mailers, bless them—especially those who kept sending U.S. stamps to Canada with the SASE). But, in reality, the editor was involved with *Fp* almost every day of the year (even when travelling). The duties went beyond evaluating about 15,000 items that were submitted each

year and writing to those whose work was accepted and to those whose work was not. There were also other responsibilities: working with the HSA Executive, mailing orders for back issues, answering a broad range of questions, dealing with rudeness, dealing with praise....

Then there was the actual creation of the journal. Some items needed hard editing; every item had to be laid out and proofread, and the index had to be compiled and checked. Usually we went through four sets of corrections with text and tinkering with layout, hoping for a perfect issue. And, of course, there were occasional unexpected and time-consuming snags involving technical matters too detailed to describe here. We are grateful that they were all solved with the help of the competent and affable people at Pennsylvania's Sheridan Press, which printed all 12 issues.

We know that the new editor, Francine Banwarth (see p. 3), will also be driven to actively solicit and select content that is stimulating to the mind as well as to the emotions and we look forward to seeing her personal stamp on the journal—the physical re-design as well as the permutations to content. We also know that she will enjoy the same support that we have received from the HSA Executive and, especially from you, our readers and contributors.

And, so, we bid you adieu.

*George Swede*, Editor  
*Anita Krumins*, Assistant Editor



*George Swede* at the Venice Biennale 2011  
(Photo by *Anita Krumins*)