MINUTES &PROCEEDINGS 21 October 1976

Minutes of the Business Meeting

After attending a special lecture on “The Tale of Genji”, given in the Japan House Auditorium by Prof. Edward G. Seidensticker of the University of Michigan, at the invitation of Japan Society, the meeting was opened at 6:30 pm by Vice President Davidson.

Those present were L.A. Davidson, William R. Haseltine, Yasko Karaki, John Koch, Jim Nichols, Edythe Polster (visiting from New Mexico), and Marion Richardson, and Tony Suraci.

The next meeting was announced: 18 November, 6pm, Japan House.

Vce President Davidson announced that Pres. Higginson is working on the Minutes & Proceedings from the meetings in May and September, which will be forthcoming together with a membership list.

There was no treasurer’s report (The Society extends it good wishes to Frances Drivas, Treasurer) whose family has borne a good deal of illness this fall.) Davidson announced that anyone wishing to make a tax-deductible contribution to Japan Society, Inc. on behalf of the Haiku Society of America, should include a note indicating that. Such contributions will be used to offset the expenses incurred by Japan Society in allowing our meetings to be held here. Contributions should be mailed to the Japan Society, Inc., at the address above. Those received by December 10th will go toward paying this year’s costs (roughly $25 per meeting). We would also appreciate a note to the Treasurer, Frances Drivas (c/o HSA) about any contribution to JS.

It was announced again that Cor van den Heuvel had been appointed to chair the Nominating Committee. Rather, than name others to the committee, it was requested that members who wished to place nominating suggestions contact Cor (212/350-2328 or 201/674-1903) prior to the November meeting, when the slate will be presented. Please check with your proposed nominee to see that they are willing before giving their name to Cor.

President Higginson’s appointment of Michael McClintock to head the 1975-76 Biennial Awards Committee was announced. Members are invited to send any

recommendations for awards for works published in the period to Chairman McClintock soon: 560 Meridian Terrace, Los Angeles, CA 90042.

Under new business, the rules for the 1977 Harold G. Henderson Award were read:

HAROLD G. HENDERSON AWARD

The annual Harold G. Henderson Award of $100 will be given to the haiku judged best in an open competition sponsored by the Haiku Society of America. Additional prizes may be awarded. Elizabeth Searle Lamb, author of in this blaze of sun and past president of the Society, will judge this year's contest.

RULES

1. Send only one entry per person, up to three poems, with entry fee of $1. In hard deadline January 1st 1977
2. Type or neatly print each poem on two 3x5 cards, one card with the poem only, one card with the poem and the author's name and address.
3. Mail entry to: Haiku Society of America, Inc., c/o Tadashi Kondo, Secretary, 611 West 111th St., Apt. 68, New York, NY 10025.
4. Poems will be judged and winners notified by April 1st, 1977. No entries will be returned.

Other announcements:

Member Alan Pizzarelli has a new book: A Silver Hubcap, haiku, senryu, and a sequence. Available from the author, at 423 Berkeley Ave., Bloomfleld, NJ 07003, @ $2.

The Poets Study Club of Terre Haute, Ind,, has released notice of their 1977 Contest Rules, including a $5 prize for haiku, one per contestant, typewritten in English on one sheet of 8-1/2 x 11 paper, with author's name and address in upper left hand corner. No poems returned, all manuscripts destroyed after the contest, none to be printed, no fee, deadline Feb. 1, 1977, winners to be announced in March. Poems should be sent to Contest Chairman Vera Koppler, RR2, Box 9, Marshall, Illinois 62441. The same rules obtain for one serious poem (prizes, $20, $15, $5), and one light verse (#10, $5) per contestant. (HSA members, please see comment at the end of these M&F.)

Copies of all current haiku publications were circulated at the meeting. The business meeting was adjourned.

PROCEEDINGS

The remainder of the evening was given to discussing haiku by members. Davidson read five sent in by member Pat Lottero. Of these, the group chose to discuss

thunder crashes
the lump in my throat
spreads itself

JK: One senses the fear spreading. MR: Why “itself”? WRH: That’s right. Unnecessary.

Miss Polster’s first-place prize winning haiku of the May Members Only Contest opened the discussion of poems by those present.

Climbing up the screen
Beetles in the starry night
Cross the milky way

YK: Haiku should have it inside, not too obvious. A good sword always stays in the sheath. One must work very hard without seeming to.

EF: Seemingly artless.

TS: There’s a difference in the artlessness of the two languages.

EF: A difference in nuances.

YK: There should be no chisel marks. JN: Today, sculpture shows the marks.

EF: We are dealing with material and immaterial things; not comparable.

MR: Still, it’s the person working with them.

Suraci presented a haiku that drew considerable discussion for its imagery, but because it had been accepted for publication and not yet published, he substituted:

even the snowball’s shadow
hits the jogger:
the full moon

LAD: You mean the jogger is so sensitive to pain? I was thinking of a recent article on jogging in The New York Times Magazine.

TS: That had a lot of nonsense in it.

Hazeltine's:

Atop a birch
a cardinal
… and something in the wind

TS: The expectancy of spring.

WRH: That day had many different fragrances in the air.

Nichols referred to his summer in California:

pulling the stumps out
almost forgotten dry days
their languid juices

JN: Mine's about life and death, too.

MR: The dead stumps.

JN: These were live ones. Doesn't make any difference. TS: What's the season? JN: (kitting down live things to make room for a garden.

Karaki said, "I spent the summer overseas:"

cobble street
I'm crossing the summer
of a foreign land

TS: You'll have to clarify the cobbled street.

YK. If you explain, it's not a poem.

There was extended discussion on the use of "crossing" as opposed to "spending" or "passing." Karaki withed to convey a short period of time, not the whole summer. The matter of punctuation was discussed inconclusively.

MR: The "I'm" should be dropped. TS: You should have summer crossing the cobbled street.

JN: How is it in Japanese?

YK: “cobble street/ foreign land summer / I’m crossing.” I don’t pass the street, not living there.

MR: “cobble street / crossing / in a foreign land.”

LAD: I like it the way it was, the image of your crossing summer as if the cobble street were a bridge.

Richardson presented two one-liners:

with falling snow crumbs for the birds are buried

shadows swing over and under the locked gates

LAD: Too much statement.

JN: Shadows don’t always swing. Shadows moving?

MR: People can’t get through; shadows can. I also have one on outer space:

space ships surrounded
by perpetual space
the quietness

Koch:

spinning
through the sun
and highways in the sky

JK: I was sitting at my desk watching a spider. VI<: I thought an elevated highway.

LAD: Sounds like a Castaneda trip.

JN: More reverberations. Can mean more than one thing.

Karaki:

hot with beer
my face receives raindrops
canopy waving.

The group agreed the beer /canopy waving and the hot / cool provided good supportive imagery and also tension.

Vice President Davidson invites out-of-town members to join this discussion by sending their comments on any of the particular poems to us at the HSA'S address. Please quote the entire poem in your comment. These Minutes & Proceedings from notes provided by L. A. Davidson, to whom our sincere thanks.

Comment: Regarding Contest Announcements

In the past the HSA has had no firm policy on publishing the contest announcements of other organizations. The announcement of the Poets Study Club contests, page 2, brings some thought to my mind, and as the out-going president I would like some input from any of our members who would care to comment. My own thoughts are these. (1) "Haiku contests" are generally of two types: those run by haiku clubs, organizations, or publications, and those which are divisions within multiple contests run by various state poetry societies, clubs, etc. (E.g., the Terre Haute group cited above.) Now it is my own personal inclination to avoid like the plague any contest in which the Judges name,,. is not announced at the outset, on the general principle that haiku contests judged by those not involved in the "haiku community" are probably being judged by persons who have no idea what a haiku IS. A "big name" in poetry, or a Japanese surname or given name or both, is no guarantee that real knowledge of the haiku genre resides in the judge's head. (I have seen the results of such contests often, often the first or second prize "haiku" is not a haiku at all, while another poem with a lesser prize is.) (2) Within the haiku community, the haiku contest is a useful way to introduce authors to new publications, and introduce audiences to new writers. (3) A careful reading of the rules of a contest often reveals the prejudice of the sponsors. In many of the state poetry society contests, for example, the haiku is one of several relatively equal divisions, along with sonnet, narra- tive, etc. In the Terre Haute contest announced on page 2, however, there seems to be one prize for haiku, $5, three for a "serious poem" starting at $20, and two for "light verse", top prize $10. Does this mean that in the eyes of the sponsors the best haiku is the equivalent of the third-best "serious poem", and that the second-best piece of "tight verse" (i.e., doggerel or limerick) is equal to the best haiku? I have nothing against these other categories, as I hope their proponents will. have nothing against the haiku. But I would seriously suggest that a contest such as this, judged by The-Poets-Study-Club-Knows-Who, and supposing one genre to be relatively more important than another, is not for serious haiku poets. (4) My own suggestion is that those who prepare the Minutes and Proceedings of the HSA he delegated the task of screening contest announcements, and include only those which either originate within the haiku community or which indicate some expertise in the judging and some appreciation of the haiku as a genre equal in importance to other genres. (5) Others, both within and without the HSA, may find this suggestion, or these views, very

parochial. I hereby invite all comers to express them- selves on the subject. Please put “Thoughts on Contest Announcements” or some such on the top of a separate sheet whereon you give us your views, and let us have them at the HSA’s address. Subject to space limitations, some of your comments will appear in later issues of the M&P. Who knows, we might even develop a policy!

—WJH

MEMBERS ONLY CONTEST—from the MAY MEETING

My apologies for not getting the results of the MDC out to you all much sooner! Tape machine break-downs, illness, and a host of other things have not made you any less distressed with a1 this waiting, Pm sure. The transcript of that glorious May meeting is now in preparation. In the mean while, the following poems were among the high-scorers (please refer to the sheet with all the entries, included in the April M&P):

1st (17 votes), #25, by Edythe Polster;
2nd (15), #18, by Gary Hotham;
3rd (13), #4, by Michael McClintock;
4th (12), #1, by Carl Fredricks;
with 11 votes: #31, by Roberta Stewart; #22, by Virginia Brady Young; #26, by Tadashi Kondo;
with 10 votes: #7 by Thelma Murphy; #16, by Betty Drevniok; and #20, by Geraldine Little.

The M&P for that meeting will be out relatively soon, with discussions of those poems which received 11 or more votes, including several comments from the. “out-of-town” people. If memory serves, over 40 ballots were cast.

The election-type of approach produced a lot of time at the meeting taken up with counting ballots, etc., and Carl Fredricks has suggested that we move toward a more workshop-oriented meeting somewhat along the same lines. Accordingly, to get the *new* year going, the January meeting is hereby designated an

ALL-MEMBERS WORKSHOP

To participate with a poem, send one poem on a 3x5 card or a post card to HSA Workshop, c/o Higginson, Box 2702, Paterson, NJ 07509—in hand deadline December 1st, please. Be sure to include your name on *the* card. Poems will be printed up without names, and distributed with the November M&P, which will include directions for making your comments. Submission of a poem is not a prerequisite for comment. Upon publication in the January Minutes & Proceedings all rights will revert to the authors. The Haiku Society of America assumes no responsibility for lost manuscripts. Please note: This is not a contest, and poems which trouble the author may be included. Our hope is that comment will be specific and helpful to the author (and to the rest of us!). • So here’s the place for that poem where you’re not quite sure of the punctuation, the line-breaks, or whatever. If you wish to include one question on technique with the poem, please do.

ANNOUNCING:

MEETING :: NOVEMBER 18, 1976, 6 p.m. at Japan House.

Program: “Haiku as Seen by a Translator”, with Hiroaki Sato

After a short business meeting, Mr. Sato will discuss the problems of translating the Japanese haiku, particularly the modern poems which are little known in America, and will read extensively from his own translations (parts of work in progress for the Chicago Review Press),

Hiroaki Sato has had translations from a broad range of ancient and contemporary Japanese poets published widely in literary journals here. He edited a special edition of CHICAGO REVIEW featuring work by modern Japanese poets, and his translation of the important early 20th century poet Kenji. Miyazawa, SPRING AND ASURA, has been acclaimed by Burton Watson and Gary Snyder.