THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA Meeting on March 13, 1982 2 p.m, Japan House

President Geraldine C. Little presided with 22 present: Little, Richmond, Davidson, Kennedy, Young, Virgil, Hayden, Suraci, Higginson, Harter, Sato, Rotella (A. & B.), O'Brien, Ward, Nakazato, Gettis, Rader (R.G. & M-J. G.), Rosenberg, van den Heuvel, Zipper). Hiroaki Sato was thanked for his three years of service as president.

President Little presented for consideration by the group a haiku: vasectomy;
the doll's
by Raymond Roseliep, copyrighted Cicada Magazine, 1981. eye
The question was: Is it haiku? The predominant opinion was negative. When the question was raised about a haiku needing a nature reference, one member pronounced it an "old argument." Another quoted Basho: "Preserve a noble mind, yet mingle with the common." Some considered the haiku vulgar on the first reading but began to see depth as the discussion advanced.

Hiroaki Sato spoke on "One-line Translation," giving his reasons for choosing that form of translation in his book From the Country of Eight Islands. Among the reasons were: it is so written in the original Japanese; he doubts the truth of equating 5- or 7- syllables with one line; all Japanese poets writing in Haiku and other forms use one line for haiku, and tanka as well.

Cor van den Heuvel then spoke on "The History of the One-line Haiku in English," stating that the one-line haiku in English has become quite common, comprising one-third of the haiku in Cicada and Frogpond. He suggested that Marlene Wills may be the finest one-line haiku poet in the US. He outlined the history of the form in this country and noted that it is often not treated seriously or is treated as a special case. At the same time, he pointed out the increasing tendency to write shorter haiku.

Discussion arose over whether pauses are necessary in English, and consideration was given to the poem: summer night clothes whirling in a dryer

It was announced that Virginia Brady Young would be chairman of the committee for the Merit Book Awards of this period to be announced in 1983, and that Bill Pauly would be sole judge for the 1982 Henderson Award.

Brussels Sprout editor Alexis Rotella then spoke on "R. H. Blyth and Women." She quoted a number of remarks by Blyth with a markedly sexist bias, in which he states that he doubts women can write haiku, and exhibits certain common generalizations such as that women are intuitive and therefore incapable of thinking. She argued that he contradicts himself in many places and misses the understanding that all people are androgynous.

After those present read haiku followed by discussion, the group adjourned to Sato's home for a social evening.

-- Courtesy of Sharon Ann Nakazato, V.P., HSA

THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA Meeting on June 5, 1982 2 p.m., Japan House

President Geraldine C. Little presided, with 15 present: Little, Rosenberg, Kennedy, Nakazato, Davidson, van den Heuvel, Heinrich, Scovel, Ward, Sorrentino, A. Whitaker, Fernando Real, Dolores Sanchez, Pilar Martin, and G. Scoll.

The Society welcomed guests Real, Sanchez, and Martin who represented the Spanish poetry magazine Equivalencias. They made a presentation, noting that their magazine, which is bilingual, is similar in its goals to the Haiku Society. It appears every three months and presents previously unpublished poetry. It is sponsored by the Fernando Rielo Foundation, whose founder was a great Spanish thinker who sought to improve the level of poetry in Spanish by organizing the First National Spanish Prize in Mystical Poetry. The magazine is published in Madrid but is available through the Foundation office in Forest Hills. [Sub/Mem Sec'y turned over all material to President Little; if interested, write her for address.]

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Sharon Nakazato gave a talk on "The Tokonoma and the Japanese Aesthetic as Related to Haiku," explaining about the development of a specific space for aesthetic appreciation in the Japanese house and indicating how an appreciation for the changing seasons is cultivated through decorations for that space and through activities such as haikai-renga meetings organized around it. Some discussion followed on the relation to Japanese religious spirit to haiku.

Reference was made to Lafcadio Hearn on vernacular poetry.

Next, haiku were read and discussed by members. The question of pitched poetry was raised, and Peggy Heinrich showed a portfolio of haiga etchings created to accompany her haiku. The problem was again raised of whether Japanese sound units may be considered equivalent to English syllables. Noting the different lengths of syllables in English, some argued for breath count. The general feeling was that English haiku could no longer be constrained by the 5-7-5 syllable pattern and that when writing in English it is necessary to listen to the character of that language. The poet Yeats was quoted as saying, "The form drives you deeper into the poem."

Ms. Martin then read some of the haiku-like poems of Fernando Riel.

NOTES distributed at the meeting by Sharon Ann Nakazato:

"On Poems About Birds and Flowers," by Takahama Kyoshi, contemporary of Shiki, but more traditional

You may call the poetic theme of flowers and birds the motivation or you may call it the purpose, but neither of these can be separated from the other. Sometimes it will be one, sometimes the other. It does not matter.

There is emotion and then there is nature; or there is nature and then there is emotion. We place the importance on nature, but without the emotion words do not become poetry.

Flowers and birds themes are not (objective) phenomena of nature. The human element is included in them. Human activities, which are influenced by the seasons, are a part of the flowers-birds-wind-and-moon. All these (aspects of nature) are represented by the two words "Flowers and Birds." I have repeated this over and over. Even if a painter paints only one pumpkin or one pigeon, if he does a magnificent job of it we cannot find fault with him. Many wonderful haiku portray some small thing. We should feel sorry for someone who does not comprehend this.

And if you think you should draw the buds of grasses, that is all right. It will be fine if your feelings at the moment that you absorb the buds of the grasses are truly fine. You must not think of the object and your feelings as separate things. If you separate them you will be deluded. At the actual moment that we create a poem, we are not thinking about what our feelings may be. We encounter the actual scene, see, our feelings are moved, and the haiku emerges. We could as well say that our feelings are the beginning and the natural scene comes after and the haiku comes out of these. However, in terms of the order, in the past the emotion came first and the natural scene after, whereas the tendency now is to have the natural scene come first and then the emotion. But at the moment of creation it is all the same and the two are linked immutably. [1934.]

NOTES by Nakazato:

1) The tokonoma is a geometrically defined space, relatively free of objects, focussing attention on the scroll and flowers.

2) Starkness of objects works to highlight the space around. One learns to see space as "real," not empty (in the sense of something missing or needing to be filled in).

3) The viewer is presented with a formal viewing situation. Art appreciation develops its own defined rules and etiquette, particularly as relates to the tea ceremony. This formality is shared by haikai-renga gatherings.

4) The seasonal content of the flower arrangement and scroll is critical, providing a context for the poetry.

-- Courtesy of Sharon Ann Nakazato, V.P., HSA

(The above two pages were typed and photocopied by LAD with permission of SAN, for you members. If you would like summaries of next year's meetings, feel free to express your ideas to the editor and other officers of 1983. It is <u>your</u> organization and <u>your</u> magazine.)

Sincerely, L. A. Davidson 10-4-82