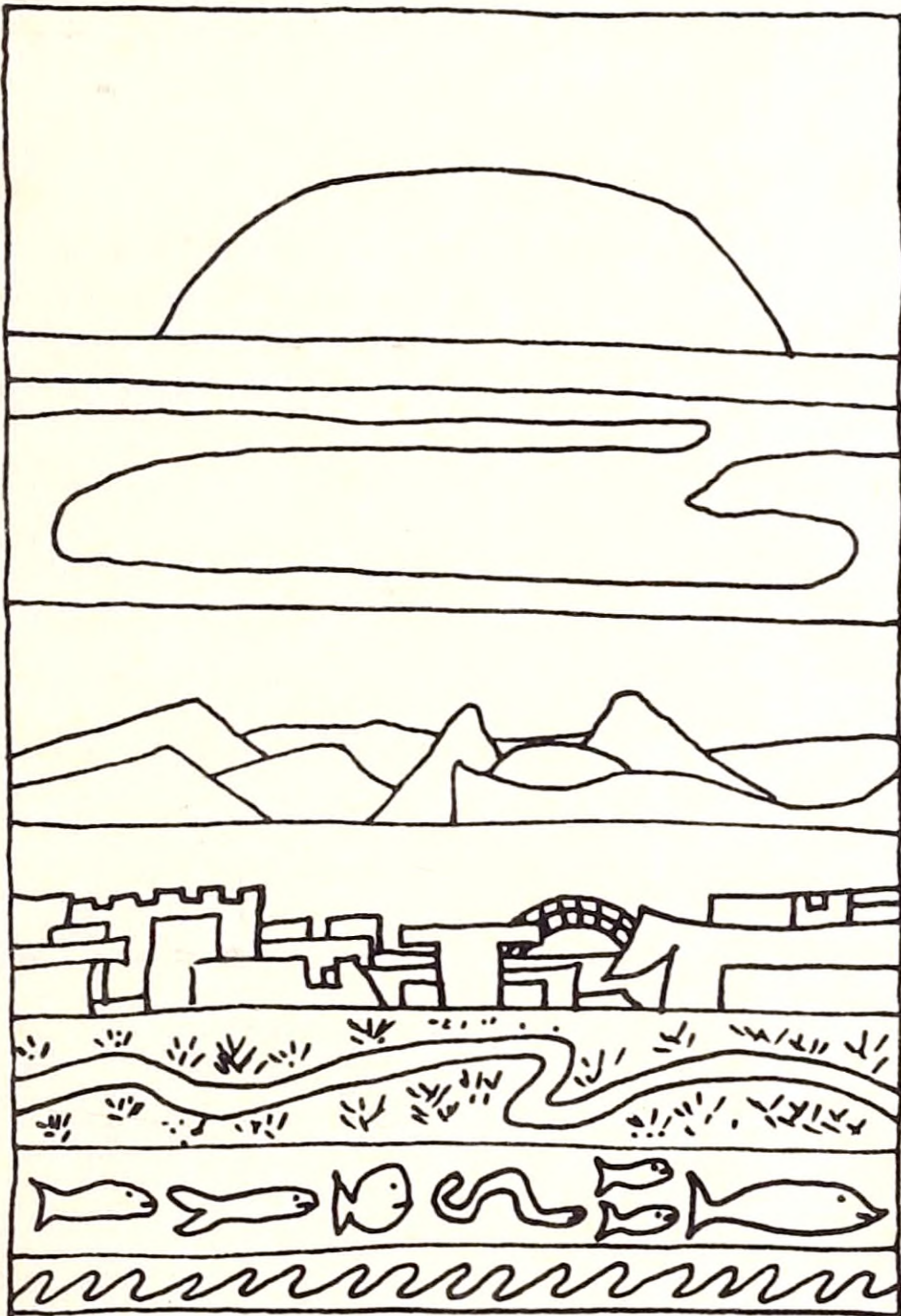


frogpond



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Volume IV Number 4

Published by The Haiku Society of America

Genny Hottel
Lanell, Maryland
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Vice President and Consulting Editor: Kyoko Selden, 1116 Murray Hill Road, Binghamton, N.Y. 13903.

Frogpond Editor and Recording Secretary: Geoffrey O'Brien, 200 East 15th St. (Apt. 7-O), New York, N.Y. 10003.

Treasurer: Peggy Heinrich, 30 Burr Farms Rd., Westport, CT 06880.

Subscription/Membership Secretary: L. A. Davidson, 2 Washington Square Village (Apt. 8-O), New York, N.Y. 10012.

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Design Consultant: Rewat Puabunditkul

Glass

cloudy day
brain
storms

moth
on the icon
mouths recite

dawn
loosened
leaf by leaf

sun
ground
in the glass

Water

hiding in the sky
a firefly
out

a cloud
carries away
awareness

map
of a plough handle
on his hand

counting
swans
a watery eye

Stone

the heart
beating
 with the fleeing geese

hot:
a moth fans
cezanne

in the ear of the roshi,
“hairless dogs in the sky!”
he shouts

zen:
knees against
stone

(Bob Boldman)

Easter morning
cold and rainy again —
our ascending breaths

my shadow emerges
from the icy stream
without a shiver

in fresh snow
the print of a maple leaf —
since blown away

beyond the river
only the Portage steeple
impales the thick mist

(Paul O. Williams)

late summer stream —
a yellow reflection rises
to meet its leaf

boy pokes the thin ice
releasing each air bubble
from itself

car in the ditch:
slanted with the headlight beam
the long darkness

sunrise strikes
the mountain's fall color
r e v e r b e r a t i n g

(Ruth Yarrow)

driving under the raven flying over its shadow

this two-thirds moon a sly look the sun not down yet

deep in the ancient black pot music of a forgotten sea

a fluttering of pale green wings luna moth feet stuck to wet paint

The fourth poem was originally published in a different form in *Butterfly Breezes*.

A Sequence from Lagos, Nigeria

mosquitoes in airport's hot moist air hum

"dash me, dash me" all the kids begging ha'pennies

a mammy-wagon named *Daddy Come Soon* rattling down the street

after drinking palm wine young men toss down empty gourds

the 16 Palm Nuts thrown to fall 'according to the will of Ifa'

how cold the bronze this ancient Benin warrior

way back in the market's chattering crush monkey skull

a street vendor sleeping in a doorway his candle burning

the storyteller turns round to pee into the dusk

into the deepest of the nightdark the talking drums

(Elizabeth Searle Lamb)

On The Green Earth

odor of earth
you catch
my breath

clouds
knot
as we

you
and green silence
deepen

maple seed
my wings
in you

Tryst For Li Ho

gauze of mist and gown
one disclosing
redbuds

flagleaves braided
gold cicada hairpin
fall

lute girl
heaven queen
in the fish bubble

(Raymond Roseliep)

At the bar
a woman traces the wineglass rim;
no crystal sound

In old pyjamas
his shadow plays Bach —
drifting snow

stretching —
the tips of my toes
touch sunlight

jet pulling chalk across the blue

phone conversation again he says my name

Under the swings puddles of moving sky

Sequence for a White Cat

my shadow only goes through the motion of feeling pain
in the winter coat pocket a tissue with old blood
“this too shall pass” she says walking away from the wound
after surgery my mother never was one for sending flowers
nothing there for me still I hurry home
recuperating the world recedes
“everything happens for the best” best isn’t always best
touching his chest, the peace inside him none of it mine
in meditation I practice jumping off a cliff again
morning the white cat comes in from her secret life

(Alexis Kaye Rotella)

Garden Walk

where to step
on every cloverleaf
a jewel

spider
zigzagging through
its fine lace

cups
of Irish primrose
hummingbird tea

sol-sol mi
from the hidden bird
I can't name

pie tins
breeze driven
above strawberries

(Sister Mary Thomas Eulberg)

Central Park Sequence

toy sailboat
drawing a child's eyes
in its wake

fingerlings
gold in lake
greenlight

sun beats on
earphones, the rollerskater
beamed to his own beat

Mozart
from a chamber music group —
leaves shake

lovers
on the grass everything
beating

(Geraldine C. Little)

cricketsong at dusk
darker louder

the candle
flickers
our shadows

your touch:
warm skin
shivers

into darkness
into you . . .

(Robert J. Fiorellino)

from Noh

sedg-
mud. hair
untied,

dried blooms
twined
round wrist-

curve, skirts
the brink,
grabs oar,

climbs up
among scared
grins, laughers,

clutched property.
she may not enter
boat, or speak

or approach luggage.
hidden under
hedges, robe

weedy, walked
a long way
down river. stands

in the entrance,
dances. the sleeve,
so patterned,

must part, seem to
perch, flutter
above a row

of red herbs
culled
in hid grove,

plucked
when moon shone,
third month,

fourth day.
and bends
again, rises

twice more,
for tune to be
full, end reached

and entered.
kneels.
my passport:

Orphic Rain

mews
a glass
of rain

eyes the fire dance

enters
purring
wet

as lightning
lights
the lock

of beads on darkling pane

a joint trembling

music
rocks
us

tones of earth
a rain
of sighs

(Zolo)

biting into an apple: lightning splits the summer heat

our morning breath an autumn cloud

a line of geese
 honking at
a line of cars

Evening —
And the ink dries
On my grinding stone

(Ann Newell)

in the cold rain leaves piled up
winter trees sun glinting glass deepening
running shadows red winter wind stone leaning graves
organ blast flying leaves flying squirrels hail
brrr the cold “am”ness
winter park face full of snow the moon
covering up nose and mouth snowy socks
turd freezing night this year’s closing
frozen waterfall an old calendar a good cry
seclusion arguments 13th or 15th storm sleet or snow
snow only snow

(Richard Witherspoon)

above dark streets
wild geese
catch the fading light

beach kiosk
closed for the season . . .
a few cirrus clouds

late winter —
a blue egg carton
with 12 seedlings

the spark
as my hand
brushes her hair

the wrecking ball
bares a peeling cola sign
spring rain

(Frank K. Robinson)

California coast:
between the crash of waves
sunlight on wet stone

Upside down snail
righting itself on my palm
over and over

So many sparrows —
where were they during the storm?

Long winter shadows
frame a patch of sunlight
and a sleeping cat

(Peggy Heinrich)

In this snow squall,
only the smoke from my pipe
refuses to turn white.

The rumpled blanket:
all that remains of a long,
winter afternoon.

Pulling on these gloves
after my mother retires,
I paint into the night.

Softly, the snow ends.
Slipping through the pickets, a hare
and the rising moon.

(Arizona Zipper)

HSA SAMPLER

An ongoing selection from work being done by members of the Haiku Society of America.

Up at five:
cold stove and —
Morning Star!

Tom Smith

This March wind
 thrusts
faces with childhood names
under my tired eyelids.

Catherine K. Limperis

sunday rain
my fingertips dark
with newsprint

Jerry Kilbride

The cornfield stubble,
along the road snow fences,
a flock of crows, loud . . .

Herta Rosenblatt

Interlaced
roadside limbs: white,
pink, white, pink . . .

Jane Andrew

On the still lake
Duck and rowboat peacefully
Floating together

Tony Verhulst

right over my head
as I doze in the bright sun
dragonflies couple

Peter Mayglothling

Fresh rain and down
The stream goes the printed mud
Where the toad's belly sat.

David E. LeCount

Scratchboard
fiddler crab trails crosscut
the ebbtide's sand rills

Edmund J. Daly

On the rust
of the abandoned rake —
flakes of snow

Charles L. Cutler

Cold coastal churchyard;
A heron over the marsh
and salt in the air.

Wayne H. Hoffmann-Ogier

Light, on August lawn
purple mimosa blossoms
soon, the evening dew

Jay Nixon

song I've taught,
dance
handed you

from this body.
you don't see
heart cut

loose, no
mooring, face
gone downriver,

young boy, his
wrist, language
like small green

leaves
torn up, dropped
on rock,

sod, beach: never
to be one piece
again.

I go to the place
where his voice stopped.
untwist

flower-braids,
throw them
at the rock.

the child
answers
but I can't see him

the child
answers.
arms, body

useless,
surrender,
embrace the grave.

(Geoffrey O'Brien)

Thunder without lightning;
Fireflies flicker
in the humid air . . .

Barbara McCoy

Sun-viewing
blue snow falls from branches
into gold

Kay Langdon

Rain on the mudflats,
the killdeer's
last cry

Glitter of mica
from the dry river stones,
the dead scorpion

Roberta Stewart

Bonze trees
a fire escape forest —
Dripping water

Linda K. Trujillo

Midnight cloud:
still one light in the bell-tower
as Vega winks out

Rosamond Haas

switching off the light
switching off the shadows

Ruby Spriggs

Cor van den Heuvel: JOHN WILLS AND ONE-LINE HAIKU

I: A Troutswirl Simplicity

up a distant ridge

31 haiku by John Wills

2 ¼ in. high x 8 ½ in. wide, 36 pages

The First Haiku Press, 113 Comeau St.

Manchester, NH 03102. 1980. \$1.00

Simplify! simplify! simplify! said J. W. Hackett more than fifteen years ago. He was applying Thoreau's admonition on how to live to the writing of haiku. And a number of American haiku poets have been following that advice diligently in the intervening years. It's hard to imagine anyone taking simplicity much further than John Wills has in his latest book *up a distant ridge*, a matchless collection of 31 one-line haiku, almost all with the simplicity of form, language, and image of a swirl of water in a stream.

Yet a surprising number of them have such a depth of feeling and awareness beneath this surface simplicity that I'm convinced they will be admired as long as the English language lasts. Even the "less deep" haiku — only one or two are unsuccessful — serve a purpose in this collection, helping to provide a level setting for the finer works to shine out of, or rise from. (Japanese haiku anthologists are said to avoid too many masterpieces in a book for just this reason.) They help to create a continuity as well, and the book gets added richness if read as a sequence.

The publisher has matched the poet's simplicity and printed the haiku in an unpretentious little chapbook, 8 ½ in. wide by 2 ¼ in. high to accommodate the horizontal, one-line form. The printing is rough — looks mimeographed — on yellow paper, but the covers are well printed on heavier blue stock. However, the "poor" printing seems to me to fit in with the common, simple approach of the poet. Especially with the "white" space around each poem, the printing seems natural and "down to earth." (I can't remember ever before being favorably impressed by the appearance of a mimeographed book

or magazine.)

Here is one of my favorite haiku from the book:

dusk from rock to rock a waterthrush

For me these nine syllables — almost like a jotted notation in a pocket diary — call into being the things named in such a way that a whole mountain-forest environment rises up with them. In the shadows beyond the rocks, about which the dull glitter of the stream's last light swirls into foam, the heavy foliage of trees darkly fades up into the walls of a ravine. The bird moves about in a deepening solitude. Its movement reflects, helps to call into image, into being, the movement of the stream, whose waters are simply evoked by the bird's name. The bird moves in mystery — for at dusk, which somehow is *the* time to bring out the nature, the essence, of a waterthrush, it is hard to be sure if it is flying, hopping, or going under water as it appears first here, then there, as if by magic.

The harsh, stark “k” sounds of the words for the surrounding “inanimate” features of the landscape — dusk and rock — contrast and help to isolate the relative softness of the word “waterthrush,” the only spot of life in the gathering darkness. Yet the iambic flow of the line, combined with the bird's movements, draws everything together into a unity where the bird is not alone at all, but is one with rock, water, and dusk — one with the universe — and we are too.

Part of the feeling of unity we feel with existence on reading this haiku may come from our being allowed to join in the creative process. The poet's choice of words lets our mind and spirit cooperate in creating out of them a moment of existence that is as real, in a way, as the actual rocks, birds-universe. By doing it with so few words we act almost like God, that power which created the universe out of nothing, and so feel a subconscious relationship with Him and His creation.

To refer again briefly to the sequential aspects of the book, the “waterthrush” haiku is further enriched for me because I see a waterfall off to the left of the “scene,” and though I might have seen one there anyway, it has been intensified for me by my having seen one in

the previous haiku. Relationships between haiku add the feeling of unity one finds within individual haiku. The haiku before the “water-thrush” is:

below the falls a boat slides under willows

Now consider the universe in a swirl of water:

rain in gusts below the deadhead troutswirl

This may take a few seconds to fully appreciate, for although it is basically about the single moment of the “troutswirl,” to experience the haiku’s full resonance one should also be aware of the several states, or conditions, of water that precede and accompany the moment. For these few words call up not only “rain in gusts” but, by suggestion, the steadier fall of rain, or mistiness, or even absence of rain, which comes between the gusts, the flowing, swelling sweep of the water of the stream, or river, above the deadhead (a wholly or partly sunken log) as it tries to get around the obstruction, the smoothness of the quiet water just below it, the meeting of those three or four kinds of rain on the different kinds of river surface, and finally the troutswirl itself. The many images of water united in one. And out of this elemental world of river, wind, and rain — and “death” — comes that one sign of life. As in the “waterthrush” haiku, the mystery is deepened as much by what we don’t see as by what we do, for the trout itself is either unseen, or just barely glimpsed through the water.

Here is one more word-spell from the book:

the sun lights up a distant ridge another

The power that John Wills has packed into that one word “another” is one of the most amazing acts of compression since God crammed e into mc^2 . For look, inside it is another ridge being lit up, and then another, and another . . . and on to some lost horizon of the infinite.

Compare this to an earlier haiku by Wills (from *Back Country*, 1969):

the hills
release the summer clouds
one . . . by one . . . by one . . .

This is a marvelous haiku too, but look at the advance Wills has made in simplicity and depth with the later one — when already in 1969 he was years ahead of almost everyone else in producing these essential elements of haiku. It is not only the single line, or the fewer words, or fewer syllables . . . but it is the sureness of phrase, the restraint, the rightness in that final word, and the feeling that a master has found out a secret of language and existence so that finally the simple, ordinary, abstract word “another” has come to glory.

This book is important, I bought ten of them.

(The remainder of this essay will appear in future issues of *Frogpond*.)

Jerry Kilbride: A FEW WORDS IN DEFENSE, AND
APPRECIATION, OF TWO HAIKU
BY RAYMOND ROSELIEP*

under
El Greco
the brown bag lunch

At first emotionally, and then intellectually, I relate the elongated and uneven shape of the paper bag with the torsos and limbs of El Greco figures and to the shapes of the clouds over Toledo. Brown the color of Spain, and the texture of the bag the same as brown Spanish rocks. Brown also the color of the Greek's face. El Greco arriving in Spain penniless — hence the bag lunch. The bag lunch of an art student who savors an apple and a cheese sandwich while studying a Master? The bag lunch of an old woman unable to pay for opera or film tickets and who finds pleasure in a museum? Two sources of nourishment! What painting? Is it *Saint Martin and the Beggar*? Ah yes, the brown bag lunch!

in the lettuce core
the distant weeping
of a man

Saint John of the Cross introduced to Georgia O'Keeffe. The swirl surrounding the Indwelling, the galaxy's vortex, the stars over Gethsemane, or the cold and lacerated heart of the buried Christ while Peter weeps.

*See book review by Hiroaki Sato, *Frogpond* IV:3.

Paul O. Williams: LOAFING ALERTLY:
OBSERVATION AND HAIKU

Some time ago, *Frogpond* printed an article which discussed the problem of accuracy in the haikuist's observation of nature. I recall cringing at the notion that purple martins might be depicted eating corn tassels. Aside from the scale, this is congruent with cows eating rabbits and belongs to the world of fancy, not of haiku.

And yet close and correct observation of nature is not haiku either. This is a problem that has chronically troubled my own attempts to work in this form. As I have discovered, and keep discovering every time I make the mistake again, even clear delight in new perceptions tends to create images, not haiku. But the delight of discovery, or rediscovery, is so intense as to fool one. What is lacking, though, is the human dimension, the organic moment when everything including oneself falls into a single comprehensive event that lies below the level of verbalization.

That is asking a lot, as of course haiku does.

I have observed that such perceptions as do transform themselves into haiku tend to emerge from the familiar rather than the new. My one trip to the Virgin Islands dazzled me with Caribbean newnesses. But out of thousands of fresh impressions no poems arose. Everything had acquired a strange sea change. The hummingbirds had curved bills. Lizards lived on kitchen walls in harmony with the family. Flamboyant tree pods hung scimitar-like, giant to someone used to locust pods. The beach bore a profusion of shells almost cloying to someone familiar with quahogs and razor clams. The result was inarticulateness.

On the other hand, the familiar has a tendency to become transparent or habitual. Even in one's deeper perceptions familiar things don't shed haiku easily and in profusion. I recall lying under some tiger lilies for a moment's rest while trimming the lawn. A strange rush of air caused me to open my eyes and discover a ruby-throat two feet over my head visiting each flower in succession. I had seen this from a distance hundreds of times but never felt the remarkably strong air blast whooshing down from the bird's tiny body.

I remember being perfectly still, not even blinking, feeling that I was in a haiku moment. The aura of the hummingbird suffused me for an instant. Then with a twitch it was gone. I felt Emily Dickinson's "a route of evanescence" much more keenly than I had before, but if a haiku was hovering in the air of my thought, it vanished, too. I've never found it even after many tries.

It may be that the haiku moment allies itself easily to those individual events that are more obviously tied to the rhythms and repetitions of nature: the first white throated sparrow of the fall, its thin, reedy voice piercing the chill dusk; November sunset again in the perfect position to reflect the oxbow lake out on the flood plain; the persistently constructed ant hills once more flushed away by summer rain — all of these things intersecting human life.

Sometimes the haiku moment seems to be found most easily in the ability to see with the side of the eye, to be surprised in the midst of familiarity by that doubleness of vision that accepts the common but sees in it the strange and new. It is a seeing without scrutiny, yet preceded by scrutiny — a relaxed allowing of seeing to happen. Such perception comes to the thought which has refused to become enthralled by facts, no matter how lovingly it has studied them. As Thoreau (who focused on fact with an assiduous devotion) knew and asserted over and over, it is not the fact which is important but the impression which flows from it.

That impression comes when the mind is relaxed and waiting. "I loaf and invite my soul," said Whitman in opening his "Song of Myself." Sometimes that works. He surely was not drowsing. He was loafing alertly. Sometimes, too, it doesn't work: one loafs and invites in vain until sleep comes. One can't coerce the arrival of a haiku perception.

If the hummingbird whose wing-breath so stirred me is still alive, he is in South America now. But something of him still hovers in the thought. Maybe it will alight on the birch twig of a haiku sometime. I really wish it would, but all I can do now is enjoy the wait. While waiting, I certainly have experienced many other small bursts of haiku apprehension — and the best of them have come to a thought both active and at rest, serenely perturbed, meditatively taut, loafing alertly.

Marlene Wills: INNERVIEW (Part 2) *

Interviewer: Why do you insist upon stressing the political and the female?

Marlene Wills: I'm not stressing the political, rather, I am recognizing its existence, and within this recognition I am involved in reexamining the direction, potential, and truth of both my painting and haiku. At first, I felt that the potential of painting was wide open and that haiku had many built-in limitations. Now, I've come to see it was my own preconception of haiku that was the limitation. I no longer see haiku as a "pure" art form, protected from the climate of the times.

And, I'm not just stressing the female. However, by being female I'm more likely to be interested (now that I'm finally interested) in content which reflects the image of woman. For generations and generations men have painted, sculpted, and written about women — handing out their not-so-accurate versions. It's only reasonable that we have a say, if not the final word, in what we're about. There's certainly an imbalance in interpretations which only women can correct, though I've found that most women aren't even aware of the imbalance. Art by women about women for women seems a necessary undertaking.

I: That sounds like propaganda. Are you saying that art by women should be reduced to propaganda?

M: Art, in one form or another, has always been propaganda. If you're in the mainstream you just aren't aware of it. But, I don't go along with your term "reduced to" — it has a negative tone. It reminds me of how words are *chosen*, i.e. male-deity worship is called a religion, female-deity worship is called a cult. Men are labeled chefs, women cooks. And so on. However, I'd say yes, women's art can incorporate propaganda.

I: This is getting so segregated. Why don't we just have people or human-being art?

M: Yes, I've often wondered about that myself.

I: You turned that back on me.

*The first part of this self-interview appeared in *Frogpond* IV:3.

M: At least, you've asked the question.

I: I'm beginning to see why you don't have a definition of haiku; you've muddied your own water.

M: Oh, I still like a "moment keenly perceived."

I: As in . . .

M: ovulation fold of the mountain scattered with mist

I: That's a bit strange. "Ovulation" isn't a word I'd expect in haiku. "Fold of the mountain scattered with mist" is practically a cliché. But, let's see, given your attitude you're stressing the female experience rather than the image of mountain/mist.

M: Yes, and you might take into consideration the mountain as female, reinforcing even further the femaleness of the haiku. Along this line is Michael Dames' discussion of the Silbury Hill, a Neolithic structure built near Stonehenge. Each year the hill, a female symbol for harvest/birth, conceives with the moon, births, and nurses the grain/child. Last year I painted a series of nineteen paintings based on some of his theories. Mountain and moon have become prominent in my paintings.

I: You're digressing. I believe, however, I'm catching onto your attitude. I'm beginning to see that there are moments which only women can write about. I don't know that I'd necessarily call the result women's art.

M: I don't believe that I'm digressing by bringing up symbols. Women need to develop a collection of positive images with which to enrich their art as well as their psyche. For me, reference to the mountain ("The first mountain was understood to be synonymous with the goddess, and with her throne..." Dames) and the moon as female is a necessary element in building an esthetic vocabulary as well as personal identification. Women have a tremendous amount of underlying texture from which to draw, but due to distortion, inversion, and removal of our archetypes, we have a long journey of rediscovery and of reclamation. Even geometric shapes are not as abstract as they might at first appear.¹ I believe it's necessary to begin, at least, with the

Neolithic era in order to find our symbols.

I: I don't see how this fits into haiku.

M: I'm not saying that symbols per se be incorporated into a haiku, but that the spirituality inherent in them — the identification and affirmation — could evoke or enrich an image.

I: As in . . .

M: first bleeding of the year²

The symbol of blood, before its association with Judeo-Christian cultures/mythologies,³ perhaps even before its association with war and violence, was very much a source of female strength and self-esteem. It is believed that all ancient women menstruated together on the new or full moon. Eventually, the menstrual *taboo* (that which is sacred) “was imposed in the gynocratic age . . . to protect all women from the rages of their male relatives.” (Davis) Later, however, this taboo was to be inverted as *protection for men*. From mystery and awe to “the curse.” Our culture is far from being comfortable with menstruation and, in fact, there are societies even today which exclude menstruating women from participation in ordinary activities. By selecting, then, this normal event as a moment keenly perceived, it becomes at the very least on a par with other moments keenly perceived. Referring back to politics and propaganda, there is art — including haiku — with the potential of reversing attitudes, of effecting change.

I: I'm tempted to ask if you've made a list of symbols or topics from which to write.

M: That's an idea, but, no . . . I feel that these kinds of perceptions come just as naturally as any other haiku perception. I do think I've a limited vocabulary just by virtue of have limited experience and limited awareness. I'm sort of depending upon other women — at least hoping that other women will want to share their awarenesses and, thereby, open up a new esthetic in haiku. It could be an exciting venture.

I: I've noticed that many of your recent haiku are about the body. Do you contend that physicality is the content of women's haiku?

M: Not at all — though certainly that's an appropriate as well as obvious direction. It's our whole awareness as women — not only that we *too* experience “pears/yellow windows,” but that *only* we experience “milk/unseen.” It is this latter experience — *our spiritual vision* — which most intrigues me.

I: Do I detect a ring of separatism?

M: That's an interesting speculation. At the risk of being misunderstood, I'm going to admit to what I feel is a healthy amount of separatism. It's been a necessary element in my growth process. I don't believe it's a prerequisite for all women but, as I mentioned, I was very much addicted to male-thought art. Now, art that moves me the most is art I rarely experience, as expressed in

i've never touched another woman's real painting

I'd like to add, however, that separatism need not be seen as a negative attitude. Quite the reverse: for me, the perimeters of art (content/form) have widened greatly since embracing the concept of women's art.

I: As in . . .

M: Well, I don't know as I've any “as in” haiku in mind. It's just an over-all feeling; a personal evolution in which I've only gotten my feet wet and, as you've suggested, muddied my own water.

I: Perhaps, though, under a full moon . . .

M: Now, there's a lead-in

i'm committed to your maleness even more to the moon's femaleness

I: These are definitely different from what you describe as your earlier object/concrete image haiku. And they, especially the latter, seem longer. Is this a backlash to short (“bare bones”) haiku? It seems that I've heard grumblings from people here and there.

M: My previous mention of minimalism wasn't intended to negate its value. One of the better directions Western haiku has taken is the so-called minimal haiku. I've certainly learned a lot from that approach. Frankly, though, I'm still hoping for a definition of haiku which has

absolutely no mention of syllables: 17 *or* 12 (a dadaku from several years back: syllablesyly). Also, one-line haiku has been extremely beneficial in the understanding of form.

What I think happened to me is due, in part, to the normal cyclical process. Art innately checks itself by swinging back and forth between classicism/romanticism, austerity/emotionalism (expressionism), purity/programmatically — whatever terms one might use. Hopefully, artists incorporate into the “pure phase” what is learned in the “programmatically phase,” and vice versa. We are enriched by each — though, in the long run, “they” represent a wholeness. My “grumblyings”/discussions with myself pertain not to the length of haiku, but to the breadth — the openness of emotion and of content. But, I say due *in part* to the cycle. I don’t believe that the difference in attitude would have come about quite yet had I not been stirred by the changes which have taken place in my life and in the lives of many women.

I: Have you an example of an “emotion(al)” haiku?

M: Perhaps, from a recent experience. A friend I hadn’t seen in several months cashing a get-out-of-town check in a crowded store, her small daughter beside her:

leaving him she whispered in the grocery store

After the initial shock, what moved me the most was being told in the grocery store. Our traditional image of women/grocery store: she clips recipes, studies newspaper ad sales, saves coupons (20¢ off), checks ingredients on the labels, counts the calories, compares prices, attempts a budget, while remembering to get toilet paper and the cereal with a prize that Billie saw this week on TV — all this, and more, before making a “creative” meal. It wasn’t just the twist of situation, but I was flooded with the whole arena of womanhood, from the daily ordinary events to the earth shaking changes taking place in women’s lives. It is these life experiences rather than the concrete art image (if I may oversimplify) which have become more meaningful.

I: And this, you say, is women’s art?

M: I don’t want my conception (which is still evolving) to package

women's art. Each woman has to find her own way.

Recently I heard an interview with the painter Willem de Kooning in which he said he was still fascinated by women and, in effect, would feel silly painting men. Needless to say, I had several reactions from "you'll never get us right" to "how come you'd feel silly painting men?"

I: In other words, men have to paint men, and women have to paint women?

M: That's not the point at all. Since, however, almost all portraits/images of women in the history of art have been produced by men, it seems only fair and right and necessary and logical that women portray themselves and their understanding of other women. We don't have a "history" of women — only a history of women as perceived by men. One-half of the world hasn't been properly identified.

I: As I understand it, there is research being conducted to unearth the artistic contributions of women . . .

M: Virginia Woolf's "Indeed, I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman" only hints at the suppression of women's cultural/historical ancestors. What is even more distressing are the centuries of suppressed creativity. We have no idea what art created by women would have been, and how it would have developed; no idea, for instance, how women might have perceived sound/silence, rhythm, and texture in music. Nor what sensibilities they could have brought to bear upon the thinking of men — not just in the arts, but in science, theology, politics, and numerous other areas. We don't know what generations and generations of women thought, felt, said, or saw. *That*, to me, is separatism.

women have no past but our moon

It would be an understatement to say that I'm disturbed by the continued one-sidedness.

I: But, could it not be said that you've swung to the other extreme?

M: It's hardly extreme to want a balanced representation in art. Nor is it extreme to be dissatisfied with limited options. Nor is it extreme to believe that women can offer alternative answers to existing social problems as well as to the direction of esthetics.

women have plenty to paint

I: Do you mean that any art which any woman creates is "women's art"?

M: No, I have to make a distinction. Since art is defined by male culture, most women are working within the culture's limitations. But, it really isn't as simply answered as that. Since we have no tradition to speak of, and since we are so embedded with "mainstream" thinking, defining/making a true women's art is a complex undertaking.

I: Do women, then, have to "give up" what they know?

M: I see the process more as a searching for rather than as a giving up. No doubt, though, there must be a certain amount of sifting and sorting, declining and accepting, and balancing. There are many more concepts to discover and to embrace than there are to negate.

I: And you insist upon calling the result women's art?

M: I feel it's quite valid to call specific attention to what women create. I'm not in favor of using the term as a "label." It's up to individual women to contribute to the overall concept, to expand it.

I: Is women's art, then, a forever situation?

M: I'd say it's very necessary until there's a truer understanding of female sensibilities and her offerings — and beyond that, of individuality. Today's woman has much to offer and, I feel, has an *obligation* to give voice.

"Women have often felt insane when cleaving to the truth of our experience. Our future depends on the sanity of each of us, and we have a profound stake, beyond the personal, in the project of describing our reality as candidly and fully as we can to each other." Adrienne Rich⁴

M: i'm glad your voice isn't calm

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NOTES

1. Triangles, associated with caves in the Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages, are said to represent the womb/labia. Fused triangles (at one time the insignia of Ishtar, subsequently known as the Star of David) represent the self-fertilizing (parthenogenetic) power of the female. The diamond, composed of two triangles, also represents the womb and is of ancient female origins. Other symbols, as the Egyptian *ankh*, snakes, and yin/yang, were originally female and have been usurped or inverted by male religions/mythologies. 2. *Cicada*, Vol. 5 No. 1, Haiku Society of Canada. 3. "The blood of Isis, the virtue of Isis, the magic power of Isis, the magic power of the Eye, are protecting this great one." Incantation from the *Book of the Dead*. 4. *Heresies, A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, Fall, 1977, NYC.

Review

THE MONKEY'S STRAW RAINCOAT AND OTHER POETRY OF THE BASHO SCHOOL. Introduced and translated by Earl Miner and Hiroko Odagiri. Princeton University Press, Princeton: NJ, 1981. Pp. xix, 396. Price not indicated.

Of the many collections of writings by Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) and those who studied with him, *Sarumino*, here translated "The Monkey's Straw Raincoat," is among the most important. Edited by Mukai Kyorai (1651-1704) and Nozawa Bonchō (died 1714) in 1691 with Bashō's help, it was a work of able, strong minds with opposing views, prepared when Bashō still maintained a stylistic consensus among his top students. A complete and annotated translation of this anthology, which contains more than four hundred hokku and four renga sequences composed by a total of one hundred eighteen poets, plus a haibun by Bashō, is the centerpiece of *The Monkey's Straw Raincoat*. The book also has three earlier and one later renga similarly handled.

The authors — Earl Miner, the greatest authority on renga in this country, and Hiroko Odagiri — say that their thesis concerning *Sarumino* "has aroused respectful interest from Japanese critics consulted" (p. xiv). Surely, their analysis of the hokku arrangement from the viewpoint of renga is the sort of thing that future commentators must improve on or refute. The authors deserve respect in two other notable ways. For one thing, as in Mr. Miner's earlier book *Japanese Linked Poetry*, they look at the selected renga as Japanese scholars have seldom done, and indicate the grades of stanzaic "impressiveness" and "relatedness" at every turn. For the other, they made the bold decision to translate in *toto* a haikai collection, parts of which are only scantily annotated. Translating a body of haikai without a convincing variety of interpretations is like getting lost in a marshy forest in a dream; one recognizes certain objects, but knows one can't win. For this last reason alone, *The Monkey's Straw Raincoat* is a landmark publication. (I must note that the three renga sequences with Bashō as a participant in *Japanese Linked Poetry* are reprinted here, though

somewhat revised. This duplication amounts to one third of the translation section and can only point to Mr. Miner's prestige at Princeton, whose press has brought out both books.)

I am, however, less sanguine about the translations themselves, because they are done in ways I find troublesome. In translating renga, the authors repeat each stanza, except the final one, and give a different version each time in most cases. This practice, which is carried forward from *Japanese Linked Poetry*, raises a question: Does it not negate the principle of renga composition? A renga, after all, is a series of verses in which each verse is supposed to suggest more than one meaning. This feature may to a good extent rely on the peculiarities of the Japanese language, but it seems to me that the difficulty of recreating it in English is somewhat exaggerated. This Mr. Miner may know, for his avowed aim is to make his translations flow "in *natural English*" (*JLP*, p. 78).

Another troublesome aspect of the translations in this book is the authors' effort to approximate the original number of syllables, a practice traceable to Mr. Miner's earliest publication. This means adding words because a straightforward English translation of a Japanese composition comes, on the average, to about seventy percent of the original in syllabic count. Here are two examples (numbered 24 and 28 in the hokku section):

Etsujin

*Cha no hana ya
horuru hito naki
Reishōjo*

The sad little tea flower
lovely but desired by no one
faithful Reishōjo

Sharai

*Kono samusa
botan no hana no
mappadaka*

For all this cold
the winter peonies in flower
stark naked without leaves

Etsujin's original has none of the four adjectives: "sad," "little," "lovely," and "faithful." Admittedly this is a difficult hokku to bring across in translation; among other things, one has to know the attributes of the Chinese woman Reishōjo, or Ling-chao-lü. But like any other piece in this book this one gets an adequate explanation on

the facing page. As for Sharai's hokku, the added words of "winter" and "without leaves" are redundant; "cold" implies winter in haikai, and leafy peonies wouldn't be described as "stark naked." Also, the addition of "winter" raises an interesting question. As the authors note, there is a word *fuyu-botan*, literally, "winter-peony." How then would they translate a hokku that mentions *fuyu-botan* rather than plain *botan*? (Addition of words raises a further question in reference to what the authors call "haikai change," a focal point in their discussion. Unfortunately, this question is too complex to be treated here.)

But my trying to criticize the translations of Earl Miner and Hiroko Odagiri may be comparable to Shelly Duvall's trying to be picky about Bo Derek's looks and figure. So I must point to the good sides of their approaches. By repeating each stanza and giving a different version according to the need of what follows, the authors are able to clarify the relation between any two consecutive stanzas in a seemingly effortless way. And by approximating the original syllabic count, they ensure a relatively consistent pattern, which may be important to some readers of classical Japanese poetry in translation. Finally, though, their most significant accomplishment lies, as noted earlier, in their translation of a haikai collection in its entirety. That is what will make *The Monkey's Straw Raincoat* a book to turn to for years to come.

(Hiroaki Sato)

CORRECTIONS

Two unfortunate errors crept into the last issue of *Frogpond*. In the list of Merit Book Award winners, one title was omitted. Geraldine C. Little's *Separation: Seasons in Space* received Honorable Mention.

A haiku by Raymond Roseliep on page 4 appeared with one word misprinted. It should have read:

enough window
to light
where you were

A FINAL WORD

This is my final issue as editor. I regret that other commitments have made it necessary to step down, and hope that my pleasure in editing *Frogpond* has been equalled by yours in reading it.

Please send all future contributions to:

Bruce Kennedy
103 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

