

蛙の池

FROGPOND

XIV:4





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# 蛙の池

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MUSEUM OF HAIKU LITERATURE (TOKYO) AWARDS

\$25 Awards for previously unpublished material from *Frogpond* XIV:3

Haiku

First spring day  
melting and melting and melting  
tracks of the mountain man.

—*vincent tripi*

Sequence

"Green A-Glitter"

—*Hiroaki Sato, Geraldine Little, Rod Willmot, annemckay,  
Jerry Kilbride, Carol Wainright, Stephen Gould, Adele  
Kenny, Hal Roth, Ruth Eshbaugh, vincent tripi, Michael  
Dudley, Lee Scott*



purple finch  
the sun backlighting  
its song  
—*Helen J. Sherry*

on the narrow path  
after twilight rain  
skyshine  
—*Ruth Yarrow*

old maple  
sharing its hoard of gold  
with the lawn  
—*Dorothy McLaughlin*

In the same wind  
that fells the apple  
the scent of a fox  
—*June Moreau*

turning off  
the radio  
to hear the rain  
—*J.I. Lipscomb*

on the window  
a white moth's wings cover  
the moon  
—*Lequita Vance*

the full moon  
no less beautiful  
through prison bars  
—*John J. Dunphy*

Monday morning  
sunshine on a snowman  
in the empty park

—*L.A. Davidson*

The cardinal  
wipes his beak on a twig and  
takes another berry  
—*Doris Heitmeyer*

cedars  
growing straight  
from stone

—*Connie Hutchison*

Late afternoon  
the fierce shadow of a heron  
shines on the pond  
—*June Moreau*

Early winter snow  
blanketing the village:  
the mountain's weight

—*Dave Sutter*

ice splinters  
glitter in the hollow  
of each deer track  
—*David Hood*

In my shoulders,  
tightening its grip—  
Winter

—*Richard Thompson*



first light . . .  
a fox track deepens  
with shadow

—*Ebba Story*

two parallel lines  
scar the surface of the lake  
the sound of a skater

—*Peter Duppenenthaler*

high wind  
treetop leaves twist  
to the white side

—*Makiko*

Down that mountain  
he dream-skis again and again  
in his wheelchair.

—*William Woodruff*

night storm—  
a deeper dark unrolls  
across the prairie

—*Ruth Yarrow*

blown from the trash  
a blank page  
cuts the snowbank  
—*Michael Dylan Welch*

Suddenly  
rich and poor houses  
under the same snow

—*Ion Codrescu*



nursing home:  
the old salt turns his bed  
to face the north star

—*Rich Youmans*

grandpa chuckling  
double parked by the clinic  
again no ticket

—*Michael Ketchek*

biopsy report . . .  
one day  
leans on another

—*Lesley Einer*

New medicine—  
today I'm looking  
for my feet.

—*Alexis Rotella*

my mother at eighty  
gives her seat  
"to someone old"

—*Christina Smith Krause*

the woman  
chanting about hell . . .  
in her own

—*Evan S. Mahl*

the old man comments  
on the nurse's beauty  
winter sunset

—*Kenneth C. Leibman*



left-over leftovers  
foiled again—

—*Carol Montgomery*

cardiologist  
heaping butter  
on a sweet roll

—*Francine Porad*

Waiting in line  
at the soup kitchen,  
reading Issa

—*Tom Tico*

After the funeral  
we order pizza  
with everything.

—*Alexis Rotella*

late night party  
the moon wobbles  
on the waves

—*Michael Ketchek*

Starry night . . .  
a cup of melted snow  
passed round the campfire.

—*vincent tripi*

After the banquet  
going for a walk  
with a full moon

—*Garry Gay*



Christmas Day—  
a mocking bird remembers  
his summer song  
—*Patricia Neubauer*

Talking to herself  
she hears  
her mother's voice  
—*Rosamond Haas*

town gossip  
passing himself in a mirror  
says nothing  
—*Mark Arvid White*

elevator graffiti:  
the grammar corrected  
in red ink  
—*Tom Clausen*

Almost new moon—  
we make  
small talk.  
—*Alexis Rotella*

a new bird song  
carried on the breeze  
rainforest immigrant  
—*Marlina Rinzen*

Under water . . .  
we talk to each other  
with our hands  
—*Garry Gay*



old battle field  
a stray breeze  
sweeps off the man's hat  
—*Yasuko Yasui*

the draft dodger's tears  
finding a friend's name  
on that dark wall  
—*Michael Ketchek*

an eternal flame  
on the grave of a soldier  
killed by friendly fire  
—*John J. Dunphy*

Her new rhinestone cross  
glittering at services  
the rabbi prays  
—*Vicki Silvers*

Moonless night—  
a friend accused  
of wife abuse.  
—*Alexis Rotella*

virgin bride —  
the spinster aunt  
wears white, too  
—*Makiko*

Falling snow—  
the bark of the birches  
also white  
—*Ion Codrescu*



December lake:  
the lone duck moves away,  
pulling a wrinkle

—*Andrew Bernardin*

Her clothes  
all rumpled —  
the psychic.

—*Alexis Rotella*

deep winter  
the librarian's voice  
even lower

—*Anthony J. Pupello*

reaching the top  
of the mountain  
losing the mountain

—*Michael Fessler*

Homesick for China  
land of my grandparents where  
I have never been

—*Kam Holifield*

twilight  
colors you cannot name  
deepen into darkness

—*Peter Duppenhaler*

Down the gutter goes the sky.

—*Alexis Rotella*



alarm clock  
still ringing  
through its ten story fall  
—*John J. Dunphy*

stillborn  
only the mother's cry  
echoes down the hall  
—*Peter Duppenthaler*

at the funeral  
a boy buries his face  
in mother's skirt  
—*David Hood*

stop light  
floods the street red  
midnight drizzle  
—*Ebba Story*

Too poor to pay  
for his funeral—  
mourners robbed as well  
—*D.C. Schaum*

Picking up the knife  
to open the bank's  
letter  
—*David Hood*

In a ray of moonlight  
I sharpen  
the poem.  
—*Alexis Rotella*



ocean pines  
    (even on a still day)  
        standing windblown  
            —*Daniel Mills*

on the cold pier  
concessions boarded up  
a fisherman baits his hook  
            —*Ronan*

Quiet night—  
fluttering wings  
in the bare apricot tree  
            —*Ion Codrescu*

after zazen  
the ride home  
without the radio  
            —*Tom Clausen*

sitting quietly alone  
rewrapping Christmas ornaments  
another year passes  
            —*Peter Duppenenthaler*

Christmas tree gone . . .  
the room fills  
with winter  
            —*Lawrence Rungren*

Deeping silence  
only the scratching  
from my pen.  
            —*Vicki Silvers*



darkening clouds:  
a leaf blows  
light side up

—*Ruth Yarrow*

snow covered field  
dry grass leans into  
its shadow

—*Jean Jorgensen*

Midwinter night—  
a dead spider  
still clinging to its web

—*Ellen H. Florman*

her broken promise . . .  
the snowfall  
deepens

—*Anthony J. Pupello*

In the cool kitchen  
a cricket keeps on singing  
into my silence

—*Lenard D. Moore*

Winter moon  
snowflakes swirl within  
the cat's shadow.

—*vincent tripi*

winter night stillness;  
the armed security guard  
reads his horoscope

—*Ty Hadman*



to invite  
winter poems  
not lighting the fire

—*Paul O. Williams*

On bare branches  
Dew drops  
Capturing the moon

—*Bert Noia*

despite what I read  
the snow sifting down  
appears to be white

—*Jean Jorgensen*

Nineteen ninety-two  
Chinese lunar monkey year—  
Do your share of tricks

—*Kam Holifield*





FOR A MOMENT, THERE ARE FACES

my mother's eyeglasses—  
for a moment,  
there are faces

smiles and frowns  
coming and going  
—snowstorm

my father's laughter  
in the harmonica's tones  
the rushing wind

winter dusk—  
from lamppost to lamppost  
the glow of weary faces

swirling snow—  
beside the dance floor,  
grandma's cane

clouds  
mask the morning sun,  
the mourning faces

winter chill—  
suddenly, my lone reflection  
in the mirror

—Anthony J. Pupello



BIRD IN DECEMBER OF 1949

Dark faces drops of sumi ink  
in dew drop snow  
Floating World of 52nd Street

Too drunk to stand  
snow dissolving  
in his African hair

That battered black case  
snow flakes  
the size of butterflies

Suddenly—  
his sax vibrating  
in empty whiskey glasses:

The sound of Basho's white birds from that dark sea

Gobbling a white rose  
he plays with  
petals on his lips:

The space between C and C sharp smelling of roses

Old Man River in my mouth  
I deep kiss a black lover

as

Van Gogh's sunflowers  
bloom from his horn

—*Elliot Richman*



## YEAR-END SEQUENCE

the changing hills—  
a lone sky-pointing tree  
where we two walked

winter solstice—  
all about the dovecote  
grapes still cluster

banana fronds clack  
in the east wind's wail—  
word long overdue

unwinking stars  
fixtures in the frieze  
of frosty skies

blizzard's end—  
on each sere twig  
a fez of snow

—*H. F. Noyes*



AIDS

Outside the hospice  
Forgotten rhodies  
Withering

Each visit  
His hospital bed  
Gets bigger

My friend  
His skin  
Bony white

Leaving  
The  
Hospice  
Alone

Stained glass windows  
His son  
Not singing

—*Bert Noia*



## RETURN TO THE WALL

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial  
Washington, DC

removing her wedding ring  
she brushes it along  
her husband's name

son of an MIA  
the flag pin on his lapel  
upside-down

woman touches a name  
while looking at  
an old photo

elderly couple  
their faces reflected  
over their son's name

man in a filthy army jacket  
tries to scratch on  
his name

a candle  
left burning on the ground  
its flame almost out

—John J. Dunphy

*"The Wall," born of the author's first impressions of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, appeared in the November 1988 issue of FROGPOND.*



## GYOTO MONKS

chanting Gyoto monks  
an aroma beyond  
the smell of incense

sparkling in the mind  
    the Gyoto monks'  
ringing of bells

each monk's face—  
the light of the diety  
emanating through it

chanting Gyoto monks  
    an inner eye  
opens wide

Gyoto monks  
in yellow and saffron robes  
fill the air with chanting

intoning three tones into one  
    the resonant choir  
of Gyoto monks

—*Wally Swist*



## BIRD SONG AND BARE BRANCHES

A Reading of Jane Reichhold by Tom Tico

*An article based on the author's 8-year correspondence with Harold G. Henderson will be appearing in the Haiku Society of America's forthcoming anthology, A Haiku Path.*

Some of Jane's poems focus on everyday, ordinary experience; others on mythic and magical moments. And then there are the poems that blend the two: where the mythic and magical aspects of life surface in one's everyday, ordinary experience.

1

arranged  
on bare branches  
bird song

Spring has not yet come but it is not far away, and the poet is always on the lookout for its advent. She watches for the first blossoms to appear on the plum tree, but so far there have been none. But today, this moment, one bird has landed on the bare branches and is singing most beautifully . . . . She's struck by the bird's inspiration, and thinks to herself that this recital undoubtedly presages the coming of spring.

2

walking east  
drawn to that place  
the sun rises

The poet is up early, before dawn, and decides to go for a walk. She leaves her house with no particular destination, but finds herself walking east, toward the place the sun rises. She realizes she didn't consciously intend to go in that direction, but was drawn that way almost by magnetic attraction. As she walks along, she's aware of the symbolic significance of her path: it's indicative of *the yearning* to return to her roots, her origin, her essence.

3

coming home  
flower  
by  
flower

During a long hike the poet is tired and feels as though she hardly has enough energy to make it the rest of the way home. She's thankful that the trail slants downward but is somewhat depressed by its rocky, barren



terrain . . . . After a while she spots a solitary flower, which lifts her spirits and somehow revives her energy. Then, after quite some time, just when her energy is starting to flag again: she sees another — which has the same heartening effect . . . .

4

a kerosene lamp  
filling the pitcher  
with sunflowers

The kerosene lamp is a beautiful old piece, a classic of its kind. Perhaps it is an heirloom that the poet values highly, but whatever the case, it is primarily ornamental and hardly ever used. But now, after Jane comes in from the garden with the large flamboyant flowers, it is finally put to use. Of course she had any number of vases that she could have used, but she wanted something different, something unique, to set off the brilliance of the sunflowers.

5

waiting for guests  
a corner of the rug  
keeps turning up

Jane and her husband have made new friends, another couple, and have invited them to their house for the first time. A luncheon is planned, and all morning Jane has been busily cooking and cleaning — preparing for their arrival. If these were old friends that were coming, it wouldn't matter so much whether the house were immaculate or not, but with new friends Jane wants to put her best foot forward. As the time nears . . . she looks with satisfaction at her handiwork, everything is just right — except for the corner of the rug which has resisted all of her efforts at perfection!

6

unpainted porch  
fog comes  
to a closed door

What a quiet poem, what a quality of peacefulness abides within it. The unpainted porch and the closed door suggest perhaps a recluse, someone who has lost interest in the things of the world, someone preoccupied with his own spirit. No visitors come to call upon this recluse, no social life is carried on, but the fog in its all-pervading and mystic oneness comes to the unpainted porch and the closed door.



7

river fog  
  untying the boat  
  from a long pier

Like a river itself, the fog rolls in over the water . . . rolls in slowly and inexorably. And as it travels along it effaces everything in its path. Gradually it makes its way towards the long pier and towards the boat that's tied to it. First the mooring line vanishes, then the boat itself starts to fade from view, starts to sail away in the fog . . . .

8

fog-flattened fields  
  radiance from the moon  
  held with rough slats

A completely natural scene and yet one of such eerie and luminescent beauty that it almost appears to be taking place in some fantastic world of magic and mystery. But what grounds the poem, what gives it its reality (and also its striking contrast), are the rough wooden slats that once upon a time were so patiently put up by some hard-working farmer.

9

striking a match  
  dawn flares  
  in an oval mirror

The haiku experience that results from the striking of the match comes as a complete surprise. One moment there is almost total darkness in the bedroom and the next moment there is an exceptionally striking picture of dawn in the oval mirror. Afterwards, as she thinks about this experience, she dwells on the remarkable contrast between her own minute personal fire and the great universal fire of the sun.

10

winter  
  hours frozen  
  into snowflakes

The season has reached that intense stage where there is no point in going out except for the most serious of reasons. Jane accepts the enforced confinement with resignation and sees it as an opportunity for contemplation. Sometimes she spends hours at the window, gazing at the snowflakes that fall on the other side. Often, she recalls experiences she



had in past winters, during her childhood and youth, so long ago, and yet, so vivid in her mind's eye.

11

morning light  
the taste of snow  
in thin tea

Day after day the poet looks out into a white world, a world laden with snow. And although she loves the snow, she's starting to feel inundated with it, as if it were pervading her consciousness, becoming a part of everything she perceives. Why even now, at this very moment, even the tea she's drinking tastes like snow.

12

winter twilight  
gathers in her lap  
white folded hands

As the old woman gazes upon the austere beauty of the winter twilight, she feels an acceptance of her approaching death which manifests in her folded hands that rest upon her lap. And as the twilight advances . . . her white folded hands become more and more noticeable against her black dress, creating a striking aesthetic effect, but more importantly, emphasizing the resignation and peacefulness that pervade her being.

---

The haiku used in this article were taken from Jane's *Tigers in a Tea Cup* (Gualala, California, 95445: AHA Books, 1988).





## HAIKU AND THE ART OF FICTION

by Paul O. Williams

*Longtime HSA member Paul O. Williams is currently president of the Haiku Poets of Northern California. Over the last 25 years he has contributed a number of haiku and essays to FROGPOND and other haiku magazines.*

For a long time I have felt there is a strong kinship between the writing of haiku and the writing of fiction, though until recently I never really inquired into this relationship. But the longer I have looked at it, the more intriguing it seems.

In a sense all haiku are based on heightened moments, and the earnest haikuist works to perceive such moments often and distinctly, and discards the haiku that come from some lesser source—some verbal trickery or adroit metaphor.

Similarly, the fiction writer strives to make the scenes in which his action moves heightened, sharp, and distinct. Each one must be crisp in thought, ideally somehow blooming in the mind, as though everything were glowing.

In fact, it is in the making of scenes, through penetrating perception and deft selection, that I find a remarkable similarity between the training offered by haiku and the skills of the novelist. This has made me feel that the work I have attempted in haiku has made me a better writer of fiction. Perhaps this is a personal matter, and not general, but I feel it applies to others as well.

As a child I listened to a great deal of radio drama, and because of this, dialogue has always been natural to me. But dialogue has to occur somewhere, and the nature of that somewhere is vital to the success of the envisioning, both for the writer and the readers. It is haiku essence and fictional underpinning.

Poetry in western styles is not of enormous help to the writer of fiction, because it is always sliding around the objective view, trying to reach its essences through metaphor, through brilliant and precise example and the remarkable discoveries of implied comparison.

Of course this has a place in fiction, too, but as a writer of fiction I find myself asking frequently, "What, accurately, was this like? What was the sound of the rain? How *exactly* did it sound? Are my perceptions genuine or borrowed? What impression does a single footfall in the dry grape leaves give?" The primary job in this process of discovery is one of perceiving. Even when one is pretty sure what will happen in a scene, one may spend a very long time realizing that scene in the mind.

This reminds me greatly of working on a haiku. As we all know, good haiku flow out on the page when we have seen something precisely. That is, when we have seen something, then seen through its masks of cliché, and of our presumptions, and of its own surfaces, to something inside it.



Even a round rock in a streambed has a heart, a being, quietly resonating what it is, in darkness, in dryness, in sunlight with water flowing over it. Before we can say it, we must see it, and of course I mean really see it. It must resonate *for us*.

Of course Hemingway, with his simplicity and directness, may be more easily amenable to translation into haiku than some others, like the voluble Faulkner, but even so, who can forget Ike McCaslin, as a boy tracking the great bear, seeing a fresh paw print and then watching it fill up with swamp water—or being in under the bear rescuing his unwise little dog, and noticing a swollen tick on the bear's leg as the great beast towered over him.

Henry James, in his justly famous essay of 1888, "The Art of Fiction," on which I will base a number of comparisons, says that "art is essentially selection . . .," and what could possibly be more selective than the haiku? James continues, saying that the guide of selection is "to be typical, to be inclusive." This is also true of haiku to a remarkable degree. Most haiku extend themselves easily in the minds of the readers, and yet a key to their success in saying something more general (which is not, by the way, absolutely necessary to their success), is having seen something very specific very clearly and rendered it precisely, but with overtones.

This leads us directly to another similarity between haiku and most fiction—what I shall call the sense of the impending. "Call me Ishmael," Melville writes in opening *Moby Dick*, and immediately we want to know why? If he is successful, and he is in *Moby Dick*, he immediately sets up a sense of tension, and he holds it throughout the story. Of course, many haiku resolve tension, but seldom entirely. Like ongoing fiction, haiku must resonate. So they must be written in ways that resonate. They must intend to resonate. They must hint at more, gain power from implication, both on a literal level, that is the level in which we explore in our minds what might be meant in the scene, and on a level of implication—the so-what level, in which we ask ourselves why we should care that a fly with an intensely green thorax is sitting on one's hand, gleaming in the sun, as one sows turnip seed.

Does that have a meaning? Must it have a meaning? It has a resonance in any case, just as it happened to me, and struck me, as a pencil might a wine glass, as radiant with meaning. Good fiction is full of such radiations, and I feel that a good part of their similarity with haiku is the fact that they are often so incipiently metaphoric. That is, they cry out to be metaphoric, but by withholding the metaphor, the writer achieves the tension of the unresolved. We wish to understand in some more abstract sense why what is going on is so meaningful—and we are denied this explanation. So we pursue it in our minds, and in this intensity, this resonance, the poem blooms, as does the scene in the novel or short story.

There is in this resonance a sense of anticipation, of the unfinished, of that which is ongoing. When Basho says that haiku is what is going on at this particular moment, I think he implies this ongoing sense. While fiction



may be written as history, it is told as the onrush of present moments, each of which is experienced as it vanishes into the past, and about which no one cares unless attention is called to something significant. This significant thing tends to be a fact or a set of facts, some actuality, not an abstraction.

In "The Art of Fiction," Henry James writes, "Catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life, that is the attempt whose strenuous force keeps fiction upon her feet. In proportion as in what she offers us we see life *without* rearrangement do we feel that we are touching the truth; in proportion as we see it *with* rearrangement do we feel we are being put off with a substitute, a compromise and convention."

Again, this is true of good fiction and good haiku, but in a sense not so much of much good English poetry, because there the brilliance of the rearrangement can have such an incredible value.

I realize that one can easily stretch this general comparison too far, but I do submit that it is in the details precisely seen that the reality of a fictional scene flashes into life. In Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, she writes in passing, "The girl had shrimps in her bamboo basket. They were covered with Spanish moss. She beat the moss down impatiently, and muttered to herself sullenly." Are the shrimps just props? No. Without such perceived details the whole passage would ghost off into an interchange of disembodied voices. The basket is bamboo. The shrimps are clearly seen. They are covered with Spanish moss, which the girl beats down. There is a haiku in that basket of moss-covered shrimp, a little burst of suchness. Once stated, it hangs in the atmosphere of the story, with its sense of impending, its resonance, and lifts the human action into a sense of reality. Ultimately, the story absolutely cannot do without it and other perceptions like it, and I feel this is so because of the quality they share with haiku.

Perhaps the Jamesian sense of fiction shares more with haiku than does that of some other novelists, say Robert Louis Stevenson or James Jones, but at any rate there is a strong similarity. James knew the value of moments and how they functioned. He writes, "Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spiderweb of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative—much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations." Does that sound to you like the job of the haikuist? It does to me. Buson steps on his dead wife's comb and feels a dual piercing. In James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, the nefarious Gilbert Osmond tells Madame Merle her decorative cup on the mantle is cracked, and we feel some of the same chill. Both are insignificant events on the surface, but both resound with implications. The poem, the significance, lies in the unspoken part. James writes, "The power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implication of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in



general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it—this cluster of gifts may almost be said to constitute experience . . . .” He certainly could have been writing about the haiku poet.

Haiku, it seems to me, is indeed manipulative of experience, *largely through fiercely disciplined selection*, but it is an attempt to avoid manipulation. It says, in a thousand ways, “This is the way things are.” This is how the fly wrings its hands and feet, and how it makes me feel, says Issa. The eye, having read through two thousand haiku, is relieved by two persimmons, Shiki notes. Virginia Brady Young notices the hawk gliding over the lake and the rower dipping the oars into the water. The parallel leaps into her mind, but what she gives us is the experience. [See *Waterfall* (Fulton, MO: Timberline Press, 1982), p. 15.] Charles Dickson writes, “new silo/ drought withers/the corn,” and we have the combination of action through hope and denial of its fulfillment, but told us through concrete perceptions alone. [*Modern Haiku* (Autumn 1989), p. 57.] Carolyn Talmadge writes, “after she died . . . /the gentle hooting/of a wood owl,” [*An anthology of Haiku by people of the United States and Canada* (New York: Japan Airlines, 1988), n.p.] and we feel the unstated grief simply by what the griever heard.

In Edith Wharton’s “Roman Fever,” two women, old friends, and old adversaries for the same man, recall a tense time long afterwards in a Roman restaurant, as dusk settles over the Seven Hills of the city. She writes, “Some vases of faded flowers were carried away, and brought back replenished,” and in that objective sentence the whole complex anguish of the interchange is caught—by a very haikulike observation placed carefully in that context. We catch it all, the note of the owl, the faded flowers replaced, if we take James’s advice to novelists, “ ‘Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost.’ ”

The multifold world contains, that is, embodies, rhythms we feel within ourselves, and so respond to, and for the haikuist and writer of fiction who are able to perceive its elements clearly, with the intricate and mysterious freight of feelings it bears on its currents, it provides an endless supply of wonder and material for perception. I am not certain that writing fiction will make one a better haikuist, but I am virtually sure that a study of haiku will teach the novelist precision, insight, and the instant depth that this marvelous short poetic form so focuses on. There is an unusual but natural marriage between the forms that any author might well explore.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Looking for a Prince, A Collection of Senryu*, Alexis Rotella. White Peony Press, Cairnbrook, PA. \$10.95 postpaid, from P.O. Box 125, Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046, 119 pages, plus introduction by Cor van den Heuvel.

Alexis Rotella's work in haiku and senryu is characterized by immense energy and output. She has produced nearly thirty books now, and in this cascade of work are many poems that one wishes to go back to again and again.

Her imagination seems especially suited to senryu. Among these 347 poems are occasional ones that bring a laugh out loud, many that provoke a smile, and a great many more that tickle one's sense of irony and delight one's whimsy. There are rapier thrusts, some with swords, others with feathers. There are sly mutterings in the reader's ear, Bronx cheers, double takes, nearly invisible puns, and chuckles behind the hand.

This is a book full of verve and elan. Whole pages pump with adrenalin. Others tell secrets, confess indiscretions, and laugh wisely. Some poems are irreplaceable:

Saying the Pledge of Allegiance  
she feels her breast  
for lumps.

Some delight in their ambivalence:

Keeping our distance both of us pet the dog.	Passing through our quarrel the garbage man's whistle.
--	--

Others touch one with their poignancy:

Parkinson's disease— sequins rattling on her hat.	Sitting on a rock talking to moths, the Vietnam vet.
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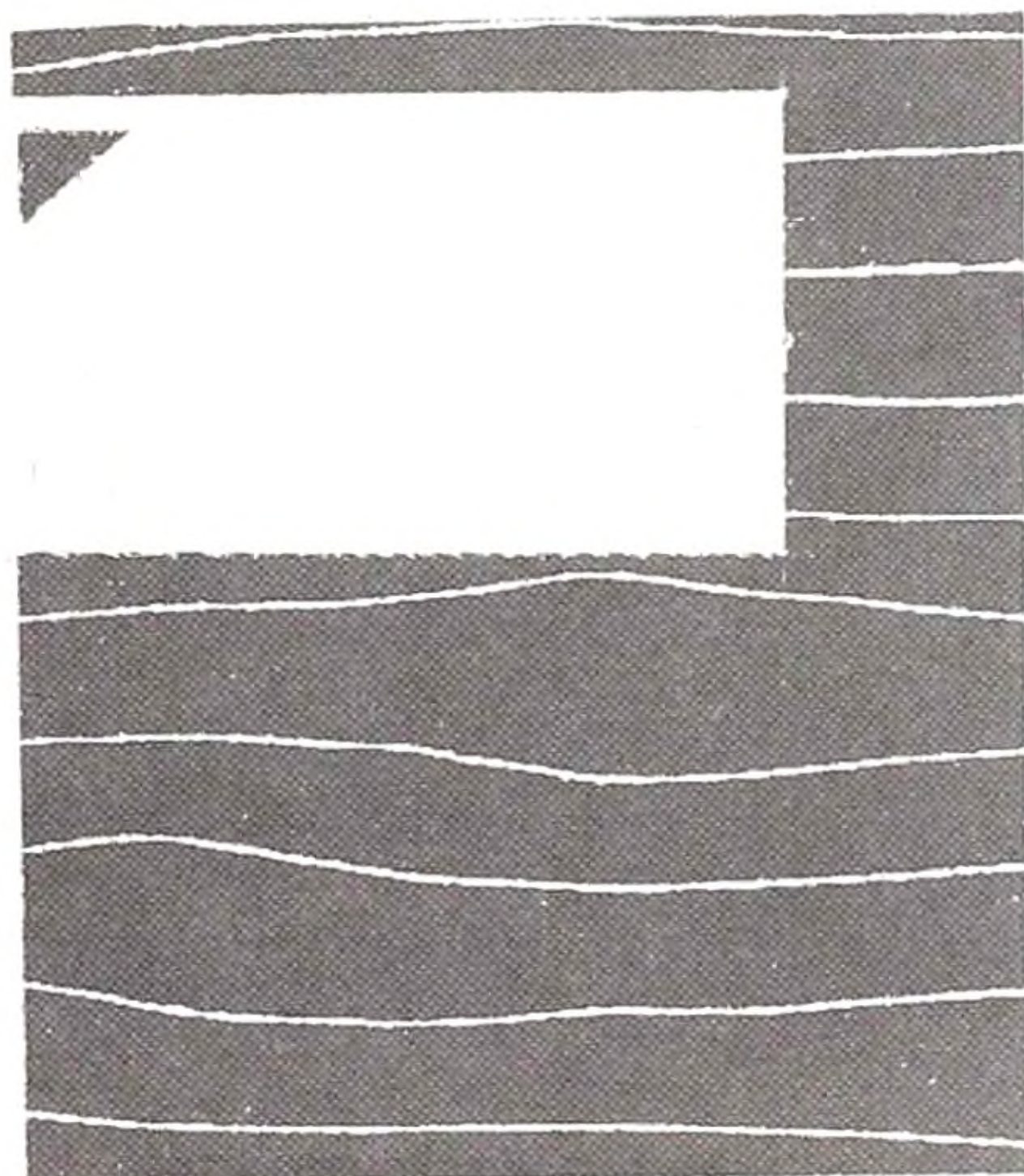
Puns are in abundance:

The woman with no culture  
keeps fondling  
her pearls.

Chamber music—  
this too,  
shall pass.

In such a tumble of fine poems, one does find, of course, some weaker ones, ones that a sobersided editor might have cut out. Some of these state a criticism flatly; laugh at something that scarcely deserves it; or merely make an observation, sometimes one made often enough before. In any bag of coins, a few will be muddily minted. But the wealth of the rest makes this a book well worth reading and quoting to others—and adding to one's collection.

—*Review by Paul O. Williams*





*Senryu: Poems of the People*, by J.C. Brown. Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont. Hardback, 6 1/12" by 5 1/8", 94 pages, 1991. ISBN 0-8048-1664-6. \$16.00.

The distinctive quality of Tuttle publications has long been legend in the haiku community. Once again, with J.C. Brown's *Senryu: Poems of the People*, Tuttle has produced a glorious volume. You could read the book in 15 minutes flat if you wanted, but you will surely savour it for hours and days beyond. In both its art and deceptively simple poems, this is a sensuous book, ringing with the truth of everyday observation.

Profusely illustrated in sumi-e style by the author/translator, this book is a visual treat. Each poem is given in English and romaji, with an illustration and Japanese calligraphy (*hentaigana*) spread over two pages. The forty-three poems date from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, with two attributed to Santarô, and one each to Shûjin, Shôichi, Shigeo, Kimbô, Shôtarô, Kenkabô, Keisen, Kôbô, Kimiko, Kaishinji, Kahô, Shittarô, Genkaibô, Yasharô, Gokason, and Kenjô (in order of appearance). The remaining twenty-five poems are unattributed; one can only assume they are Brown's. Most all poems are a treat to the eye, ear, and mind.

In a brief introduction written from Tokyo, Brown summarizes the origin of senryu as distinct from haiku, and also makes the following observations: "The main difference between senryu and haiku is one of tone. The meaning and structure of a haiku can be brilliant, but I personally often find them conventionally serious and sentimental, offering few surprises. One has to be a near genius to write good haiku, but almost anyone can write reasonably good senryu; the form seems somehow to have escaped the structural restrictions that bind and, perhaps, limit haiku. Whereas haiku often call for analysis, I have found that a typical response to senryu is a laugh or a chuckle followed by a remark like 'That's so true!' To me, that is the appeal of senryu: They express everyday truths, happy or sad, in succinct verse."

The above is true in the verses Brown includes. For example (Brown's unless noted):

The stone saint  
is kissed on the mouth  
by a slug.

*Namekuji ni  
kuchi o suwareta  
ishi Jizô*



When I think it's mine,  
how light this big bundle is.      *Waga mono to  
omoemba karushi  
ôzutsumi*

A butterfly  
that goes straight  
has free time.      *Massugu ni  
yuku ni chôchô  
hima ga ari*

—*Kahô*

The aphrodisiac—  
Will it work? Will it work?  
The year comes to an end.      *Horegusuri  
kikuka kikuka to  
toshi kurenu*

The stray dog,  
whatever name it's called by  
turns back.      *Mayoi inu  
dono na yondemo  
furikaeri*

—*Santarô*

No matter how  
sorry you are,  
the tea cup is broken.      *Kôkai wa  
shitemo chawan wa  
warete iru*

Never giving away  
how soon it will die—  
the voice of the cicada.      *Yagate shinu  
keshiki wa mienu  
semi no koe*

Ecstatic at being  
set free,  
the bird collides with a tree.      *Ureshisa no  
ki ni tsukiataru  
hanashi-dori*

You will chuckle or sigh at many of these poems, each sensitively amplified by its illustration. I am pleased to add this book to my haiku library, and I would highly recommend that you hunt for this volume at your favorite bookstore. These are poems of everyday life, of subjects which we don't often see as well as we should. As J.C. Brown concludes in this somewhat expensive but richly rewarding book, "poetry can be found in anything." And although it takes talent to turn "everything" into a poem, Brown has succeeded here with this marvelous collection of senryu.

—*Review by Michael Dylan Welch*



*Voice of the Mourning Dove* (An Anthology of Haiku), Alexis Rotella. Jade Mountain Press, Mountain Lakes, NJ. \$11.95 from P.O. Box 125, Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046, 140 pages.

This collection of 377 Rotella poems is divided into four sections: "Voice of the Mourning Dove," "Riding the Wind," "Bringing Heaven Down to Earth," and "Crushed Acorns." Most work their way through a series of seasons. The collection contains six sequences, mostly short, including the exquisite "Sequence for a Golden Retriever," which is understated, spare in form, and extremely poignant.

Some of the poems are pure haiku:

Catalpa blossoms  
sliding off  
the hearse.

Quiet morning—  
pigeons gurgle  
in the chapel eaves.

Many contain incipient metaphors:

Sandals damp—  
the grass lets go  
of fireflies.

Under a stone arch  
the river slowly tows  
the ducks.

A few are nothing but metaphors:

Cicada  
sawing itself  
in two.

The javelin—  
still  
traveling.

*(for John Diamond, M.D.)*

In form the poems are also eclectic, the book containing one liners, minimalist haiku and other three line forms in great variety. Some lines show enjambment. Plainly formal matters are not of as great concern to Rotella as are organic ones. She shows a sensitivity to sound patterns, and with her typical verve and amusement uses them deftly:

Steamy day—  
the mussels  
plump.

Longjohns  
running away  
in the wind.

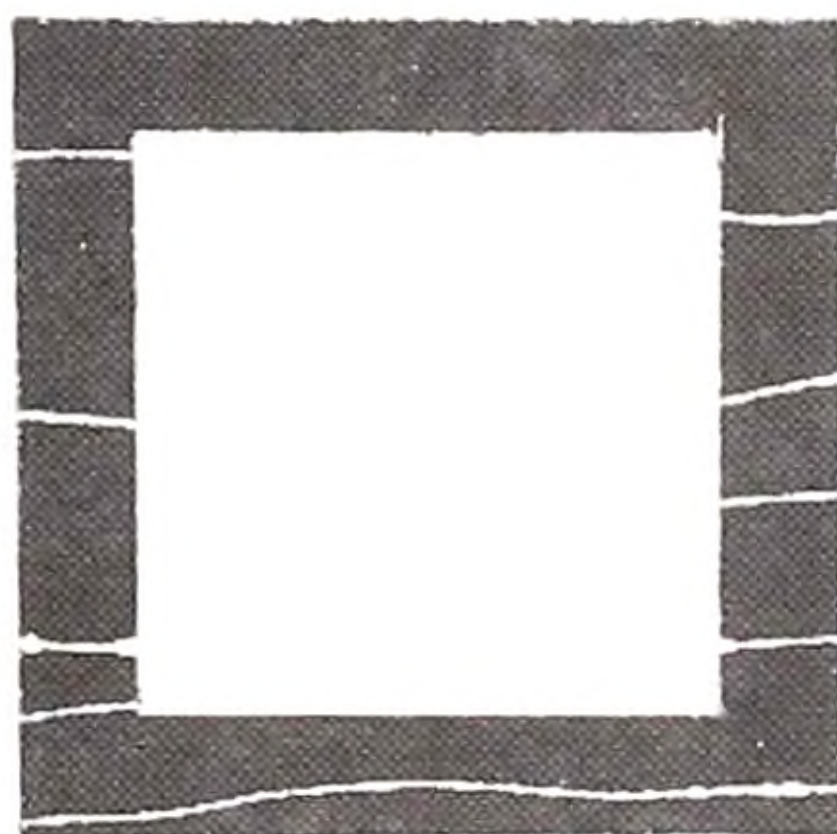


She also is sensitive to American vernacular and employs it to fine effect. As a New Jersey native, I would venture that I hear an Easterner's voice in her work—plain spoken, open to many influences, wry, whimsical to the point of brassiness, not shrinking from saying things straight on, even if they may sometimes come with a slight distaste. Some Rotella poems wrench the haiku form by their muscular power. Some are not distinguishable from her senryu:

Calla-lily—  
my friend remembers  
her first time.

Typically, this is a collection full of energy, sharply observant, sometimes forceful, sometimes delicate. As is inevitable in such a large collection, one wishes it had been edited down somewhat, removing a couple of handfuls of poems that even an admiring reader would probably feel were weaker than the rest. But it is consistently interesting, often highly engaging, and a welcome addition to one's shelf of haiku books.

—*Review by Paul O. Williams*





*The Cottage of Wild Plum* by Robert Spiess. Modern Haiku Press, P.O. Box 1752, Madison, WI 53701, 1991. 72 pp, \$7.00 ppd.

This book of 80 poems is Robert Spiess's seventh, beginning with the 1966 publication of *the heron's legs*, now a collector's item. In addition to fine haiku there has been a book of prose "speculations on haiku" and the first collection of American haibun (*Five Caribbean Haibun*), so one comes to *The Cottage of Wild Plum* with eagerness and some curiosity.

What Spiess gives us now is a book hard to categorize. Here are some of his most lyrical haiku, many of them expressed in his newly created, experimental 5- and 7-line forms; here are a few prose notes of philosophy touching on his Buddhist beliefs; here are a goodly portion of his "voices" ("saith the snipe," "saith the mayfly," "saith the weasel") and a half dozen "levities unto the Lord." Senryu, I suppose, if one is to name these — closed, intellectual, witty and thought-provoking.

"Seven Haiku of Spring at 'The Cottage of Wild Plum'" begins the book and the same heading announces the seven final poems. A total of 25 haiku include wild plum in some form or other, but this repetition is not monotonous; rather it celebrates the seasons, the songs and sights of his own cottage on a creek close to a wildlife preserve where he often kayaks. Variety in form among all the haiku also minimizes danger of monotony.

This collection includes many haiku in the traditional 3-line form and also a good many cast in one vertical line. In the latter each line has a single word, regardless of syllable count. As Spiess himself has said, his 5-line form (3-4-3-4-3 syllables) and the 7-line (2-3-2-3-2-3-2 syllables) combine aspects of the traditional horizontal and the vertical forms. He prefaces the first group of haiku with:

forbearing  
to take a branch  
in flower  
i bring you songs  
of wild plum

There is a strict syllable count of 17 in these experimental-form haiku. A couple of 7-liners:



a dust	the heart
of late snow—	grows dizzy!
through it	sunlight
a faint scent	crashing through
rises	the ice
from blossomed	that glazes
wild plum	wild plum!

Although there is a sense of “the moment felt,” of clear images and traditional length as far as syllables go, somehow the placement of each phrase on a line of its own seems to stretch out the poem. For the eye the poem seems elongated beyond “haiku possibility” to the point of being perceived as simply a brief lyric or variation of tanka. And it will remain to be seen whether or not haiku poets find their own possibilities in these forms so that they become part of haiku technique.

Spiess certainly maintains high quality in all of the haiku.

yellow	the field’s evening fog—
twilight	quietly the hound comes
a	to fetch me home
far-off	
bell	buddha icon
on	stolen iris
the	
pine-resined	
breeze	

Of the “Twenty Voices,” a couple of examples:

[saith the ape]  
 ‘Leave me not in the lurch,  
 Lord—though i do not as yet  
 attend your church’

[saith the frog]  
 ‘Though i am merely  
 a frog, Lord—do you, as Issa,  
 love me dearly?’

These voices and the “Six Levities unto the Lord” provide contrast with their humor. The rhymes here are clever though obvious; in a number of the other haiku rhyme is used very subtly.

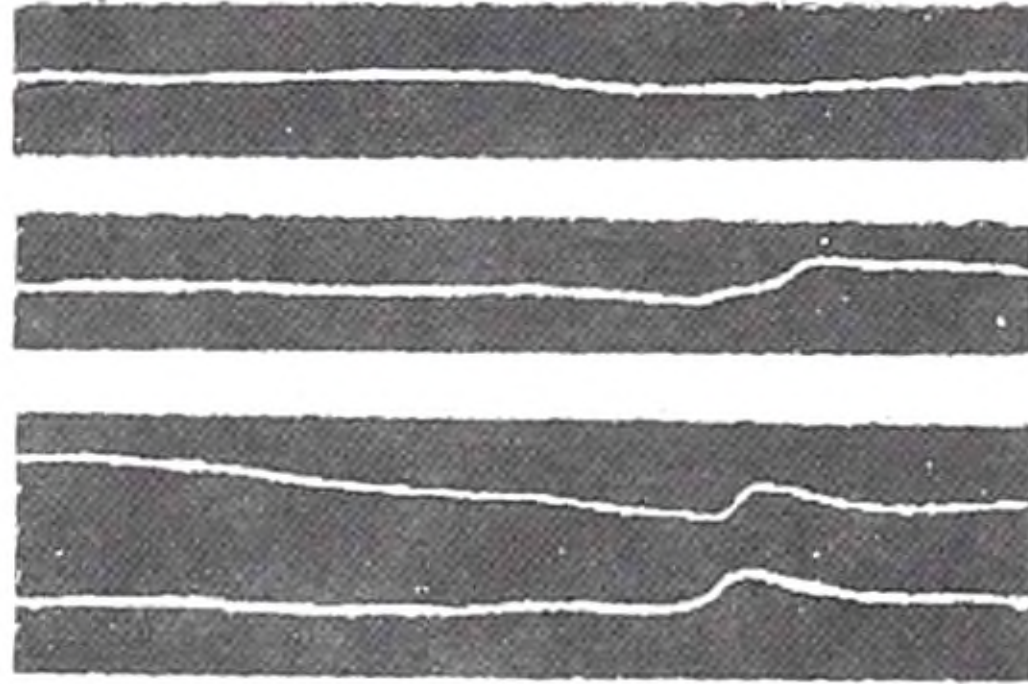
*The Cottage of Wild Plum* is an attractive perfectbound book, enhanced by twelve illustrations by John R. Reynolds, whose work is



familiar from *Modern Haiku*. Each drawing is given its own page and the poems are allowed plenty of room to breathe. The book deserves a place beside Spiess's other books in the haiku poet's library. The reader will find beautiful and haunting haiku as well as clever comments on our world. The experimental aspects should stimulate fresh discussion on the developing nature and form of haiku in the West.

someone old  
stands in the grove—  
the blossoms  
so fresh again  
on wild plum

—Review by Elizabeth Searle Lamb





*The Gristmill's Trough*, Haiku by Wally Swist. Hummingbird Press, P.O. Box 96, Richland Center, WI 53581. 1991, 12 pps., \$4 ppd.

From the first poem to the last, *The Gristmill's Trough* is a progression through the seasons and senses. The reader is led through a delicately sensual world that is highlighted with a dash of blue in a dry streambed, the scream of mating raccoons, a brook's stoney voice, the sudden sensation of dew-soaked feet, the lingering fragrance of cut grass. The poet interweaves his themes so that a later haiku softly echoes or reflects an earlier one. The individual haiku are subtly netted together to form a flowing text.

The twenty two haiku are additionally bonded by a predominate concern voiced in the title's poem.

stars gather  
in the gristmill's trough  
water wheel creaking

This tension — between the ephemeral stillness of floating starlight and the insistent flowing of the dark water that gathers and holds it in place — is found in a number of the haiku. There is also the repeated contrast of light and dark (within individual haiku as well as between the collected poems) that energizes the book as a whole.

In certain haiku the conjunction of a similar but not causally connected images calls more for an intellectual than visceral response:

nodding trillium—  
lovers rock in an embrace  
beside the brook

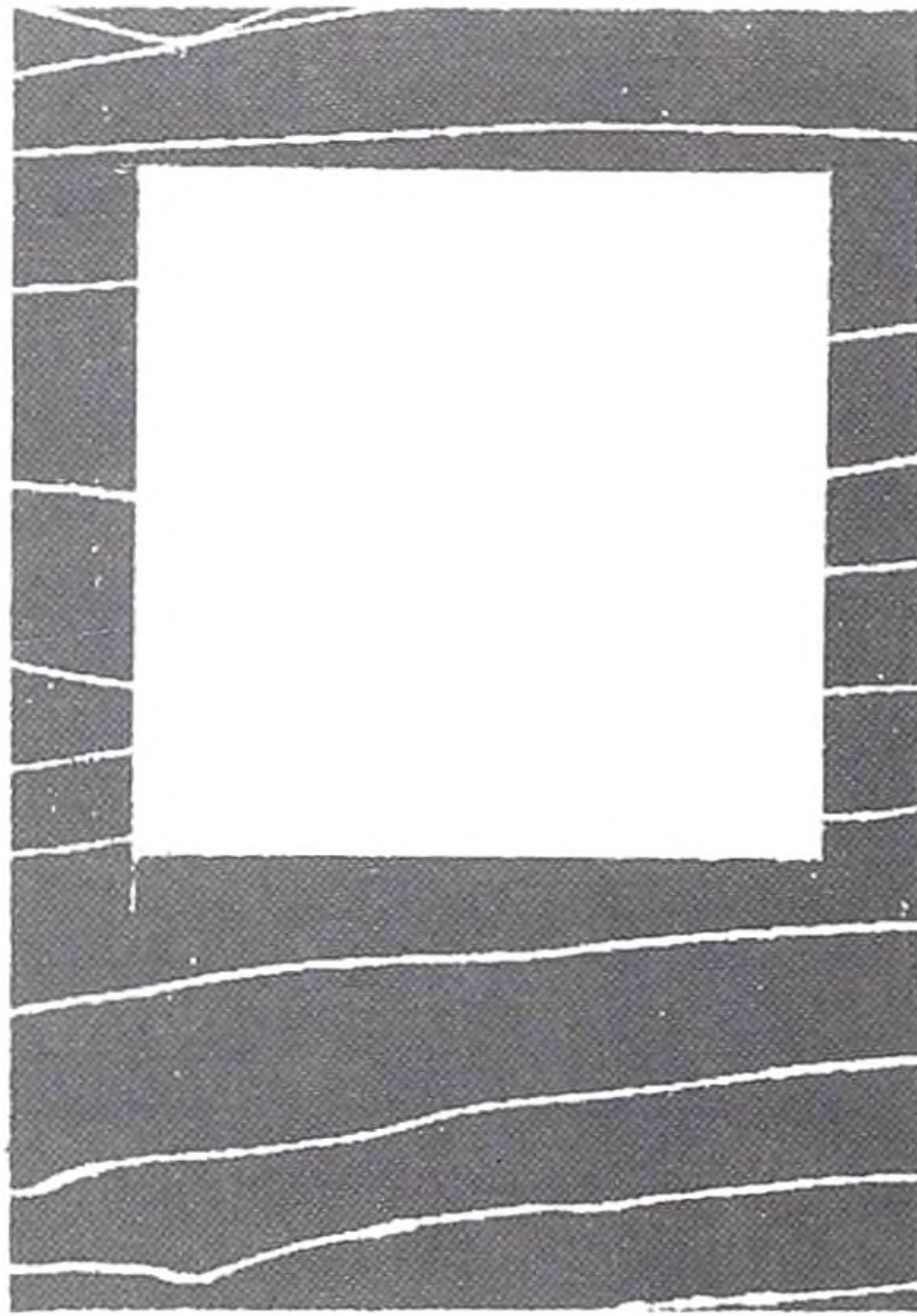
Overall, the haiku that are formulated in this manner are not as satisfying as others. We see and appreciate the relationship but do not feel it with the same intensity as:



shining in the heat  
the laborer's back  
sticky with sweat

The sensitivity to the power of the physical world is one of the finest attributes of this little volume.

—*Review by Ebba Story*









## PUBLICATION NEWS

Western World Haiku Society, a non-profit organization founded in 1972 by Lorraine E. Harr (tombo), has been re-activated, with Lorraine E. Harr, senior editor, Wilma M. Erwin, editor, and Leona Ward, membership. \$7.50 for membership a year, which includes two newsletters. First one planned for early 1992. Please address all correspondence to: Western World Haiku Society, c/o Wilma M. Erwin, 6123 N. Commercial Avenue, Portland, Oregon, 97217, 503-283-3682.

The first book of modern English haiku by a western poet has just been published (in translation) in the People's Republic of China. *The Moment's Gift* by H. F. Noyes was published by Baihua Literature and Art Publishing House in Tianjin. The translation was done by Haiping Gong, Director of The Research Centre of American Literature in Gaoyou, with the translated copy examined and revised by Professor Yongqi Zhou, Nankai University. Inside the attractively designed bright yellow cover is a photograph of Noyes, a brief introduction by Elizabeth Lamb, a short autobiography by the poet himself, plus 4 sections of haiku (67 of the book's 78 pages), closing with a brief "Translation Postscript" by Haiping Gong. The haiku include selections from *My Rain, My Moon* and *Star Carvings* as well as uncollected haiku and award-winning poems. Page numbers are in Arabic, all else in Chinese. Publication of this book is an important contribution to the international growth and development of haiku.—submitted by Elizabeth Searle Lamb.

The Summer/Fall issue of *Kaimana* (Diamond), the magazine of the Hawaii Literary Arts Council, contains an article on the classic tanka collection, the Shuisho, compiled by Fujiwara Kinto about a thousand years ago and newly translated and commented on by Professor Mildred Tahara of the University of Hawaii. For more information, write to *Kaimana*, Hawaii Literary Arts Council, P. O. Box 11213, Honolulu, Hawaii 96828.



## BOOKS AND CHAPBOOKS RECEIVED

*Listing of new books is for information and does not imply endorsement by FROGPOND nor the Haiku Society of America. Future issues will carry reviews of some of these titles.*

*The Broken Iris*, Tom Smith. Available from the publisher (Mary Belle Campbell, Persephone Press, Box 22-B, Whispering Pines, NC 28327). \$7.95 and \$1.00 for postage and handling.

*Colors of Haiku*, Helen J. Sherry. Chocho Books, 11929 Caminito Corriente, San Diego, CA 92128, 96 pages, perfect-bound, \$8.00 ppd., \$9.00., Foreign.

*The Dumpling Field*, Lucien Stryk with the assistance of Noboru Fujiwara. Ohio University Press, c/o CUP Services, Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14851. \$24.95 cloth. \$14.95 paper. 115 pages.

*The Gulf Within*, edited by Christopher Herold and Michael Dylan Welch. Two Autumns Press, 1991, 32 pages, paperback, 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches. \$6.00 postpaid. The book is divided into three sections: The Shield, The Storm, and The Gulf Within, each with a short synopsis of war events. Includes 58 Gulf War poems by 34 HPNC members. Send checks (payable to HPNC) to Ebba Story, 478 Guerrero Street, San Francisco, CA 94110.

*The Haiku Anthology*, edited by Cor van den Heuvel, has just been re-issued by Simon & Schuster as a Touchstone book. After going through five printings under S & S's Fireside imprint, this second edition of the book had been unavailable for almost a year. The artwork on the cover has been changed from black to silver and the price is now \$12.00.

*Harvest*, edited and introduced by Michael Dylan Welch. Press Here, 1991, 20 pages, 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches. \$5.75 postpaid from Press Here, P.O. Box 4014, Foster City, California 94404 (checks payable to Michael D. Welch). An anthology of haiku commemorating the Haiku North America conference held August 23 -25, 1991, at Las Positas College, Livermore, California. Contains one poem each by 52 conference attendees and participants from the US, Canada, and Japan.

*I Want to Lasso Time*, George Swede. Simon & Pierre Publishing Company Ltd./Les Editions Simon & Pierre Ltee. P.O. Box 280 Adelaide Street Postal Station, Toronto, Canada M5C 2J4. \$11.95.

*Little Enough*, 49 Haiku by Basho, Sodo, Ransetsu, Buson, Ryokan, Issa, Shiki and a tanka by Soban. Versions by Cid Corman. Follows similar successful translations by Corman including 2



- books, *Born of a Dream* (1988) and *One Man's Moon* (1984). 1991. \$6.50, paperback. Order from Gnomon Press, P.O. Box 475, Frankfort, KY.
- Monsoon*, poems written in India and Nepal, William Hart. Illustrated by Jayasri Majumdar. Timberline Press, 1991, 35 pp. Route 1 Box 1434, Fulton, MO 65251. \$7.50 + \$1.50 postage.
- A Mural of Leaves*, Francine Porad. Vandina Press, 1991. P.O. Box 1551, Mercer Island, WA 98040. Individual haiku and senryu, a Gulf War sequence, plus six two-person renku: Porad with partners anne mckay, vincent tripi, Paul O. Williams, Connie Brannan, Tom Clausen and Marlene Mountain. \$5.00 ppd.
- Sensescapes*, poems and collage by Werner Reichhold. AHA Books. P.O. Box 767, Gualala, CA 95445. 11x16", 36 pages, \$8.00 ppd., perfect-bound.
- shaping the need*, anne mckay. Wind Chimes Press, 1991. 64 pp., \$5.00. Please order from the author: Studio 709, 1275 Haro street, Vancouver, British Columbia V6E -1G1. These poems for American painter Georgia O'Keeffe, her way, her work.
- Silenced Spring*, 1991 Haiku Canada Member's Anthology. Coordinated by Brian Birch, layout, Keith Southward. 1991. Haiku Canada, 67 rue Court, Aylmer, Quebec J9H4M1. No price given.
- The Sudden Sneeze . . . and others*, sixty-six senryu and such, Lesley Einer. Sage Shadow Press, 2108 E. Greenway Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85022, \$4.50 postpaid in USA. \$2.00 postage overseas.

NOTE: For future listings in "Books and Chapbooks Received," please follow the format shown above. Books sent *must* be accompanied by the appropriate typed description.



GARY HOTHAM  
SCAGGSVILLE, MARY  
29 JANUARY 92

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