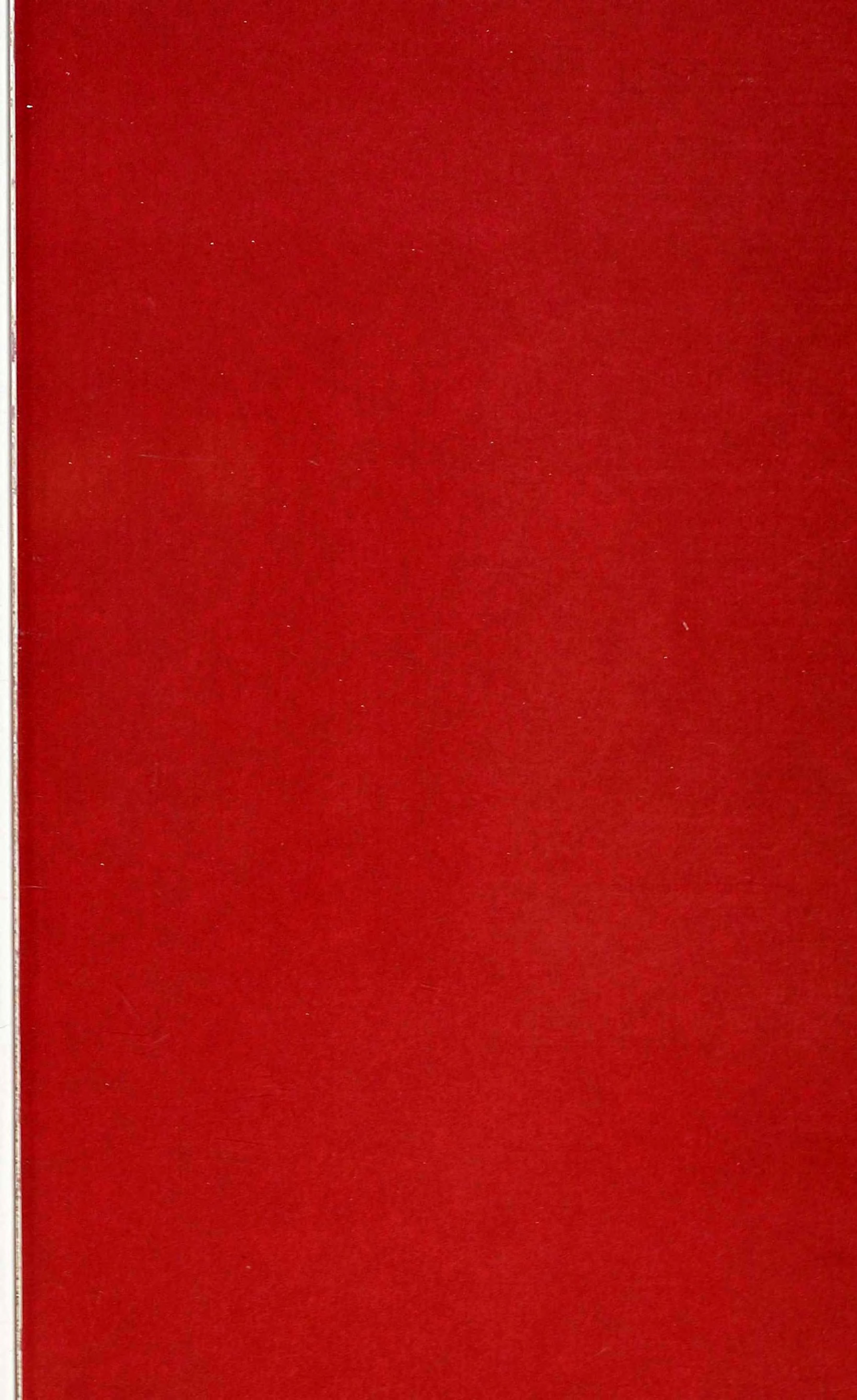


FROGPOND XXI:2





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President's Message

YATSUKA ISHIHARA (1919-1998)

On the evening of July 16th in Tokyo, Japan, the haiku world lost one of its great souls, Japanese haiku master, Yatsuka Ishihara. Ishihara—prize-winning poet, scholar, critic, son of a poet—studied with two master poets: haiku poet Iida Dakotsu and free verse poet Miyoashi Tatsuji. His understanding of poetry and world literature was further deepened through his friendship with famed haiku scholar R.H. Blyth. Endowed with broad vision and generosity of spirit, Yatsuka became a bridge of friendship between the poets of many cultures. His poetic achievements, productive literary life, and active support of non-Japanese haiku have helped to expand the horizon of haiku. Mr. Ishihara stands as an example of the Japanese haiku master system at its best.

It was Yatsuka who took the lead in organizing the two recent international haiku conferences, one in the U.S. and one in Japan. During the Haiku Chicago Conference, he warmed our hearts by declaring that "The spirit of haiku is alive in America." He truly understood the universal feelings that bind the souls of poets everywhere and was willing to make extraordinary efforts to help us. We are grateful.

We remember him with some haiku from *Red Fuji: Selected Haiku of Yatsuka Ishihara* (translated by William J. Higginson and Tadashi Kondo, From Here Press, Santa Fe NM, 1997):

pulling light/from the other world.../the Milky Way

the one crossing/the withered field did not/see the withered field

into the deep/dark sky ascend/floating lanterns

—Kristen Deming

haiku

1) An unrhymed Japanese poem recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived, in which Nature is linked to human nature. It usually consists of seventeen *onji*.

2) A foreign adaptation of 1, usually written in three lines totalling fewer than seventeen syllables.

(from *A Haiku Path* page 82 with corrections from page 80)

Summer solstice—
between lightning and thunder
we count the seconds

Marjorie Buettner

the yard finally scythed
combing mint scent
from my hair

Francis W. Alexander

5

cutting blue hydrangeas
I scatter
the captured rain

Ellen Compton

spittlebug froth
up on a tree trunk
during the rain

Jo Lea Parker

night drive
the mist lifts a moment
of stars

Celia Powles-Stuart

summer road trip—
coolness of the
white center line

Kristen Deming

lake cottage—
the wicker chair seats
giving way

A. C. Missias

the buddha
by camellias has
wide nostrils

ai li

sunlit shoal—
a small hand grasps
at minnow shadows

H. F. Noyes

night swimming
just me
and the moon

Paul O. Williams

3rd of July:
a stack of fresh flags
in the laundry truck

Bruce Ross

summer sunrise
a man on a ladder
changing the price of gas

John Stevenson

the ice cream truck's song
then
the mockingbird's

Carrie Etter

moonstruck kiss
on candy-apple lips—
ridin' a ferris wheel

Charles Bernard Rodning

in the pause
between fireworks
the baby's quickening

Kristen Deming

summer run
a braless jogger
rounds a curve

Anthony J. Pupello

sea wind
fat paper fish
tug on the line
Robert Gibson

after all these years
ankle deep
in the other ocean
Pamela Ness

8

clicking ice cubes—
melting into
another hot day
Carla Sari

beach parking lot—
where the car door opened
a small pile of sand
Michael Dylan Welch

Monday morning
brushing sand
from between the sheets

Jennifer Jensen

dreaming of willows
I awake with the cat's paw
touching my knuckle

Donald McLeod

9

muggy night
knuckle-baller swings
at a mosquito

Michael Fessler

the begging bowl
full of
fireflies

Alice Mae Ward

night . . .
she traces my scar
cicadas buzz

Tom Painting

Hot summer night
every traffic light
green

Christina Hutchins

before the tornado siren
wind chimes

Carrie Etter

cicada shell
rocks in the cool wind . . .
rumble of thunder

Emily Romano

the sky
alive with bangs and booms
one worried dog comes closer

Brian Daube

hailstorm:
the city child asks
about the scarecrow

Charles Trumbull

praying mantis
on the scarecrow's shoulder
also watching

Ross Figgins

twilight rain . . .
neighbors gather
where one saw a snake

Kim Dorman

|| ||

trees in full leaf
in the grotto a man whispers
to his daughter

Charles Trumbull

kinglet's song
high in the canopy
the drape of moss

Cherie Day Hunter

after a hard look—
the copperhead flowing
into the stones

Larry Kimmel

The Cyber Pond

A. C. Missias

These days, almost anyone can make a web page. The technology is easy to master, and with a small amount of artistry the would-be webmaster can whip together an assortment of links to useful sites and resources. Very few people, however, are willing to invest the considerable extra effort to turn their personal sites into real web resources with broad collections of original content. And fewer still manage to compile such comprehensive and useful resource sites that almost anyone sharing their interests makes use of their collections and points them out to others.

Among the handful of indispensable haiku web sites is Dhugal Lindsay's "Haiku Universe" (<http://www.ori.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~dhugal/haikuhome.html>).

|| 2 In this single site are collected a wide variety of essays on writing and appreciating haiku, written by Dhugal and by others, along with collections of haiku and discussions of related forms. I can't begin to do justice to the entirety of this array, but by selecting some excerpts I may be able to capture some of the feel of the place, and perhaps the philosophy of the person behind it. I will focus on the large section headed "How to Make Haiku", and leave the other major topics for your own visits or another day.

Dhugal begins this section with an Introduction that outlines some schools of haiku in Japan, with

examples of each style taken from his own haiku (written in Japanese and translated into English). He offers a simplified introductory definition:

A haiku is a short poem of form (in Japanese) 5,7,5 syllables. It normally includes a seasonal reference and often conveys something deeper behind the superficial words. Haiku should ideally use simple words and describe experiences common to most readers, yet in a fresh and insightful way.

From this he lays out a tree of haiku schools, starting with the traditional school (exemplified by Masaoka Shiki), which focuses on “naturally occurring things” and “objectivity” in approach. Two sample haiku in this style (both by Dhugal):

Camilla blossoms...
none of them standing out
more than all the rest

Lotus pond
a thousand stems
pierce the mist

The second school that he describes is the “humanist” school, led by Katoh Shuuson and Nakamura Kusatao. Dhugal explains:

This school believes that haiku must be intrinsically subjective, as the poet selects objects, or parts of objects, from the myriad that surround them at the time a haiku moment occurs. They also believe that humans are inseparable from nature, . . . and as such are a valid topic for haiku.

An example by Dhugal in this style is:

winter's breath on the train window I become a nobody

A third school that Dhugal describes is the “Santohka school”, which uses “a more organic form” often far short of 17 syllables, and presenting a single idea. Dhugal suggests that many American haiku are

written in this form. As an example, he quotes a haiku from Santohka himself:

into the beggar's bowl as well
hailstones

Another topic covered in this section is kigo, or season words. Dhugal acknowledges the difficulties in using kigo over varied climates and cultures, but advocates attempting to integrate them, in part because of the powerful shorthand they provide. As he puts it:

The ability to provide "instant access" to a setting is a major plus in using kigo. Just by stating "migrating geese" it invokes in the reader all the images associated with Autumn, but it also invokes a feeling of loss.

He also discusses the suggestion that there be an additional kigo category, called "zoh" which are sort of "theme words" capitalizing on the associations surrounding everyday objects (such as "grave" or "clock"). Dhugal argues against the substitution of zoh for kigo, for reasons both of maintaining a tradition and of preserving a useful haiku tool:

I feel that people use *zoh* already and that it needs no stressing. However, the haiku tradition of kigo does need stressing, as many Westerners believe it unnecessary. (If not stressed a bit it may disappear...)

|| 4

He includes in his pages a large collection of example kigo used for the biweekly kukai competitions on the Shiki mailing list, along with the list of winning haiku written on each subject; I'll explore those archives another time, but they do give a good sense of the variety of ways in which a single kigo can be used.

On the question of whether Western haiku can ever really be "haiku" in the Japanese sense, he writes:

...AT THE MOMENT, generally speaking, [Western haiku] and Haiku are separate and distinct, BUT I do not believe, as some Japanese Haijin do, that Westerners can not understand or grasp the core of Haiku. Several Western poets make haiku very close to the spirit of the Japanese way. I think the problem is having different concepts on what a haiku is. . . . A haiku is often not ABOUT nature, it only INCLUDES a reference to nature as a way of indirectly stating what the poet is trying to get across. The poet often doesn't know what it is exactly that they are conveying behind their poem but for a resonance to occur . . . there invariably is a "message" . . . CONTENT is important, next comes the season, and last comes the form.

And finally, on the issue of form and aesthetics in haiku, Dhugal writes:

Haiku is a form of poetry and should be read as such. Linked statements do not make an aesthetic poem. The "surprising truth" arising from two objects in juxtaposition or from deep empathy with a single object has to be expressed both with minimal redundancy and also aesthetically pleasingly. There must be a balance between the two.

So, it seems appropriate to end with a few more of Dhugal's haiku for our aesthetic appreciation (again, translated from the Japanese), spanning his varying approaches.

Pompei:
 from scrap of shade to scrap of shade
 the lizard runs

probably buried
 somewhere... a snowman made
 with snow from the first fall

crisp and clear blue sky
 alighting on a tree branch
 a goldfish!



mid-August . . .
the numbers below 80°
smothered in ivy

Dee Evetts

turning the double play—
her perfect pirouette
around second base

Pam Connor

August heat
umpire and manager
nose to nose

Michael Fessler

16

rainclouds in the west
asking security
about a lost backpack

Jerry Ball

a butterfly
finding its way
into a prison

ai li

late summer garden
dozing off
with the afternoon

Maurice Tasnier

dusk
the green vine's tendrils
round a fallen tree

Robert Gilliland

17

corn moon
the cabbage butterfly
absorbs light

Raffael DeGruttola

shadows pool
in morning silence;
a rooster folded asleep

Brett B. Bodemer

dew-bright grass—
her worn sandals tossed
this way, that

Rich Youmans

autumn dune—
Grandmother descends
the angle of repose

D. Claire Gallagher

too late to
revisit those
morning glories

Carl Patrick

turn of the tide—
for a moment
the gulls are quiet

Ferris Gilli

wading near
the NO FISHING sign—
snowy egret

Maureen Sanders

reed blades
turning in the breeze
the anhinga's neck

Harry Gilli

floodwater
beyond the berm
spreading sky
Cherie Hunter Day

water's edge
rocks steaming
between waves
Fred Gasser

19

Stalking the great white egret
capturing on film
his sudden flight
Sue-Stapleton Tkach

shadow of a gull
sliding over every leaf:
the dunes in autumn
Jeffrey Rabkin

heavy mist
the resonance
of the foghorn
Yvonne Hardenbrook

north cascades
hiking with a pebble
in my mouth

Robert Gibson

trout stream
turning a smooth rock
in her hand

A. C. Missias

the walk back to camp . . .
capless water bottle hums
in the warm breeze

Jo Lea Parker

20

mountain dust
covers my boots
the descending night

Laurie W. Stoelting

starry night
I lie awake
by the rushing creek

Carolyn Rohrig

coming to rest
the tossed pebble
takes a shadow

Bruce Ross

the loud whirr
of the scrub jay's wings
bush to bush

Paul O. Williams

21

pinching leaves
for the scent of wild thyme
—the coolness

Ellen Compton

dusk—
the heron's slow step
into shadow

Jeanne Emrich

moonless night
the wail of a loon
across the lake

Peggy Heinrich

The Conscious Eye

Dee Evetts

I have taken the environment as my theme for this issue, partly inspired by the material that has come my way in recent weeks, but also because I regard this as the crucial question and fundamental challenge of our time. However important it is to oppose inhumanity and oppression in every form, what will this avail us in the end, if meanwhile we allow our very habitat to be destroyed?

A first step towards confronting such dilemmas is to recognise and give expression to them. The poets represented below all pose the question, in one form or another: "Where are we going, and what price are we paying?" As always, this is done most effectively when the poet refrains from climbing onto a soapbox or into a pulpit. The poems that speak most eloquently to me are those that present an arresting image, or juxtaposition of images, leaving me to ponder the implications.

An outstanding example of this is found in paul m.'s

afternoon sun
the trail down
a logged hill¹

This is at first glance a gentle, even appealing picture: we see the slanting light, the way it delineates the trail

winding down a treeless slope. I have spent many summers in Western Canada, and still have friends there who campaign doggedly, like others in Washington, Oregon, and California, to convince government and the timber industry that selective logging makes far more sense—for all of us—than crude clear-cutting. I am therefore primed, no doubt, to experience an aftertaste of sadness and desolation when I read this poem. I feel my feet once again on trails made soft by pine needles and moss—and wonder if today they are merely dust, baking under the sun.

A recent poem by Bruce Detrick addresses deforestation in a more urban context:

23

between the inbound
and outbound lanes
a slice of woods in bloom²

Here the loss seems inevitable, the price to be paid for the highways on which we all expect to ride. This poem can be read in two ways: as an elegy for the vanished woodland, and as a celebration of the fact that something has been spared, and is blooming. On another level it simply says: keep your eyes open—and your heart.

Still on the subject of land use and development, Patricia Okolski gives us:

Old Indian camp . . .
we look for arrowheads
while developers browse.³

Although this needs not a word of explanation, I enjoyed hearing what the author wrote to me about it: "The history of this poem comes from Berkeley, Massachusetts, where a friend of ours owned a piece of land on the Taunton River. When I heard that the

property was to be developed, I hastened to collect artifacts from the accessible land. The property is now an affluent community with a great view of the river, but perhaps someday their children will dig in the yard and come up with a different view. It is something to hope for." What works so well in her poem is the picture of two kinds of browsing, with utterly different motivations, while the poet holds back from passing judgement.

Conflicting priorities are also on display in Mark Arvid White's

last house on the left
that unmanicured lawn
where butterflies come⁴

Perhaps this is in one of those neighborhoods where property owners can be fined for letting their yard go to seed. The eyesore or nuisance to neighbors can be a haven for wildlife. I admire this poem because it insists on nothing, yet compels me to reconsider what matters.

Pollution is the theme of the next two poems, both of which seem more obvious in their intentions than those discussed so far. With imagination and irony Tom Tico presents a paradox:

24

Spring rain
even the oil-slicks
have bloomed⁵

I am reminded of our sunsets here in New York City, so often enhanced by the emissions of industrial New Jersey across the Hudson River. It can be confusing, and poignant, when beauty emanates from something we know to be harmful.

Diane Borsenik takes a very definite position, with her:

the only cloud
in this perfect sky
nuke plant's vapor⁶

I find this accomplished, playing skillfully on the literal and figurative interpretations of "the only cloud". It is with the word "perfect" that I find the poet overreaches. The simpler alternative, "the only cloud/in the sky," would have made for a stronger poem in my opinion. This view can be supported by asking: where is the reader's attention directed—or where does it finally rest—on the problem, or on the poet?

The last word goes to Penny Harter, whose work in haiku and senryu as well as her longer poems has for many years reflected a passionate awareness of the interdependence of species, and the fragility of our common ecosystem. Her lyrical yet understated

distant thunder
overhead a satellite
moves in the dark⁷

evokes for me a gamut of feelings about our brave new world: awe, wonder, doubt, hope, and foreboding.



(Submissions and recommendations for this column can be sent to: Dee Evetts, 102 Forsyth Street #18, New York, NY 10002. Please state whether previously published, giving details. Work may also be selected from general submissions to Frogpond, and other sources.)

1. *Frogpond* XXI:1. 2. unpublished 3. unpublished 4. *black bough* 11
5. *The San Francisco Haiku Anthology*, ed. Ball, Gay & Tico (Smythe-Waithe Press, Windsor CA 1992) 6. *The Red Moon Anthology* 1997, ed. Kacian et.al. (Red Moon Press, Winchester VA 1998)
7. *The Monkey's Face* (From Here Press, Fanwood NJ 1987)

city gardens—
mushrooms under a bush
unlabeled

Lori Laliberte-Carey

prickly burdocks
and blossoming thistles—
the child says "flowers"

Edward J. Rielly

Wrapping tomatoes
in today's newspaper
. . . frost warning

Joyce Austin Gilbert

26

sundown . . .
all in white the young girl
gathering red apples

Elizabeth St Jacques

late plum
leaving its color
to dusk

Gloria H. Procsal

evening swifts,
low above the heads
of the reapers

Kim Dorman

treeless plain
a vulture closes in
on its shadow

Ernest J. Berry

27

able to move
the whole herd
that one horsefly

Teresa Volz

one-room schoolhouse
the prairie grasses
all weathered the same

Melissa Leaf Nelson

swallows fly low
through the open door—
my fluttering heart

Flori Ignoffo

moonlight
river divides the forest
into two nights

Nikola Nilic

a leaf falls
earlier than the rest—
gentle rain

Lori Laliberte-Carey

only whispers
and a murmur
until the shooting star

D. Claire Gallagher

28

full moon
next door a newborn
cries

Carol Dagenhardt

Balcony stars . . .
Her compact mirror
catches a handful
Norman St. Francis

fog descending
the curve of the railroad tracks
disappears

Melissa Leaf Nelson

also
exceeding the speed limit
—the truck's shadow

Catherine Mair

29

wishbone cloud the mile-long honking of wild geese

Fred Gasser

chill wind
a lizard slips
into his headstone

Ernest J. Berry

gutters trickling
his cremation night—
endless blackness

William M. Ramsey

before confession . . .
wood crackles
on the hearth

Charlotte Digregorio

I brush
my mother's hair
the sparks

Peggy Willis Lyles

kind heart . . .
the yellowed leaves
of over-fertilized plants

Naomi Y. Brown

30

Indian summer bank teller's false smile

M. Kettner

late autumn dusk—
peeing
what I thirsted for

William M. Ramsey

crow's nest
stark in the tree-top . . .
scent of a wood fire

Melissa Dixon

Forest path
moonlight
stepping places

Robert F. Mainone

31

Indian summer—
in the woods a small-leafed vine
on the old grave

Melissa Dixon

deepening silence
leaves falling
on headstones

Lee Giesecke

jack o'lanterns
still on the porch
Veterans Day

Timothy Russell

What Is Tan Renga?

Michael Dylan Welch

Tan renga is an ancient Japanese form of linked poem. It's the shortest linked poetry possible—one verse each by two poets. Tan renga consist of a three-line verse followed by a two-line “capping” verse. As with renku verses, the main technique is to link and shift. Typically, the second verse has some connection (link) with the first, yet shifts away from it significantly. A few of the following capping verses deliberately do not shift away, showing a more thematic approach to this poetry. Another way to look at tan renga is as a tanka written by two poets. The “turn” technique commonly used in tanka occurs naturally in the shift from one poet to the other. The following tan renga were composed at the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society's annual haiku retreat at Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, California, in September 1996.

32

nearing the summit—
this tiny ladybug
on my shoulder

circular horizon
and not a cloud in the sky

*Michael Dylan Welch
Christopher Herold*

a letter from home—
the cat on my laundry
paws the red socks

another Christmas Eve alone
smell of burnt cookies

*Michael Dylan Welch
Jocelyn A. Conway*

walking the dune
with a bird book in hand—
bark of a seal

web-footed tracks through the sand
lead away to the empty sky

*Michael Dylan Welch
Helen K. Davie*

33

an old fungus
imprinted with a maple leaf . . .
the story she tells

of this revealing tattoo—
better to say little more

*Michael Dylan Welch
D. Claire Gallagher*

last day of vacation—
mailing a postcard
to myself

the crowd near the train station
reflection in store windows

*Michael Dylan Welch
Jerry Ball*

beach path—
the flapping of the kite
in the little boy's arms

his father some distance away
with a metal detector

*Michael Dylan Welch
James Ferris*

above white breakers
the gull on the rocks—his cry
drowned out by the surf

at last the sun sets
into offshore fog

*Beth Brewster
Michael Dylan Welch*

the bonsai book
falls over in the bookcase—
the bent pine branch

some things are out of plumb
with the worlds we build for them

*Michael Dylan Welch
George Knox*

haiku poets
alert for nature's sounds
but listening for the lunch bell

dried stalks along the boardwalk
—do they smell the sea?

*John Schipper
Michael Dylan Welch*

from hand to hand
the pumice stone . . .
distant surf sound

echoes of the quiet
last night on the beach

*Michael Dylan Welch
Alex Benedict*

colored grape leaves
closely cover the cheese tray
the grapes all eaten

all the way through the speech
his fly undone

*Liz Knox
Michael Dylan Welch*

solstice: how the light lingers
on the softness

of fog

Laurie W. Stoelting

Christmas morning
a potted poinsettia beneath
each church spire leak

Kay F. Anderson

35

pausing between chapters
the sound of sleet
against the windows

Michael Cecilione

winter gale—
a plastic bag flies higher
than the birds

Catherine Mair

raining raining
a winter fly tapping
on the lamp glass

joan iversen goswell

Winter dawn—
the way her hand lingers
on my back

Richard Rosenberg

old & new snow—
the weight of each step
the dog takes

Gary Hotham

winter sunday
the chill of the back row
church pew

Donald McLeod

36

icicles hang
from the cabin roof
winter stillness

Donnie Nichols

his crying jag
my mind forgets
drifting snow

Michelle Lohnes

rising up so lightly
snowbird onto
a snowy branch

joan iversen goswell

her breath in the air . . .
a feather from her jacket
settles on the snow

Donnie Nichols

37

antarctic wind—
in a disused horse trough
cellophane

Susan Stanford

last year's spinach bed
comes through the winter
better than I do

Art Stein

early Spring—
breathing in
the melting snow

Maureen Sanders

first day of spring
a glint of sun
on her nose-rings

Hayat Abuza

Narrowing
the stone stairway—
the grasses of spring

Tom Tico

bandages off—
iridescent light
through new leaves

Gloria H. Procsal

38

angry with my son
I discuss it first
with the tulips

Carl Patrick

dark clouds in the distance;
in the wet nest
newborn duck dead

Edward J. Rielly

spring rain—
among the black umbrellas
a pink one, twirling

Rich Youmans

Vernal equinox—
hay fever supplants the flu
in the subway ads

Richard Rosenberg

39

April snow . . .
the mail carrier
blinks one eye

Timothy Russell

Wind . . .
The round shadow
of a dandelion
disappears

Norman St. Francis

the wind at his back—
flower petals follow him
through the parking lot

Jeffrey Rabkin

Heavy rain—
under the rhubarb leaves
eyes of a cat

Marjorie Buettner

a new path—
tickle of weedgrass
against my ankles

Emily Romano

first barefoot day
of the year
touching base

Sheila Windsor

40

fiddleneck ferns
in the clenched hands
of a small girl

Makiko

warm spring breeze
in the child's arms
a child

Mark Alan Osterhaus

in clusters
of white lilac
a raven even darker

Nikola Nilic

blustery day—
in the Roman bath ruins
wild fennel

Darold D. Braida

41

abortion clinic
a ripe blossom
stirs in the breeze

Anthony J. Pupello

Mother's Day:
filling in the bare patches
with annuals

John O'Connor

May—
after weeks in the classroom
released butterflies

Lee Giesecke

senryū

1) An Japanese poem structurally similar to the Japanese haiku but primarily concerned with human nature; often humorous or satiric.

2) A foreign adaptation of 1.

washing windows—
seeing myself
more clearly

Dorothy McLaughlin

the mirror
wiped clean
for a guest

John Stevenson

43

tiny in the water drop
on the mirror reflecting me,
me

William Woodruff

tightly drawn curtains
dust
the last visitor

Ross Figgins

small motel
1-way bulb
in the 3-way lamp

Kenneth C. Leibman

single mom
her preschooler's play-doh self
hugging a play-doh daddy

Kay F. Anderson

classroom mineral chart
the fool's gold specimen
missing

Yvonne Hardenbrook

playground arcade—
deeper into shadow
the spastic child

H. F. Noyes

44

class photo—
the autistic girl stares
at the ceiling

John O'Connor

antique store
shelf full of old box cameras—
my son's blank stare

Jeff Winke

attic clean-up
his old uniform
missing a button

Peggy Heinrich

for auction now—
one missing from a set
of pewter soldiers

Susan Stanford

45

Antique shop:
the fine features
of the old proprietress

Tom Tico

Aunt's gift—
a porcelain heirloom's
curtsey

Barry George

sculpture garden
for a moment
the cats are still

Jeff Witkin

rest stop—
a jogger's walkman
on the milestone

Yu Chang

outskirts of town—
the faded clown face
on the phone pole

Tom Clausen

construction work
boarded from view—
the lure of a knothole

Alec Kowalczyk

46

drive-in feature—
beyond the screen
shooting stars

Alec Kowalczyk

a moment after
the sound of popcorn
its smell

Robert L. Brimm

old scar—
how carefully she touches
my hand

Yu Chang

a couple arguing . . .
with and against
the wind

Tom Clausen

47

at a station
the train keeps the girl
the platform keeps the boy

Nikhil Nath

when she's gone,
I open the bedside drawer
and stare at her gun

Michael Dylan Welch

late for work
he stands there reading
an old love letter

Barry Sparks

girls jump rope
in out pepper pepper
old man wipes his brow

Barry Spacks

in the silence
of the zendo
my stomach growls

Angelee Deodhar

marking her place
in the low-cal dessert book
chocolate bar wrapper

Margaret Chula

48

my old Honda
sheds a strip of chrome
I pull off the matching piece

Dee Evetts

facedown
in the gutter
AA's Big Book

Robert Epstein

wrapped in newspaper
with the Dalai Lama's smile
chicken breasts

Carla Sari

Thin blade unsheathed
slitting letters
one by one

Ken Jones

49

bad review toilet won't flush

M. Kettner

an eyelash
)
my blank page

Tom Painting

now a paper airplane,
a page of drafts
of this haiku

William Woodruff

Airport terminal
Dad wipes my tears
With an old handkerchief

Rachel Siegel

Osaka Castle—
Darkened by the shadows
Of banking towers

Edward Zuk

the whiteness
of the plastic spoon
in the Rio Negra

Darold D. Braida

50

holiday over—
I call at the cemetery
to tell her I'm back

Cyril Childs

a bell tolls
checking
my wristwatch

R. A. Stefanac

still in my suit—
the smell
of the nursing home

Alan Realey

bottle of white pills
in the medicine cabinet—
grandma lives on

Rachel Siegel

51

this morning alone
birds fly
into the fog

Margaret Chula

extreme unction kit
on the car seat beside him
friday night bingo

Art Stein

under the door
a wedge of night

Maurice Tasnier

linked

forms

a wave hello

At the airport
the window-washer's rag
a wave hello

Too late: the radishes
wormy and wooden

Fiery sun sinking . . .
and tonight, to follow it,
a cool spring moon

A few skinny birch
bend on the logged slope

Cowled in a blanket
lukewarm tea
revising poems for the contest

Jam on her forehead
she tightens all the lids

The brackenfern
pivot on their stems
in the stir of wind

Cricket in the waiting room
—smiles

Lingering autumn
the motorcycle club
whizzing south

Snapshot

cropped photograph—
leaving my shadow
on the darkroom floor

from the bottom of the tray
your smile slowly develops

pulling me closer
in front of the camera . . .
first date

pinned
on the bulletin board
your snapshot

54

a roll of negatives . . .
the brightness of your dark eyes

self-timer
I join you
in the photograph

—*Cherie Hunter Day*
Garry Gay

first frost

first frost—
on the garden spade
traces of dawn

dropping from the pink cloud
a rainbow fragment

55

sand ripples
left by the low tide—
autumn sky

their fingertips
along the tree rings
thin and wide

fading in the new coolness
her white band of skin

firelight—
thawing out the top layer
of their wedding cake

—Neca Stoller
Laura Young

Vigil

cut flowers
by her deathbed
also holding on

doctor calls
too late . . .
a nurse chucks the iris

deathbed stripped
did i say it
with flowers

empty vase
the dark
at the bottom

an empty mouth
the night
the night

a dead moth
so powdery
beneath the stars

leaves still falling

leaves still falling
the street corner scented
by Christmas trees

*dummies draped in velvet
face the crowds*

with a thump
snow from the barn roof
into the yard

*fragments of terracotta
among the tangled roots*

a hundred brush strokes
for her long black hair
August moon

*midnight swimmers chuckle
in a phosphorescent sea*

caught by one foot—
the paramedic gently
working it free

*a noisy helicopter
circulates dust*

seat-belt sign
shortly before landing
flying over her house

*faces caressed . . .
the spring moon's aura*

a narrow bed
the blackbird's song
outside their window

*unwinding the string
till the kite finds its level*

*the tethered goat
its grazing circle
getting smaller*

*home after school, she shows off
her first pie chart*

*Monday morning
the pocketful of chestnuts
no longer glossy*

*leaves on the track
halt the commuter train*

*returning favors
the new government's
autumn budget*

*a tight belt
his belly hanging over it*

*karate class
forty arms and legs
move in unison*

*the shoal of minnows
suddenly turning*

*squeals of delight—
the little boy showered
by the garden hose*

*snake pit at the zoo
at first glance empty*

*the coal-mine's closure
taking with it
a way of life*

*into the widow's bag
he slips an Easter egg*

*it is said
that when the sun goes down
they meet in Bluebell Wood*

perhaps the same pair—
returning swallows

*houses with fences
on the green space
where we used to play*

at the Wimbledon final
torrential rain

*spotlighted
by the moon
fighting alley cats*

the ice-cream van's jingle
gone until next year

*gulls over the river
losing their whiteness
in the falling mist*

an unused canvas
gathers dust in the attic

*looking younger
the retired doctor
called back to work*

at the research lab
lights still burning

*through the tunnel
into a meadow
full of buttercups*

helped by a gentle breeze
the tablecloth spread out

waxeyes

just as the sickle-shaped black flax pods are spent all
the seeds used leaving finely textured slender shells
dry and split all has changed

curved pod
a momentary perch
for the hunting waxeye

I do not know you you do not know me we all moon
gaze together we only imagine that we have
anything in common we comfort one another
recalling past incidents how he took the machete to
the spiky yucca how we laughed

pecked over blonde plumes shiver tattered remnants
flutter to the lawn like wisps of hair

toi-toi tremble seed-feasting sparrows

the table awaits breakfasters on its green oil-cloth
two erotic salt and pepper shakers imitate red peppers

boats carve patterns
silver early morning sea

no breath of wind shadows on a concrete block wall
even then

3AM 3/25/98

In a dream he suggests rewriting a haiku that I'd rejected that I'd written earlier in the dream. On waking, change its form to concrete. Next, in the dream, gave him and his family an agate—it changed in the dream to have crystals, too. Then I saw other crystals amid and on moss. They had trapezoidal planes, smoothed edges, about twenty sides.

61

artificial hollow
of silver alloy - crystals
metals seen in a dream

its champagne
center of
empty— glass
the fifth

—Brent Partridge

Haibun

journey
through foreign lands—
familiar stars

62 It was the December of the comet Kohoutek when I went to Montagnola, regressing from winter back into autumn as the Zurich train climbed over the Alps and descended into Lugano. Two or three other passengers left the railroad station and went their separate ways; it was late at night and the funicular that angled down to the city was closed. The Ticinean air was fragrant after the sharp, metallic scent of drifted snow in Munich and St. Gallen; it held a sensual odor of growth and decay. I passed dark and shuttered resort hotels while walking an empty street that circled down toward the waterfront. Then LA PIANTA ROSA appeared in brightly illuminated letters on a three-story building more starkly modern than most of its 19th Century neighbors, and I decided it would be fitting on this pilgrimage to stay at an inn called THE RED PLANT, as the name suggested a set-decoration in a magic theater. A blonde, sturdily built, middle-aged woman answered the bell, said I would be the only guest, and informed me that bread, jam and cheese would be found in the morning on the breakfast table—she left the premises at an early hour for an off-season job. She answered a question by explaining that a tunnel behind the railroad station led to a plaza where a bus departed to where the great writer had lived, and that I could get there and back in a few hours. I was given a second-floor room with a window overlooking the lake.

winter solstice
sparkling lights of a village
across the water

The following morning was spent studying stone saints placed on the cathedral's balustrade, and rereading Siddhartha in a coffee shop that faced the main plaza. At noon, I found my way to the funicular.

from the cathedral
gothic figures stare down
on a shopping mall

The little bus, winding its way up the mountain, curved past a gnarled oak growing in front of a baroque church and I thought of the altarpiece that Goldmund carved at the end of his painful wanderings. As we entered the village, the driver announced that it was the siesta hour. Seeking the writer's house, I entered the village hall to ask directions, but found it deserted. Persimmon-like fruit had been placed to ripen on desk tops, tables, and to each side of a bronze head of the writer displayed on a mantel in the council chamber. Leaving, I saw an old woman almost completely covered in a black shawl and walking with the use of a cane. *Bitte...scusi, senora*, I asked in wretched polyglot, *dove il casa de Hermann Hesse?* She motioned with her cane to the back of the village hall and pointed up a path. *Casa bianca...alta casa bianca*, she cackled as she continued on her way. Taking the path, I saw a white house, beyond thickets and a wire fence, that anchored itself solidly to the top of a hill. I began to understand my search would be as ongoing as that of Joseph Knecht after he sought out the Music Master. And, as I looked down on Lake Lugano, in half-shadow far below, it seemed to spread its arms as if pointing to distant places.

unfolding a map. . .
final line of the journal
yet unwritten

—Jerry Kilbride

Whimbrel Cottage

For three days we're held captive in our cottage strewn with birding guides, binoculars and books while autumn's northeast winds roar and sigh up and down the beach...now we hear news of Josephine rushing to join us, a tropical storm spiraling up the Atlantic coast leaving Florida devastated in her wake, she heads for the Outer Banks of North Carolina, churning our ocean with her imminent attack, lining up waves in orderly rows that rise higher and higher...

each cresting wave
a glimmer of moonlight
crashing

Weary of storm vigilance I retreat to the bedroom, flannel sheets from home swaddling me against the storm...a steady sea spray patters the window above my head, the floor beneath me shudders with the wind's gathering force. . .I close my eyes, feeling strangely calmed by nature's upheaval, listening as raindrops and ocean spray merge together as though gathering tears of rage to smear the small panes of glass that frame its fury. The bed begins to rock, dispelling fears and bringing dreams of a watchful nanny's hand swaying a cradle to her soothing lullaby...

64

barrier island
rocking her to sleep
a tropical storm

Our turbulent vacation over we return to home and work, only to hear news of El Niño...nor'easters to be especially hard this coming winter we watch as each weather report announces spring-like conditions—including one storm following close on another. Televised scenes of beach cottages falling into the sea appear almost weekly on our local news...after one

record-breaking storm we venture out to visit Whim-
brel Cottage, past flooded fields, wind-downed signs
and stretches of empty beach where once familiar
houses stood.

storm clearing—
atop every other house
roofers at work

Sand in uneven layers crisscrosses cracked pavement
that leads upwards to the dune we know so well...just
beyond its rise we hope to find our cottage still
standing, hope that its record of enduring fifty years
of storms has held once more through a nor'easter
that blew through under a full moon, pulling tides
seven feet above normal...we come to the crest of the
hill, the roar of the ocean louder now, relief washing
over us when we see roof and windows intact we
don't at first notice the pile of broken boards where
once an outdoor shower stall stood and wooden
steps led the way to our beachside retreat. . .

65

shattered steps leading nowhere
. . .seaside cottage
marooned on the sand

With trepidation, we walk under floors we remember
swaying with the same motion as a fishing pier
reaching out into the sea...we look up at sea-sprayed
windows, at a strip of exposed wood shining bright
tan against the grey of weathered boards all still in
place high above us, the cottage's reinforced stilts
somehow holding solid in wet sand, yet another
nor'easter is forecast in two days. . .

heavy rain—
an object in the next room
falls

—Linda Jeannette Ward

Drawing Down the Moon

In the center of a lunar garden, a bowl or bath of water is placed for the purpose of reflecting the moon, "Drawing Down the Moon" the Wiccans call it. The Druids used moon-ruled herbs such as cleavers, chickweed, wild poppy, and white roses to increase appreciation, awareness, and sensitivity. Ponds half-hidden by woods are suddenly illuminated by the Hunter's Moon, as are the gentle ripples of puddle-water, the mosquitoes and fireflies dipping in and out. And in both the Waxing and Waning Moons, blue herons have been witnessed performing movements as graceful and deliberate as Tai Chi.

noting in my journal
that mountains too
live on the moon

—Robin White



To her cheeks

66

This valley must be one of the most beautiful in the whole wide world. . .this valley that flows from an eastern corner of Lake Towada in northern Japan. We walk on the forest path that follows and, here and there, crosses the stream. It is early autumn and already leaves colour and carpet the path. Some float on the stream as it bubbles and gurgles in places and lazes quietly in others. It sparkles where the sun filters through the forest canopy. You are happy, the pain is not too great and you breathe more easily than usual. The joy you feel is in your eyes. We walk much further than planned. We feel we could walk forever.

The path rounds below a bluff, the gentle roar
increases, the air is cold on our faces—

Oirase valley—
a waterfall brings tears
to her cheeks

—Cyril Childs



Flowers for an Assassin

67

My hometown of Alton, Illinois holds the dubious distinction of being the birthplace of James Earl Ray, the confessed assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ray was born on March 10, 1928 at 1021 West Ninth Street. The house was torn down years ago, and the location is now a weed-choked vacant lot.

I drove by the place every day for about two weeks after Ray's death on April 23, 1968. I felt that it was my duty as a humanist and member of the Alton Human Relations Commission to see if anyone placed a memorial bouquet on the lot and, if so, then to remove the thing.

This possibility is not as far-fetched as it might appear. Racism thrives in my community, and some whites revere Ray rather than the civil rights leader he was sentenced for murdering.

Fortunately, my region's racists must have been either too apathetic to care about Ray's death or just too stupid to find the lot. No bouquets showed up. Still,

Ray's birth site
luxuriantly strewn
with dandelions

—John J. Dunphy

essays

Fragment & Phrase Theory

The fact that the smallest literary form—haiku—has the most rules never ceases to amaze and astound. The only real comfort one can find in this situation is the concept that this affords a wider range of rules from which a writer can pick and choose. You cannot follow all of the rules and several of them are so contradictory that there is no way to honor some of them simultaneously. You must always choose. In order to make a choice, you have to understand the reasons and methods. To write about one or two 'rules' as if these are the only 'real rules' could (and should!) offend those of the society membership who have chosen to follow opposite or other guidelines. So let me make the disclaimer that in discussing these rules I am only discussing some of the current disciplines I am following in my own haiku writing and which are currently shared by a majority of writers.

First and foremost, and certainly the guideline which I have consciously or unconsciously followed the longest, is the one that a haiku must be divided into two parts. This is the positive side of the rule that haiku should not be a run-on sentence. There needs to be a syntactical break dividing the ku into two parts. From the Japanese language examples this meant that one line (5 *onji*) was separated from the rest by either grammar or punctuation (in the Japanese an accepted sound-word—*kireji*—was as if we said or wrote out "dash" or "comma"). For purposes of this discussion, I would like to call the shorter portion, the one line, the fragment and the longer portion, two lines, or rest of the poem the phrase. The need for distinguishing between the two parts of the ku takes on importance when one begins to discuss the use of

articles (a, an, & the) because it is possible to have different rules concerning these in the different parts. Before getting into that, let me state that the fragment can be (or usually is) either line one or line three. A clear example of the first is:

rain gusts
the electricity goes
on and off

Even without punctuation the reader can hear and feel the break between the fragment (rain gusts) and the phrase (the electricity goes on and off). Also one instinctively feels that the second line break would go after goes. Yet, another author may find merit in continuing the line to read “the electricity goes on” and then let the final line bring in the dropped shoe — “and off.” I chose to have “on and off” as the third line because my goal was to establish an association between “rain gusts” and “on and off.” One can write of many qualities of “rain gusts,” but in this ku, the “on and off” aspect is brought forward and then reinforced by bringing in the power of electricity. An example of the fragment found in the third line is often used as answer when creating a riddle (a valid and well-used haiku technique) as in:

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a vegetarian
with legs crossed in zazen
the roasting chicken

It is also possible to write ku in which the reader would have to decide which part was the fragment by imagining a combination of either lines one with two or reading lines two and three together to make the phrase. An example might be:

moonlit pines
 dimming
 the flashlight

But even here, the fact that “moonlit pines” is not written as ‘the moonlit pines’ tells one that the author was silently designating the first line as the fragment even though the middle line has its own curious brevity. Still the lack of punctuation allows the reader to try out the thought that as the moon-light in the pines became dimmer someone had to turn on a flashlight. Or, reading the poem as it was experienced: the moonlight on the pines was so bright the flashlight seemed to be getting dimmer. This brings us around to the articles and you may have already guessed the next guideline for using them. In the fragment you can often dispense with the use of an article to leave the noun stand alone. Sometimes you can even erase the preposition from the fragment especially if you are feeling that you will scream if you read one more haiku which begins with “in the garden.” This guideline asks sensitivity. It is not a hard and fast rule. But during the revising stage of writing your ku, it is something to try. Cover up the preposition and the article in the fragment and see if the ku holds together. Perhaps it will even get stronger! If you feel the article and preposition are needed, then by all means, use them. Do whatever works for your voice. In the ‘roasted chicken’ ku I debated about leaving the articles out, but decided I felt the ku needed the ‘grease to the wheels of understanding’ of the articles. But if you are seeking to shorten the ku, look first to the fragment as you cross out unneeded words. However, one cannot follow the same ‘rule’ in writing the phrase portion of the ku. Sometimes critics make the comment in a workshop that a haiku is ‘choppy.’ What they are referring to is the feeling that at the end

of each line the break in syntax is final. The two lines of the phrase are not hooked together in a flow of grammar and meaning. Notice the difference between:

low winter sun
raspberry leaves
red and green

If to this 'grocery list ku' we add a preposition and an article we get:

low winter sun
in the raspberry leaves
red and green

It pays to be aware of which two lines you wish to make into the phrase. It helps to read the two lines of a ku which are to become your phrase out loud to see how they sound in your mouth and ears. If there is a too-clear break between the lines, ask yourself if you need an article or an article plus a preposition to be inserted. If you do, forget brevity and allow yourself the lyric pleasure of a smooth shift between these two lines. If I had chosen to make the first line the fragment I would write the ku as:

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low winter sun
raspberry leaves glow
red and green

Adding a verb gives the proper grammatical flow between lines two and three. If one added 'in the' to the first line, the ku would read as 'in the low winter sun raspberry leaves glow red and green' which, to my ears would be a run-on sentence.

One other variation on this subject is the haiku in which the break occurs in the middle of the second line. Often one finds this in translations of Basho's

haikai taken out of context from a renga. Basically you have a two-liner set into three lines. Occasionally one will find an English haiku written in this manner. Again, it is often 'rescued' out of a renga or written by people using 5-7-5 syllable count who end up with too many images as in this example from *Borrowed Water* (edited by Helen Chenoweth, 1966) who wrote:

A cricket disturbed
the sleeping child; on the porch
a man smoked and smiled.

If the comment above sounds too critical of the use of the break in the middle of the second line, let me add that this method becomes very interesting if one is working with parallels. Perhaps that is what Helen was noticing—the difference between the sleeping child and man on the porch. Parallels were learned by the Japanese from the Chinese and often used successfully in haiku and tanka.

Those persons using punctuation in their ku, will often find themselves making a dash after the fragment and hopefully nothing, not even a comma in the middle of the phrase, even if there is a breath of the possibility of one. Sometimes, the haiku sounds like a run-on sentence because the author is too lazy to rewrite the fragment clearly and thus, has to add a dash forcing the reader into the obligatory break. For me, this is a red flag that the writer either did not believe in the "haiku has two parts" rule or didn't stay with the rewrite long enough to solve the problem properly. Frankly, I see most punctuation as a cop-out. Almost any ku written as a run-on sentence (with or without its dash) can be rewritten so that the grammar syntax forms the proper breaks. Or the author forms places where the reader can decide where to make the break and thus, give the haiku additional meaning. From this philosophy, I view

haiku with punctuation as haiku which perhaps fail to fit this basic form. Some writers, unable, or unwilling to understand the use of fragment and phrase will write the ku in one line. If the author has a well developed feeling for fragment and phrase, the grammar will expose which is which. In these cases, my feeling is—why not write the ku in the three lines it 'shows' by the way it sounds.

Occasionally a haiku is written that is so full of possible divisions into what is the fragment or the phrase that writing it in one line is the only way that offers the reader the complete freedom to find the breaks. And with each new arrangement the meaning of the poem varies. An example would be:

mountain heart in the stone mountain tunnel light

Over the years I gradually gave up (and easily abandoned) the dashes, semi-colons, commas and periods in order to incorporate ambiguity in the ku, but it has been hard for me to let go of the question mark—which is rather silly, as it is so clear from the grammar that a question is being asked. Still, and yet ... I mention this, so new-comers to haiku understand that rules are not written in stone, but something each of us has to work out for ourselves. It is an on-going job and one I hope will never end.

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The usual way we find new 'rules' is by reading the work of others and deciding for ourselves what works as a ku or what we admire. Consciously or unconsciously we begin to imitate the style that 'rule' creates. Usually we stay with a 'rule' until we find a new one to replace it. Because there are so many rules, we all have different set with which we are working. By carefully reading a magazine like Frogpond, you can often see which 'rules' the editor is accepting by the haiku printed. That does not mean 'this' is the only way to write a haiku. You need to

make the decision: are those rules, goals or guidelines some I want for myself? This thought is much more gentle to the Universe than saying some haiku are good and others are bad.

There is, thank goodness, no one way to write a haiku. Though the literature has haiku which we admire and even model our own works on, there is no one style or technique which is absolutely the best. Haiku is too large for that. Haiku has, in its short history, been explored and expanded by writers so that now we have a fairly wide range of styles, techniques and methods to investigate.

Personally, I would prefer more discussions of these techniques of using riddles, associations, contrasts, oneness, sense-switching, narrowing focus, metaphor and simile (yes! judiciously and in moderation), sketch (Shiki's *shasei*), double entendre, close linkage, leap linkage, pure objectivism, and more, rather than the mysterious idea that if one has a true haiku moment the resulting ku will be an excellent haiku. This is pure rot. The experience is necessary and valid (and probably the best part of the haiku path), but writing is writing is a skill and a craft to be learned.

Techniques are methods of achieving a known goal in writing. They are something to learn and then forget as Basho has already told us. But once you learn them you will understand why some haiku 'work' for you and others do not. It also prepares you to instinctively use the best technique for each of your haiku experiences. Perhaps, nothing is absolute in haiku. Like life, haiku require learning, experience and balance. I hope today you have learned a bit more of one technique—the use of fragment and phrase. Blessed Be!

—Jane Reichhold

books

&

review

SPRING MORNING SUN

by Tom Tico; from the author: 721 18th Avenue, San Francisco CA 94121; 114 pages, 5.5" x 8.5" paper, perfect-bound. ISBN 1-57502-711-9. \$12 postpaid.

After writing haiku for thirty-three years and having the benefit of a mentor considered one of the "pillars of the Western haiku movement," none other than Harold G. Henderson himself, Tom Tico has pulled together his first book of haiku: *SPRING MORNING SUN*. The book, featuring a blue cover framing a Mary Field painting, is clean and handsome, and the poems are real: neither clever nor brilliant, but more important to this reviewer, soulful.

Tom Tico's book moves me because the poems are sensuous and simple. Consider the following:

a lonely park path . . .
only my grinding footsteps
and the birds' silence

"A lonely park path" has been around a long time. Cor van den Heuvel included it in his famous 1974 volume *The Haiku Anthology*. Henderson liked the poem too, as I do, and for similar reasons: details in the poem pull the reader into the park where the feet can feel the gravel roll beneath them in this place where the silence of birds reinforces the pilgrim's separation and loneliness, or *sabi*. From there, the concentric impressions continue as long as the reader wishes to linger. As Henderson says, the poem has a "haunting" quality.

In his introduction, Tico tells us "From 1985 through 1996 I spent over seven years in a state of homelessness, sleeping in a redwood forest in Golden Gate Park.

Although this period was a challenge, it didn't prevent me from enjoying the leisure of my days."

Nothing to bring her. . .
except flowers from gardens
all along the way

Many of the poems in this volume are not necessarily about his homeless experiences, but they could be. Living in a place that requires no keys for so many years, the poet wanders day and night through sunshine, fog, and rain, giving us glimpses of the inner city; in and out of bars, run-down hotels, apartments, missions, soup kitchens, coffee shops; onto nude beaches and through quiet gardens, and back to his home to retire for the night:

One after another
crows vanish into the dark
branches of the cypress

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Unlike most of the haiku being written in North America these days, Tico's haiku retain devices most of us have dropped: most begin with a capital, and a large number have a 5-7-5 syllable count, although the majority do not. This appeals to me, as does his indentation of lines 2 and 3. The opening capital emphasizes the event and draws attention to the moment; the indented lines open the poem to space and flow, which box haiku cannot do as well. Both techniques contribute to the success of his poems.

Because haiku are seeds of energy that need to settle and root, I read Tico's poems with quiet attention over several days. *SPRING MORNING SUN* is full of mystery and grace, the skillful work of a poet fully engaged with life. Highly recommended.

—Reviewed by Marian Olson

Six Directions

Haiku & Field Notes

by Jim Kacian, illustrations by Stephen Addiss (La Alameda Press, Albuquerque NM, 1998). Available from Red Moon Press, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester VA 22604. 6.0" x 6.0", 84 pages, paper, perfect-bound. \$10 + \$1 shipping. ISBN 0-9631909-4-6.

Calling on us to be "surprised into recognition," Jim Kacian's latest book brims with haiku sensibility and spirit. Brightly and attractively presented are six haibun, over 100 haiku and complementing pen and ink illustrations by Stephen Addiss.

Six Directions chronicles the author's move to a new house on the Shenandoah River in Virginia, and his coming to know the environment there. Readers are invited to share in the awakening and discovery of this new space as a place to center, a home. The book, the author suggests in his foreword, is exposition of two predicates: that "the cumulative effects of small moments" is responsible for "expand[ing] our sense of the universe to its full size;" and that "the only way out of a circle is through its center." The book offers many examples as proof of the first of these statements, as one would expect from a book of haiku. I offer these two:

welling up—
a drop forms
at the spigot

morning dew
no hiding the way
we've come

These powerful haiku (and the book is filled with poems which continue to resonate after repeated readings), communicate an understated elegance, occasionally reminiscent of the late master John Wills. These haiku often shine with a sudden seeing—but

the poet himself cautions us not to laud ourselves too loudly: "... if haiku affords us moments of vision, it is not so much that we are visionaries, as that up to that moment, we have been blind."

While moments of insight might be the stock in trade of the haiku poet, what might be more surprising is the realization of his second premise. Through walks and rambles we are shown his house, his environs, the creatures and people he encounters, and ultimately the relationship of these things to the poet and his writing. What emerges is a sense of patterning, which, recurring, offers the engaged reader a way out of the mundane, a moving through the center:

walking in		drifting
the orchard	suddenly	the canoe finds
	its plan	the current

80 There are other threads to be followed as well: the sense of the land, river and sky and how they relate to the poet's sensibility; the simultaneous connectedness and solitariness which all creatures in the world share; the call to move and the call to settle; our ineffable relations with our fellow creatures; ultimately, our sense of being at home with ourselves. We are challenged to meet, in this book, what the ancients knew we must meet—as one of the wonderful epigrams, taken from the *Upanishads*, says, "The Infinite indeed is below, above, behind, before, right and left—it is indeed all this." Or, as the poet puts it:

thunderclap—
six crows
in six directions

—Reviewed by Tom Clausen

Current Crop IV

The herding during the Second World War of 100,000 Japanese residents and Japanese-Americans on the West Coast into sites variously called "assembly centers," "relocation centers," "segregation centers," and "concentration camps" is well known. Not much known is the literary and artistic work done in those places of confinement—for understandable reasons: circumstances were not conducive to such work and much of the work done was not preserved or since lost.

Still, when you think about it, it's easy to imagine that quite a few of the inmates must have written haiku. A great many of them were Isseis or immigrants with a perfect command of their native language, the haiku form, such as it is, is easy to learn, and haiku doesn't tax the mind much—at least when compared with a sonnet or a sestina.

As it turns out, there indeed were people who wrote haiku in those places of confinement. The surprise is that one important group followed the early non-traditionalist Nakatsuka Ippekirô (1887-1946), who famously said, in 1913:

My poems have a standpoint totally different from that of what have been called haiku until now. In the first place, I think nothing of [depriving] haiku of what is regarded as the most important: seasonal preferences (*kidai shumi*). . . . With the form, too, I don't care whether it gets to be seventeen syllables or thereabouts, thirty-one syllables or thereabouts, or whatever. . . .

So Ippekirô wrote pieces such as: *Kono ki ga kitto medatte anata ga watashi ni hikizurareru* (24 syllables), "This tree is sure to bud and you'll be dragged by me," and *Hadaka de meshi o kûte sabishiika ashi o kumi-nasai* (23 syllables), "Eating a meal naked are you lonely cross your legs."

So Neiji Ozawa (1886-1967), a leader of the West Coast haiku groups who followed Ippekirô's approach, composed, as a camp inmate, pieces such as: *Ikusa Kashû o oware sabaku no mizuumi nami tatanu hi* (24 syllables), "War driven out of California State the day waves do not rise on the desert lake," and *Byôreki katariai hitori nemuri futari nemuri fuyu no yo* (26 syllables; 27, if the last character in the original is read *yoru*), "Telling medical histories to each other one falls asleep another falls asleep this winter night."

Why preference for such an unorthodox approach? Wouldn't native orthodoxy have a stronger appeal in a foreign land—especially when you feel alienated by your adopted country? In his Foreword to the collection of these pieces, *May Sky: There Is Always Tomorrow: An Anthology of Japanese American Concentration Camp Kaiko Haiku* (Sun and Moon, 1997), Makoto Ueda suggests it may have been because many of the "early Japanese settlers in the United States [were] seekers of freedom in a new land." Perhaps. Though Ippekirô's daughter, Mayumi, contributes a brief introduction, the direct linkage between her father's magazine *Kaikô* (Quince) and the writers assembled in this anthology—compiled, translated, and prefaced by Violet Kazue de Cristoforo—is not clear.

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Whatever the reason, the unorthodoxy of these writers is what fascinates. Had they left us batches of haiku composed in the strict 5-7-5-syllable, *kachô fûgetsu* (flower-bird-wind-moon) mode of Ippekirô's more influential contemporary Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959), I doubt that my reaction would go beyond "So what?"

And precisely because of its unorthodoxy, this collection compels me to raise two unanswerable questions—one on haiku translation, and the other on the nature of haiku.

Violet de Cristoforo (born in Hilo, in 1917, as Kazue Yamane), who came under the influence of Neiji Ozawa

when she was twenty or so and wrote haiku herself, gives the original haiku (in Japanese script and Roman transliteration) in one line but her translations in three lines. Here are two of the pieces she composed at the Tule Lake Segregation Center.

Mitsuba no hana sakishi hibi tashikani ikin
Trefoil flowers bloom
daily—
I shall live positively

Shokubutsu hinjaku to omou soko koko no natsu no hatake
Vegetation seems meager
here and there
summer garden plots

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Aside from De Cristoforo's description of "free-style" (*jiyûritsu*) as "one-line" at one point, it seems to me that both the first of these haiku, in 18 syllables, and the second, in 23 syllables, can be broken into two lines at most—or, to ride my hobby horse, both haiku seem to work just fine in one line. Did she feel it necessary to apply a three-line format because of the formation of the syllabic units of *traditional* haiku? Or did she think one-line translations simply wouldn't appeal to English readers of poems?

(In *Cape Jasmine and Pomegranates*, Grossman Publishers, 1974, Soichi Furuta also translated Ippekirô's haiku in three lines, while giving the original in Japanese script in one line.)

As to the nature of haiku, many of the pieces in *May Sky* can be readily recast into a 5-7-5-syllable format despite their almost total disregard of syllabic count and syllabic formations. For example, one piece by Senbinshi Takaoka (dates unknown), *Natsuyû chi ni zu o kaite miseru otoko niji hakkiri tachi* (25 syllables), "Summer evening a man draws a figure for us on the ground a rainbow's up clearly," may be shortened to *Natsu no yû zu okaki miseru otoko niji*, "Summer evening a man draws

us a figure: a rainbow." So can another by the same poet, *Koya wa fuyugare no kaze fukuni makase yagi naiteiru* (23 syllables), "The shed lets the winter-withering wind blow the goat is bleating," be turned into *Fuyugare no fukunimakaseru koyanoyagi*, "Left to the winter-withering wind the shed the goat."

So one may ask: If both versions of each of the two haiku make it as haiku, as they must, what is a haiku? If one of the two versions makes it as a haiku but the other doesn't, as is possible, why not?

These questions, especially as they relate to the form, are largely moot in much of American haiku today. The trilinear structure is the norm, but other kinds of lineation, one liner among them, are accepted. The 17-syllable configuration is not the standard, but it is used and accepted. (In fact, there exist a coterie of adherents to the form.) Lee Gurga's latest book of haiku typifies this situation.

Of his 135 haiku selected in *Fresh Scent* (Brooks Books, 1998), two are in one line ("trying the old pump a mouse pours out," reads one of them), one in five lines ("the ticking of sleet / on the bedroom window; / your hand / gathers / me"), but the rest are all in three lines. Haiku with seventeen syllables are rare—almost accidental, written perhaps when he was still "counting syllables"—but the configuration itself is not discounted.

So the question as to the nature of haiku must focus on its content. And any description of literary content can only be just that: a description. Gurga, who in the Appendix to *Fresh Scent* discusses haiku, is no different. He gives "brevity, a seasonal or nature reference, the 'haiku moment,' juxtaposition, and what is referred to as 'haiku mind'" as "essential haiku characteristics," but they are all undefinable, except perhaps for the seasonal or natural element.

frozen branches
measure the emptiness—
winter sunset

the liquid movement
of the raccoon's eyes:
filled with maggots

figure drawing class—
in the model's deepest shadow
a stark white string.

Gurga probably calls this last a senryu, and that brings us to Dee Evetts's latest collection, *endgrain* (Red Moon Press, 1997). Evetts has observed somewhere that his haiku tend to be senryu-esque. In this book, the borderline between the two genres is often wafer-thin:

October again	after the rain
my walk to the post office	on my vegetable patch
on the sunny side	a new crop of stones

chill night
after you the toilet seat
slightly warm

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Evetts, who had “overdoses of Wordsworth and Milton,” perhaps describes best what haiku should be, if not what haiku is, when he says: “For all its brevity, it must ultimately be assessed by the same standards as all other literature. That is, by its aptness, wit, accuracy, felicity of language, and by its lack of sentimentality and moralizing.”

To go back briefly to *May Sky*, Violet Kazue de Cristoforo spent the war years—married to her first husband at the time and named Kazue Matsuda—in the Fresno Assembly Center, the Jerome Concentration Camp (in “the swampland of Arkansas”), and the Tule Lake Segregation Center. After the war, she was “expatriated” to Japan. In the 1950s she returned to the States and remarried. Other than the Ippekirô surprise, her book allows us to glimpse the convoluted psychology of those alienated in an alien land.

An occasional series of views and reviews by Hiroaki Sato

Red Moon Anthology 1997

The Red Moon Anthology, Jim Kacian, Editor-in-Chief, 1997, paper, 150+10 pp. ISBN 0-9657818-5-2. Red Moon Press, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604-1661. \$13.95.

Lest there be any doubt: *The Red Moon Anthology 1997 (RMA97)* is simply the best thing out there. The concept is inspired—to collect in one place the year's best English-language haiku and related materials from all sources. The collaborative, blind selection process is a fine idea: at last we have a haiku publication that relies on a real jury review. Virtually all the haiku, senryu, haibun, and linked verse that you liked in 1997 are here in one attractively designed and reasonably priced volume.

There are some problems, however. I found the "Essays" the least rewarding section of the book. It may just have been an undistinguished year for writings about haiku, but *RMA96* seemed to contain greater variety and fewer ho-hum essays. Also, my enjoyment of the contents of *RMA97* was assailed by far too many typographical errors, some merely comical, but others more substantive such as missing spaces between words, misplaced hyphens, and misspellings, which might have been caught by careful proofreading. "Acknowledgements" is especially sloppy: reference to Alex Feldvebel's haiku is absent; Caroline Gourlay's haiku is incorrectly cited, as are Michael Ketchek's and A.C. Missias's haibun; one journal title is erroneous; editor and publisher credits are missing for *Scratch and Sniff* and wrong for *Beneath Cherry Blossoms* and *Flows Down the Mountain*; and the title of Anita Virgil's essay regains the question mark that probably should have been there in the first instance.

I view it as a milestone that at last we have a publication that relies on more than one person in selecting haiku for publication. Appreciation of poetry is highly subjective. The views of more than one person

should be taken into account when selecting for publication, as is done in contests. The *RMA* procedure, which incorporates blind judging, statistical tallying, and ceilings for poets in each category of the book is likely as good or better than any other that can be devised, but, alas, it never can be 100% "scientific." The panelists are experts, but for that very reason they will bring certain biases to the judging process. Would not a panelist vote for a haiku that is 99% for certain the work of a co-panelist over one whose authorship is not known, all other things being equal? I am casting about here for an explanation of why the two *RMA*s have included a large percentage of haiku by the editors themselves (13% in 1997 and 18% in 1996). Is it because the panelists have written most of the best haiku this year, as the rigorous *RMA* selection process has determined? Are there other factors at work?

The publication of this second annual *RMA* volume also invites speculation about the long-term significance of the series: do we have something here more meaningful than just a yearly collection of fine haiku? Probably so. I know in my own writing I already rely on the two published *RMA*s for examples of what the most respected haiku poets are doing. But again the *RMA* statistics belie my gut feelings and some caution is advisable. I was not surprised, for example, to find that of the 212 items appearing in *RMA97* the preponderance, 23%, came from two journals, *Frogpond* (28) and *Modern Haiku* (20), but I might not have predicted the list of the other top sources: *Raw Nerve* (10), *South by Southeast*, *Still*, and *Woodnotes* (7 each).

But the negatives are minor and the speculations idle. The bottom line is that *The Red Moon Anthology 1997*, the second in, we hope, a long-running series, is a book that anyone who is at all serious about haiku simply must have.

—Reviewed by Charles Trumbull

HISA

News

HSA Virgilio Contest Winners 1998

In Summary: For all that each is unique, the poems we have chosen have one quality in common. They draw the reader into the moment—telling neither too much nor too little, leaving room for the reader to reflect on his/her own experience. Congratulations to the poets.

photograph:
for a moment
everything still

*Tyler Stoffel, Age 18
Wahlert High School
Dubuque IA, Grade 12*

Compton: "Haiku-like, the photograph captures a single moment in a world given increasingly to activity. Perhaps the photo is a 'still' taken from filmed motion—a dance performance or the flight of a hawk, for example. Or might the stillness be in the posing for the photo?"

Witkin: "A snapshot of the way things are, when seen clearly, stops us and puts us firmly in eternity. The poet at the flashpoint sees the connection between people, objects, and occasions that are in and outside of the photo here, sees their past and their future; as the film gathers its light, the poetic vision brings the poet home."

smiling at him
in the old pictures
he smiles back

*Crystal Wagner, Age 17
Wahlert High School
Dubuque IA, Grade 11*

Witkin: "The smile across time is tinged with sadness. As our own face is seen in a pond, the poet sees through many years, many changes, and from the silty bottom, a smile rises to the clean surface of the moment. We wonder about the relationship between these two, but it is the linking of the poet with the here and now that brings the poem its gleam."

Compton: Has the smiled-at man aged into sourness, or become ill? Has the relationship changed or ended? A poem of delicate understatement—one that suggests the poet's longing and offers many possibilities as to its cause.

the quiet girl
wearing
a loud shirt

*Tara Stecklein, Age 18
Wahlert High School
Dubuque IA, Grade 12*

Compton: "A moment of heightened perception, in which one external (the shirt) lets the poet look beyond another external (the girl's apparent quietness) to perceive the girl within."

Witkin: "The contrast shocks us into awareness that things are not always as they seem. The child never heard is finally seen in all her complexities and contradictions of ourselves. Regardless of who chose the shirt, the girl who wears it now comes boldly to life."

finding myself
between the willows—
autumn evening

*Adam Rauch, Age 17
Marple Newtown Sr. H.S.
Newtown Square PA, Grade
12*

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Witkin: "Stopping on an evening walk the poet finds himself between two willows. The trees will soon shed their leaves, the coolness gives a sense of winter. Deeply felt is all that has been lost. At the same time the willows will bring forth their leaves again in spring. For the moment the poet and the willows are one."

Compton: "Like the autumn evening, the poem is bitter-sweet. The poet's experience might recall similar times in one's own autumn walks, often over unplanned routes, frequently lost in thought—only to arrive in a familiar place without being quite sure how one got there. The leaves are turning, dusk comes early. In beauty there is just a little pain."

signs of spring— *Dani DeCaro, Age 16*
tanktop revealing *Marple Newtown Sr. H.S.*
her butterfly tattoo *Newtown Sq. PA, Grade 12*

Compton: "A gently humorous moment. One senses not only the poet's joy in the signs of spring, but also the joy of the tanktop wearer in her new freedom. Might they be the same person? Nice rhythm in this poem—especially the tanktop/tattoo interplay."

Witkin: "The lightness of the poem flutters delicately past the butterfly and then ends. The consonance of tanktop with tattoo reinforces what we feel only at the last word. A time of renewal and the warm spring sun brings freshness and play and yet the tanktop wearer, perhaps still quite young, has heard at least a note or two from the songs of experience. The interplay of the unfolding of spring and the unfolding of the wings of youth make poetry out of what could have been cute word play." 9 ||

leaf pattern *Bridget Leary, Age 18*
arranged *Wahlert High School*
rearranged by the wind *Dubuque IA, Grade 12*

Witkin: "A simple description. Watching this miracle, the poet sees her own life, all life, as part of the cosmic lattice. The changing patterns, all of them beautiful, hold for a moment an understanding of the mystery behind it all. In the season for reflection on change, there is a profound sense of awe in this vision."

Compton: "A meditative poem that speaks of the specialness of 'nothing special,' and of the ephemeral nature of all things. The poet has perceived a grace in every-day shapes constantly forming and re-forming into patterns—no two ever the same."

—*Ellen Compton and Jeff Witkin, Judges*

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The Last Word

It is with disappointment that I must announce there will be no *Frogpond Supplement* this year. The current state of the budget, coupled with rising costs in printing, precludes the production of such a volume at this time. However, the Executive Committee is considering several proposals which should bring expenses more in line with revenues, and it is our hope that we will be able to produce a Supplement next year. Meanwhile, of course, we will continue to bring you three issues of *Frogpond* per year, as well as four issues of the *HSA Newsletter*, and I continue to look forward to receiving and publishing your very best work. Thank you.

Jim Kacian, Editor

Errata from Frogpond XXI:1

In the beauty cream,
the last indentation
of her fingertips

Tom Tico

relapse . . .
more and more raindrops clinging
to the window

Carol Conti-Entin

Board meeting
wasps caught
between the windows

David Elliott

THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA

TREASURER'S REPORT

(April 1—June 30, 1998)

Income

Balance	17,177.83	
Membership Dues	1,385.00	
Frogpond Samples	70.00	
Museum of Haiku Literature	*200.00	
Total Income		18,832.83

Expenses

<u>HSA General Account</u>		
Postage	54.62	
Supplies	85.36	
Awards	100.00	
Tree Planting	250.00	
<u>Newsletter</u>		
Printing	882.60	
Postage	277.45	
<u>Frogpond</u>		
Printing	4,401.50	
Postage	876.04	
Total Expenses		6,927.87

Balance (6/30/98) 11,904.96

Respectfully submitted
Raffael DeGruttola, Treasurer

*\$400 check received 4/16/98, \$200 of which was for FY'97 as recorded in Annual Report.

Museum of Haiku Literature Award
\$50 for the best haiku or senryu
appearing in the previous issue of FROGPOND
as voted by the HSA Executive Committee

starry night—
biting into a melon
full of seeds

Yu Chang



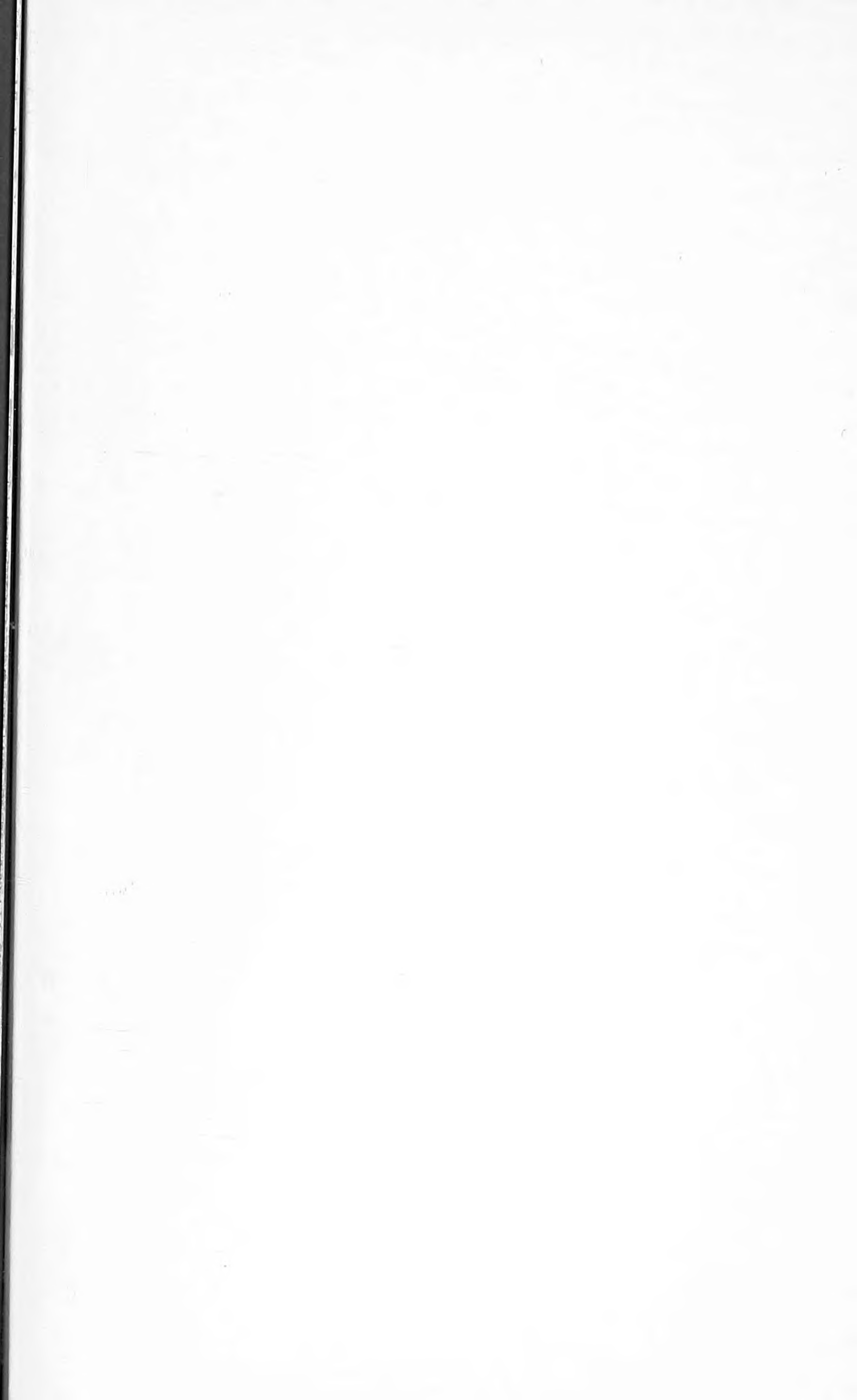


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