

FROGPOND XXVII:2





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## President's Message

Spring/summer greetings to all HSA members!

Exciting things are happening. The first HSA Quarterly Meeting took place in March, graciously hosted by the Fort Worth Haiku Society. This was the first-ever such event in Texas, a state that was central in the early definition and propagation of American haiku.

Speaking of definitions, the big news is that the HSA committee formed in 2003 to develop new definitions of "haiku" and related terms has completed its report. Clearly, for all of us, a definition of haiku is fundamental. Committee members Bill Higginson, Naomi Brown, and Lee Gurga have done a superb job in bringing the understanding of haiku up to date, and they have earned our highest praise and thanks. I urge each HSA member to become familiar with the new definitions, either by viewing them on the Web at

<[http://wjhigginson.home.att.net/HSA/HSA\\_Definitions\\_2004.html](http://wjhigginson.home.att.net/HSA/HSA_Definitions_2004.html)>  
(user ID = "HSA"; password = "Def2004" —case sensitive)

or by requesting a print copy from Secretary Karen Klein (please enclose an SASE with \$0.60 postage). The membership will vote on acceptance of the Committee's report at the Annual Meeting in September.

With all best wishes,

*Charles Trumbull*



# 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)*



April moon  
the tide backs upriver  
cove by cove

*kirsty karkow*

lakeside memorial  
the single shadow  
of clustered tadpoles

*Ferris Gilli*

5

spring dusk—  
herbs drying  
in a doorway

*David Faul*

two tides  
the fog never leaving  
the estuary

*Cherie Hunter Day*

curtain-breeze . . .  
a breath of turned earth  
between one dream and the next

*Robert Gilliland*



normal cycle  
a paper poppy  
tints the wash

*Peggy Willis Lyles*

Grass Moon—  
scolded for leaving  
the door open

*paul m.*

spring evening  
he flips flounder  
in yellow batter

*Lenard D. Moore*

6

spring walk—  
wondering what's happening  
in every house

*Toshiro Takeshita*

the side of the road that runs back home

*marlene mountain*



we bang our bowls clean  
against a pine—a sound so old  
I remember dying

*Keith Woodruff*

shattered egg shells  
the goose nudges  
each tiny piece

*Linda Jeannette Ward*

7

projector switched off . . .  
on the white screen  
shadows of bamboo

*K. Ramesh*

left and right  
he follows the way  
of his kicked stone

*Tom Clausen*

wildflowers . . .  
the saddle creaks  
as I lean down

*Kerann Christopherson*



spring winds all redheads like their mother

*Marilyn Appl Walker*

missing you—  
the farrier's hands  
calm the brood mare

*Billie Wilson*

on the canal towpath  
with my mother  
sound of hard rain

*Frances Angela*

8

five o'clock  
the other voices  
fade away

*Charlie Close*

Lights across the bay—  
is someone over there  
looking over here?

*William Scott Galasso*



sunrise  
the goldfish gather  
this end of the pond

*Dee Evetts*

morning commute  
train shadow  
shooting through the trees

*Nate Haken*

9

along Southwest Drive  
parking for the northeast view  
of snowcapped mountains

*Rengé/David Priebe*

growth rings  
of a felled tree  
moment of silence

*Allen McGill*

sunrise—  
out of the river  
the osprey plucks silver

*Ruth Yarrow*



old farmer  
circles the hayfield  
first cutting

*Cheryl Burghdurf*

black butterfly  
lifting its wings  
the sun comes out

*H. F. Noyes*

warm beer—  
heat lightning flickers  
beyond the outfield

*Billie Wilson*

10

your last garden the green tomatoes. . .

*Cheryl Burghdurf*

swallowing water  
the famous silence  
of the dessert

*Michael McClintock*

the drag with the paddle  
holds our course  
summer afternoon

*Helen Russell*

high summer  
halfway home from tennis  
we know it is over

*Helen Russell*

11

a thin foam  
lines the sandbar shore  
broken shells

*Steven Thunell*

high surf—  
a whole flock of sanderlings  
on one leg

*Brent Partridge*

birds  
fold up their colors—  
last berries

*CarrieAnn Thunell*



# The Conscious Eye

*On the Urban Experience*

Dee Evetts

THE SUBJECT OF URBAN HAIKU has generated a considerable response, and once again my post-bag has provided an angle of approach for this column. Letters from Michael Ketchek and Paul Miller offered some thought-provoking observations, along similar lines but with different emphases. Here first is Miller:

I think haiku's purpose like most of Art is to allow mankind to unite—albeit briefly—with a loftier world from which civilization and its machinations have long since been estranged. Thomas Hemstege put it well in the latest issue of *Modern Haiku* when he said, “The object is to find something in nature that will accurately reflect that particular mood of the moment, a leaf, a cloud...” But why nature? I think this is because nature has a cycle that can be easily translated to our own cyclical moods—from the joy and hope of Spring to the acceptance and perhaps bleakness of Winter. Nature is an easy metaphor. The City, however, does not have such cycles. It is a machine that acts the same in Spring as it does in Winter.

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The Hemstege quote is unfamiliar to me, and I find it quite startlingly reminiscent of T.S. Eliot's proposal\* for an “objective correlative”. But why indeed must this be found in nature? Could it not equally well reside in a human gesture—let's say, the pose of a mannequin in a store window, the way a shoe-shine boy flourishes his rag, or a Japanese commuter bows to his fellow-passengers upon boarding a train?

---

\* ‘The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an “objective correlative”; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.’ (“Hamlet and his Problems”, 1919)



We may readily agree with Miller that the rhythms of the natural world reflect our own emotional cycles, endowing them (often consolingly and holistically) with a larger context. But is it really the case that the city does not have such cycles? My ten years as a New Yorker suggest otherwise to me. And it is not difficult to find poems that demonstrate the effect of the seasons on a great city. Here are four from among many:

first snow  
brought in from the suburbs  
on the neighbor's car<sup>1</sup>

summer heat—  
the nightlong buzz  
of a streetlamp<sup>2</sup>

public garden  
she photographs the iris  
I just smelled<sup>3</sup>

spring thaw  
the young cop aims  
her snowball<sup>4</sup>

These, in order, are by Doris Heitmeyer, Christopher Patchel, and Bruce Detrick, while the last is my own.

On reflection, I take Miller's meaning to be that the city does not *of itself* have such cycles. Certainly this seems to be the drift of Michael Ketchek's comments:

One of the problems of urban haiku is that very few urban images are archetypal and therefore [are] unable to stir deep emotions in the way that images from nature or a more pastoral setting do . . . Besides the lack of archetypes there is another major obstacle to writing urban haiku. In haiku, through its use of juxtaposition, there is an underlying feeling of the interconnectedness of things... Urban life can be seen as the opposite of this expression of the connectness of things... as alienation from the earth and the natural cycles of seasons and life and death.

If this is the case, could it be that a deep-seated impulse to resist this alienation is precisely what drives so many city-



dwelling haiku poets to observe and to celebrate natural cycles, wherever these push their way through or in between the mechanical, the commercial, the digitalized?

From this viewpoint, such poems are to be seen as vital and authentic expressions—rather than representing a nostalgic hearkening after distant realities, or an idealized notion of what subjects are appropriate to haiku (both of which have been frequently suggested).

I stated earlier that we can easily find poems that show the effect of the seasons upon the urban environment. It may then be more accurate to say that it is the *citizens* who are affected, despite the insulating tendency of the city. And at a profound level it may be that we want and need to be thus affected, to feel the connections, to take note of and take satisfaction in the first roller-bladers in the park, the roar of traffic recalling a recent vacation near the ocean surf, or a businessman taking a short cut across a frozen pond.

I have selected another half dozen poems that seem to exemplify this particularly well:

bridge traffic  
moving slower  
than the river<sup>5</sup>

at the market  
the spot on the melon  
where it lay in the mud<sup>6</sup>

afternoon sleet  
cathedral door  
unlocked<sup>7</sup>

Central Park sunset  
a man with a briefcase  
crosses the frozen lake<sup>8</sup>

vacation over  
hearing the sea  
in the traffic's roar<sup>9</sup>

summer rain  
the bank teller shares  
his peanuts<sup>10</sup>



These are by: Joann Klontz, Cor van den Heuvel, Mike Dillon, Doris Heitmeyer, Pamela Miller Ness, and Mark Brooks.

I find the image of a river, flowing as it does through so many of the world's great cities, a potent reminder of the larger and more permanent forces that we tend to regard merely as a backdrop to our elaborate constructions.

Klontz's bridge also brings to mind another of Ketchek's remarks: "This is not to argue against urban haiku, or to say that there are no aspects of urban life that are part of the collective unconscious. Certainly skyscrapers are symbolic of humanity's secular aspirations, in the same way as a steeple represents western religious goals."

I have on this occasion side-stepped the question of whether human activity is as much part of "nature" as that of any other species. And by extension, whether our connections and relations with each other are not simply another aspect of the larger connectedness discussed above. Next time, I will attempt to address this, while examining poems—*grittier* work, some would say—that reflect some of the more intrinsically urban scenes and interactions.

15

\* \* \*

1. *New Cicada* 10:2
2. *Modern Haiku* 33:3
3. *For a Moment* (Farrington Press, 2000)
4. *endgrain* (Red Moon Press, 1997)
5. *Bridge Traffic* (Tiny Poems Press and Winfred Press, 1998)
6. *After Lights Out* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 1996)
7. *Modern Haiku* 34:2
8. *The Pianist's Nose* (Spring Street Haiku Group, 2001)
9. *ibid.*
10. *acorn* 5

(Submissions for this column may be sent to Dee Evetts, 131 Roszel Road, Winchester, VA 22601. Please indicate whether the work has been previously published, supplying details.)



prairie morning  
sun on the lee  
of a small hill

*Gerald Bravi*

fallen apples  
touching each other  
abandoned farm

*Burnell Lippy*

she sifts  
embossing powder—  
cicada song

*Mark Brooks*

16

fainter and fainter  
up church steps  
damp footprints

*Michael Dudley*

my lapsed religion . . .  
three flocks of geese  
waver into one

*Joann Klontz*

autumn sunrise  
the valley warms  
with color

*Allen McGill*

first three gears  
of the neighbor's drive to work—  
autumn morning

*Barry A. George*

17

flea market  
testing the heft  
of the pokers

*Elizabeth Howard*

autumn dusk  
the tattered ends  
of the basketball net

*Michael Ketchek*

autumn loneliness—  
your final letter to me  
with a missing page

*Michael Dylan Welch*



morning espresso  
the sound of  
hardwood floors

*CarrieAnn Thunell*

her radio in Chinese  
mine in English  
cicadas

*Andy Hacanis*

autumn wind  
in his sweater pocket  
the missing button

*Nancy S. Young*

18

memorial wreath-  
pine cone sap  
on my fingers

*Merrill Ann Gonzales*

rainy night  
a light in a window  
at the end of the road

*Cor van den Heuvel*

a stone, a leaf . . .  
the quiet closing  
of a door

*Peggy Willis Lyles*

twilight  
the wind sends ripples  
from the decoy

*Cor van den Heuvel*

19

the "Lost Dog" sign  
nailed deep  
into the oak

*David Lanoue*

Walking home alone . . .  
from beginning to end  
autumn twilight

*Tom Tico*

meadow frost  
the wolf pups nip  
puffs of steam

*Darrell Byrd*



out of its reflecting pool  
the wind blown  
fountain

*Tom Clausen*

late fall—  
my echo calling  
the dog

*Rebecca Lilly*

moon-viewing  
chilled m&m's spilled  
into a glass bowl

*Shimi*

20

insomnia —  
a receding train whistle  
lengthens the night

*Curtis Dunlap*

between the waves  
and the wind in the pines  
it never stops

*Makiko*

outside the classroom—  
a hallway that goes by  
other classrooms

*Gary Hotham*

cardinal feathers—  
a perfect circle  
on the pink snow

*Makiko*

21

two snowmen  
the children perform  
a wedding ceremony

*William Cullen Jr.*

winter evening—  
in my bedroom mirror  
the ceiling

*Scott Mason*

at 30,000 feet  
my ears clear—  
winter stars

*Christopher Patchel*



the longest night  
we share passages  
from our journals

*Pamela Miller Ness*

through misty rain  
the voices  
of carol singers

*Ruth Franke*

rolling dough  
for a gingerbread house—  
winter solstice

*Richmond D. Williams*

22

new year's eve  
thin clouds pass  
behind the moon

*Mark Hollingsworth*

winter night  
the light left on  
in the other room

*Charlie Close*

New Year's bonfire  
the quiet moment  
just before lighting  
*Yasuhiko Shigemoto*

warm winter evening—  
the chairs askew  
after the poetry reading  
*Michael Dylan Welch*

23

the bird feeder's  
steep slope of seeds  
bitter cold  
*Burnell Lippy*

new year  
she's moved on  
to a new corner  
*Nancy S. Young*

winter stars . . .  
the sirens  
fade  
*Francine Banwarth*



winter morning-  
the wicker basket  
crammed with single mittens

*George Dorsty*

winter sunshine  
warms her hand  
letters to answer

*Greg Piko*

midwinter  
a spot licked bare  
on the cat

*Kay Grimnes*

24

the smoothness  
of my lover's face—  
snowy evening

*Agnes Eva Savich*

personal effects  
the scent  
of the cedar chest

*w f owen*

walking my shadow in winter woods

*Robert M. Wilson*

winter evening  
angry dog tries to scare off  
his own echo

*Gary Cozine*

25

return ski trail—  
the glacial valley fills  
with blue light

*Ruth Yarrow*

calm winter night—  
taking in the dark side  
of the moon

*Dorothy McLaughlin*

mid-winter thaw . . .  
the crowns  
of headstones

*Michael Dudley*



sap run beginning—  
the tunk tunk in the bucket  
turns to tink tink tink . . .

*Peter Yovu*

cloudless sky  
the pond ice retreats  
into itself

*Bob Boni*

sounds of snowmelt  
hand-on-belly she speaks  
of a fish at the surface

*Paul Wigelius*

26

thick fog I jump from stone to stone

*Dimitar Anakiev*

spring evening—  
a kind of sadness  
comes and goes

*Marcus Larsson*

vernal equinox  
from all sides of the yard  
chickadees

*Bruce Ross*

spring weather  
the joy of squeezing  
a paper wad

*Michael Fessler*

27

tomato blossoms  
a breeze lifts the hair  
on my arm

*w f owen*

the children home  
for spring break  
a few warm days

*Toshiro Takeshita*

electric wires  
disappear inside  
cherry blossoms

*Scott Metz*



# senryu

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

**2: A foreign adaptation of 1.**

into one wedding picture  
the whole family  
crowded for eternity

*LeRoy Gorman*

breakwater—  
the hush after  
my opinion

*D. Claire Gallagher*

29

xxx  
am I  
telling too much

*Yu Chang*

small hours  
downstairs  
her folks  
discuss us

*Paul Pfleuger*

promise ring  
left on the table—  
burgundy

*Thomas Patrick DeSisto*



a neatened desk  
my days here  
all but vanished

*Michael McClintock*

just gathering dust  
granddad's collection  
of Zane Grey novels

*Tom Tico*

book closed—  
I'm lost  
outside the story

*Frank Dullaghan*

30

*La Boheme*  
I block out the moon  
with a martini olive

*Joshua Gage*

my face  
in a bowl of soup,  
smaller and smaller

*Robert M. Wilson*

at the bar  
swollen grains  
in the shaker

*Dan Schwerin*

divorced  
he finishes  
his sentence

*Tom Painting*

31

waking up  
the remote gone cold  
in my hand

*Mykel Board*

every so often  
the sound of a passing car . . .  
sleeping along now

*Jay Santini*

summer drought—  
not even  
a wet dream

*Stanford M. Forrester*



# Haiku in the Wild

Richard Gilbert

## A Very Warm Mountain

autumn mist oak leaves left to rust  
—marlene mountain, *Frogpond* XXVI:1)

IT WAS URSULA K. LE GUIN who re-conceptualized the genres of science fiction and fantasy, introducing new visions of humanity which delved into issues of politics, feminism and human potential, among diverse topics. Le Guin has also entered the canon of nature writing in American literature, with her essay from which this article takes its name. In haiku, marlene mountain has likewise crafted an oeuvre which offers numerous haiku re-conceptualizations in the *gendai* spirit, an important term from the Japanese haiku tradition meaning “modern, contemporary.” mountain offers readers a range of possibilities for presenting contemporary social issues in haiku, and importantly, through her prevalent one-line form, has presented *gendai* re-conceptualizations of the natural in haiku.

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The above haiku is one of her more imagistically concrete poems: even the register shift of “rust” coming at the end of the line remains strongly visual. But “rust” creates imagistic irruption and so, naturalistic irruption. Does rust reinforce the sense of season? This is how irruption seems to create a tension, in terms of nature. The uneasiness; rust instead of russet; rust as weathering metal, as technos not geos. Rust is sometimes sharp-edged, ragged, something that gets you cut (so, cutting), infected; the feeling of decay—deforms any rising romanticism of the beauty of the leaves of the autumn oak in mist. It also seems that the irruptive collocation “mist oak” really catalyzes this unease; this language seems to rebel against meaning, forcing us out of the poem, so we lose contact with the natural, with the naturalness of the natural read-image, read naturally. Then the power of rust (vivid, solid color, substance) throws us back in again, but as garbage, detritus:



cast-off or broken. And yes it's the leaves turning, dying, drying out. But we can't quite believe this in a facile way anymore.

And why is that important—not to believe? Yes, why should we lose our belief in how we habitually find nature? Just perhaps, nature tainted by the consciousness of language is more honest, in a surprising way. Why may this be? It is difficult and painful to look at the truth of our contemporary relationship with nature; the field of literary ecocriticism, shared by Le Guin and mountain, offers us relevant contemplations which directly impend upon haiku. While there are a number of avenues to consider, one that strikes me in relation to mountain's haiku is that of Bill McKibben, whose 1991 book *The End of Nature* showed us that what human civilization has lost, in our time, is the very *idea* of nature as something apart, indomitable, pure: the very molecules our biosphere have now been altered by human civilization, from global warming and ocean temperature-rise to acid rain and ozone holes, no heretofore natural biome remains unaffected, at our hand. In another important text, *The Abstract Wild*, Jack Turner shows how the wilds have been converted to managed zones. How can haiku deal with these new truths, concerning relationships between nature and society? Does "pure" nature even exist, except as a romantic concept?

Contemplating such deformations of nature and the wild, it may be said that at this point in time, naturalistic haiku are highly artificial. And conversely, that there is a strange and rather mysterious naturalness that arises from deformation. James Hillman discusses this in terms of the need for the pathologic in soul-making—it's become very difficult to recover nature through either the romantic or naive. This is one reason why the realism-inspired *shasei* representation style of Shiki, which we have been following as a main haiku guideline, is limited. Not irrelevant by any means, but definitely partial.

For haiku, we need to ask: finally, where in the natural is the wild? Is there a last refuge? Perhaps it is mind itself that is at root wild, beneath language, outside of it; but to reach this sense, language and habitual conceptualizations (propositions, constructions), must be deformed, irrupted. It is fair to consider that haiku, through their unique techniques



of juxtaposition and disjunction, have already given Western literature just this sort of paradoxical truth, but to the present, our haiku tradition has feared deformations of the natural image, and has mainly rejected language-based (textual) irruption, as a main technique in revealing haiku resonance. Thus, as relevant literary needs and concerns have shifted (the academic field of ecocriticism did not exist as such, two decades ago), haiku have come to seem increasingly managed; we might propitiously ask, has our poetic genre become little more than a conglomeration of “haiku parks” tended by conceptual park-rangers? Do formulaic concepts too often cordon off our poetics from the wild? Have we lost sight of the importance of the wild, of how we might be able to connect with untrammelled nature? Such a need as we now face may not have been a main concern of Basho, in terms of direct representation: the idea of language deformation as a means of reading the land. Neither, perhaps, was an irrupted psychic landscape a necessary entry point leading to a recovery or memento mori of nature, to awaken “the lion [who] roars at the enraging desert” of modernity, to quote Wallace Stevens. But wildness was Basho’s concern, regarding mind and being. Haiku, at their best, activate an indomitable wildness, a scent of mind which is uncontrollable and which at times reaches beyond the humanistic realm, relativizing our place in cosmos, reminding us of scale, nurturing our unknowing.

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Questions such as “where is the wild” and “what is nature” must likely be relevant for poets these days, and they are crucial questions for haiku. Coupled with these questions are the polemics of haiku viz nature. It would be ironic indeed, witnessing increasing ecological chaos, to leaf through page after page of picaresque juxtapositional haiku scenes of serene contemplation—some future literatur might well ask, “what were those people thinking?” These days, our zeitgeist demands fresh poetic responses to our global predicament. One dimension of mountain’s search has been to artfully seek the wild in haiku, with a rare and unflinching honesty, and in doing so provide approaches that challenge us to reflect honestly upon our time and both the poetic and political relevance of the modern haiku tradition.

*Richard Gilbert*



*stable* he answers  
as if this life  
was an ICU

*Steve Sanfield*

tracing the contours  
of my brain scan . . .  
recalling past mountains

*Helen Buckingham*

35

suture scars along her spine pink panties

*Victor Ortiz*

the one  
who never touched me  
touched me

*Bonnie Stepenoff*

Burial  
behind each mourner  
a shadow

*Klaus-Dieter Wirth*



Year of the Monkey  
firecrackers  
start a fight

*Andy Hacanis*

senior's centre—  
a bowl of broken candycanes  
on Valentine's Day

*Alice Frampton*

melting snow  
your list  
of projects

*Marcus Larsson*

36

ski-slope  
my other half  
goes oops

*Ernest J. Berry*

St. Patrick's Day  
from the cabbage  
the trail of steam

*Lenard D. Moore*

spring in the air—  
how long that hole holds  
the cat's attention

*Carolyn Hall*

her posture  
as she says  
“puffy little clouds”

*Brent Partridge*

37

downtown—  
the mime repeats  
yesterday's motions

*Emily Romano*

ATM: SUV  
SUV  
SUV

*Peter Yovu*

a little envy  
between me and these tourists  
lost on my street

*Janelle Barrera*



50% off:  
trying on pants  
that won't fit

*Guy Jefferson*

Halloween dusk  
the siding salesman's  
gold earring

*Rees Evans*

consignment jewelry store  
the owner sells me  
his wedding band

*Carolyn Rohrig*

38

antique store  
teacups  
between owners

*Dorothy McLaughlin*

the portrait complete  
what lingers is the scent  
of paint

*William Scott Galasso*

left to itself a moon without subtitles

*marlene mountain*

passing a casino  
my odometer has a full house

*Phillip Ronald Stormer*

39

ignoring  
the handwriting on the wall . . .  
turnpike restroom

*Dan McCullough*

home again  
out of practice with chopsticks  
I take tiny bites

*Shelly Chang*

faded blue jeans stretch  
their comfort life style around  
my relaxed fit frame

*Sally Clark*



linked

forms

## *An Ancient Force*

which way home?  
yellow ferns pointing  
in all directions

the copper vane spins  
a rainbow's arc

41

no channel marker  
only the fish  
know the way

eyes searching  
for the big dipper—  
moonless night

a compass points north  
an ancient force

journey's end  
calling of geese  
just over the hill . . .

*gerald bravi  
karina klesko*

## *Clickety Clack*

chiming cowbells—  
the mountain hikers  
enter a cloud

thin mist—  
the soft tap of a walking cane

clickety clack  
of high heel shoes—  
the blind man looks up

home again . . .  
absentmindedly  
finding the creaky floorboard

steamed up motel window  
an unseen rooster crows

morning birdsong  
through the open tent flap  
the billy boils



## *Between Stepping Stones*

snow . . .  
everywhere I look  
men

winter decisions  
a lock of hair  
from the family dog

43

Friday afternoon—  
the ice melting  
between stepping stones

propagation  
a house full  
of coleus

## *Hospitality*

THE NURSES TELL ME that I should rest but they return to take my vital signs at 10 p.m., 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. My “private” room is beside the heliport and, unfortunately, it’s been a busy night for the chopper and crew. By the time breakfast is brought to me on a tray, I can barely keep my eyes open.

home.  
the dog slips under  
my blanket

*Curtis Dunlap*

## *Visiting Day*

HIGH ON MY DA’S SHOULDERS i was no more than five into the bar we went and i carrying the beer bucket the barman calling out *beer...here...beer...here...* the barman filling it overflowing what a head on her can you imagine 5¢ for all that beer can you imagine that and da and i laughing all the way home he carried me

overheated room  
a scent of mothballs  
from the open drawer

*Roberta Beary*

44

## *Before the Thaw*

EARLY SPRING before the ice sheet cleared, my grandfather would sprinkle blue crystals of copper sulfide to kill the algae. All morning, the huge fish sulked and tarnished, gasping near the surface. Once he emptied a drawer of baby mice through the feeding hole. It wasn’t callous, by strict definition, since that would imply roughness from repeated wear. He’d survived two pandemics, fallen from the roof of his trailer fixing his TV antennae and walked away unbroken. He had no patience for anything imperfect, and anyone infirm he’d say would be better off dead than a burden.



between us  
and rainbow trout  
cracks in the ice

*Judson Evans*

### *To Touch the Shore*

IT IS UNUSUAL WEATHER for Florida, cold with high winds. I am comfortably curled up on the couch. A TV alert breaks into the program. Three Cuban rafters in old inner tubes tied together have been spotted in the rough sea. Wave after wave brings them closer to shore. With the “foot policy”, they must touch the shore to stay in the US. A Coast Guard helicopter hovers overhead just watching, just watching. They will help if there is danger but the rafters must make it on their own. Wave after wave slowly brings them closer. A crowd has gathered on the beach. They can only stand and watch.

45

climbing over the wall  
the bougainvillea drops  
a blanket of petals

*Betty Kaplan*

### *Untitled*

I REMEMBER a claim that it was the most photographed tree in the world. Stubbornly rooted on granite, the Jeffrey pine looked down on the Yosemite Valley for 400 years until it finally died in the drought of 1976. Less than thirty years later when I read in a newspaper that its trunk has toppled over I seek out my own family's photograph with the tree. Arms intertwined, the six of us bunch closely—the mountains behind stretching into eternity. A picture undoubtedly taken by a stranger waiting for his own family's turn.

autumn wind—  
I soak the bonsai  
an extra minute

*paul m.*



## Ending

MATSUMOTO-SAN is a sweet old man. He sends me some haiku every three months or so and I make one or two haiga from the batch. He likes to frame the haiga so I send him printouts with my hanko and signature. In return, he sends me gifts, a box of English tea one time and some expensive European chocolate another.

Occasionally, he calls me on the phone. He has some kind of lung disease so he cannot speak for too long. He speaks little by little but with a clear and crisp typical Tokyo dialect. Our conversation is almost entirely one way—he talks about his haiku and I listen. Then

year's end phone call—  
the aged haijin clicks off  
at my "so, how is . . . ?"

I am used to such conversation. My father, who is the same age as Matsumoto-san, does the same. Usually we "talk" over sake. I just keep on drinking sake, ending up more drunken than my father, and usually pretty badly hung over next morning.

year ending—  
with a long stream of clouds  
Mt. Fuji runs

\* \* \*

46

At the beginning of last autumn, Matsumoto-san sent me a new batch. I picked one and made a haiga. I edited his haiku, switching a few words and providing an English translation:

June rain passing—  
baking scent of  
doll cookies lingers

As usual, I made a printout and sent it to him. As usual, he sent me a gift. As usual, he called me, confirming that the gift had arrived OK and expressing gratitude for the correction. And then, as usual, he was gone.



A few months passed. One December day, I received a letter. It was from Matsumoto-san's wife. Only then I learned that Matsumoto-san had passed away the month before. I decided to add my own haiku to his doll haiga:

passing November rain—  
something departs from an unowned doll

*Kuniharu Shimizu*

### *Emptiness*

AS ALWAYS it was difficult to fall asleep in a new place. The darkened room pulsed with light from passing cars, eerie reflections on walls shifted with the lightning through the moving curtains. With eyes closed breathing deeply as taught letting go of this day not thinking of the morrow willing sleep to come body mind distanced not seeking not analyzing sinking into a thoughtless void...outside the storm has just begun to a distant roll of thunder; inside the stick-on glow stars on the ceiling bring to mind Leonardo Da Vinci's quote—"Of the great things that we have among us, the existence of nothingness is the greatest."

47

in the green spikes  
and dips of the monitor  
memories of Scotland

*Angelee Deodhar*

### *Seniority*

WHERE DID I leave my keys?

Outside sunlight dazzles against snow. Sparrows flit in and out of hedgerows. Where a patch of snow has dwindled to almost nothing, an early robin basks with sunlight on its breast.

Where did I leave my keys?

an ambulance siren  
shrills past the house:  
keys cold in my hand

*Emily Romano*



## *Birthday Time*

A LITTLE GIRL, helping her mother wash clothes at the stream. Later, with two older brothers, grabbing a few tangerines from the neighbor's tree, some peanuts from the fields above the rice paddies. Today, for her sixth birthday, an egg, which makes her very happy. In the evening, after all the chores are done, after dinner by lantern light, climbing the hill to look at the stars.

her two watches:  
one made of paper  
one drawn on her wrist

*Andy Hacanis*

## *One Less Voice*

IT'S A CRISP MORNING, crystal blue skies with the exception of one cloud. On my back deck I discover a dead bird. I recognize it as the Pine Warbler that sings in the same tree every day outside my window. A bonfire is burning yard grasses and leaves in the back acre so my children and I carefully wrap the songbird in a burlap cloth securing it with a rose coloured ribbon. We lay this beautiful creature in a box and carry it to the fire.

From the many trees around us, bird song, one less voice, one last good-bye.

48

gray smoke spirals  
she takes her fine linen  
off the clothes line

*Karina Klesko*

## *Requiem*

AN ORCHARD OF GNARLED APPLE TREES stand entwined in a memory, where summers of abundance appear. Heady years of golden honey flow, delightful in fragrance and texture. *Malus pumila*, *Pyrus Communis*, *Prunus Domestica*, clover, mustard, lime.



over quiet glades  
honey bees go winging  
true to nature

In a sleeping orchard, a voice speaks softly to the bees. "The master is dead, I am the new master." This incantation handed down through generations of beekeepers drifts quietly along a row of beehives. The voice contains the songs of honey and cedar wood. As the incantation dies, a memory remains.

Even with insects  
some can sing  
some can't

*Issa*

49

As the voice fades, there among the gnarled apple trees, honey bees forage for pollen and nectar, and a memory is chanting; "*Malus pumila, Pyrus Communis, Prunus Domestica, clover, mustard, lime.*" The master is dead.

in winter  
in those quiet hives  
a field mouse nests

*Richard Cluroe*

### ***Shadow Talk***

A SHADOW saw some kids playing, so it went up to them. It said, "Paint me red." So the kids painted some red on the shadow. Then the shadow said, "Paint me blue." So they painted blue on it. And then the shadow said, "Paint me some more." When the shadow was full of color, it got up and played with the kids.

child's play—  
full of light,  
the rainbow

*Madeleine Truffat, age 4 (prose)*  
*Peggy Olafson (poem)*

## *Old Wounds*

As a military family, we rarely spent holidays with dad. This holiday wasn't any different. My father was serving a tour of duty in Vietnam. Trained as a trouble-shooter, he was sent to Saigon to manage a military hotel in financial trouble. Earlier that summer, in anticipation of joining him in Vietnam, my family was given the requisite shots for overseas travel. Due to an increase in the conflict, however, the U. S. government began sending to safer locations those they deemed as non-essential personnel; we never made it there.

balmy day  
dust floats  
from the duffel bag

It was Christmas Eve, 1964, when the message was delivered. Printed on a mere half-sheet of yellow paper, its capital-lettered contents shattered the calm in our living room. "Hotel bombed ... YOUR husband TREATED FOR HIS INJURY ... will receive the Purple Heart for his services."

silent night  
only the TV  
sings Christmas carols

50 As a veteran of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, when dad speaks of his experiences now it's in the most casual way. Yes, he tells us, he had been injured that night in Saigon but didn't know it at the time. He was too busy tending to others. A Christmas party was in progress for his employees. On his way down to the lower level to check the meat freezers' finicky temperatures, his secretary called him back to look at records pulled for the next day's audit. If she hadn't, he would have been a casualty of the blast.

war veteran  
somewhere  
his scar

*Yvonne Cabalona*



## *in and out of fog*

I STRIDE THIS JANUARY MORNING as much to stay warm as to emulate my heroes, Jim Bridger, Davy Crockett, Kit Carson and my grandfather. Pump pellet gun slung over my shoulder, a leftover biscuit wrapped in foil bulging my left pants pocket, a ball of cotton twine--in case i get a squirrel or rabbit--bunched in my right pocket. After an hour walk, i reach the outskirts of town, a pecan grove cut by a small stream. When i have been here before, i have seen families of squirrels among the bare limbs and clumps of mistletoe. Even so, they are hard to shoot, as they rotate around the trunks to hide. Grandfather explained how to hunt game in his many stories. "Click the bolt of your rifle or click your tongue," he would say, "the squirrels will come around the trunk to see what's making the noise." And, about hunting rabbits, "make sure you lead 'em like shooting birds." Walking slowly through the grove, clicking my way, looking for squirrels above and for rabbits among the tufts of winter rye. Feelings of anticipation and sadness. Sad that grandfather had only told me how to hunt--he never came with me. He wanted to, but as a young man he had pierced his right eye with a pocketknife while whittling. "My shooting eye," he joked. And recently, his dementia has taken more from him.

Fog is lifting, birds are singing. This hunt seems over. Reaching for my biscuit, i look for a boulder to sit on. Across the creek, a large marsh rabbit lumbers up the trail. i raise my pellet gun, aim ahead of the rabbit and squeeze the trigger. To my amazement, the animal falls. i run across an oak trunk that spans the creek, up the embankment and stand over the twitching body. The pellet has entered one eye and protrudes the other.

Rabbit hanging from my waist, munching a cold biscuit, i walk home.

in and out of fog  
driving him  
to the home



## *In Passing*

LOST. ABANDONED. ALONE. That's how I felt when my father died. I had the feeling that I would never sleep again and having awoken, I had emerged from a state that could never be reentered. I got out of bed and went directly into my mother's room. It was early and I never got up early. Neither did she. She was laying on her side in bed, fully dressed, staring straight ahead in bewilderment as the tears furrowed deep paths down her cheeks. "Wendy," she called to me, somewhere between a question and a statement. Then I knew for sure. I can't remember how much I cried then, but I know I cried some and she cried a lot. Eventually my arm went to sleep and I had to go to the bathroom. So, like a sleepwalker, I went through the motions in a complete daze; that kind of cottony no man's land where I felt as if I'd been drugged, but knew it was a shot of life I'd had instead.

frosted windows  
moving from shock to grief  
like entering another room

*Wendy Smith*

## *Haiku Rendezvous*

IT'S BEEN NEARLY A YEAR since I've seen him. I even moved, not leaving a forwarding number.

52

you don't know  
where i live but still  
i leave the porch light on

Our phone conversation is short, nothing much exchanged except when and where we will meet, a secret spot: a cheesy cabin restaurant with an artificial fireplace. It is another place neither of us has been to and will never go again. I make sure I wear a black, fringed sweater he's never seen, a new shade of lipstick, Scarlet O'Hara Red.

I freeze in my heels when I see his profile at the bar, and he turns his face to me.



his moustache gone—  
a shorter reach  
for our tongues

His voice steadies me, like it always has. The shabby, ordinary life I lead becomes poetry as we talk. Nothing else exists except his wide blue eyes and the worn little journals we each bring, scribbled full of our lonely love haiku. We take turns reading, each poem taking one slow breath.

my haiku lover . . .  
not many words  
between us

I got worried about you when I wasn't seeing your work in Plum Blossoms, he says, his eyes like blue moons. Haven't submitted in a long time, I say, sighing. Maybe I needed you for some new material, I tease. He strokes my hair and plays with the ring on my finger. He writes something in my journal that I won't read just now. I can't tell you what the waitress looks like, though she fetches us drinks for hours. A married couple next to us listens in for a while and when they leave, we take their booth until the last call, and the waitress leaves the stark white bill on the table.

It's cold out and I tuck my hand into the crook of his elbow as he walks me out, opens my car for me.

after midnight—  
keys jingling  
in my door

Let's just stay a while longer, I say, though I didn't need to say it. As my lips find his, I know he is as imaginary as a lullaby and as real as a bruise. Later tonight, I will fall asleep, nestled in a dream of his arms. And tomorrow I will wake to an emptiness that fills every gaping, longing space within me. But now I do not care.

the pull  
of my ex-lover—  
crater moon

essays



## *Thoreau and the Haiku Spirit*

HENRY DAVID THOREAU (July 12, 1817–May 6, 1862) is one of America's great prose stylists. His is a hard, flinty prose. One could strike it with a rock and sparks would fly. Yet it is fluid, simple, and lucid. It also possesses twists and turns of irony and depths of meaning. It is both straightforward and paradoxical. Reasoned and quirky. Among American nature writers, only John Muir challenges him in the ability to evoke the presence of nature. Trees grow from his words and birds sing from them.

He uses the power of suggestion like a haiku master. Too much detail can muddy the view. Thoreau presents only those essential elements that will allow the reader to create the image. For example, in the following striking passage from his essay "Walking," it is not the flood of light from the sunset that gives the most telling effects; it is the barely mentioned stump around which the stream winds and the "bankside" just touched with the fading light. The simple suggestion of these elements is enough to allow readers to recreate the whole scene for themselves. At the same time, isolating them in the prose lends to the landscape a sense of what in haiku is called *sabi*, or loneliness, allowing an emotional response from the viewer, rather than just an esthetic and intellectual appreciation. Here is the passage, a perfect gem of a haibun that might be entitled "In a Meadow":

We had a remarkable sunset one day last November. I was walking in a meadow, the source of a small brook, when the sun at last, just before setting, after a cold gray day, reached a clear stratum in the horizon, and the softest, brightest morning sunlight fell on the dry grass and on the stems of the trees in the opposite horizon, and on the leaves of the shrub-oaks on the hill-side, while our shadows stretched long over the meadow eastward, as if we were the only motes in its beams. It was such a light as we could not have imagined a moment before, and the air also was so warm and serene that nothing was wanting to make a paradise of that meadow. When we reflected that this was not a solitary phenomenon, never to happen again, but that it would happen for ever and ever an infinite number of evenings, and cheer and reassure the latest child that walked there, it was more glorious still.



The sun sets on some retired meadow, where no house is visible, with all the glory and splendor that it lavishes on cities, and, perchance, as it has never set before,—where there is but a solitary marsh-hawk to have his wings gilded by it, or only a musquash looks out from his cabin, and there is some little black-veined brook in the midst of the marsh, just beginning to meander, winding slowly round a decaying stump. We walked in so pure and bright a light, gilding the withered grass and leaves, so softly and serenely bright, I thought I had never bathed in such a golden flood, without a ripple or a murmur to it. The west side of every wood and rising ground gleamed like the boundary of Elysium, and the sun on our backs seemed like a gentle herdsman driving us home at evening.

So we saunter toward the Holy Land, till one day the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done, shall perchance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, as warm and serene and golden as on a bank-side in autumn.

Admittedly, Thoreau employs here some of the rhetorical techniques he inherited, such as repetition and parallel phrasing, but they are used sparingly and musically so as to complement, not obstruct, the imagery.

56 Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts, and rarely ventured far from there. “I have travelled much in Concord,” he once said, and he is the archetypal American spokesman for the belief that one can find all one needs in one’s own backyard. Yet he also took a keen interest in the rest of the world, avidly reading books of travel (including William Bartram on the natural wonders of Florida) and going to jail rather than pay taxes to a government he thought was waging an unjust war against Mexico. He was also an active defender of John Brown and his fight against slavery. His interest in American Indian culture, particularly the Indians’ relationship to nature, was intense and genuine and informed by actual experiences in the still-wild woods of Maine, where he sought out Indian guides and instructors for his camping trips. He believed in personal independence and felt we should be content with the necessities of life: that there are more important things we can do with our time than using it to labor for material luxuries.



He was a close friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson and the two influenced each other. Emerson called him an “iconoclast in literature.” During his lifetime, Thoreau was accused of being an imitator of Emerson, but he is radically different both as a writer and thinker. Thoreau both in life and in his prose paid closer attention to the concrete details of his experiences than Emerson did, while Emerson was more prone to philosophize and deal more abstractly with them.

Though in agreement on many subjects, they lived lives that were singularly at variance. Thoreau’s was essentially one of solitude and immediate contact with the natural world, while Emerson’s involved interaction with the community, especially the religious and literary branches of it, and an approach to nature that was more philosophically ruminative than immediate. Both are superb prose stylists, but when describing nature Thoreau’s prose is more concrete in its imagery and moves into the realm of poetry. (His actual poetry, or verse, partook, like Emerson’s, of the weaknesses of the period—rhetorical periphrases, reverse syntax, and sentimental, personified apostrophes to nature’s elements.) He may digress to philosophize in his essays, but when he takes us for a walk in nature, the trees are seen for themselves. Emerson may see the trees, but they become more a subject for speculation. When writing, he can’t stop thinking about his own reactions and so gives us only that glimpse of nature necessary for the point he wishes to make.

When Thoreau philosophizes or speculates, he does so with concrete, practical examples as in the celebrated parable of the staff-maker artist in Walden whose seeking of perfection overcame time and brought about the creation of new worlds. The writer like the staff-maker pays attention to the details, such as peeling the stick and adding the ferule, and even takes note of the pile of shavings left from the work.

Here is a passage by Thoreau from Walden that approaches the objectivity of a haibun. His description of the tumbling flight of the hawk is presented for itself:

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, as I was fishing from the bank of the river near the Nine-Acre-Corner bridge, standing on the quaking grass and willow roots, where the muskrats lurk, I heard a singular rattling sound, somewhat like that of the



sticks which boys play with their fingers, when, looking up, I observed a very slight and graceful hawk, like a nighthawk, alternately soaring like a ripple and tumbling a rod or two over and over, showing the under side of its wings, which gleamed like a satin ribbon in the sun, or like the pearly inside of a shell. This sight reminded me of falconry and what nobleness and poetry are associated with that sport. The merlin it seemed to me it might be called: but I care not for its name. It was the most ethereal flight I had ever witnessed. It did not simply flutter like a butterfly, nor soar like the larger hawks, but it sported with proud reliance in the fields of air; mounting again and again with its strange chuckle, it repeated its free and beautiful fall, turning over and over like a kite, and then recovering from its lofty tumbling, as if it had never set its foot on terra firma. It appeared to have no companion in the universe—sporting there alone—and to need none but the morning and the ether with which it played. It was not lonely, but made all the earth lonely beneath it. Where was the parent which hatched it, its kindred, and its father in the heavens? The tenant of the air, it seemed related to the earth but by an egg hatched some time in the crevice of a crag—or was its native nest made in the angle of a cloud, woven of the rainbow's trimmings and the sunset sky, and lined with some soft midsummer haze caught up from earth? Its eyry now some cliffy cloud.

58 Though he does ruminate after this passage (and a short paragraph about catching a “rare mess” of fish and walking in bright meadows) on the importance of nature to humankind, he does so with the inclusion of haiku-like, brief vignettes (such as those of the snipe and the mink) to make his prose sparkle imagistically:

Our village life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it. We need the tonic of wildness—to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable.



We can never have enough of nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees, the thunder-cloud, and the rain which lasts three weeks and produces feshets. We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander.

*Walden* is recognized as one of the most important books in American literature. For American haiku poets it is significant as a major influence in establishing a tradition of nature writing in this country that was to provide the literary field for haiku to take root once R. H. Blyth and Harold G. Henderson brought us the seed. Thoreau left several other books that demonstrate his haiku spirit, including *The Maine Woods* (where there is a marvelous haibun-like section about phosphorescent wood glowing in the forest on a wet night), and the many volumes of his journals. Most of his works contain outstanding passages of nature writing. Though he believed in taking notes about his experiences in nature as soon as possible after their occurrence, his writings went through many drafts. The revisions often took the form of deleting things. Simplicity in life and in writing were among his most important messages to, and examples for, posterity.

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\* \* \*

This essay is from a work in progress entitled *The Haiku Spirit: One With Nature in North America*. "Walking," the essay from which "In the Meadow" was excerpted, was among several essays Thoreau prepared for publication during the year before his death. It was first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* of June, 1862. (Some parts of it appear in the section of his *Journals* for 1850-52.) The version used here is the original from the *Atlantic Monthly*, which can be found in its entirety in *Henry David Thoreau: Representative Selections, with Introduction, Bibliography, and Notes* by Bartholow V. Crawford, American Book Company, New York, 1934. "The Tumbling Hawk" excerpt from *Walden* is from the *Collected Works, Walden Edition*, Boston, 1906. The glowing wood incident can be found in "The Allegash and East Branch" in *The Maine Woods*.

*Cor van den Heuvel*



## *Barking Dogs and Trips to the Moon* *Haiku in the Comic Art of Hasegawa Machiko*

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE VERSE has always been practiced by a wide variety of people for a wide variety of reasons. Poetry in Japan can serve a social function. A haiku poet might send a poem to friends and relations with the New Year's greetings. Drunken party goers celebrating the spring under the cherry blossoms might compose haiku, senryu, or tanka. A poem can serve as a snapshot, preserving the beauty of the pine trees on a windswept shore. A small book of tanka can record the trauma of war or a collection of haiku can celebrate the novelty of a trip to Europe. Composing haiku can even be a pleasant way to pass a cold winter evening beside a warm fire with a brush and ink stone musing on life's beauty and sorrow. One of the reasons for the worldwide popularity of haiku is that it is poetry for everyone.

This sense of poetry for the average person can be found in a highly entertaining fictionalized portrait of postwar Japan, Hasegawa Machiko's *Sazae-san*. This four-panel cartoon ran in the *Asahi* daily newspaper from 1949 to 1974. One of her major characters is an amateur haiku poet trying to cope with the rapid changes that will eventually turn Japan into a prosperous modern nation. The main character is Sazae who lives with her mother (Fune), father (Namihei), little sister (Wakame) and brother (Katsuo). There is also Sazae's husband (Masuo) and her son (Taro) who is still an infant. The haiku poet is Sazae's father (Namihei).

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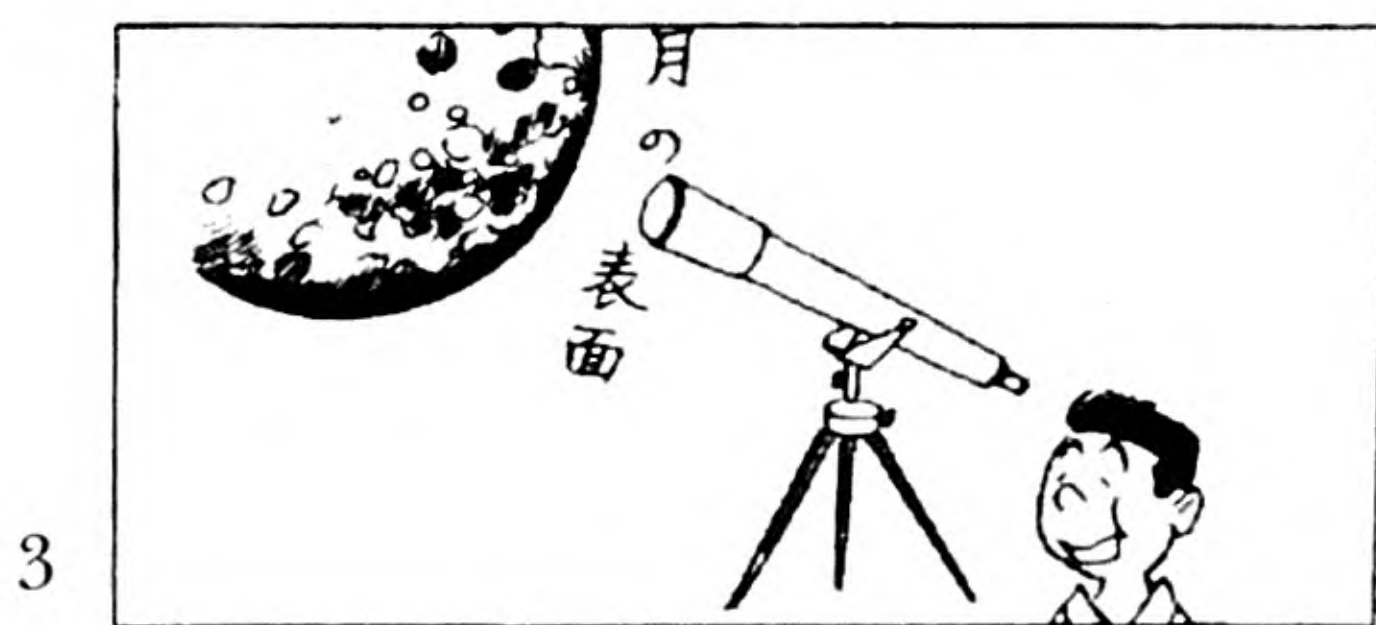
Namihei's haiku are first introduced in the late 1940's. It's the New Year in Japan, a time of getting bonuses and giving gifts to the boss. While Americans have to deal with the blessings and burdens of Christmas cards, people in Japan exchange year-end cards (*nengajo*). In the first panel [1] of this comic Nami-hei is seated around a table with his wife who is taking care of Sazae's baby.





The father has an open letter and an envelope. "It says that a year-end haiku was enclosed. What happened to it?" he asks his wife. She says that she didn't notice it when she read the letter. Sazae's brother and sister also have no idea where it is. In the third panel Namihei meets the friend in the street. The friend mentions that he wrote a haiku. Namihei stops his friend in mid-sentence, "Oh yes, that was really a masterpiece. My wife also enjoyed it." In the final panel [2] the friend looks somewhat out of sorts as he hands Namihei a piece of paper, "Actually, I forgot to put it in the envelope. I was coming by so that I could drop it off." Namihei looks very embarrassed.

One of the themes that runs throughout the comic strip in the 1950's is the conflict between the traditional and the modern that has been a part of Japanese verse since its beginnings. The first panel of a strip from this period shows the son-in-law, Masuo. Above his head and showing what he is thinking about is a picture of a rocket ship heading for the moon with the caption, "Tours to the moon." The second panel [3] has one of Masuo's friends; drawn above him is a telescope and a huge magnified moon with the caption, "The surface of the moon."



The third panel shows Masuo and his friend talking. Above them, showing what they are talking about, are some strange looking alien creatures and the caption, "Men from Mars." In the fourth panel [4] Masuo and his friend continue their conversation while Namihei is sitting at his writing table. The table has a large vase with some *susuki*, an autumn grass, and a platter of *tsukimi dango*, literally "moon viewing dumplings." Beside him on the floor is an ink stone. He is holding his brush and writing paper. Outside there is the full moon and several migrating geese. It is the perfect autumn scene. Namihei says, "Won't you please stop [your gabbing], I can't compose a haiku."

Getting appreciated by his family is not easy for Namihei. In a cartoon from the early 1960's, Namihei is reading one of his poems to Katsuo, his young son. "With the passing of win-

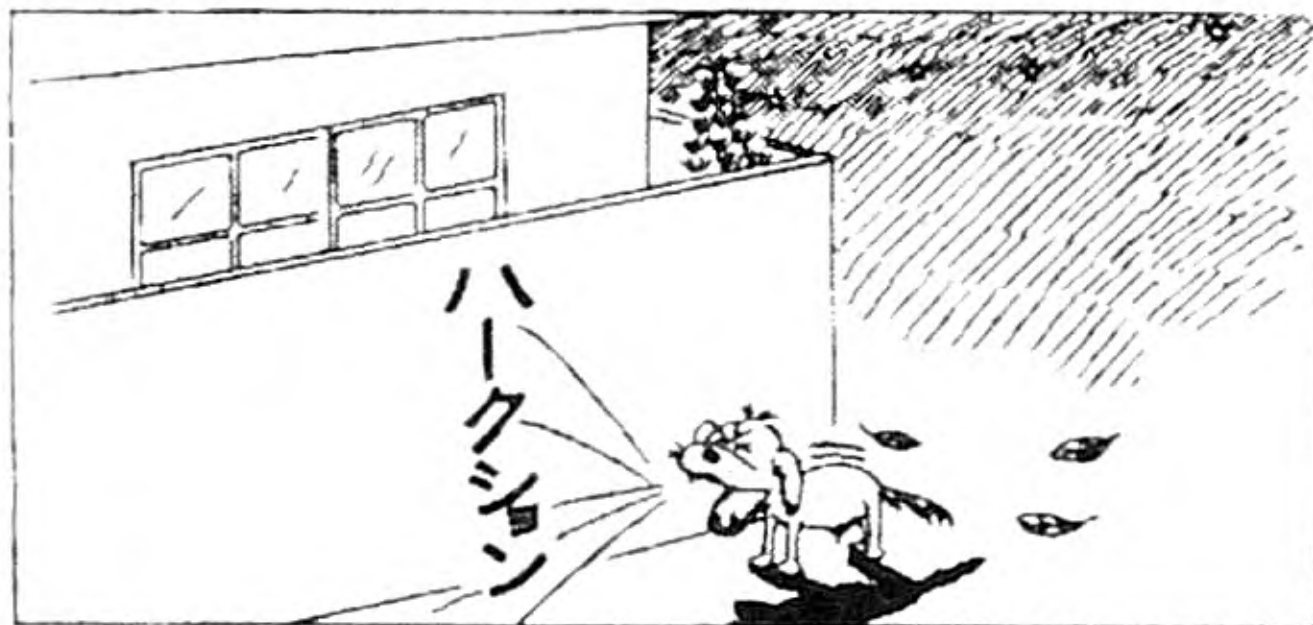


ter's cold, a fragrance, the branch of plum." Katsuo asks him if he didn't swipe the poem from somewhere and Namihei looks angry. In the third panel Masuo pushes his son-in-law Katsuo aside, "What are you saying? Anyone hearing the poem would know it's not something that would get published." The final panel [5] shows Namihei, obviously angry, eating in a separate room with his back to the family. The rest of the family looks very sorry about what has happened.



A cartoon from 1963 reflects the generation gap. Namihei is sitting in front of the traditional Japanese alcove at New Year's. There is a scroll and some decorated rice cakes for the occasion in the alcove. He is wearing traditional formal clothes and recites a haiku, "The New Year's pine bows mark a year's passing, nearer to the other world." This is a rather obscure poem with several Chinese words, including "meido," a formal reference to the afterlife. In the second panel Katsuo remarks that it seems a very good poem. Namihei is surprised that Katsuo could understand the poem. Unfortunately, Katsuo is not willing to let well enough alone. He next remarks that the poem seems very contemporary since it used the English word, "meido." *Meido* would be the Japanese pronunciation of the word: "maid." Namihei is once again disappointed.

In a strip from 1964 we again find Namihei in the middle of creating a haiku, sitting beside a charcoal brazier with a writing brush, ink stone, and *tanzaku* (a narrow piece of card-



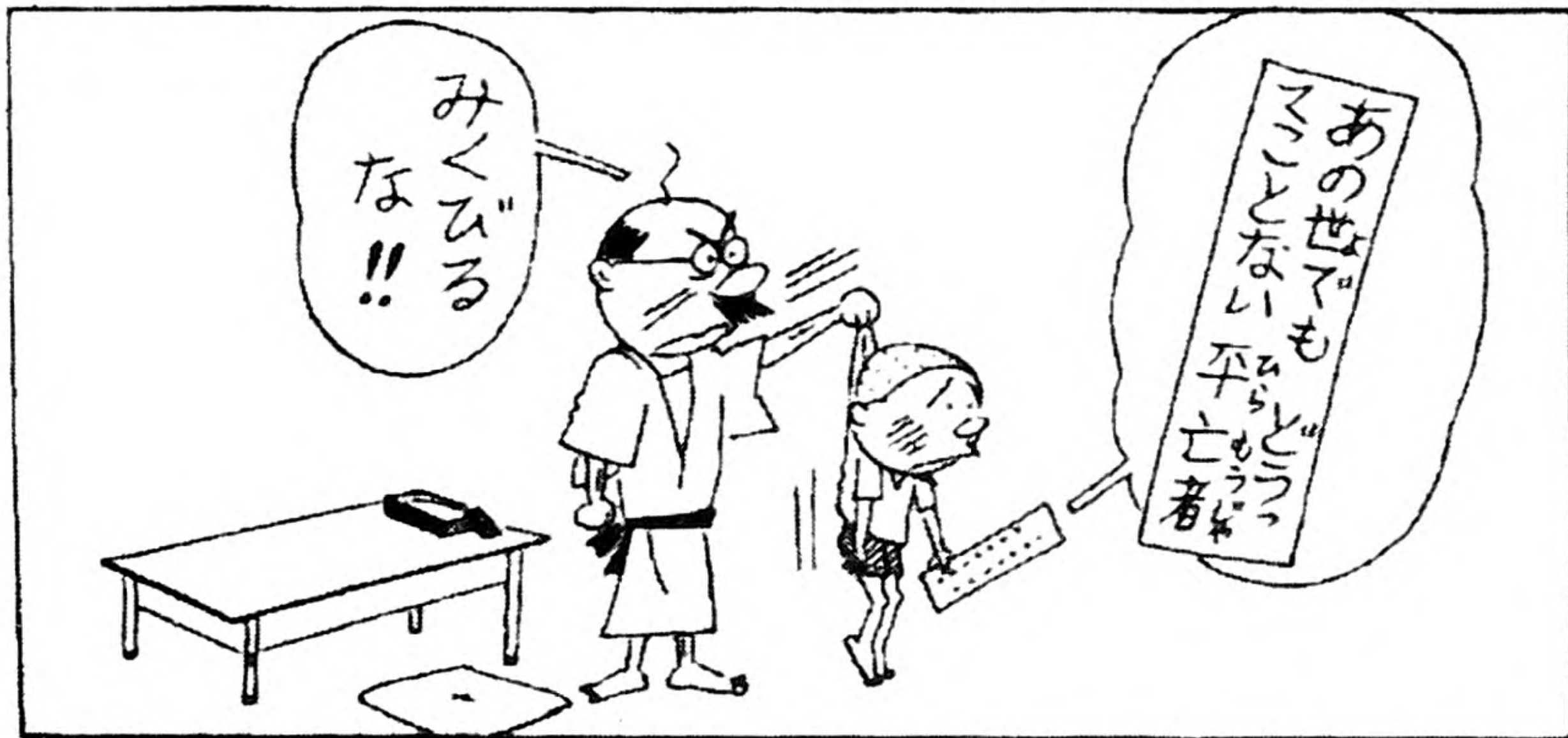


board covered with writing paper for composing poetry). "The night so cold..." In the second panel [6] we see a mutt outside the garden wall, shivering in the cold and sneezing.

Namihei thinks for a moment, then finishes the poem, "I wonder about the elegant woman who just sneezed." [7]

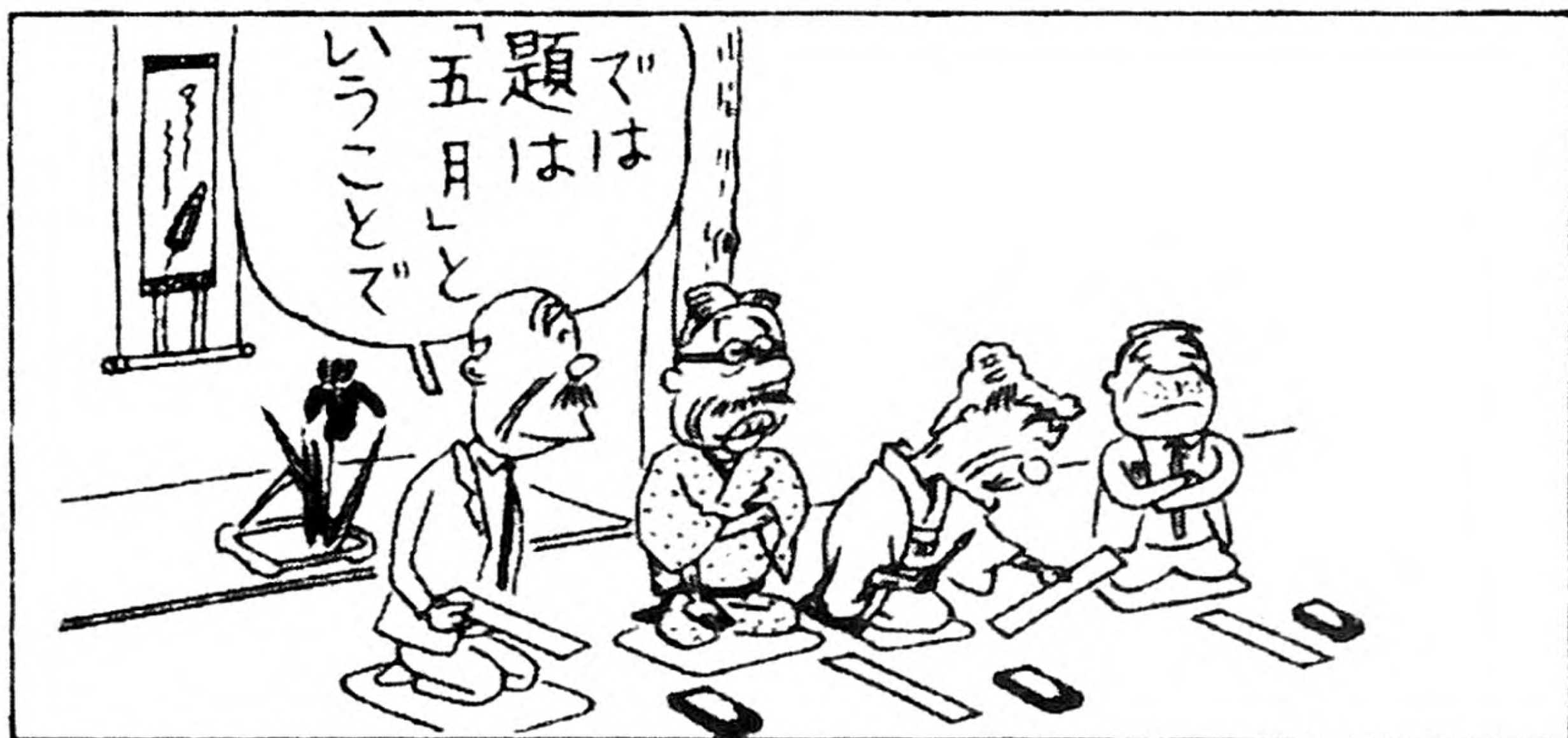
A cartoon from 1966 concerns haiku composed on parting from this world, *jisei no ku*. In the first panel Namihei reads in the newspaper about the death of a famous kabuki actor. "It really makes you think about the brevity of life," he remarks. In the second panel he decides that he should write a final poem for himself. In the third panel [8] Katsuo comes in with a poem asking, "how about this?" The poem reads, "Even in the other world, something of no importance, an ordinary ghost." Namihei is obviously angry. He picks up Katsuo by his collar, "Don't insult your father!"

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8

Perhaps my favorite of all the cartoons about haiku by Hasegawa was published in another series called *The Mean Granny (Ijiwaru basan)*. The "Mean Granny" is always playing tricks on her friends and relations. In one cartoon [9] she has



9



invited over a group of neighbors for a haiku party. The cushions are all set up and beside them are paper (*tanzaku*) and ink stones. In the alcove there is an iris and a hanging scroll with a ink drawing of a traditional Japanese umbrella for the spring rains. They all sit down and the leader announces that the topic for the day will be the month of May.



In the final panel [10] the “Mean Granny” comes in with two platters of fruit. “Please, help yourselves,” she says. “Now days you can get anything you want.” There are slices of watermelon, bunches of grapes, an apple, even persimmons. The old lady has completely destroyed the mood of the season. The fruits are appropriate for summer, fall, and even winter. There is nothing even remotely associated with the month of May.

In Hasegawa Machiko’s comic strip a haiku may record the beauties of nature or the changes of the seasons. It may be composed on social occasions or to commemorate the landmarks of life. The poetry may be very mundane, but this is after all one of the most charming aspects of traditional Japanese verse. It was intended to be practiced by everyone.

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*Jon LaCure*

*A note about the sources . . .*

The comic art by Hasegawa Machiko is from a recent compilation published by the Asahi Newspaper in 33 volumes. The Japanese title is *Hasegawa Machiko zenshu* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1998). The publisher Kodansha has put out some selected cartoons in a dual language format. The series is called *The Wonderful World of Sazae-san* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1998-1999). I believe that approximately a dozen volumes have been published.



## Notes from the Field

A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE END of the year, I visited the poetry section of my neighborhood bookstore, checking for new haiku books on the shelf. I found *Haiku People*, by Stephen Addiss (Weatherhill, Inc., 1998). I bought it and walked home, content at the thought of seeing out the old year in this company.

That evening, I sat in my armchair with a cup of tea and cracked open the book. Each haiku came with an English translation and, just below, the original Japanese script. This pleased me especially, as my first encounter with haiku was in Japan, several years back, when I was invited to join a Japanese haiku group in a small town near the foothills of Mt. Fuji. I have always felt more rooted in haiku in Japanese than in English.

All was serene that evening—until I came to the following:

yukuni wareni  
todomarunareni  
aki futatsu

For me leaving  
for you staying  
two autumns

and under the haiku, Buson.

Buson? I was certain this haiku was by Masaoka Shiki. I recalled seeing the same mistake a few months earlier, in another book, *The Essential Haiku*, by Robert Hass (The Ecco Press, 1994). At that time, it had bothered me—particularly since the haiku itself seemed so obviously Shiki-like in character to begin with, resonant with separation and death—but a few days went by and I put off the matter, thinking “who has the time to track this kind of thing down?”

Yet here it was again, that Shiki poem ascribed to Buson, disturbing my serenity. I closed the book and got up, wondering how I could ascertain the haiku’s authorship for sure and then, too, wondering whether perhaps I was wrong, after all.

Two days passed. By January 1<sup>st</sup>, I could stand it no longer. I really had to settle this matter once and for all. I pulled the Hass book from my shelf and confirmed that, on page 81, he had indeed ascribed the poem to Buson. Where had I seen it ascribed to Shiki? I pored through my English-language haiku books and found it in Burton Watson’s book, *Masaoka Shiki, Selected Poems* (Columbia University Press, 1997). According to Watson, Shiki wrote the poem in the autumn of 1895, when taking leave of his friend, the author Natsume Soseki.



Theoretically, I reasoned, Watson could be wrong and the others right. But I had once asked the Shiki scholar, Janine Beichman, about the poem and she had assured me that it was by Shiki. My Tokyo haiku master, Momoko Kuroda, also had told me that it was by Shiki.

I surfed the Internet in both Japanese and English. All of the Japanese language sites where the poem scored a hit listed the “Two Autumns” haiku as by Shiki, including a site based in Shikoku, Shiki’s home island, dedicated to the works of that poet. Only in the English language sites did there seem to be some confusion. No longer living in Japan, and without access to the complete works of either Buson or Shiki, I decided that this was about as definitive as I would be able to get.

But where had this confusion in English come from? I had a hunch that the English-language authors of the 1990s might be drawing on English language secondary sources for their haiku. I checked whether Shiki’s “Two Autumns” haiku might have appeared in R.H. Blyth’s four-volume work on haiku, but could not find it. I then went through my shelves looking through all of the early English-language translations of Japanese haiku that I owned. At last, I found it: Harold Henderson’s 1958 edition of *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Basho to Shiki*. There, on page 111, in the chapter on Buson, with the added title, ‘Parting’:

For me who go,	<i>Yukuwareni</i>
For you who stay—	<i>Todomarunareni</i>
Two autumns.	<i>Akifutatsu</i>

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While only a conjecture, it seemed logical to conclude that English-language poets and authors since Henderson had been repeating Henderson’s error.

Having spent my New Year’s Day tracking down this answer, I thought that at last I would be able to rest. Dusk was falling; a peace gently descended upon me. All was quiet. Until, that is, a voice inside me asked “Say, who put the extra *ni* in the first line of the poem?” I looked at the poem again. Was it “*yukuniwareni?*” or “*yukuwareni?*” But I could hear the children downstairs, it was time to get dinner started and as I got up from my chair, I thought to myself “Well, who has time to check out this kind of thing anyway?”

*Fu-ji* 富士



## *Favorite Haiku*

The priest, the cow  
and the last bit of light  
all take the sidewalk

*Carlos Pellicer (Mexico)*<sup>1</sup>

One of the most memorable haiku I've come across, expressing with *wabi* and *karumi* lightness the oneness we sometimes feel with all of life. How good to see horses in "The Great White Way" theater district of New York city, the sacred cows in the metropolitan streets of India, or a streetcleaner with a huge broom following behind the elephants in some inner-city parade. That "last bit of light" sharing the sidewalk is an inspired touch.

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Under  
the river's flow  
the stone's velvet

*Virginia Brady Young*<sup>2</sup>

The haiku can bestow upon us the blessing of a suddenly awakening mind. When the poet gets it just right, the three lines can send shivers up and down our spines. We hear so much about the effectiveness of intuitive juxtaposition, but we rarely see successful inner comparison between such complete opposites as stone and velvet.

swaying feeder  
the grosbeak's head  
begins to nod

*Bruce Ross*<sup>3</sup>

Bruce takes notice of the "insignificant," which is also what haiku thrive on. There is a delicate life rhythm that runs through the action and response of this haiku, and it boasts a rare empathic tenderness. "... there is no frontier between what is ordinary and extraordinary, great and small; all are equally charged with their ration of universal wonder."<sup>4</sup>

*H. F. Noyes*

1. *Frogpond* XXIV:1

2. *Frogpond* XXIV:3

3. private postcard

4. Laurens van der Post, *Jung and the Story of our Time* (New York: Penguin, 1976)



## Re:Readings

A somewhat abbreviated column appears this time, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of a few readers. We thank them and extend this reminder to you that we need your readings too. After you've explored this issue, please take some time to send us your comments on a poem or two that were especially effective for you.

Tom Tico on Mike Spikes (*forced key/breaks in the lock—/clouds float off the moon*) "Having gone to the limit with willfulness, the poet turns away from the door and sees the lovely light of the moon as the clouds roll away. The scene looks like something an old Taoist might have painted in his most serene moments. And it reminds the poet of a couple of lines from the *Tao Te Ching* that he'd memorized a long time ago. 'Let life ripen and then fall,/Force isn't the way at all.'"

Tom Tico on Alice Frampton (*rock throwing/our circles/about to meet*) "What's fascinating about this haiku is the ambiguity of it, how it lends itself to two diametrically opposed interpretations. One, a man and a woman, deeply attracted to each other, are dating for the first time. After tossing stones in a pool they watch as the rippling circles meet. This merging of the circles seems to foretell the inevitability of a sexual relationship. Two, after a bitter divorce both parties have been slinging rocks at one another. And all of their friends and acquaintances have become polarized. But an event is in the offing where both circles are bound to meet. It ought to be interesting."

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Tom Tico on Marcus Larsson (*April argument/we can't subdue/our laughter*) "It's an argument they've gotten into a number of times, and each is pretty much aware of what the other is going to say. But today both are coming up with surprising variations on old themes, variations that are serious and yet at the same time particularly funny. And although each tries to keep a straight face, eventually both of them explode with laughter. Without doubt, this ultimately delightful experience was animated by the vibrant energy of spring."

Tom Tico on D. Claire Gallagher (*elementary school—/beyond the sprinkler's range/a few blades of grass*) "I think of the small percentage of kids in every grammar school who resist the regimentation. They don't want to be quiet and sit



at their desks; they want to be outside playing. Perhaps they're thought to be hyper and are probably viewed as troublemakers. They make the teacher's job harder, and consequently the teacher tends to come down on them. They're the outsiders, and if their spirits are strong they won't be broken. From among these children will come outlaws, artists, and wonderful individualists."

Curtis Dunlap on "the weight of the sparrow" (haibun by Katherine Cudney): "This is a moving and thought provoking haibun. The pale green concrete walls and the metal bed paint a cold bleak picture. The children are shuffled about as automatons. No mother, no father, no love . . . Indeed, in the last paragraph, I got the impression that emotions were suppressed. Ironically, in an institution where prayer is prevalent, I felt that the nuns were missing the point. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' The haiku that accompany the story compliment and add resonance to this composition. I hugged both of my children after reading this haibun."

Christopher Patchel on H. F. Noyes (*black of night—/this joy of entering/the rain together*) "Darkness and rain, two images often associated with negative life experiences, but for this couple, in this moment, making the joy of intimacy all the more complete."

Christopher Patchel on Michael Dylan Welch (*moving day—/the coolness on my cheek/after your kiss*) "An apt detail which captures that 'sweet sorrow' of parting, all that we had for a season now more apparent as we contemplate its absence."

Christopher Patchel on Peggy Willis Lyles (*the numbness/of scar tissue—/forsythia*) "This opens with a sensation of deadness which connects back to a surgery or wound, perhaps recent, and the emotions that elicits. What follows is the surprising 'forsythia', a bright announcement of new spring life which strongly counters the first two lines, but also transforms them into a picture of persistence and renewal."



books

&

reviews



## Establishing an Identity

Antonini, Jean (Editor) *Anthologie du HAIKU en France* (Aleas, 15 quai Lassagne, 69001-Lyon, 2003). Translated by Bertrand Agostini, Sam Cannarozzi, George Morgan, Carole Py, Daniel Py, et.al. ISBN 2-84301-072-1. 161pp., 16.5 cm X 24 cm, proofbound. 16 Euros.

It has been a productive year for French haiku: an on-line monthly haiku kukai (Nov.2002—June 2003) published as “Bourgeons eclos” and the establishment of the French Haiku Association and the first issue (Oct. 2003) of its journal *Gong*. Now here is an anthology of 800 French haiku by 80 haiku poets, with some Breton translated into French and almost all haiku translated into English (the prose is not translated) .

To be fair, the anthology is decidedly uneven by world haiku standards but ambitious in its aims. Those aims are deftly expressed when each haiku poet is asked what brought them to haiku. One of Georges Friedenkraft’s responses is that haiku allows “the crystallization of a moment of privileged emotion.” There is a recognizable presiding voice throughout the haiku, reliant on French poetry and drama, that unfortunately doesn’t always square with such a concept of haiku. So we see phrasing based on Romanticism, Parnassus, classical and modern drama, modernism, symbolism, and the like, as if French haiku were an easy extension of these modes of expression. Most unforgivable is a kind of “cutesy” attitude this voice takes. Clearly French haiku is in the process of establishing its identity.

They know what they are looking for: to be “enraptured by an ant at the end of a twig” (Jean-Christophe Cros). They know what constitutes the high road of haiku: “a return to the source of language and the essence of life: the poetic evidence born from the attention of the poet to the insignificant-ephemeral, taken in correspondence with the universal-eternal” (Marie-Lise Roger). They also know the miraculous nature of the form: “Haiku, like *ikebana*, is time suspended, emotion concentrated. It obeys rules but gives the impression of a spontaneous opening and hides its complexity under the appearance of the greatest simplicity” (Henri Lackeze). But theory does not necessarily meet practice.



There are far too many non-haiku here, notwithstanding occasional bad translations and a penchant for the 5-7-5 syllable pattern, the latter despite the discovery that the “5-7-5 rhythm does not correspond well in French poetry” (Bruno Sourdin). In fact the truth of the inappropriateness of the 5-7-5 adaptation is exhibited in atrocious line breaks that are repeated faithfully in the translations.

Though most of the haiku are short-long-short, the extremes of form are exhibited as in minimalism by Daniel Biga or Alexandrine-like lines by Alain Lacouchie:

dog  
 shit on the  
 graveled path  
 I walk bare feet.

Of course, she would be delicate, to slowly live;  
 her fragrance and the Angel of Riems. Or a robin,  
 red breasted.

Notice the style in the second haiku that suggests varied French poetic interests, such as surrealism, symbolism, etc. Many of the haiku represented here are in accord:

Antidote to days of anger  
 A great snake  
 Of dancing bodies  
*Alain Kervern*

Twilight dark glint where  
 the dust of memory ripples out  
 in the hyperbole of the light  
*Jean-Francois Roger*

Yet certain haiku stand out as exceptional even in translation:

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In the wet air  
 A shutter bangs  
 Long autumn day  
*Bruno Sourdin*

End of September already . . .  
 No poems this year  
 Blooming dahlias  
*Jean Antonini*

usual alley-way  
 the sure emptiness  
 of nascent October  
*Roland Tixier*

morning stroll—  
 my dog  
 the same colour as the leaves  
*Daniel Py*

A war is on  
 Yet  
 The little birds  
*Yves Gerbal*

Winter chestnut tree  
 your limbs are squeaking  
 mine do too  
*Fanch Peru*



A year later  
At the same place,  
The squirrel is not older.  
*Jean-Claude Cesar*

In the steaming cup  
the verbena leaf  
Fall evening  
*Bertrand Agostini*

There is also much humor to be found in the anthology, however wordy.

A snail is cart wheeling  
Down a green salad leaf  
in slow motion  
*Jean-Claude Touzeil*

A mountain path  
Oh, toad! What are you  
waiting for?  
The snow is coming  
*Oliver Walter*

This anthology offers introductory and end essays on French haiku history (J. Antonini), haiku definitions (A. Kervern), haiku form (G. Friedenkraft), general comments (Ban'ya Natsuishi), modernism and haiku (P. Courtaud), and internet haiku (D. Py).

All in all, this anthology is thoroughgoing in its examination of haiku in general and French haiku in particular. It is a good first start, after Eluard's, Claudel's, etc., for a French approach to this Japanese poetic form from a nation always in the forefront of poetry.

*Bruce Ross*

\* \* \*

## **Kid Stuff**

Yolen, Jane *Least Things: Poems About Small Natures* (Honesdale, Pennsylvania: Wordsong/Boyd's Mills Press, 2003.) Photographs by Jason Stemple. \$17.95 in bookstores.

Jane Yolen is no stranger to literature for children, but she is a stranger to haiku, at least judging by the poems in her recent children's book, *Least Things: Poems About Small Natures*. This hardback book presents fourteen haiku, each about an insect, mammal, bird, or reptile, except the last one, about a human baby. Each two-page spread features a large background photograph, an overly tiny inset photograph, the name of the



subject (twice), a haiku about the subject, and a brief prose comment on the subject. If it sounds cluttered, it is. The book's first subject is "snail". The following poem and prose description appear on opposite pages with a giant close-up picture of a snail (that's entirely unsharp):

*Snail*

I make my slow way  
Between the water droplets,  
Between the minutes.

The body of the snail is moist and slimy. It has a single foot, which is a creeping organ. When frightened, the snail pulls itself into its shell.

Each poem states something obvious about the creature and succeeds neither as haiku or as insightful poetry, which is unfortunate, because poetry, including haiku, should not lower its standards for children. The caterpillar poem tells us "How slow and hairy / Am I over the long grass. / Someday I will change". The squirrel poem proclaims, "You say 'What a tail! / What beady eyes! What quick steps!' / I say, 'Nuts to you'". No seasonal reference, no implied comparison or juxtaposition, no objective and nonjudgmental imagery. Need I go on? Cute, and maybe fine for some children to enjoy, but nearly nothing to do with well-established haiku aesthetics.

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All the poems demonstrate a similarly superficial understanding of haiku, hitting only the unnecessary and trivial target of a 5-7-5 syllable count, the poet seemingly unaware that she has missed practically all of the other, more significant targets. The inclusion of commentary about the subjects, though probably informative for the audience of children, indicates an inherent distrust of the poems to carry sufficient weight or to deliver enough substance to the reader, and in the case of Yolen's well-meaning haiku attempts, this distrust is accurate. Of the photographs, I would be proud of some of them if I had taken them, but they are not consistently of professional quality; most have problems with sharpness or with depth of field.

In "A Note from the Author", Yolen describes how she was first inspired by Thoreau's attribution to Pliny the Elder of the exclamation that "Nature excels in the least things", and that



she wanted to collaborate with her photographer son on a collection of poems and photographs. Though the photos piled up, she was never sufficiently inspired to write until one night she sat up in bed. “I had been dreaming about the book,” she says. “In my dream, all the poems were haiku”, which she then describes merely as celebrating nature usually in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Though the book may not offend the poetic sensibilities of many parents and children, haiku poets may wish that she had just gone back to sleep. Sincerity, even by an accomplished writer for children, does not, in this case, translate into successful haiku.

Michael Dylan Welch

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\* \* \*

## Leaving Room

Purington, Carol and Kimmel, Larry *a spill of apples: tan renga and other linked verse*, Preface by Jane Reichhold, Illustrations by Merrill Ann Gonzales (Winfred Press, 364 Wilson Hill Road, Colrain, MA 01340, 2003). ISBN 0-9743856-6-2. 49 pp., 8.5" X 5.5", perfect softbound. \$10 postpaid US; \$12 overseas.

IN THEIR NEW COLLECTION, Carol Purington and Larry Kimmel spill forth a creative bounty of linked forms, from rengay to renku to tanrenga.

Both poets are accomplished haiku and tanka writers with publications of their own. In *a spill of apples*, they have joined together to explore ways of linking images, moods and settings. Included in the book are six rengay, one *kasen* renku, a *junichi* renku and a tanka sequence, showing their agility and delight in writing collaborative verse. The highlight of this book, however, is the lesser known *tanrenga* form.

In her Preface, Jane Reichhold defines *tanrenga* as “... a tanka written by two persons instead of one.” She goes on to say that “As far as I know, *a spill of apples* is the first book in English or Japanese featuring a collection of *tanrenga*.”

It is one thing to write a tanka by yourself and quite another to complement and inspire a writing partner. These two poets have done just that—Larry with his unconventional views and wry humor balanced by Carol



with her more homely, nature-inspired links.

more slowly now  
the reminiscences  
pass back and forth [cp]  
    the porch swing creaks  
    a June bug claws the air [lk]

The opening verse sets a tranquil scene, a gathering of family or old friends. “More slowly now” suggests that they have been doing this for many years and have become comfortable with the silences between stories. There is no defined season or setting. The last two lines expand our view, like a wide-angle camera, changing not only the scope but the mood. Sound and activity add to the contrast. “Back and forth” becomes a creaking porch swing. A frenzied June bug struggles to right itself. The strong verbs, “creaks” and “claws”, add to the dissonance.

One of the skills of collaborative poetry is the ability to compose an opening verse that leaves room for contrast and expansion.

pinching dry leaves  
from the African violet  
    the twist of her mouth  
    as she repeats  
    those final words

76 This tanrenga begins with a neutral description. Nothing is implied about the emotional state of the person who’s doing the pinching. The act is final, however, like the words spoken (and repeated) in the linking verse. Marriage, death, parting? Whatever the situation, the words are irrevocable. This poem pivots on the tight parallel between “pinching” and “twist”. When we pinch off plants, we often twist at the same time to make a clean break.

There is a gentle, humorous honesty to these tan renga.

Hawaii postcard  
that friend who never has time  
for a visit  
    morning-glory tendril  
    at the window

The tone of the first three lines could be irritated, cynical,



resigned or even envious. Rather than play to one of these negative emotions, the poet shifts away from inner feelings to focus on nature. With that morning glory tendril, he interprets the act of sending a postcard as a delicate overture.

The evocative pen and ink drawings by Merrill Ann Gonzales grace many pages with frogs, herons, rowboats and add another layer of linking—this time between art and poetry. The most poignant drawing, for this reviewer, is the image of a dog lying with his head between his forepaws.

in scorching sun  
and smalltown dust  
a dilapidated dog  
    “patch the rust spots  
    and put in a new engine”

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Like a new engine, Carol's and Larry's links leap and spark each other.

*Margaret Chula*

\* \* \*

## **The Ephemeral Life of Things**

Lippy, Burnell *late geese up a dry fork* (Red Moon Press, PO Box 2461, Winchester VA 22604 USA, 2003). ISBN 1-893959-35-X. 64 pages 8" x 4.375" perfect bound. \$12 from the publisher.

I HAVE BEEN ADMIRING Burnell Lippy's haiku over the past few years where I happened upon them. One early one struck me, literally stalled me in my tracks:

deep in the sink  
the great veins of chard  
summer's end

There was a resonance of collocation here that modestly reflected a deep understanding of the way things of our world go together in an almost hidden simplicity.

This volume collects a rich representation of such



moments of insight into the life of things through the template of an unwavering clarity of mind in relation to those things. The titular late geese haiku expresses the ambitions of that mind. This haiku ends: “All Souls’ Day,” the day when Catholics pray for the souls in purgatory. The late geese become a metaphor of these souls in a way station waiting to enter paradise and the haiku becomes an act of compassion for them.

This haiku, the chard haiku, and most of Lippy’s haiku contain moving elements of *yugen* (“mysterious subtlety”) and *seijaku* (“tranquility of spirit”), elements R.H.Blyth ascribed as desired affects in waka. The following subtly convey such values:

winter dusk  
the long string  
of the tea bag

the woods’ long vines  
reaching the ground  
evening calm

the long gap downstream  
to the bridge’s shadow  
evening coolness

Although these values wonderfully dominate the collection in a presiding juxtaposition of a described element or elements (lines 1-2) and a broad seasonal or atmospheric affect (line 3), issues of desire and humor are not left out:

watching you change  
by the river at dusk  
days too long for spring

peeing  
off the porch’s high end  
the Milky Way

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Here the endearing complexity of human emotion are reflected as love and a fortuitous, if grandiose, posturing.

Blyth has defined haiku as “the expression of a temporary enlightenment, in which we see into the life of things” (*Haiku: Volume 1, Eastern Culture*, p.241). Lippy’s long years as a farm worker and year-long residence at Zen Mountain Monastery have obviously honed the sensibility, precision of image, and clarity of mind exhibited in this volume. These haiku are in fact smaller and larger enlightenments, however ephemeral, as life is ephemeral, overtures into connecting with the wonderfully diverse world we live in and are a part of, one the haiku spirit helps reveal and



share. Part of this spirit is to foster the occasion of what I have termed “absolute metaphor”. Try to work out the suggestive yet tangible connections in these haiku:

the flatness  
of watermelon seeds  
August dusk

the long segments  
of the Big Dipper’s handle  
summer fields

Yes, the black seeds and the darkening of the day, but something more. Yes, the long lines punctuated by stars and the furrows punctuated by seeds or plants or sticks, but something more.

This is a wonderful volume made more wonderful by the graphic design which features on its cover Ann Ritter’s collage of embroidered, almost abstract, mountains pierced, as in a classic oriental landscape, by a just-suggested wavering line of geese headed up between two of the mountains.

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*Bruce Ross*

\* \* \*

## Haiku Eyes

Donegan, Patricia *Haiku* (Tuttle Publishing, Boston 2004). ISBN 0-8048-3501-2. 64 pp., 9.25” x 9.25”, hardbound with dustjacket. \$9.95 at bookstores.

PATRICIA DONEGAN’S attractive and engaging “how-to” haiku book, one of five in the “Asian Arts and Crafts for Creative Kids” series, is a real find. I was at once delighted by the look and the feel of the book with its pastel purples and greens and a playful frog on its shiny cover. It seems a perfect weight and size for young writers. The jacket flap describes it as a book for readers 7-to-12 years old, but it is equally attractive to older children and adult beginners. As a writer and teacher I felt I had lucked upon exactly what I wanted even as I first flipped through the pages.

The book is divided not into chapters but into projects which include haiku, haibun, haiga and renga, as well as the making of a single folded sheet small book. Senryu is referred to as a “cousin” of haiku.



In the introductory pages readers are invited to look at the world with “haiku eyes”. “When children learn haiku . . . they learn a fresh and sensitive way to see and connect to nature and the world and usually become happier and more respectful. . . . Capturing these little haiku moments in words is what makes a haiku, and the creation depends on how open our eyes are to the world. It is a matter of seeing with clear and open eyes what is in front of our noses right now.”

All children (or any of us, for that matter) learn a new skill best when provided with varied repetitions of the lesson and plenty of opportunity to practice on their own. This book seems to take repetition and practice as its premise. It is sprinkled with both reminders that haiku record everyday moments of awareness and with activities that ask the reader to put the book down and look, or walk or write something.

This colorfully illustrated book teaches children more than just step-by-step haiku writing. Ms. Donegan includes descriptions of traditional Japanese culture, Buddhist beliefs and the haiku founding fathers Basho, Issa and Buson to demonstrate what she calls “the seven keys to writing haiku”—form, image, *kigo*, here and now, feeling, surprise and compassion. Basho’s famous frog and pond haiku classic becomes particularly familiar in Donegan’s introductory discussions giving the learner some grounding in haiku history. Messages about respecting our environment are plentiful.

Before assigning the first writing exercise, Ms Donegan suggests the reader “sit back and enjoy these selections.” Included are familiar names including Bruce Ross, Elizabeth Searle Lamb and Penny Harter. The 70-plus haiku throughout the text are a wonderful mix of old and new from young and mature and from all over the world.

above the stream  
chasing her reflection  
the dragonfly

*Cyril Dautigney (age 12, France)*

beautiful—  
after the typhoon  
the red peppers

*Buson*



For practice, readers are asked to add final lines, or first lines, or to substitute words, to play with style on the page, list seasonal words and those that “hint” at a season, etc.

As a teacher I was anxious to see how the author would handle the syllable counting issue, since the 5-7-5 formula is most commonly suggested in student textbooks as a given rule for haiku writing. Here are her words: “You may have heard that, in English, haiku is like a syllable counting game, but that is not the important thing for haiku in English. Haiku is an experience, not an act of counting syllables. . . . In English, it is best to write haiku in three lines, with no specific syllable count. In fact, haiku should only be as long as one breath.”

come here  
sparrows without mothers  
and play with me  
*Issa (when eight years old)*

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The book is a pleasure to read and provides a relaxing and fun series of lessons that lead children or any beginner into the mindset and fun of haiku writing. It includes a Glossary, Resource Guide and Bibliography. Highly recommended.

*Maureen Virginia Gorman*

## Erratum

The author of the review “Begin Again” (*Frogpond* XXVII:1, pp. 71-7) has brought to our attention that she was mistaken in thinking the book in question, *Haiku: A Poet’s Guide* by Lee Gurga, was available in bookstores. In fact it is available \$20 ppd. worldwide from Modern Haiku Press, Box 68, Lincoln IL 62656. Also the editor of *Frogpond* acknowledges that the way the review was published was not how it was submitted by the reviewer. Editorial errors affecting pg.73, para.1 and 4, and pg.74, para.1 cause words of the author under review to appear as if they were written by the reviewer. We regret any confusion caused by these errors.



## Books Received

Proctor, Vanessa *Temples of Angkor* (Sunline Press, 21 Jarrad Street, Cottesloe, W. Australia 6011, 2003). ISBN 0-9579-51531. 8 pp., 5" x 8", saddle-stapled softbound. No price. Enquire with the publisher. *A simple and attractive chapbook of 28 poems based on the famous site of the title. Haiku is rarely successful with exotic material, since the novelty of such subject matter overwhelms the "everyday" aspects which are the stuff of haiku. This book shows the pleasures of exoticism, but also reveals the difficulties of making it work within the tradition.*

Rao, G. R. Parimala *Seasons Heart Beat* (Prema Sai Prakashana, Bangalore, India, 2003). No ISBN. 100 pp., 4.75" x 7", perfect softbound. No price. Enquire with the author at <grrrao.hotmail.com> *The many manifestations of haiku around the world are baffling if we don't see them in the contexts of the literature of the poets. Saying this, not all literatures are suited to serve well as the basis for haiku praxis. Indian literature, for one, seems somewhat at odds with the concision and specificity of haiku. Nevertheless, there are attempts, and for those interested in discovering the results, it's worth a look.*

Hermann, Evelyn H. *Cornflowers* (Small Poetry Press, Concord CA 2003). No ISBN. 32 pp., 4.5" x 6.5", saddle-stapled softbound. \$11 ppd. from the author at 2 Park Terrace, Mill Valley CA 94941 USA.

*A collection of senryu of the punning school taken from 10 years' work in the genre, the author's first, and attractively designed, book.*

Williams, Richmond D. (Facilitator) *Writing Haiku* (self-published, 2004). No ISBN. 20 pp., 8.5" x 5.5", thesis-bound. No price. Enquire with the Facilitator at 202 Brecks Lane, Wilmington DE 19807-3011, USA.

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*What is remarkable about this volume is that it is the ninth annual "progress report" from the Academy of Lifelong Learning of the University of Delaware, Wilmington Campus. Most journals are long gone in that time, but kudos to this group which hews to the muse.*

an'ya (Editor) *haigaonline 2002 yearbook* (natal\*light press, PO Box 1168, Crooked River Ranch, OR, 97760 USA, 2003). ISBN 0-9727130-4-2. 50 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", thesis-bound. \$12 ppd. from the publisher.

*This creative solution to making on-line material available to a wider (and non-computerized) public features haiga, reproduced in full color, taken from the beautiful and accomplished website of the title. The binding is stiff, but the images are nevertheless not crowded, and the reproduction is quite well done. Recommended.*



Argakijev, Dimitar *Sand and Slippers* (Menora, Porta Viznakoved, 19 Skopje Macedonia, 2003). ISBN 9989-932-61-1, 80 pp., 5" x 7.75", perfect softbound. No price. Enquire with the publisher. *We English speakers presume everyone has to come to us: it continues to amaze me that so many do. This is another trilingual volume emanating from the Balkans, and is betrayed by the usual the English translation errors, but there are enough good moments here to indicate that haiku spirit and practice continues to grow in the Balkans.*

Ramsey, William M. *ascend with care* (LeapPress, PO Box 1424, N. Falmouth MA 02556, 2003). ISBN 0-9747229-0-1, 24 pp., 8.5" x 5.5", saddle-stapled softbound. \$7 from the publisher. *What great news to know that there's another publisher of haibun out there. This is LeapPress's initial offering, a modest, artful, pleasing 24 pages of the work of Bill Ramsey, one of the sharpest writers around, in 7 honed haibun and a brief interview with the author on the nature of his metier. Highly recommended.*

Aoyagi, Fay *Chrysanthemum Love* (Blue Willow Press, 930 Pine Street, #105, San Francisco, CA 94108, 2003). ISBN 0-9745547-0-7, 89 pp., 4" x 5.5", saddle-stapled softbound with jacket. \$10. *From one of the precious few poets who produce effective haiku in both English and Japanese. These are all in English and originally composed in English. They often make use of Japanese kigo not in general use here and Japanese cultural references that may not register with some readers. This is rarely a problem, though knowledge of these references enhances one's reading. Fresh, urban, and irreverent; these poems, as the author says in her introduction, are not weather reports.*

Lanoue, David *Pure Land Haiku: The Art of Priest Issa* (Buddhist Books International, 820 Plumas Street, Reno NV 89509, 2004). ISBN 0-914910-53-1. 156 pp., 8.75" x 5.75", perfect softbound. \$15.95 ppd. from the publishers.

*A most welcome volume: for those who have seen Issa to be a kind of self-parody in English, valued far beyond his apparent accomplishment, this book will be palliative. Professor Lanoue presents the poet in the context of the full range of his aesthetic concerns, and gives the reader a sense of the complexity of a life given to haiku. Recommended.*

Sanfield, Steve *Crocuses in the Snow* (Tangram, 22000 Lost River Road, Nevada City CA 95959, 2004). No ISBN. 6 pp., 5" x 7", letterpress folio. No price, enquire with the publisher.

*"A Garland for Sarah" is the subtitle of this love offering of Sanfield's usual high quality work, letterpressed in two colors on deckled paper. The poet has remained staunchly and successfully outside the haiku mainstream, and a certain freshness is attendant. Recommended.*



HSA

News



# The Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Competition 2003

## New Coolness

*Ninjun* at Onawa, Maine, September 6-7 2002, by Yu Chang, Paul MacNeil, John Stevenson, and Hilary Tann.  
Rotation by Paul MacNeil.

new coolness a perfect day for climbing	js
red maple leaves line most of the bootprints	pwm
she reads mother's pancake recipe by moonlight	ht
the usual suspects of a murder mystery	yc
accountants in three-piece suits and handcuffs	pwm
I offer you my name with a hyphen	js
at Las Vegas our best man hits the jackpot	yc
bright nasturtiums frame the herb garden	ht
all five car doors frozen shut	js

cardboard boxes on a subway vent	yc
tattoos tensed the harpooner listens	pwm
eye to eye with an eagle	js
it rained on their golf course rendezvous	ht
whispering... under a pool umbrella	pwm
sangria on the rocks and slivers of moon	yc
the photojournalist adjusts his lens	ht
we sense the silent prayer is about to end	js
rich soil yields to the harrow	pwm
on the classroom wall shadows of magnolia blossoms	ht
homemade nets for the smelt run	yc



## Open Convertible

*akasen* renku led by June Hopper Hymas, written by Roger Abe [RA], Ann Bendixen [AB], donnalynn chase [dc], Anne Homan [AH], June Hopper Hymas [JHH], and Carol Steele [CS] on April 19, 2003 in Livermore, California.

the climb up green hills  
too narrow for cars to pass  
open convertible CS

warmed by spring sunshine  
well-planned bricks, wood & glass dc

a measuring worm  
inches across my ankle  
it tickles AH

wasabi peas  
in a porcelain bowl AB

between the clouds  
every now and then—  
fingernail moon AH

as a thank you gift  
he paints her an autumn landscape JHH

the quail struts and sings  
along the deck railing—  
“Chi-ca-go” AH

can they see Godzilla  
through a steamed-up windshield? RA

talk over breakfast  
of renewing our vows—  
our coffee grows cold dc

angry gods  
clash over the desert AB

a new talk show  
with Monica Lewinsky  
minus her beret JHH

back from China—  
my workmates  
greet me with facemasks dc

spotlight burned out  
but tonight it doesn't matter—  
summer moon JHH

lizards skitter any old way  
across the railroad ties AH

above the floodwaters  
Coyote lives on Mt. Diablo—  
Miwok folk tale AH

recommended restaurant—  
sullen waiters but good food CS

Kiyoko—tell me  
how would you tread on these  
cherry petals? dc

long lazy ripples where  
willow tips touch the stream JHH

silver windmills  
line the ridges—  
only a few spinning AH

hard-boiled eggs  
yucky without salt AB

ranch hands discuss  
the merits of yodeling—  
the hogs just snort RA



verse writing as a game—  
we argue with laughter dc

I make new clothes  
for my granddaughter's doll—  
Christmas Eve CS

winter mist—her neighbor  
must enter a nursing home AH

Marines play ping-pong—  
an occasional distant  
burst of gunfire AH

“that OLD BLACK MAGIC”  
with Louis and Keely RA

ninety thousand hits  
she punches in another  
sperm dot com AB

feng shui at work  
in our master bedroom dc

moon of falling leaves  
above the flicker's grave  
we set a stone JHH

November dusk  
winds scour the cliff AH

the salmon leaps  
over obstacles, toward  
that familiar scent RA

a shaft of sun  
on the bicycle's yellow basket JHH

Michelangelo's  
Madonna, can marble know  
grief and joy? RA

hand-in-hand the toddlers  
lead the family hike AH

Ikebana class—  
the teacher arranges  
first cherry blossoms CS

Mother's day surprise  
it must be good—she smiles RA

\* \* \*

### JUDGES' COMMENTARY

We chose two winning poems that generally hold to the formal structure of renku and also capture its playful collaborative spirit. Both poems, in their own distinctive ways, skillfully touch on a panorama of human experience with tenderness and humor.

90

The Grand Prize winner is *New Coolness*, a *nijūin* (20-link) renku with four authors. The poem as a whole has a stately tone, set at the beginning with the expansive sense of the outdoors on a fine early autumn day. As expected, the first two verses are tightly linked, followed by a shift in location, topic, and point of view in the third verse. After this calm start, shifts become more lively. A freer range of topics, as well as interesting shifts in scale and focus of each verse quickens the pace. Yet because verses all have a kind of contained intensity, reinforced by similarity in rhetoric and syntax, the poem remains contemplative throughout. The treatment of the flower verses is unorthodox. Normally, these verses must refer to cherry blossoms, but the authors chose to use "bright nasturtiums" and "shadows of magnolia blossoms" instead. The effect is interesting, especially in a 20-link poem in English. However, if you were expecting cherry blossom verses with their complex allusive resonance, these verses, though well-integrated in the poem, might be less captivating.



An Honorable Mention is awarded to *Open Convertible*, a *kasen* renku with five authors. This poem has a much wider emotional and rhetorical range than the grand prize winner. In addition to the variety of topics, the authors use quotations, questions, and varied syntax (not just statements). This adds liveliness to fast sections and heightened emotional impact to verses that are already in high relief (such as the first flower verse). More than one set of verses are beautifully composed and linked. For example the sequence from verse 23 to 26 is an elegant excursion from winter verses to the beginning of the series of love verses:

23) I make new clothes/for my granddaughter's doll/  
Christmas Eve

24) winter mist—her neighbor/must enter a nursing  
home

25) Marines play ping-pong/an occasional distant/burst  
of gunfire

26) “that OLD BLACK MAGIC”/with Louis and Keely

However the poem's opening is not handled as skillfully. Topics are repeated (“sunshine” and “clouds”), and the *wakiku* (2<sup>nd</sup> verse) is a bit unfocused. Because the opening verses set the tone for the whole renku, these are serious shortcomings. In other sections as well, repeated topics create parallel links that tend to deflate the energy of the poem. We mention this because in our experience, renku benefits from careful editing, both during and after composition, with a view to formal renku rules.

What might at first seem like prescriptions and prohibitions, are more like efficient reminders to record a playful poetic conversation connected not by subject matter, rhetoric, or point of view, but by sensitivity to the feeling and experience that breathes in each verse. The winning poems do approach this ideal, and we congratulate the authors for their success!

—Alice Benedict & Patricia Machmiller  
Judges



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# THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA

## Treasurer's Report First Quarter (January 1 through March 31, 2004)

<b>Beginning Bank Balance</b>		<b>\$26,913</b>
<b>Dues/Contributions</b>	<b>\$12,479</b>	
<b>Members Anthology Sales</b>	<b>63</b>	
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<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>12,702</b>
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<b>Newsletter Expenses</b>	<b>(2,227)</b>	
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>(175)</b>	
<b>Members Anthology Expenses</b>	<b>(12)</b>	
<b>Meeting Expenses</b>	<b>(300)</b>	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>(1)</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>(6,861)</b>
<b>BALANCE:</b>		<b>\$32,754</b>

Respectfully submitted,

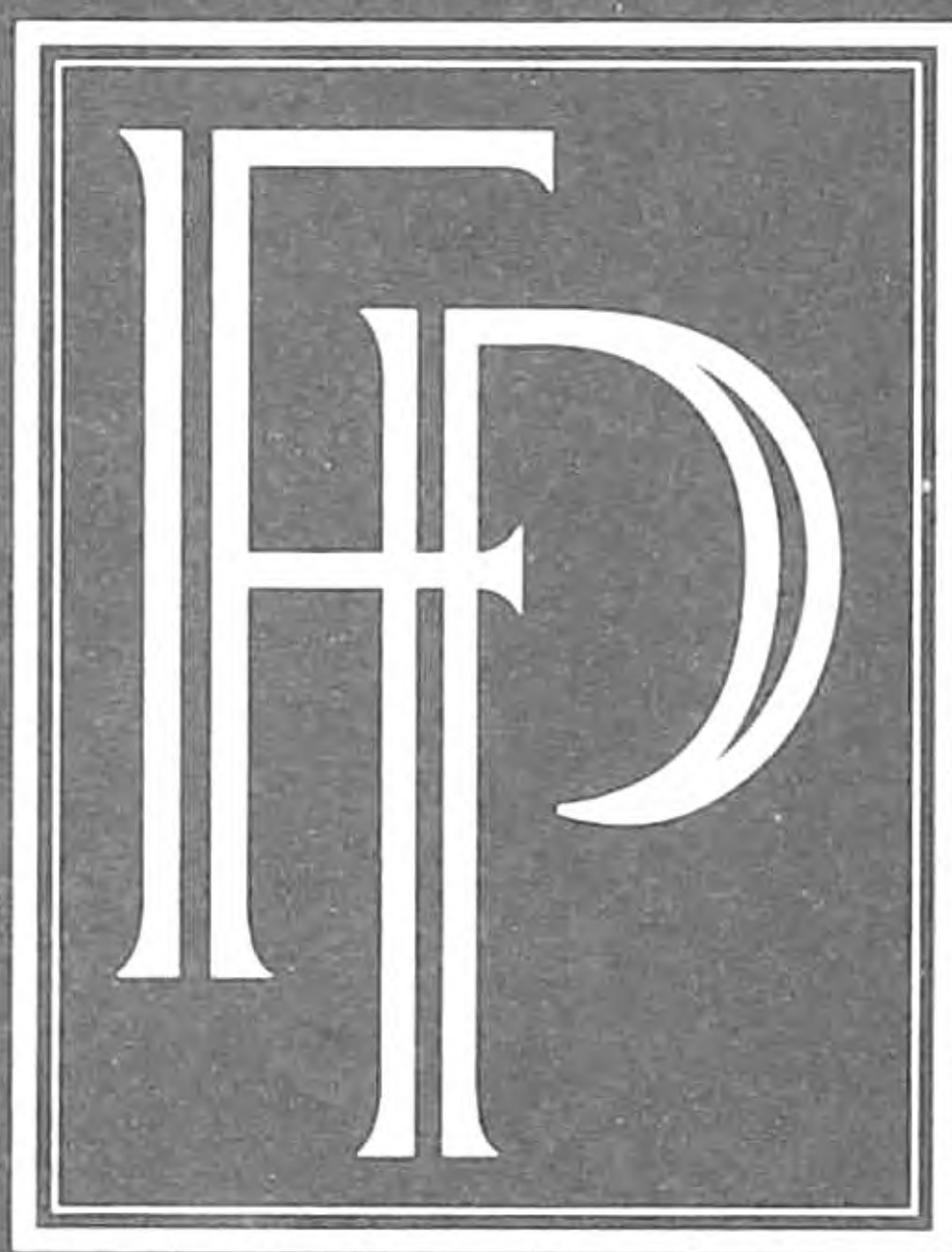
Paul Miller, Treasurer



**Museum of Haiku Literature Award**  
**\$100 for the best unpublished work**  
**appearing in the previous issue of *Frogpond***  
**as voted by the HSA Executive Committee**

*the numbness  
of scar tissue—  
forsythia*

**Peggy Willis Lyles**

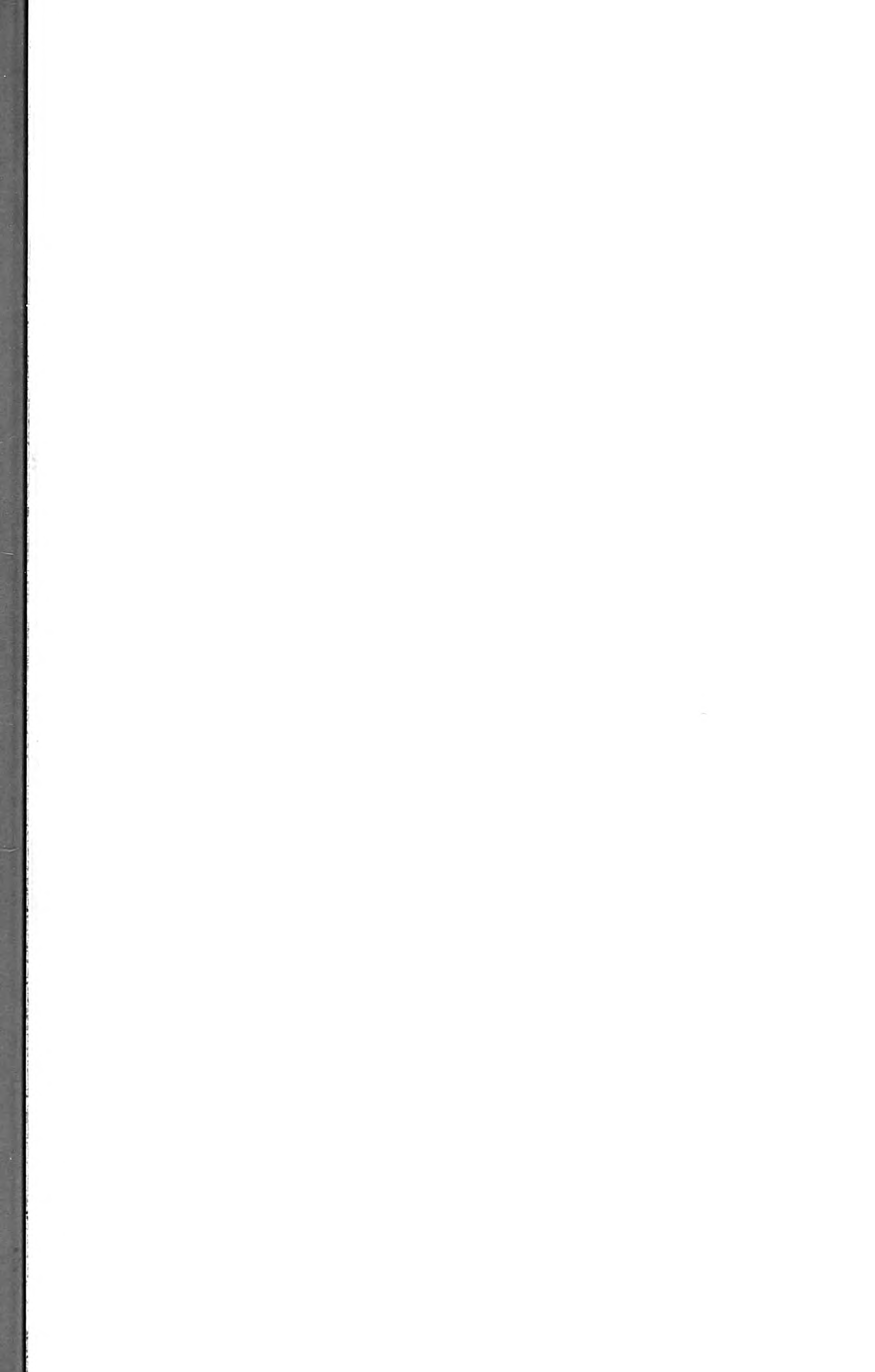


*Frogpond Capping Poem*

writer's block  
glacier sky  
reflections in the lake  
*Ellen Florman*

*[Please submit your two-line cap with SASE on the theme of "writer's block" to Frogpond, PO Box 2461, Winchester VA 22604-1661.]*





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