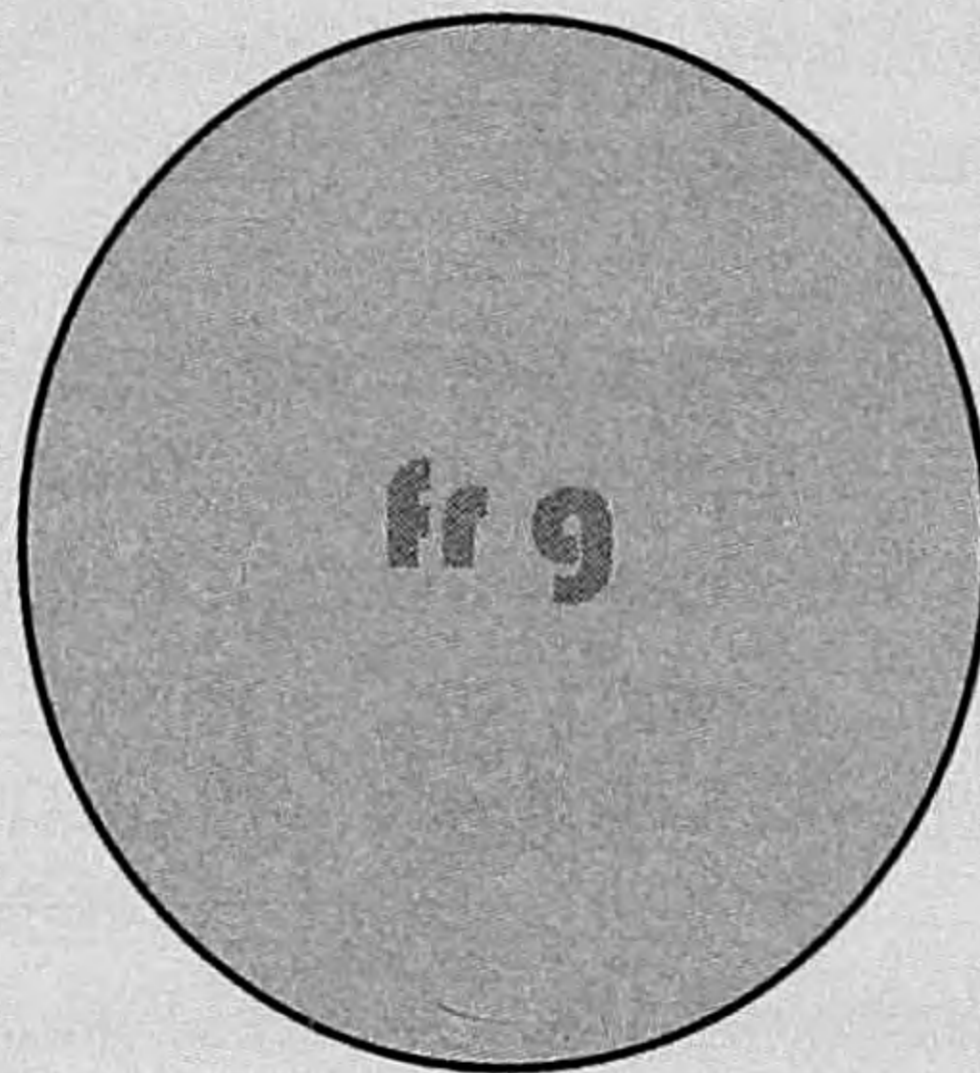


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Volume 34:3, 2011

frogpond

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Society of America**



**Volume 34, Number 3
Fall, 2011**

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3. Up to three (3) rengay or other short sequences
4. One (1) renku or other long sequence
5. One (1) essay
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Literature Award
\$100**

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From Issue 34:2

how some things end—
onion flakes
in the market sack

William M. Ramsey
Florence, South Carolina



Haiku & Senryu

folded inside
a paper crane—
tsunami news

Wendy Conway, East Chatham, New York

day lilies
brevity mentioned
at his funeral

Peg McAulay Byrd, Madison, New Jersey

left behind
in the poison ivy
my travel itch

Noel Sloboda, York, Pennsylvania

the way his eyes
light up just so
pair of aces

John Hawk, Columbus, Ohio

kedg anchor
anniversary flowers
two days late

Michael Blaine, Seaford, Delaware

failed bank
waving from its flagpole
gossamer

John J. Dunphy, Alton, Illinois

scales
on the fisherman's wharf
gilded light

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

middle of the night
until I find it there
late winter moon

thinking of you
minnows dart to-and-fro
in my bait bucket

Craig W. Steele, Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania

the geese
land on their honks...
trembling pond

Kala Ramesh, Pune, India

tree stumps
father never needed
poetry

Glenn Coats, Prospect, Virginia

after the storm
the chainsaw
keens

Brad Bennett, Arlington, Massachusetts

your thoughts
curling smoke
from your pipe

Bernard Gieske, Bowling Green, Kentucky

your absence—
the empty smell
of the house

R.P. Carter, North Bay, Ontario

train journey...
immersing into the smell
of borrowed books

Ramona Linke, Beesenstedt, Germany

our last photo—
I scissor him out
of my life

midnight
a cricket's falsetto
from the lingerie drawer

Carol Raisfeld, Atlantic Beach, New York

my shadow
on the sundial—
for once I'm on time

Hortensia Anderson, New York, New York

on the footpath
shadow dance of butterflies
flickers to dust

Diana Webb, Leatherhead, England

Gastroenterology—
a waiting room at the end
of a long corridor

Alan Bridges, Littleton, Massachusetts

indian summer—
ghee pools
in the pan

Helen Buckingham, Bristol, England

snow flurries
on the way home, my thoughts drift
in Chinese

Chen-ou Liu, Ajax, Ontario

the silence
after an argument—
lightning at dusk

PMF Johnson, St. Paul Minnesota

Consciousness balloons.
Now contracts in cardiac
Rhythms, liminal.

Isobel Yeap, Sidney, Australia

late autumn haze
a constellation of gnats
skywriting ampersands

John Hawkhead, Yeovil, England

he brings flowers
the same shade—
bruises

reflecting pool
trying to see past
what she's not

Terri L. French, Huntsville, Alabama

summer romance...
the gardener's broom sweeps
spent blossoms

leaves fall...
it is time
to let go

Sue Colpitts, Lakefield, Ontario

grey boughs
the cold seems to seep
into my wound

Jo McInerney, Gippsland, Australia

humpty-dumpty
this fractured life
of scrambled eggs

Merrill Ann Gonzales, Dayville, Connecticut

first tattoo your touch

Mike Spikes, Jonesboro, Arkansas

after the band
the peepers
are the silence

Michael Ketchek, Rochester, New York

cool breeze;
in her new summer frock
the woman's nipples

the way she tickles
my inner thigh
a leggy spider

Johnny Baranski, Vancouver, Washington

Walking home from school:
the burden of intellect
carried on her back

Arlene Gay Levine, Forest Hills, New York

sun filters
misty trail
—hear the unsaid

Patricia Nolan, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Winter darkness
the end of the world
still iffy

Fonda Bell Miller, Alexandria, Virginia

Watching TV news
popping every worry bead
of my bubble pack

Bruce England, Santa Clara, California

a pupa breaks down the lure of a quick fix

Mark F. Harris, Princeton, New Jersey

My life—
a long
slow rain

Finally
looking at a peony—
speechless

David Rosen, Eugene, Oregon

burnt toast on the floor
jam on the spoon
last memory of grandpa

Scott J. Kirshenbaum, Chicago, Illinois

flashlight beam's

stampede
on a cave wall

Judson Evans, Holbrook, Massachusetts

that truck door sound
I still listen
for his footstep

Frances Jones, Bend, Oregon

heat lightning...
his lucidity
comes and goes

acorn caps...
mulling over
what might have been

Michele L. Harvey, Brooklyn, New York

in a cup
well prepared
the quietness of tea

in einer Tasse
wohl zubereitet
die Ruhe des Tees

Klaus-Dieter Wirth, Viersen, Germany

scrimshaw
moonlit in a window
on a widow's walk

William Cullen Jr., Brooklyn, New York

getting on
off to bed
with frogpond

Ernest J. Berry, Picton, New Zealand

march morning
the holocaust of dreams
in Fukushima

day's end
i walk home across
the milky way

Dietmar Tauchner, Puchberg, Austria

raking leaves
into the wind
bafflegab

Roland Packer, Hamilton, Ontario

all that she knows...
the endless drone
of cicadas

as if
no one grew old
puppy breath

Melissa Spurr, Joshua Tree, California

summer holidays
lots of blue sky again
in the next jigsaw

Philip D. Noble, Inverness, Scotland

spring cleaning
I throw away dreams
that almost came true

Angela Terry, Lake Forest Park, Washington

the daughter-in-law
cries loudest
pink casket

Joshua Beach, Sammamish, Washington

snowmelt
on the rock wall
your lips cold on mine

Deb Baker, Concord, New Hampshire

first Mom
and then Dad...
a door left open

Elinor Pihl Huggett, Lakeville, Indiana

middle of the night
until I find it there
late winter moon

steady mist...
the red quince blossoms
center the day

Bruce Ross, Bangor, Maine

pinwheeling leaves
thirty-five years end
with the word *amicable*

Dave Baldwin, Lake Stevens, Washington

another death—
the weight
of a pen in my hand

Carolyn Hall, San Francisco, California

trampling a path
through wild mustard...
our first argument

Victor Ortiz, San Pedro, California

deep shadows
a dingo dodges back
into the dreamtime

when the heart
turns cartwheels—
dolphins on the bay

Lorin Ford, Melbourne, Australia

reflected
off the bumper
incoming tide

David Ash, Mukilteo, Washington

twilight
a calligraphy
of bats

forest giant
a fringed epiphyte
sunlit

Quendryth Young, Alstonville, Australia

he looks past me
to the mirror—
narcissus scent

after the argument
separating
lights and darks

winter dawn—
the O of a doll's face
in the earthquake debris

deep winter—
my fingers tick through
the almanac

Kristen B. Deming, Bethesda, Maryland

longer
between snowflakes
between laughs

Gary Hotham, Scaggsville, Maryland

she and I in the mirror of the tantrum

knowing well
the head that doesn't turn
to a dropped kettle

commuting
abridged
river

Paul Pfeuger Jr., Chiayi, Taiwan

licking so far
down your spine
dreams divide

Bill Wolak, Bogota, New Jersey

on TV
while the golfer putts
the cardinal's song

Mankh (Walter E. Harris III), New York, New York

on one spindle
the heron waits
patient as sky

Kathryn Riddall, Eugene, Oregon

White chicken
waits beside the red wheelbarrow.
Where's the poet?

William Ward, Reston, Virginia

orioles insist
there must be music
for my reverie

Joan Vistain, Antioch, Illinois

pouring hot water
on dry mint leaves
autumn rain

Ernest Wit, Warsaw, Poland

second thoughts—
rose thorns
catch my sleeves

Mary Frederick Ahearn, Pottstown, Pennsylvania

our kissing tree
a red spider crawls
from an old wound

my child thirtysomething...
I close my hand on dust
adrift in a sunbeam

flood watch
the wave and trough
of a squirrel's tail

a thought for me
in her last journal...
forsythia

Ferris Gilli, Marietta, Georgia

mountain chickadees and i pine nuts

Charles Shiotani, Watsonville, California

the couch we sink into each other

winter night
the irrational
is where the warmth is

the mist
begins and ends
produce aisle

John Stevenson, Nassau, New York

white iris
the morning light
slips in

Ann K. Schwader, Westminister, Colorado

sun-warm apricots
overripe just enough
the musk of his skin

J. Zimmerman, Santa Cruz, California

all day rain
the inner life
of tea leaves

and yet
deep in the dewdrop
you

Michele Root-Bernstein, East Lansing, Michigan

long twilight
the first star twinkles
above stacked hay

Ron Moss, Leslie Vale, Tasmania

the onion farmer
gets under
his hat

Michael Fessler, Kanagawa, Japan

untidy house
your scent
scattered everywhere

Raquel D. Bailey, Kingston, Jamaica

Breezes of the night
left behind,
the body remembers.

Judith Kelvin Miller, St. Louis, Missouri

sea urchin
constellations
in Braille

Peter Newton, Winchendon, Massachusetts

sudden breeze—
in the sedges
gray heron's legs

Nalet lahora
otkri u šašu noge
sive čaplje.

Nikola Duretić, Zagreb, Croatia

a finch in the sun
I am well
after all

Greg Piko, Yass, Australia

cranky...
showing a tourist
the wrong direction

Jörgen Johansson, Lidköping, Sweden

stinging nettle where are you now

John Soules, Wingham, Ontario

after she leaves
the weight
of hanging apples

Marsh Muirhead, Bemidji, Minnesota

wrack line
the sting of the sun
on jellyfish

Jeff Hoagland, Hopewell, New Jersey

morning commute
last night's anger
along for the ride

Lynne Steel, Hillsboro Beach, Florida

inside the pine boughs
entrance to another
morning

Michelle Tennison, Blackwood, New Jersey

day lilies bow in twilight finale

fescue roaming
the prairie
npk 10-8-8

Julie Jacob, Branson West, Missouri

hitting send
the last walnut
rancid

David Boyer, Stamford, Connecticut

lightning strike
the mean streak in me
deepens

Aubrie Cox, Blue Mound, Florida

4th of July
we flip from the war
to the fireworks

Michael Magliari, Chico, California

the mood ring
says I'm happy—
winter solitude

Michael McClintock, Clovis, California

after the war
what stays in your heart
deep trenches

Christina Nguyen, Hugo, Minnesota

winter chill...
the whitespace between
the lines

Svetlana Marisova, Wellington, New Zealand

rain:sunlight
hangs drying
in the trees

Adrian Bouter, Gouda, The Netherlands

the scent
of a change in plans...
summer rain

Susan Constable, Nanoose Bay, British Columbia

nails rust into what is joined...

so it has become
with thoughts of you

Bud Cole, Ocean City, New Jersey

wild rhubarb
that sudden yearning
for something more

G.R. LeBlanc, Dieppe, New Brunswick

skulking towhee
under the juniper
tule fog

Neal Whitman, Pacific Grove, California

scent of
night-blooming jasmine
words get
in the way

Thomas Martin, Beaverton, Oregon

lakeside breeze
ripples fanning out
the summer moon

Tomislav Maretić, Zagreb, Croatia

old footbridge—
both ends lost
to wildflowers

from crocus to crocus—
the spider adding
a new dimension

deep fog—
the streetlight floats in
an amniotic sac

rocking chair
back and forth
between now and then

Sanjukta, Karnataka, India

marten and squirrel
running a double helix
on the pine tree

Shirley Plummer, Central Coast, Oregon

heat wave the shade of a glacial erratic

Scott Mason, Chappaqua, New York

too old
to start over
another buried bone

Robert Epstein, El Cerrito, California

Stations of the Cross
a mason bee walling off
another cell

Cherie Hunter Day, Cupertino, California

winter solstice
cradled in between
the north and south of him

Karen DiNobile, Poughkeepsie, New York

the places I cannot feel your six legs on my finger

Eve Luckring, Los Angeles, California

death poem
the time it takes
to sneeze

Renée Owen, Sebastopol, California

tree toad
all afternoon
this lassitude

Bill Kenney, New York, New York

break in the drought
in every puddle bathing
sparrows exult

Patricia Machmiller, San Jose, California

the choice made
for better or worse...
crepuscular rays

Jennifer Corpe, Wayzata, Minnesota

Autumn drizzle
I almost believe
my apology

Jeannie Martin, Salisbury, Massachusetts

water strider—
I still don't believe
in miracles

fireflies
forgiving you
on and off

fall pruning
learning what not
to say

Melissa Allen, Madison, Wisconsin

white silence
a pheasant picks his way
across a haze of frost

John Barlow, Ormskirk, England

pocket of firs
impasto of dad's wrinkles
in low relief

Michael Francis King, Arvada, Colorado

coming to grips
with all the loose threads
autumn wind

wild surf
the lost camera grants me
this peace

Billie Dee, San Diego, California

whirlpool
near the river's edge—
tracing a rumor

the sound of coat snaps
dissolves into
raindrops

Ida M. Freilinger, Bellevue, Washington

winging silent
across the field, five crows
leading my thoughts

Andrew C. Eller Jr., Benton, Kentucky

f(r)oghorn

alon
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at's
a wi
shin
g we
ll b
ut a
hole

LeRoy Gorman, Napanee, Ontario



Revelations: Unedited

Milestones and Paths Untangled

by *Ferris Gilli*, Marietta, Georgia

The first meant-to-be haiku I ever wrote, in 1978:

Madame Spider, please . . .
Your pardon for my broomstraw
Through your little home.

Thirty-three years ago on a dairy farm in South America, I opened a hand-sized volume of Issa's poems (translated into English), thus taking my first conscious step into haiku territory. That sultry afternoon a tienda across the way sold me a small, hardcover notebook with *Industria Paraguaya* stamped in red on the back. I filled several lined pages with my verses, carefully imitating the style of Issa's poems—the translator's style, that is. Eventually I submitted ten or so to an American journal, received a polite rejection, left Issa on the coffee table, and put away my own efforts. Eighteen years later in Orlando, Florida, I found the notebook at the bottom of a pile of photo albums. On a whim, I did a Web search with the word "haiku" and found the Shiki Haiku Salon. A weathered, jasmine-entwined sign pointed to a somewhat tangly but enchanting path. And there I was, ready with my faded little notebook.

My horse's hooves cracked	Caged chirping cricket
The chocolate pudding sheen	You will never be fishbait. . . .
Of fresh sun-glazed mud.	My child is your friend!

* * *

When I first read the letter inviting me to write an article for *Frogpond*, I must have held my breath while thoughts ricocheted inside my skull, because my head began to feel as if it were filled with helium. *Me? I may have honed a balancing act while standing on giant shoulders, and surely that is a talent in itself and requires some work . . . but . . . it was only a few years ago that I lacked the courage to offer my haiku to any journal. What do I know?*

Over the ringing in my ears, an edgy inner voice replied: *You know how you got here from there (when you took those first steps into haiku land), and the milestones along the way. And it hasn't been a few years, it's been about fifteen years since you received that first acceptance note. Remember your on-line school in the early... by the way, how long have you been an associate editor for The Heron's Nest?*

Oh. *Fugit irreparabile tempus.*

* * *

Really, do you think
We would dare to harm your eggs,
Brave hissing grey goose?

And what haiku poet's oeuvre would be complete without her very own last leaf?

Two stubborn leaves defy
Beckoning autumn gales . . .
One is left behind

After finding the Shiki site, I began churning out what I believed were haiku and posting them to the list with requests for feedback. I came to understand that a surfeit of capital letters and rampant punctuation were not requisite. Though at some point I realized that neither was a 5/7/5 syllable count demanded by a haiku deity, by then it had become an unbreakable habit, automatically kicking in whenever I put words together in haiku format. I counted in private and in public, in my head, whispered or silently, on my fingers, tapping a fork, spoon, breadstick, pencil, or toe. I could not finish a poem without counting.

finding the answer	wind-faded tracks
in the sea's timeless beat . . .	sea gull, sandpiper, shore crab
almost	jeep

In addition to the haiku happening all around every day, a lifetime of haiku were inside me, waiting for expression. I penned hundreds of hopefuls, a thousand and more, in the course of a year. I ate, drank, slept, worked, played, and spoke haiku, though what I wrote was often not...

kid's out, cat's in
music's on
baby let the good times roll

what soul
soft against my cheek?
...anonymous butterfly

on her head
a huge damp bundle—
cow guts, cheap

“Madame Spider” became an ongoing project.

Madame Spider
pardon my broom...
will you rebuild?

Through the Shiki mailing list, peers and seasoned mentors encouraged new haiku poets, taught us through their examples, and helped us lay the foundations upon which we would build our haiku “careers.” During those early years I learned to dissect a poem and discover how the skin and bones and sinews of Western haiku hold it together; how to select naturally occurring elements from an unexpected moment of discovery and fit them together in a haiku. Incredibly generous haiku scholars supplied the tools and instructions—ZOT!—via email. And I continued to nag my first-born . . .

Madame Spider
surely you can weave
around a broomstraw

* * *

My first major breakthrough occurred when our dear Francine Porad offered kind, constructive evaluation of another gem from the little notebook.

these days are neither
hot nor cold; they caress me
with their perfection

That linear statement merely tells my opinion, goes nowhere, and reveals no entryway for readers. It offers nothing con-

crete for readers to grasp. Those three lines don't make a haiku (Francine put it more tactfully). When the penny dropped, I felt as if until then I had been viewing haiku through a blurry glass door. Suddenly the glass disappeared and I was through the open doorway. Always generous, Francine sent me a list of journals, including the submission guidelines for each. A couple of months later, I received my very first haiku acceptance.

while I sit musing
a small spider on this page
hurries over words

It wasn't long before I gratefully embraced concision with a slight lean toward minimalism; I had not quite, however, given up talking to animals.

butterfly,
you can't fool me
I knew you when

Madame Spider—
I have removed
the damn broomstraw

Yet a poem with prescribed, carefully counted syllables and plenty of capital letters and punctuation became my first contest success, winning first place in the 1998 Alabama Sakura Haiku Competition.

A full moonlight kiss,
The shape of a gliding owl
Moves through our shadow.

I soon knew that the only kind of haiku I wanted to write were those grounded in reality, coming from my personal experiences. For me, there's no point in writing made-up haiku. When I want to let my imagination soar, I turn to other genres.

That same year a fellow poet culled a list of what he considered my best poems and urged me to submit them to *Modern Haiku*. I did, and dear Robert Spiess accepted six for the summer issue. That was the first journal I ever held in my hands that had my name and my haiku in it. Of those six, these two with coincidental "lappings" remain my favorites.

the quiet
after he leaves—
a cat lapping milk

water lapping
at the path's end
murmur of moorhens

In those early days I often made the same mistake that many new haiku writers make, confusing insight and layered meaning with linear facts and a wish to teach readers something. I didn't yet understand that observing an amazing, weird, awful, or wonderful thing for the first time, while indisputably a "Wow!" moment, is not the same as the "Aha!" moment. I hadn't completely grasped the idea that the revelation of meaning for the haiku poet and the discovery that awaits a reader are most often created by the juxtaposition of two seemingly unrelated things; and that such combination implies meaning that cannot be found in either thing alone. For example, the first time that I saw jellyfish changing colors at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, it was a fantastic experience. The quickly scrawled image of those coelenterates became the entire haiku.

aquarium visit—
the jellyfish reflect
neon colors

That falls pretty flat. No matter how strange and beautiful these creatures are, no matter the depth of my enchantment, no new awareness lies beneath the imagery or between the lines in that poem. But there was more to my experience than the first-time viewing of the incredible marine dwellers. The combination of circumstance and imagery might suggest that a good marriage keeps its glow.

second honeymoon
the jellyfish reflecting
neon color

Another first draft that I came to realize lacked depth:

backyard breeze
the corn snake's eggs
begin to hatch

Juxtaposing the religious significance of the time of year during which the eggs hatched allows readers entry into the haiku and my emotion. With revision, the two parts of the haiku complement each other, together reinforcing the sense of a time for inner reflection and new beginnings.

Yom Kippur
the corn snake's eggs
begin to hatch

I learned how to read the haiku of others, to move beyond the surface imagery, to go deeper and find my own interpretations, drawing from my accumulative knowledge and life experiences. Timothy Russell's haiku parsings taught me how to spot the illusion of drama where none actually exists at the haiku's core—such as the artificiality often created by the popular use of inverted syntax. His work confirmed for me the value of effective juxtaposition and taught me how to recognize its presence—or absence. With Tim's brilliant and addictive dissections at my fingertips, I began to understand which of my haiku lacked clarity or were incomplete or one-dimensional. I was eager to take them apart and rebuild them. For example,

in a blue sky
the soaring hawk
stretches its circle

reached maturity as

winter solstice
the circling hawk
widens its range

During the late Nineties and at the beginning of the new millennium, Elizabeth St. Jacques taught me that there is something to be learned, some morsel of insight in every sincerely expressed haiku, no matter a poem's perceived weakness or roughness. From her example, I learned the value of humility, a sense of humor, and an open mind when given the privilege of appraising another poet's work. Elizabeth's selfless, joyous presence in my life, perhaps more than anything else, helped shape the teacher and editor that I would become. By

then I had given up on Madame Spider's home-repair problem and moved on to one of her kin, with better success.

company coming
I nudge a little spider
into its hole

* * *

As my confidence and courage grew, so did the number of journals and contests to which I submitted my work. Continually studying and writing, I explored haiku and related genres, including renga, renku, sijo, tanka, and haibun. After constantly practicing the concision of haiku, I found that writing sijo often felt like overindulging in a rich dessert.

Passion done, we lie beneath this sweet magnolia canopy
The slow night sky slides overhead while more ancient magic works,
thrilling us as moonlit dew reflects a spider web just spun

However, there is one whose last line moves me to tears, affecting me far more strongly today that it did when I wrote it in 2000.

the ruby glimmer of a passing hummingbird reminds me
it is the season for beginnings a time for letting go
my shining April child I set you free to follow your heart

Humbly and happily I joined *The Heron's Nest* in late 2000. For the next few years I juggled those duties with editing an on-line haiku column, while preparing lessons and conducting my school of Western traditional haiku. The column and the school have retired (though perhaps not permanently). I am still wearing *Heron's* feathers.

I am sometimes asked what, more than anything else, informs my work as a haiku poet. My answer is the same as it would have been thirty-three years ago, if I had known enough to be able to put it into words: the continual experiences that give me new insight into our enduring bond with nature. This awareness is the essence of the haiku I most enjoy reading and writing.

fireflies one by one the half-tame rabbits come to feed

I would like to emphasize, however, that does not mean that I find haiku written with a blend of humanity and nature generally more appealing or valuable than haiku purely of the natural world. I feel that all-nature haiku often do not get the recognition they deserve. A haiku containing no reference to humanity can nevertheless remind us of our bond with nature. I did not reference humanity in “heat wave,” but I hope that readers may intuit the poet’s sense of connection to the purely natural world, and that the poem itself may even be read as metaphor for human circumstance and emotion.

heat wave
one raindrop at a time
shakes the passionflower

My incessant talk of haiku nearly drove my family crazy, until in self-defense they began writing haiku too—and getting them published. My world was complete.

tiny pie-billed grebe—
its wake the width
of the river

Harry Gilli

rain drips off
a hummingbird’s tail—
brief rainbow

Susana Chelli Hoffman

* * *

As a few folks know, I have completed a haiku guidebook that compiles all my formal lessons, some of which were presented on-line in The Hibiscus School, and others that have never appeared in public. I believe that among its many example haiku from poets around the world are some of the best ever published. I *know* that the lessons work, that they do the job they’re supposed to. I know this because I’ve celebrated with the dedicated writers who, guided or goaded by the discussions and exercises, ambled, flew, or leapt into the thick of the haiku jungle and emerged as exemplary, well-published, award-winning haiku poets.

Nearly every tutorial was first a private lesson tailored to fit the specific needs of someone who had hit a snag (or brick wall) and asked for my help, and with nudges in the right direction then found his or her way around or through the sinkholes and brambles. And of course I've often worked with poets who originally believed that at least a few of the following "rules" were writ in pokeberry dye (try washing *that* out!):

It has to be in three lines. No need to count syllables, but make the middle line the longest line. Never use punctuation. Start each line with a capital letter, and use commas and colons and semicolons and dashes and a period at the end, unless you're asking a question. Don't use capital letters, not even in your name. If you put nature and the name of a season in it, it's a haiku. Always remember 5/7/5.

Semper fi. The author of these two raw works kindly gave me permission to share them, but with anonymity:

frog bee crab spider snake toad butterfly
no way to tell which creature is safe to embrace
in the dark of my eternal winter dream

end of the line
autumn leaf and dried spider
swaying on same

The second one, hackneyed and clunky as haiku, seems a great senryu. It makes me laugh every time I read it. End of the line indeed for leaf and arachnid—but not for its talented author who quickly found her groove and whose work appears in leading haiku journals.

I once wrote the rather labored analogy, "Just as a waltz is meant to be danced with a partner, a haiku waits for an astute reader to recognize its music and accept the invitation. When the partnership is successful, a reader will hear the music long after the dance is over." So, if the reader can't follow the music, the partnership is a nonstarter. Whose fault is that? Well, perhaps the poet is not hitting the right notes. Or maybe the reader is tone deaf and jus' got no rhythm.

After its first and only submission to a publisher, I later withdrew my guidebook manuscript in order to refine it further. Paying close attention to the words of a number of wise and generous people, including Christopher Herold, Peggy Willis Lyles, Paul W. MacNeil, Dr. Randy Brooks, William J. Higginson, John Barlow, and Dr. David Lanoue, I made crucial revisions in 2005 and 2006. In the years since, I've continued to revise but hesitate to again pronounce it finished. Maybe, like those who make a career of college, I can make a career of everlasting edits?

That is not an entirely frivolous thought. I admit to sloth as I attempt to keep up with every journal, every article that comes my way, and it's surely possible that I missed the handwriting on the wall, failed to hear the pendulum swing. Already I fear that a few of my manuscript's principles are on the way to becoming passé. I worry that the basics of haiku rooted in tradition that I have taught for the last twelve years, the fundamental qualities in which I place my trust, may be depreciating in some camps.

Oh, what a weight it is to know that I have not read nor yet unearthed even a smidgen of everything available on all things haiku, by the best of teachers both here and gone; have not heard even one hundredth of one percent of all the discussions and conclusions by fellow poets; that what I taught five years ago may be out of vogue this year—or worse, that one of my “don'ts” has become a “do.” How I sag, limp with chagrin, whenever a whiff of such change wafts my way. Read “whiff” as the baffling poems I now and then find published as haiku in the top journals, and as the question I often get from serious and respected haiku poets about one published poem or another: *How does this pass for haiku?*

And I wonder...before I offer guidance to any trusting haiku poet who requests it, should I first step outside and test the air, lift a wetted finger to the wind? Do I lay too much on the agreeable folk who ask for haiku writing tips, for dependable guidelines, reliable do's and don'ts? I don't believe so, for I simply share tools that have done the job for a multitude of poets,

including me. I stress that the criteria I offer are not carved in stone, but that surely they are a fine starting place. Styles and trends may come and go, offend or thrill, may morph and evolve, the burden of proving their worth ultimately devolving upon haiku editors and critics. Skirmishes occasionally break out over what some old hands may view as mutant haiku. But I have always told new haiku poets that they must eventually choose their own paths. I've encouraged them to study the different schools of thought, try them out, make excursions off a beaten path and see what they find.

If newcomers to English-language haiku wish to experiment or deliberately bypass one or more time-honored elements of haiku, I believe they can strengthen their work by first becoming grounded in the basics and understanding their value; that before they stray from tradition they should know why they are doing so and what results they expect. I suggest that they also become comfortable reading and writing traditional Western haiku, learn how to self-edit and how to parse haiku, their own and the work of others, and discover why a poem does or does not satisfy.

Western haiku had already gone through basic changes in its brief history by the time I discovered it in 1978. Overall, I believe that innovation has been beneficial and exciting, fortifying and enhancing the very fundamentals of this genre. Still, when inspired to hike a new trail, I will keep a reliable compass in my pocket. Tradition will continue to be my starting point for reading and writing contemporary English-language haiku.

cherry blossoms
the baby's hair too fine
to hold a ribbon

open door
a child cups her hand
to the rain

Credits for poems used in this essay

Gilli, Ferris: "while I sit musing," *Cicada* 1997. "A full moonlight kiss" 1st Place, 1998 Alabama Sakura Haiku Competition. "the quiet" and "water lapping," *Modern Haiku*, XXIX:2, Summer 1998; *Shaped by the Wind* by Ferris Gilli, edited by John Barlow (Snap-

shot Press, 2006). “Yom Kippur,” *Acorn* #8, Spring 2002; *Shaped by the Wind* (Snapshot Press, 2006). “winter solstice,” *Frogpond*, XXV:1, 2002; *The Haiku Calendar* 2000, edited by John Barlow (Snapshot Press, 1999); *Shaped by the Wind* (Snapshot Press, 2006). “company coming,” *Poetry in the Light*, 2000; *Shaped by the Wind* (Snapshot Press, 2006). “the ruby glimmer...,” *Sijo Blossoms*, April 2000. “Passion done...,” 1st Place, Florida Poets Sijo Competition, 2000. “fireflies,” *Acorn* #23, Fall 2009. “heat wave,” *Snapshots* S10, 2002; *Shaped by the Wind* (Snapshot Press, 2006). “cherry blossoms,” Best U.S. Poem, Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival 2008. “open door,” *Riverwind* 30, Summer 2010. Gilli, Harry: “tiny pie-billed grebe,” *Modern Haiku* XXIX:3, Fall 1998; 2nd Place, The Herb Barrett Award 2000. Hoffman, Susana Chelli: “rain drips off,” *Modern Haiku* XXX:3, Fall 1999.

Ferris Gilli has been an Associate Editor of *The Heron's Nest* since the autumn of 2000. She conducted The Hibiscus School of Western Traditional Haiku, Sponsored by World Haiku Club, from January 2001 to April 2002. From 2001 to 2004 she was editor of “Treetops,” a haiku column in *World Haiku Review*. Her twelve-lesson guide *Exploring Haiku* was translated for use in the Romanian Educational System and appeared in *Albatross*, Magazine of the Constantza Haiku Society of Romania, Numbers 1 and 2, 2004. Snapshot Press published her first collection of haiku and senryu, *Shaped by the Wind*, edited by John Barlow, in 2006. Her work in haiku and related genres has won numerous awards and appears in prestigious journals in North America, Europe, and Australia.



Rengay

Waiting

by

Bette Wappner (b'oki), Newton, Iowa

Carole MacRrury, Point Roberts, Washington

Hortensia Anderson, New York, New York

autumn silence

she sits in the old chair

waiting...

b'oki

the thrush's song

held back for the dawn

Carole

fallen feather

the stillness of the dead

grass and twigs

Hortensia

a closed window—

daylight glows on the pane

b'oki

moonshine...

she rubs the tarnish

from a cup

Carole

traces of dark purple dusk

open onto a new night

Hortensia

Haiku Sequence

Scent of the Sea

by

Catherine Nowaski, Rochester, New York

late-day sun
reflecting the satin
of her bridal dress

homeowners
they trade Manhattan
for salt air and sea roses

rolling in sand dunes
on a moonlit beach—
the children and family dog

second honeymoon
the inn's weathered shingles
darken in the rain

spilling forth
after all these years
her secret wishes

love fades...
the bonfire masks
the scent of the sea

divorce pending—
her silk scarf clings
to his cashmere coat

all soul's eve
torn papers float
down the stairs

Boundaries

by *Duro Jaiye*, Hirakata, Japan

when we say up, she says down. when we say no, she says yes. when we say later, she says now□ that's our six year old. it seems as though she's been embedded with the gene that makes her contest everything we ask her to do: rules; manners; safety tips; whatever. and to top it off, she'll go right up to that line that she knows she'd better not cross, then casually mash one of her big toes all over it. she plays a high stake game. winner takes all. and all we have as a guide, is some proverbial warning: "give 'em an inch, and they'll take a mile."

the sky becomes clear...
the crows finish off a pigeon
run over by a car



The Deciding Factor

by *Susan Constable*, Nanoose Bay, British Columbia

It might have been the parsnips. Or the broccoli. But when my father said, "Leave, if you don't like it!" I took his words to heart. Packed some PJ's, tucked an alarm clock under my arm, and stamped my five-year-old feet out the door.

moonless night
the taste of tin foil
on my tongue

The Kiss

by *Adelaide B. Shaw*, Millbrook, New York

first date
following the moon
through the sun-roof

We are on the way home from seeing a movie, and I wonder if he will kiss me when we reach my apartment. The gear shift between us prevents me from sitting closer. He drives with his left hand on the wheel and reaches across with his right to take my hand, holds it gently until he has to shift gears.

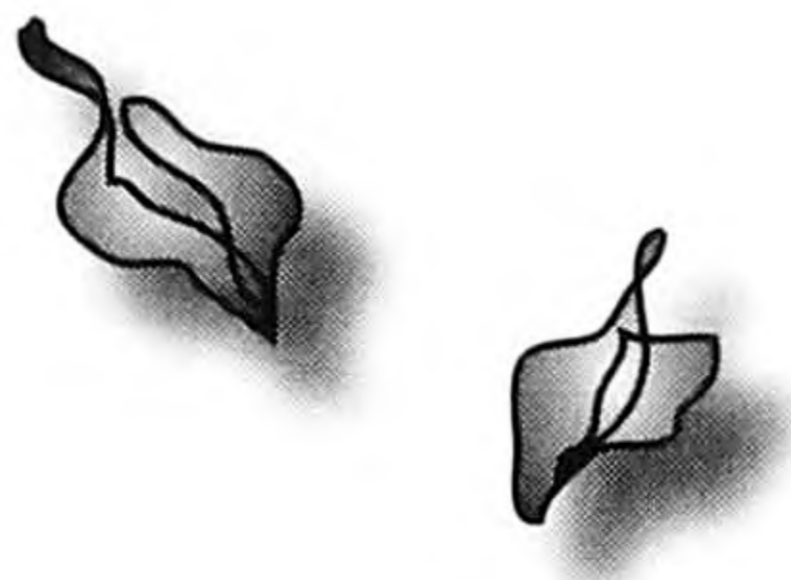
early spring
brushing life into leaf buds,
into me

He parks in front of my apartment. There is no attempt to surmount the obstacle of the gear shift.

the car door slams
echoing in the quiet night
my heartbeats

There is an awkward pause at the door, but not for long.

a flickering light
as clouds skip across the sky
lips touch



Ring

by *Jody Stoddard*, Craftsbury, Vermont

I lost my wedding ring in the pigpen Wednesday afternoon.

Young sow straining on piglets, in trouble, and birth-juices sliming my reaching hand made my ring slippery too. After the ninth neonatal noticed my knuckles... No ring. Not in the sow, either. Somewhere in the hundred square feet of deep chopped hay, it's fallen.

"Are we still married?" husband has to ask. Well. What is a wedding ring, but a bit of glint and sparkle?

Ten years and more of love and labor and worry rests in my ring, shines in its smooth setting of small stones, streamlined so I can wear it whatever my wedded work.

pearls before swine
lost in the line of duty
decade dropped like dung

I bide three days barehanded, while eternal maternal magic binds the sow to her brood. Stressed too soon, sows reject (or ingest) piglets; and that trumps ring-longing. Farmers bow to their beasts.

Saturday, and I want forevermore back on my finger! Step aside, sow, and let me seek without cease. Bend for a handful of hay, shake it and sift it and sigh, advance and repeat. Pessimistic friends and hours sidle past, scoffing. Still I search. Rumpelstiltskinian refuse rises behind me.

Sow, suspicious, flops broadside smack down on my search pattern. Her quarter-ton nurses nine squealers. My half-hearted nudge budes nobody. Pause for reflection. *Reflection*—late lowering light dances off her dewclaw—*there lies my ring!*

Touchdown

by *Diana Webb*, Leatherhead, England

I look out over a suburban garden-scape, each hedge like a rough cut slice of cake with its glisten of thick white icing. Soon here and there a window shines out lemon against the paler light of snow. Softly again the flakes begin to fall. buddleia twigs point, sway a little, becoming witches' fingers casting the spell of the season deeper; down through this almost motionless world to the day I turned sixteen, kept home by the freeze as now. In quest of a magic garment to keep me snug, my mother busy for days with a close-ribbed pattern and a yarn of my choice called "moonstone." She brought it up to my room to surprise me with the gift of its swift completion. Too tight for me now, kept safe in a plastic bag, I treasure it as memento of her skill with needles, the glow of our wintry isolation.

soundlessly
settling in the dark
moths



Photograph

by *Dru Phillipou*, Taos, New Mexico

It is an old gloss photograph, the two of us sitting on Tetilla Peak, smiling at the camera. An image of the perfect couple: their future together clear. The good times—lunch among the scrub oak overlooking the meadow, his hand on my shoulder, the new neon sunglasses, and the rain jackets billowing blue and purple in the wind. All this has faded now, turning nearly blank.

cutting flowers
the sap runs
into my hand

To Liv(e)

by *Chen-ou Liu*, Ajax, Ontario

My Dear:

Upon reading your ground-floor comment regarding my decision to emigrate to Canada, “you’re a dreamer with your head in the clouds, paying little attention to the reality on the ground,” I laugh... to tears.

It reminds me that Ingmar Bergman once commented on Elliot Gould, “It was the impatience of a soul to find out things about reality and himself, and that is one thing that always makes me touched almost to tears, that impatience of the soul.”

I miss you, miss the conversations we used to have inside and outside the theater, and miss your favorite actress Liv Ullmann and our dream.

autumn twilight
a butterfly darts in and out
of my shadow

It’s true that my immigrant life here is much tougher than I thought. It can easily thrust me into troubling circumstances that threaten to undo my “mastery” over those things that matter most.

Thanks for your advice: “don’t let life make your heart hard; sometimes, you need to keep one of your eyes open and the other closed.” You told me that you’ve long found yourself mesmerized by Pablo Picasso’s painting, “The Head of a Medical Student,” a face in the form of an African mask with one eye open, and the other closed. I can generalize about the provocative poignancy of this painting: most people live their lives with one of their eyes keenly open to the dangers of the world and the uncertainty of the human condition; their other eye is closed so they do not see or feel too many of these things, so they can get on with their lives.

fight after fight
against loneliness—
waning moon

I don’t want to drag you into our decade-old debate again. But, is this the kind of life we’re going to pursue after spending years together reading, seeing, and discussing so many artistic works on life and death?

Your Ullmann once quoted Bergman as saying, “Perhaps there’s no reality; reality exists only as a longing.” For me, my longing is reality.

falling off a dream I become a butterfly

Love,

Chen-ou

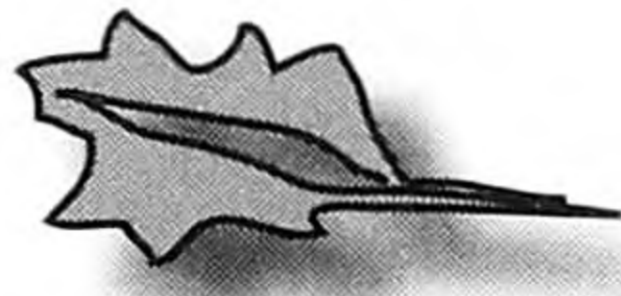
Oct. 22, 2003

At Red Willow Canyon

by *Mark F. Harris*, Princeton, New Jersey

Across a table on a roadside near Taos Pueblo, a boy with Down's syndrome hands me a small clay bear with a painted arrow heart. I've been haggling with his mother over a black-on-white pot. She needs the money; I want the thing because it's old and well-made and beautiful. Her voice carries the cadence of another language; is she among the few who still live within the pueblo walls? For the first time, we look hard at each other. Her forehead and broad cheeks are lined from sun exposure. Strands of gray streak her black hair. She can't or won't disguise a look of need and fight combined. What she sees... I buy the bear and thank them and leave.

copies of an old contract the sky's edge



The things I throw away

by *Michele Root-Bernstein*, East Lansing, Michigan

: half read issues of *The New Yorker*, paper clips bent out of shape, clothes I only think I want to wear, cheap novels lacking possibility, corn husks though they might serve to make tamales should I learn to make tamales, stale ideas of who I am, issues of *The New Yorker* I only think I want to read, clothes lacking possibility, cheap novels bent out of shape, ideas that might serve me in another life should I awake to another life, stale things and who I might be in all possibility...

spring cleaning
i rearrange a vase
of lost feathers

Rockport

by *Ruth Holzer*, Herndon, Virginia

I've been up the coast to Rockport twice, according to my journals, so it must be true. In page after page of familiar scribble are descriptions of the town, the famous red fishing shack, the harbor with its small boats, the landmark lighthouse. I had even made detailed observations about the actors and artists I met. But try as I might, I can't recapture a single memory of either the first trip or the second which had made me feel nostalgic for the first, or of ever being there at all.

sand in a bottle...
grain by grain
losing it



Into White

by *Cara Holman*, Portland, Oregon

"You came through with flying colors," she says. She is bustling around the room, plumping my pillows, straightening the covers. I open my eyes and look around. I don't see colors, I see white. My white hospital gown. White sheets. White walls. White snowflakes swirling around outside my one tiny window. My fingers gingerly probe the edges of my bandage, then stop. A million and one questions bubble up inside of me. Did they get clean margins? What did they find in my sentinel nodes? Will I ever feel normal again? They told me I was lucky my cancer was caught early. I don't feel lucky right now. I open my mouth to speak, then think the better of it. Tomorrow. Tomorrow I will ask my questions, and maybe get answers. I let my eyelids slowly flutter shut and feel myself drift.

morning fog—
one foot
in front of the other

Question and Answer

by *Cara Holman*, Portland, Oregon

“He’s not interested in food anymore,” I say. “What can I do?”
Slowly, the social worker raises his hand, and uncurls his fingers, palm side up.

green peaches
he says we’ll know
when it’s time



Grand Moons

by *Renée Owen*, Sebastopol, California

All week the new baby. Another link in our chain. Watching her eat, sleep, cry. A few moments of play, a smile, tiny fingernails, the soft toes. Then eat, sleep, cry. Oh the order, in those first few months, as she opens to life. And I—for her, I try not to close.

this bent cypress
beneath a half moon
what day, what year



On Autopilot

by *Michele L. Harvey*, Brooklyn, New York

My thoughts race by at high speed fast enough to crowd each other but slow enough to pile on. Did the woman smelling of beer, who appeared out of the pitch black in front of my car with her arms waving at 2:30 in the morning just scream, “my car’s on fire in the river with my baby in it”?

hornets’ nest—
the black and yellow jackets
of firefighters

Where The Heart Is

by *Jennifer Met*, Moscow, Idaho

4 AM, Saturday. I snap awake ready to pound the dorm room wall, a rich bass line booming, reverberating, and filling my sleep-addled head with too much noise. Then I hear the trickle of rain down the aluminum gutters and remember that I am not sharing walls anymore. I am in my own house, in a small, sleepy town, near the middle of nowhere. The sound must be summer raindrops, I think, dripping on a pail. And still... and still... it could be someone else's melody. I lie for a good twenty minutes trying to decide, until I drift asleep between the beats.

an unseen grackle...
what strange radar
is this?



Musical Allsorts

by *Susan Constable*, Nanoose Bay, British Columbia

In single file, the a capella choir enters the chancel. Wearing black pants and colourful tops, they stand in a semi-circle beneath a stained glass window. The conductor nods her head. Fourteen people open their black binders and wait for her to give them their notes.

I sink into *Deep River*, almost melt with a warm tenor solo in *The Turtle Dove*. When my attention wanders during a 16th century Latin dirge, I check my watch. Soon, however, my foot is tapping to the beat of *Wimoweh*.

sunlight glows
through cranberry juice –
Restless Farewell

Release Me

by *Wende Skidmore DuFlon*, La Antigua, Guatemala

The rainy season has been heavy and is slow leaving this year. The steady patter still pounds in my ears and in my head—water saturates treeless mountainsides and mud slides down onto highways covering public buses laden with people, pigs and chickens and market goods in woven baskets. Radios report a high death toll and I feel my body clench imagining tomorrow's commute with our children to the City along edges of the disappearing highway: *Perhaps all will go well if I blast the music and we sing together as we pass the precipice?! Shall I try? . . .*

green parakeets
chattering overhead. . .
soft sunbeams



was that river

by *Susan Diridoni*, San Francisco, California

the air that grew poisonous, contaminated, dropping like lead, was NOT that river, was that tsunami, even when the flames lit up the oily sea, was that deadly meters-high flow/plow tossing the huge fishing ships like bathtub ducks, was that river of everyday comforts, dolls, futons, baseball bats, sewing kits, bonsai trees tended over three generations, mashing into blackened sludge, raku-black beetle-black, was that river ripping child with mother tossed past cemeteries & natural life spans, childhood sweetheart, was that river his weeping outside on the pavement, inside the ripped away bodies of love's making, cold, still wearing a face, was that river, of our joy, skin no more kissed, that river was

thunderless
heavenly river
remote haven

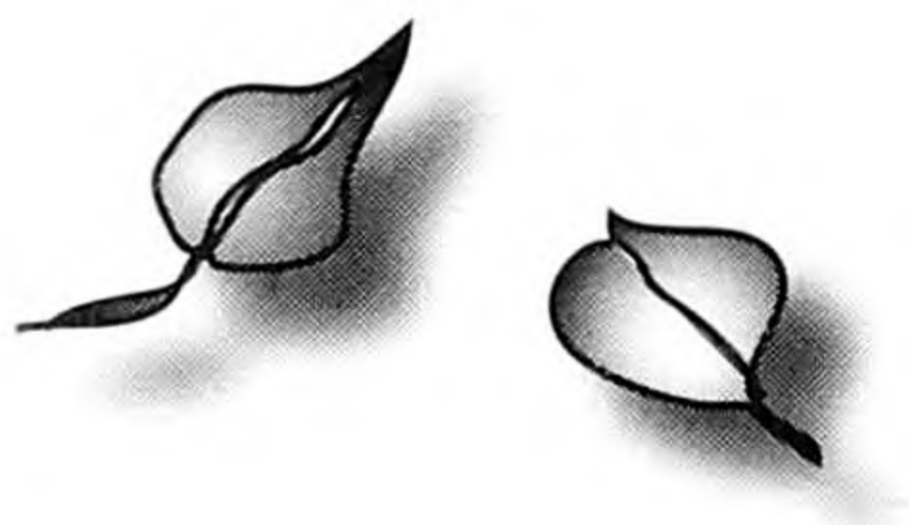
Heaven and Earth

by *Ron Moss*, Leslie Vale, Tasmania

counting my pulse
the night-light dims
on my exhale

Unable to sleep I get dressed and step outside. The stars are close overhead and there is weight in the dark void of the night sky. I perform a tai-chi movement—in a vain hope of leaving a Taoist thumb-print of myself, between heaven and earth.

Single Whip—
a shooting star
through my fingers



Evolution Blue

Duro Jaiye, Hirakata, Japan

my old man was basically unsympathetic when he heard that my brother had accidentally lopped off his big toe while mowing grass on a hill in an army base in south korea. he chuckled, shook his head, and said, “man controls the machine, the machine don’t control the man.”

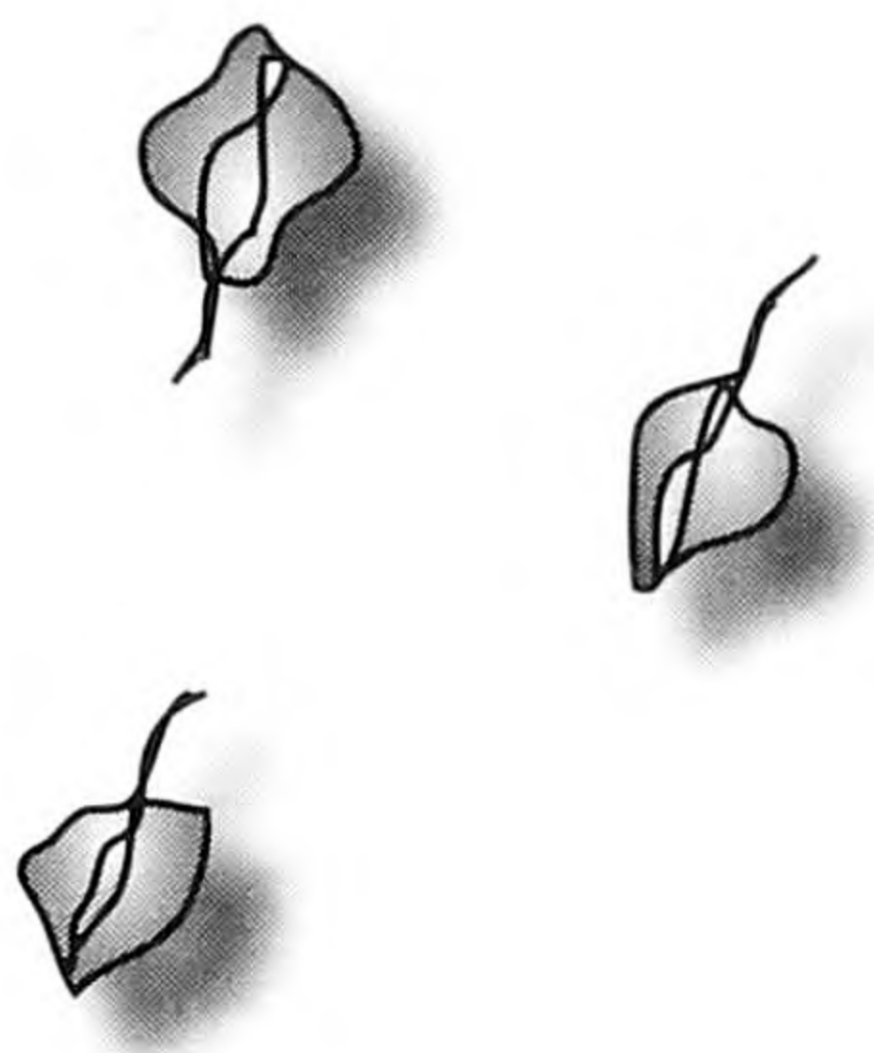
another heatwave—
videos of the first moon walk
on tv tonight

Pick-Your-Own

by *Diane Mayr*, Salem, New Hampshire

You have to park on the hill since the parking lot is always full in early October. The local pick-your-own orchard caters to those who want give their kids a “country experience.” There are hayrides, cider press demonstrations, and the smell of dough frying. The old orchardist now has more in common with a midway barker than with a farmer—hey, the man’s got to pay his taxes.

windfall apples
bees binge undisturbed



Longings

by *Wende DuFlon*, La Antigua, Guatemala

The news is bleak everywhere—on television, radio and Internet. I get up and walk outside to tend the laundry. Light breezes surprise my bare arms and the dogs tell me they want to be rubbed under the neck and between the ears. The neighbor’s rooster sounds his afternoon call and orange *clivia miniata* blooms push up through fans of thick, dark leaves.

bright wisps
cross the cloud bank
full moon rising

Email to a Birdwatcher

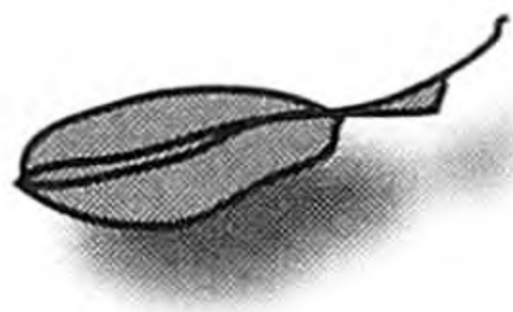
by *Ray Rasmussen*, Edmonton, Alberta

Dear Sir. I found your name listed as the local president of the Edmonton Bird Society. I know the robin is one of the most melodic of the thrush family and I should be overwhelmed by the bird's ode to joy, but why, I wonder, can't the robin sing at a more decent hour, when people are already up and about? And why can't I have a hermit thrush instead? From its name, I assume that it's a solitary bird—one that would not trumpet its love songs at 4:30 a.m.

I'm not one to complain, so this morning I've been pondering solutions. What about a line of breadcrumbs from my back yard to the neighbor's—the one who releases her yappy, rodent-sized dogs at precisely 6:30 a.m. Why not let my robin bugle her awake?

And, what, you might be wondering, do you have to do with all of this? A bit of advice, please. What type of bread crumbs should I use: plain, garlic or arsenic-laced?

dark clouds
the robin gulps down
my raspberries



Remnants of Dreaming

by *Hortensia Anderson*, New York, New York

Through marbled grey-white skies, the crow reaches my windowsill. His beak taps at the glass until drowsing, I reach for the haiku it left as it flew away:

dreamcatcher—
a violet slides from
a black feather

At the Heart of The Heart of Haiku: An Interview with Jane Hirshfield

by *Ce Rosenow*, Eugene, Oregon

This interview was conducted by e-mail in August, 2011.

CE: Thank you, Jane, for agreeing to this interview. I think your Kindle Single, The Heart of Haiku, will be of interest to many haiku poets, as will your comments about this essay. You have a long history of printed publications, and you have described yourself previously as someone who is not especially comfortable with computer technology. What prompted you to circulate The Heart of Haiku as a Kindle Single?

JANE: Thank you—I appreciate the chance to talk about this with what I see as this piece’s most natural audience, the haiku community.

Bringing this piece out as a Kindle Single was an experiment—I had never read an e-book myself before this came out. I have to admit, I don’t really like reading on-screen. But many others do, and mostly I did this because the description for the Single program fit exactly what I had: an essay-lecture too long for publication in any magazine, but not long enough for a formal printed book. I had thought about expanding it into a regular book—but I’d have needed to polish many more of the new translations I’d done (with the invaluable help of Mariko Aratani, my co-translator for the classical-era tanka poets in *The Ink Dark Moon*), and I’d also have needed to round the book more fully. I do now wish I had put some back matter into even this Single—a “further resources” section, for instance. But I never could quite decide to expand it, the piece stayed on my desk, and when the suggestion to submit this to the new Kindle Singles program came up, I took it almost on impulse. I didn’t actually expect them to accept it—it’s by far the most literary thing on their list so far. And then from acceptance to publication

was dizzyingly fast—two weeks, including their copy editing, which was, by the way, very good. So I didn't have any time for anything but the quickest final pass.

You know, Bashō himself might have been one of the first to buy an iPad or Kindle. He was never without the books of earlier Chinese and Japanese poets he loved, and I imagine would have been happy to carry less weight in his knapsack. He was, throughout his life, both practical and what's now called "an early adopter"—haiku anthologies were the first broadly popular printed books in Japan, so Bashō, who published in them and also brought one out himself, was participating in the leading-edge technology of his time. One thing I muse over in *The Heart of Haiku* is that Bashō, today, might have been the first person to take You Tube videos and turn them into a true art form. What he did feels comparable to that, to me.

There are so many superb books on Bashō already, I'm not sure the world needs another. That was always one of my hesitations about turning this into a book. I do retain all the rights, and will quite likely include this in my next book of essays. That way it will reach more people who don't already know about haiku—which is what I first wrote it to do. And the Kindle Single did do that—a truly startling number of people have bought it so far, in only two months. I'm sure it helps that it costs only 99 cents, and can be downloaded onto any computer almost instantly. I hope some of them may continue to pursue that curiosity further.

CE: I understand that this project began as a presentation for the 2007 Branching Out series of poetry lectures held in public libraries around the country, a program co-sponsored by the Poetry Society of America and Poets' House. How would you characterize your initial audience? How much did you revise the presentation before it was published by Amazon? For instance, to what extent was this project originally conceived of as a way to help people better understand and appreciate haiku as readers or as casual writers of haiku-like poems?

Do you feel that the current version is at least as much directed toward those who already write haiku as it is toward the initial audience?

JANE: I was asked by the Branching Out program to give a talk for the general public—for people who might not have read much poetry, let alone haiku. I tried to do that—to find ways to open the field to newcomers—but poetry is a universal language, whose very point is that it does not simplify; it expands, saturates, investigates, faces many directions at once. I tried to make the original talk something that would be interesting to both kinds of audience—new, and informed—and truly, there isn't that much of a gap. You're always a beginner, entering a poem. A poem asks an original, unjaded presence, some state that includes both informed awareness and the erasure of preconception.

I have polished the piece quite a lot since the original lecture, but that's just what I do with anything I write, poetry or prose. I'd gone over it again just this past February, when I was asked to lecture on Bashō at a Japanese university. As to whether I changed it to make it more useful for serious writers of haiku, no, not specifically. I myself don't make that strong a distinction between looking at poetry as a writer and as a reader. Every serious writer needs also to read alertly, with a real depth of attention—both her or his own work, and the work of others; and every act of reading a poem is a recreation of the original energies of its writing—that is what a poem is: not a record of thought, experience, emotion, realization, but a recipe for its own reenactment.

*CE: You have extensive knowledge about poetry in general and haiku in particular, including a knowledge of the history of haiku in English. Where do you see this book fitting in among some of the other work on haiku in English (for instance, Eric Amann's *The Wordless Poem*; R. H. Blyth's *Haiku in 4 volumes*; Harold G. Henderson's *Haiku in English*; and William J. Higginson and Penny Harter's *The Haiku Handbook to name just a few foundational texts in this field*)?*

And where do you see this essay fitting in among other considerations specifically focused on Bashō's life and work (Robert Aiken's A Zen Wave; Haruo Shirane's Traces of Dreams; and Makoto Ueda's Bashō and His Interpreters come to mind among others)?

JANE: Those books are indispensable, and many were part of my own introduction to haiku and, I'll add, to poetry as a whole: the first book of any kind I ever bought for myself, at age eight, was a Peter Pauper Press book of translated Japanese haiku. We should add also the many translations of Bashō's poetry now in print. I recommend them all—I think that to understand anything, especially when there are large leaps of culture and time and translation involved, the most accurate understanding comes from looking at multiple sources. There is no single "best" authority. If you can't read Bashō, Issa, Buson, or Yosano Akiko in the original, then reading them through many eyes is best.

As for how my contribution fits in, *The Heart of Haiku* was retitled by Amazon when they took it for the Kindle Singles program; my title was *Seeing Through Words: Matsuo Bashō, an Introduction*. I think that tells you quite a lot about how I see this piece: I would never myself have made such a grand claim for it as *The Heart of Haiku* does. My piece is introductory, not exhaustive, and its angle of entrance is historical, through Bashō, not haiku in general, though to read Bashō you have to understand what haiku are, and how they work, and what they can hold at their best. Bashō himself, though, is a perennially useful lens, since haiku as we now know it was so radically changed by Bashō, generally described as its "founder," even though the form existed before him. For current, American writers of haiku, *The Heart of Haiku* is really a way to look back to the rootstock, to refresh their relationship with how haiku was first conceived by its extraordinarily radical and continually evolving founding figure. Bashō himself was concerned with so many of the issues that current haiku writers are concerned with—how to write in this moment's language and perception, how to learn from the past without

being bound by it, how to use haiku as a tool not only for expression but for the navigation of a life. I still read Sappho and Homer, I still read Su Tung Po and Dante, and I still read Bashō and Issa and Buson. These are wellspring poets for me. Bashō's teachings about writing are as relevant and provocative now as they were when he was alive: "poetry is a fan in winter, a fireplace in summer;" "To learn of the pine, go to the pine;" "Don't imitate me, like the second half of a melon." His navigation of the creative life and poverty, his restless curiosity, his losses, even his death was exemplary, really—Bashō's last spoken words take the point of view of the flies his students were trying to chase from the room. They show how supple and compassionate a poet's sense of existence can be.

CE: The Ink Dark Moon, it's been said, helped inspire what's become a working community of tanka writers, both in the U.S. and in Australia. How do you see your role here, as a poet, translator, and teacher?

JANE: I might not have published this Bashō piece at all, except that people who'd heard it or read it in manuscript kept telling me both that they loved the translations and that it does bring something new to the table. That it was helpful. That's my hope for anything I do, though I write my own poems outside of any hope, or intention, beyond the needs of that particular poem and moment. I translated Bashō's haiku freshly mostly because I found I couldn't use other people's translations for the original talk—not because they weren't good, just because, once you've done some translating, you understand how much more intimate an entrance to a poem that is. I am tremendously lucky that my old co-translator, Mariko Aratani, agreed to re-join me for this project. As a teacher of poems, I've been investigating the deep workings of poetry for almost forty years now, both Japanese and Western. I believe in the happy accidents of cross-fertilization and that different traditions have always informed one another. There are two essays in *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry* that talk about Japanese poetics and translation. My

interest is always the same: in how poems work, precisely, in why they affect us they do, and in bringing in whatever background helps us read more vulnerably, openly, accurately, and deeply. I think this is especially needed for haiku. We teach haiku to third graders, but in fact it's an art form that requires some real initiation to be truly practiced or read. Haiku are the most immediate of art forms in one way, but in another, they are slip knots that you need to know the knack of, to untie fully. The more I learn about haiku, the more I feel how much I have not yet learned. It is bottomless, really. Any good poetry is.

CE: In your essay, you address the wide popular interest in non-literary haiku and you specifically reference the thousands of haiku written about Spam ("Spamku") and posted online. You foreground that, "... to write or read with only this understanding is to go back to what haiku was before Bashō transformed it: 'playful verse' is the word's literal meaning. Bashō asked for more: to make of this brief, buoyant verse-tool the kinds of emotional, psychological and spiritual discoveries that he experienced in the work of earlier poets. He wanted to renovate human vision by putting what he saw into a bare handful of mostly ordinary words, and he wanted to renovate language by what he asked it to see." To what extent do you find contemporary English-language haiku poets continuing to follow this approach?

JANE: It seems to me that the best contemporary haiku writers are in Bashō's lineage, and Issa's and Buson's. This is of course my own definition of "best." It's fine that many poets do other things as well. But the central work of poetry is the same everywhere—from Sappho to Akhmatova, Tu Fu to Frank O'Hara, lyric poets magnify and enlarge and open our relationship to our lives, to the lives of others, and to the world.

CE: Your consideration of Bashō's overall output of haiku leads to an intriguing claim about the impact transparent seeing can have. You state, "Bashō's haiku, taken as a whole, conduct an extended investigation into how much can be said and known by image. When the space between poet and object disappears, Bashō taught, the object itself can begin to be fully

perceived. Through this transparent seeing, our own existence is made much larger.” Would you please elaborate on how this type of seeing enlarges our existence?

JANE: I’ve come to feel that every good poem does this, not only haiku. The exchange currency of the imagination is fundamentally transformative and empathic. The current thinking in neuroscience is that this recreation of other within self has something to do with mirror neurons, but poets have known the alchemies of empathy from the beginning. Permeability is how image works, how metaphor works. Every time we take in an image in a poem, we become for an instant that image. Reading “mountain,” I become for that moment everything I know of mountainness—its steepness, its insects, its largeness, its seeming immobility punctuated by streams or rock-slide, what it asks of the legs that travel it, what it asks of the breathing, of the eyes, what it tells us of abidingness and perspective, of distance and scale. Any time we take in a poem’s held experience, we become that experience. The experience of a poem is not “about” life—it is life. And so taking in a good poem, our lives are expanded by that poem’s measure. One of the great paradoxes of haiku is that the measure of taken-in meaning can be so large, from a vessel so small, and how meaning in haiku can reach in almost any direction. A haiku can puncture our human hubris, or can remind us that we too are going to die. It can pierce us with the beauty of spareness or open us to the futility of ambition. It can evoke humor, memory, grief. It can, at times, do all these things at once.

CE: You also note that “...the haiku presents its author as a person outside any sense of the personal self.” Do you see contemporary English-language haiku presenting the authors as people outside a sense of the personal self? What might the author gain from striving to experience and write haiku in this manner?

JANE: I recently judged a haiku competition and was a bit startled by the frequency of the pronoun “I” in one form or the other, and by the strong presence of personal life that was in them, including in those I chose as the winners. In some cases

I wondered if the pronoun might have been there to fill in the count, since these were haiku written in the traditional 5-7-5. But I think it runs deeper, and is more a reflection of how poetry in general is written in America today.

Bashō studied both Taoism and Zen, and his relationship to poetry reflected that. Bashō once said that the problem with most haiku was that they were either subjective or objective. A student asked him, “Don’t you mean too subjective or objective?” Bashō answered, simply “No.” I share Bashō’s Zen training and interests, and I see poetry as, in part, a mode of perception by which we can slip the shackles of single view and single stance. I think that is one of poetry’s tasks in our lives, to liberate us from narrow, overly pointed seeing. A good poem never says or holds only one thing.

This opening into broader ways of perceiving does happen in poems that include “I” and personal circumstance, I should add. And on the other side, I think it a misconception to believe that all haiku are somehow supposed to be “objective,” and impersonal. Poetry reflects inner experience and understanding. The most objective haiku I can think of is Buson’s: “Spring rain / the belly of the frog/ is not wet.” This is not a metaphor for anything other than what it holds, the awareness of rain so gentle that it does not drip down to or splash up to even something so near as the frog’s belly. And yet, reading that haiku, I feel it, in body and in spirit; I feel appreciation for the action of the small and the subtle, for the wetness of the frog’s back and the grass tips’ thirst. To have such an experience is to step outside of ego, but not outside our experience of life on this earth, a life with rain, shared with other creatures. And this modest, homely, silent frog is something that emerged into Japanese poetry with haiku—in earlier Japanese poems, we know frogs by their voices, not by their skin’s dryness or wetness. Frogs’ calling is an image of our own longing, desire, and courtship, of the small sounds we ourselves make amid the vast dark. Buson’s silent frog, or Bashō’s in his famous “Old pond,/ frog jumps in/ the sound of water,” these are different. Frog is frog, water is water, the sound of their

meeting is completely itself, part and whole neither vanish nor are separate. This seems to me something worth noticing, worth storing in repeatable words, worth practicing. Isolation is real, the solitude of the self is real, but interconnection is equally real. A good haiku keeps us in the particular and multiple, not the generic. It stops us from leaning too far in any direction.

CE: Thank you again, Jane, for participating in this interview and providing additional insights into your essay, The Heart of Haiku.

NOTE: Jane Hirshfield's *The Heart of Haiku* is available from Amazon.com as a \$0.99 Kindle Single, and can be read on any computer or smart phone, not only Kindles, with a free download. A new book of poetry, *Come, Thief*, has also just been published, by Knopf.

Ce Rosenow is the current President of the Haiku Society of America. She is the author of seven books and chapbooks and the co-editor with Bob Arnold of *The Next One Thousand Years: Selected Poems of Cid Corman*. Her poetry, articles, and translations have been published in journals and anthologies in the U.S. and abroad.



Going Organic: Line Break in Free Form Haiku

by *Lynne Rees*, Offham, England

The line is the fundamental structuring tool in writing poetry and understanding how and when and why to use it is even more essential in the writing of free verse¹ where neither poet nor reader has the guide of a predetermined metrical pattern or stanza structure. I remember the moment, back in the mid 1990s, when I suddenly “got” line break, a real eureka moment that illuminated the correlation between form and content in free verse poetry.

Over the years I developed and refined my ideas about the structuring possibilities available to free verse poets but when, in 2006, I started studying and writing haiku, my, by now inbuilt, free-verse poet’s attention to form was more of a hindrance than a help. Line breaks that could be supported in a longer free verse poem were now shouting from the page. “Yoo hoo!” they called. “Aren’t I a clever girl?!” And no one likes a show off.

Over the years I have managed to develop a lighter touch but attention to line break in free form haiku still remains an essential crafting element. As **John Barlow** says:

In a poem as short as haiku every word, and just as importantly every pause and silence—whether these be internal or at the end of the poem—has to play a full part in both meaning and rhythm.²

Line break, and the pause it creates, contributes to the meaning of the haiku.

The following list of possible reasons for breaking a line forms the basis of two seminars in all of my poetry writing courses:

1. **To emphasise normal speech patterns and pauses.**
2. **As a form of punctuation, i.e., to direct the reading of the poem.**
3. **For the music of the line.**

4. To emphasise a single word on a line, or the last or first word on a line.
5. To confine an image to a single line or to split an image over more than one line.
6. To introduce a dramatic effect, e.g., misdirection, temporary ambiguity, hesitancy.
7. To reflect the poem's dominant mood or emotional tone.
8. To play with the surrounding white space on the page.
9. To express the poem's organisation.
10. To suggest balance or imbalance.

I was interested to explore how well they might apply to writing haiku.

1. To emphasise normal speech patterns and pauses.
2. As a form of punctuation, i.e., to direct the reading of the poem.

Because of its reputation for simplicity and lack of adornment a haiku with an understated form, i.e., one that comfortably fits normal speech patterns and subtly directs our reading, might be automatically accepted as the most effective, but if those lines/speech patterns also reinforce the theme then the effectiveness is increased.

the scent of cut grass
carried on a March breeze
a still-sleepy bee³

The line breaks in **Brian Tasker's** haiku make it easy to read; they don't cut or extend the breath, they reveal the images in turn, there's no confusion. We feel the leisureliness of the moment because of this arrangement and also because of the soothing repetition of three principal stresses in each line. I admit to a certain suspicion of centred haiku—it often seems to be chosen for decoration rather than anything to do with the haiku itself—but here the choice seems conscious and I feel “centred” too, at rest in the middle of the page.

3. For the music of the line.

I close my book —
a wave breaks its silence
against the rocks⁴

It is often because of their music that some haiku pin themselves to our memories and this is the case with **Caroline Gourlay's** haiku. My free verse poem editor automatically identifies a line break at an obvious point in the middle of line two:

I close my book —
a wave breaks
its silence against the rocks

and I do believe that the new third line would make for a more interesting line in a free verse poem. But restraint is the better option here and the haiku is more memorable for the comforting rhythm of its opening and closing iambic lines that surround the three heavy stresses in the middle line.

4. To emphasise a single word on a line or the last or first word on a line.

Here's another haiku from **Brian Tasker**:

first warm day
the ground
gives a little⁵

Placing a word, or image, on a line of its own naturally draws attention to it so we need to be sure that the attention is deserved. Here, the weight we apply to the word "ground" as we read it parallels the imagined physical weight the haiku wants us to experience: the change of the season we detect when the ground "gives a little" to our footfall.

The verb "gives" at the opening of the third line is separated from its subject and becomes a vehicle for other ideas: giving as in "gift," the "little" gift we are rewarded with as we realise spring is on its way.

5. To confine an image to a single line or to split an image over more than one line.

A three-line haiku often segments the image, or images, it contains, but when we feel poets are working consciously with this technique we place more trust in them:

summer sales
a Caravaggio
chalked on the kerb⁶

The “Caravaggio/chalked on the kerb” in **Matthew Paul’s** haiku is a single image yet the poet breaks the line to slow us down in our reading. When we read “Caravaggio” master paintings come to mind, but the following line reverses our expectation. This is the work of a street artist, although not something we might appreciate any less. In fact, the skill and location of these works often have more power to attract us than paintings held in museums. When we read the haiku again the fracture created by the line break invites us to ponder on the ideas of value and greatness, and on what can be bought and sold.

In contrast, **John Barlow** lays out his imagery in a more traditional manner:

out between showers
her milk tooth grin
wobbling with her bicycle⁷

The poet wants us to experience the break between showers *before* we see the child’s smile and *before* we see her learning to ride her bicycle. The order of perception⁸ is important: knowing the child is young (“milk tooth”) impacts on our emotional response to the final line. There is tenderness and there is unease, in the subject of the haiku, in the viewer of the scene and in the reader. Once we have experienced the haiku in its parts we go back and absorb it as a whole and the concrete imagery—the breaks between showers, a child’s shaky smile during the rite of passage of learning to ride a bike—takes on the deeper significance about parenting and releasing a child into the world.

6. To introduce a dramatic effect, e.g., misdirection, temporary ambiguity, hesitancy.

skipping stones—
the stuttered marriage
proposal⁹

In **Terra Martin**'s haiku the break in line two temporarily misdirects the reader as to the meaning (is the marriage itself “stuttered” or fragmented?) and injects its own stutter into the phrase “marriage proposal.” This reflects the nervousness of the person doing the proposing and links wonderfully to the image of skipping stones in the first line—the way they bounce and rise and bounce again before finding their resting place.

A different dramatic effect is achieved in **John Stevenson**'s haiku:

a crowded street
I'm the one
who steps in it¹⁰

“I'm the one” is a phrase we might naturally associate with boasting or self-aggrandisement, particularly as the “I” is fore-grounded against an anonymous “crowded street.” The line break creates a temporary ambiguity, as well as hesitancy... before we step, along with the narrator, into the unfortunate reality of the closing line. The line break is part of the self-deprecating humour in the haiku.

7. To reflect the poem's dominant mood or emotional tone.

after the crash
the doll's eyes
jammed open ¹¹

The shape of **Michael Gunton**'s haiku, the “weight” of its square shape on the page reinforces the heaviness of the emotional theme. In addition, the two heavy stresses in each line further emphasise the sudden shock and grief associated with such an event. Notice too how the short second and third lines cut the breath slightly, reinforcing the theme of loss and distress.

An alternative layout, following a more traditional s/l/s pattern might have been:

after the crash
the doll's eyes jammed
open

but we lose the compression of the original shape and the line break after “jammed” adds a melodramatic element, the denouement hinted at but held back, and becomes unnecessarily titillating for such a serious subject matter and the understated approach of haiku writing.

8. To play with the surrounding white space on the page.

An unexpected line-break in another of **Gunton**'s haiku:

summer evening
a man in a vest leans out
to water his plants¹²

contributes to the fun. This light hearted line-break uses the white space on the page so the reader “leans out” along with the man in the haiku: we feel the stretch into the whiteness of the right hand side of the page but also feel the emptiness in the drop below as suggested by the indent in the third line.

9. To express the poem's organisation.

Now looking back,
Where we had talked
Among the stones—
A wagtail in the rain¹³

This haiku, by **Tito**, has four lines rather than the traditional three. Why? My first response is that the first line might be redundant:

Where we had talked
Among the stones—
A wagtail in the rain.

I think that works. But critical analysis generally benefits from trusting the poet and attempting to discover his/her intention

rather than imposing our own opinions too quickly. So what do the four lines and an extra line break achieve that the three lines don't?

The extra line adds far more than just three words. When I read the original and then my cropped version aloud, the latter feels significantly more compressed, and hurries me towards the juxtaposition of the place among the stones and the wag-tail. The addition of the opening line, with its pronouncement of "Now," adds a gravitas to the haiku that's missing completely in my three liner. It expands the haiku too, creating a more balanced and considered division of commentary (the first two lines) and imagery (the last two lines). And of course, "looking back" can be read at different levels too: looking behind one, literally, but also looking back in time. The three lines I first suggested might make an acceptable haiku but the four lines are richer in terms of the emotional experience.

10. To suggest balance or imbalance.

Wandering the supermarket aisles
the diagnosis
sinks in¹⁴

Ken Jones uses line break to throw the reader off balance: all the physical weight of the haiku is anchored on the left hand side while two small words float on their own in the white space on the right. The form is perfectly suited to the reality of the experience, how it takes time for some kinds of information to sink in, how we fill our days with the weight of the ordinary, and how the "truth" of a situation can suddenly hit us and set us adrift.

Two lines can be an appropriate choice for haiku where the idea of balance is important.

in the darkness
pushing open a door¹⁵

Keith J. Coleman's haiku balances one thing against another:

darkness against possible light, the unknown with what might become known, and while a three-line haiku could have been created with a break after “pushing/” the reciprocation of form (one line set against another) and this content would have been lost.

The list is by no means definitive; it represents an ongoing investigation into my own editing processes. I am sure other writers will have more and different reasons for shaping their haiku. I am sure too that some will challenge the emphasis on crafting suggested here, haiku writers who feel that haiku emerge from the moment and “all a haiku often needs is a little tighter focus and a little polish.”¹⁶

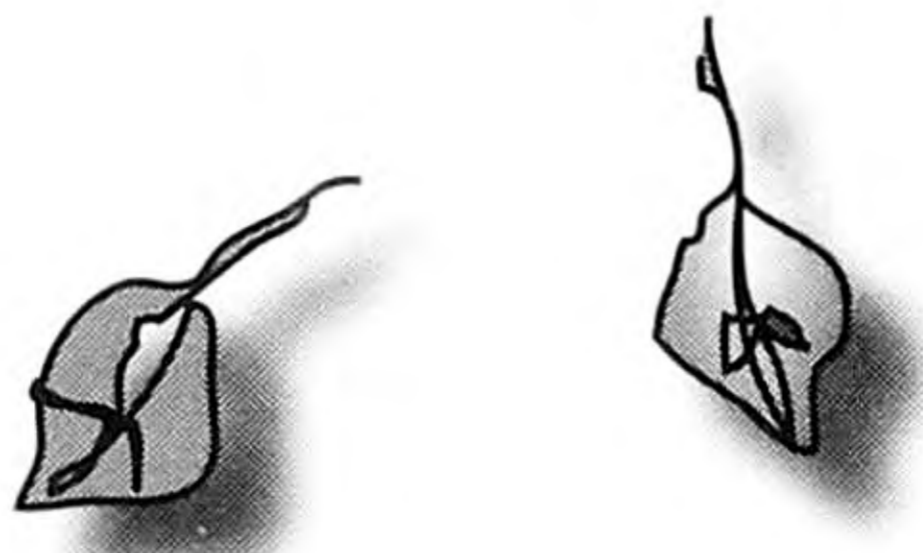
Disagreement is good for critical debate and unanimity amongst poets is not a goal worth pursuing. What is important is each individual poet’s attention to the conscious crafting of their work if, that is, their aim is to transform the raw material of personal experience into something that becomes important to others too.

Notes

1. “free verse” is a misnomer in that it is only “free” because of the absence of any pre-determined form on which to “hang” the words. I prefer the term “organic” because of the process of finding the form, during the conscious editing process, in direct response to subject matter, theme and emotional tone.
2. “An Introduction to the Origins, Mechanics and Aesthetics of English-language Haiku,” in *The New Haiku*, John Barlow & Martin Lucas (eds.), Liverpool: Snapshot Press 2002, p. 193 .
3. Brian Tasker, *a ragbag of haiku*. London: The Bare Bones Press, 2004, unpag.
4. Caroline Gourlay in *another country, haiku poetry from Wales*, N.Jenkins, K. Jones, & L. Rees (eds.), Llandysul, Wales: Gomer Press 2011, p. 146.
5. Brian Tasker, *Ibid*.
6. Matthew Paul, *The Regulars*. Liverpool: Snapshot Press 2006, p. 17.
7. John Barlow in *The New Haiku*, p. 24.

8. For more on "Order of Perception," see Lee Gurga's *Haiku: A Poet's Guide*, Lincoln, IL: Modern Haiku Press 2003, pp.37-38.
9. Terra Martin, *tiny words*, 15 June 2007, <<http://tinywords.com/>>
10. John Stevenson. *quiet enough*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2004, unpag.
11. Michael Gunton. *Echoes in the Heart*. Portsmouth, UK: Waning Moon Press, 1997, unpag.
12. Gunton, *Ibid*.
13. Tito, in *Stepping Stones, a way into haiku*, by Martin Lucas, Hornchurch, UK: BHS 2007, p. 9.
14. Ken Jones in *The New Haiku*, p. 94.
15. Keith J. Coleman. in *Stepping Stones, a way into haiku*, p. 142.
16. Bruce Ross. *How to Haiku, a writer's guide to haiku and related forms*. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle 2002, p. 33.

Lynne Rees is the author of a novel, a collection of poetry, and a volume of collaborative short prose. She was haibun editor at *Simply Haiku* during 2008 and 2009, joint editor of *The Unseen Wind, British Haiku Society Haibun Anthology 2009* (BHS 2010), and co-editor, with Nigel Jenkins and Ken Jones, of the first national anthology of its kind, *another country, haiku poetry from Wales* (Gomer Press 2011). Lynne is a Hawthornden Fellow and the recipient of the University of Kent's (UK) Faculty of Humanities Teaching Award. <www.lynnerees.com>



The Lost Weekend:

An editor's brief perspective on haibun submissions as viewed through the prism of film noir titles.

by *Roberta Beary*, Bethesda, Maryland

D.O.A.

Failing to submit your best work may make your submission dead on arrival. If you feel your haibun lacks a certain something, and you hope an editor will supply whatever is missing, you are mistaken. Even editors who are willing to provide comments will not do this as the norm but as the exception. Keep polishing your haibun until it glows in the dark. Then submit it as your best work.

Sorry, Wrong Number

In haibun, the wrong title is like a wrong number. It makes the reader want to hang up the phone. A haibun's title should be strong enough to draw the reader into the prose and make the reader want more. Let the title be a link to the prose and the haiku, not give away the rest of the piece. After reading the entire haibun, the reader should be able to look at the title and see more than one meaning.

Nightmare Alley

The present tense and short sentences work best for the prose of the haibun. Simple writing is also the most effective. Avoid rambling sentences and hyperbole. You don't want to make the reader feel as if he or she has stumbled into nightmare alley. Do not confuse the prose of haibun with poetry. They are not the same.

Spellbound

A good haibun should leave the reader spellbound. If you cannot quite get to spellbound, try for mystery. Do not set everything out in black and white. Leave a bit of gray so there is room for the reader to maneuver among the written

words. The title should set the stage; the prose should show but not tell. The haiku should reflect or expand the prose, not repeat it. When your haibun read in its entirety is subject to more than one interpretation, you are on the right track.

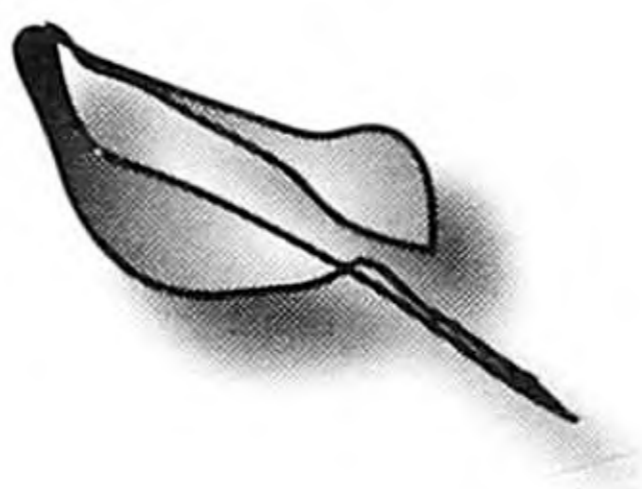
Notorious

Your reputation as a haibun writer is something to be valued. Failing to keep track of your haibun submissions makes you look bad when two editors accept the same work. “Not previously published” means just that. It does not mean, “I don’t remember submitting it anywhere else.” Similarly, “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery” does not apply to haibun submissions. The work you submit, whether it places the reader squarely on *Mystery Street* or puts the reader into *The Big Sleep*, must be your own.

Farewell, My Lovely

Finally, before you press send or drop the envelope in the slot, read the rules for submission. Doing so will ensure the editor will give your work a thoughtful reading.

Roberta Beary is the haibun editor for *haijinx*. Her collection, *The Unworn Necklace* (Snapshot Press, 1st Hardcover ed. 2011), was selected by Ron Silliman as finalist for the William Carlos Williams Award of the Poetry Society of America. She lives near Washington, DC with her husband Frank Stella. <www.robertabeary.com>



Reviewed

Nigel Jenkins, Ken Jones, Lynne Rees (eds.). *Another Country: Haiku Poetry from Wales*. Llandysul, Ceredigion: Gomer Press, 2011, 176 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 7. ISBN 978-1-84851-306-8, £9.99, <www.gomer.co.uk>.

By *Michael W. Thomas*, Stourport-on-Severn, England.

“Land of my fathers,” Dylan Thomas once said, “and my fathers can keep it.” As so often, he was twirling his cape at the gallery (and, in fairness, he was aware of such showboating: on another occasion, at a party, he observed with sonorous self-mockery, “Somebody’s boring me—I think it’s me”). If Thomas had really meant to disown the land of his fathers, he would arguably have had to estrange himself from the depths and richness of Wales’ poetic heritage. But of course he couldn’t. Wales has nurtured poetic forms aplenty and the poets to go with them: native writers like a brace of Thomases, including Dylan and R.S.; semi-connected blow-ins like Hopkins; first cousins like Robert Graves; and, sporting guitars rather than Eisteddfod staffs, the likes of Manic Street Preachers and Super Furry Animals. It has also welcomed in other forms, and *Another Country* illustrates the strength and warmth of that welcome, making it a notable addition to the Gomer catalogue.

Variety is the keyword here, in terms of form no less than theme. So there are standard haiku, tanka, haibun and somonka, all invitingly described in a prefatory note by the editors, and a range of subjects to put them through their paces, among them “Age and Youth,” “Exits and Entrances” and appropriately, “Shorelines,” since Wales has its fair, often beautiful share of those. Jenkins, Jones and Rees are noted promoters of the haiku in Wales, and their own work justifies such status. Here, for example, is Jenkins capturing a moment at which, it might be thought, words would fail:

she introduces
her baby to its shadow:
he waves, it waves back

Elsewhere, Lynne Rees employs haibun to juxtapose events in a childhood memory: “We were the first people at our end of Chrome Avenue to have a fridge” (“Aberafan Beach—Summer of ’63”). The first paragraph presents the acquisition as the marvel it clearly was, ending with the speaker’s first gift from the strange new beast: an orange squash ice-lolly, which “I sucked . . . until my gums ached.” But in the companion paragraph, Kathryn, the speaker’s friend, fridgeless and touchy, gives her a clout “with a long-handled spade,” condemning her over this new difference: “And we were different now. Our butter was hard. We had frozen peas”—the images here sadly prophetic of a waning friendship.

Landscapes are peopled in other ways in the collection. Hilary Tann offers a beguiling moment in which disappointment flips over into re-discovery:

first warm day
looking for eagles
and finding the sky—

while, from a shoreline, Arwyn Evans weaves the tangible present with a beyond filled with possibilities yet to be understood:

Trawling between stars
what limpets cling
to spaceship hulls

Noragh Jones’ haibun, “Pilgrimage to Pennant Melangell,” demonstrates how prose and haiku can call and respond to each other, shaping the reader’s apprehension of the foursquare appearance yet also the mystery of “the bare mountain that gives birth to three rivers—the Wye, the Severn and the Rheidol.” Jones’ speaker is acutely aware that the place has been hijacked: tourism flourishes in what was a place of meditation, of pilgrimage:

Nid llu o saint
yn ympridio ‘ma
ar eu gwelyau cerrig

No host of saints
fasting here
on their beds of stone

Very occasionally, form and poetic intent do not quite cohere. One or two poems leave the reader sensing that the poet's design could have been better served by, say, a short lyric or a straight prose poem. But this comes with the territory of anthologies—and overall, *Another Country* offers fertile territory indeed. It's one to browse, then read more intently, then read again, section by section. This reviewer was more than happy to: Wales is the land of his fathers as well.

Fine poetry from Wales? It's not unusual, eh, Jones the Voice?

Michael W. Thomas is a poet, novelist and dramatist. He has published several poetry collections, the latest being *Port Winston Mulberry* (Littlejohn and Bray, 2010). A new collection and novel are forthcoming in 2012. He is poet-in-residence at the annual Robert Frost Poetry Festival, Key West, FL. Website: <www.michaelwthomas.co.uk>.



Robert Epstein (ed.). *Dreams Wander On: Contemporary Poems of Death Awareness*. Baltimore, MD: Modern English Tanka Press. 2011, 131 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 978-1-935398-24-0, 18.95 USD, <<http://www.modernenglishtanka-press.com>>.

by *Bruce England*, Santa Clara, California

Robert Epstein is a psychotherapist, a widely published haiku poet, and an editor of anthologies of emotionally charged topics. The title of his new anthology, *Dreams Wander On: Contemporary Poems of Death Awareness*, is taken from what is generally considered Bashō's death haiku.

Sick, on a journey,
Yet over withered fields
Dreams wander on.¹

This is the second volume in a yet to be determined number of anthologies. The first was *The Breath of Surrender: A Collection of Recovery-Oriented Haiku*, and Epstein is currently working on a third, *The Temple Bell Stops: Contemporary Poems of Grief, Loss and Change*.

This anthology is a showcase for poems on death awareness. The poems are intended to be written "with awareness of one's own mortality, not someone else's."² This might suggest a similarity to Yoel Hoffmann's *Japanese Death Poems*.³ For the most part, these are not summary of life or farewell to life poems in the sense of traditional Japanese death poems. I would say the two books complement each other. Hoffmann's book reflects a well-established Japanese cultural tradition among monks, nobles, warriors, and haiku poets, while Epstein's book is our own expression of what could become a tradition among English language haiku writers.

As I count, there are 185 contributors and 382 poems. The list of contributors contains a good mix of well-known and not so well known haiku writers. The poems include haiku, senryu, tanka, short poems and haiga. The author wrote the preface,

acknowledgments and introduction, and Ron C. Moss, a haiga contributor, provided the front cover art. For the sake of full-disclosure, three of my haiku were accepted for inclusion.

Epstein quotes vincent tripi to the effect that: "We all pass never having spoken enough about death or about poetry."⁴ This anthology is an excellent contribution to a beginning conversation on death awareness in English haiku writing. The following poems are some of my favorites:

thinking about death
I reach for a cigarette
to calm down
Michael Ketchek

Old age—
he begins to notice
every cremation tower
John Brandi

seated between us
the imaginary
middle passenger
John Stevenson

so awkward
that stage between
birth & death
Art Stein

Ten times ten thousand
terrible things in this world
and still I don't want to leave it
Sylvia Forges-Ryan

preparing for
my death
I sort the bills
Carmi Soifer

all the poems
I've written
melting snow
Carlos Colón

when my whole note
and the universe are ready
there will be a tap
on my shoulder—and my songs
shall fly beyond me
Kay Anderson

my shadow ephemeral too
Karma Tenzing Wangchuk

I have only three quibbles. First of all, the title of books and some journals are put in capital letters. This occurs in the text, notes and suggested readings. As a matter of personal taste, I just wish it wasn't done that way. Second, I wish there had been a list of the deceased contributors. I believe that would have created an added sense of poignancy to their poems and the book. Third, there's a small number of included haiku that seem to have been initially written about something else other than death.

An early departure
The painful tug of ten o'clock
I am not ready.
Anne Curran

If I had read the above haiku in a book not about death awareness, would I have thought this poem was about death? I have to say, probably not. I would say the person in the poem is not packed for her trip and/or not emotionally ready to leave on her trip. But since it is in a book about death awareness, death seems an added trip possibility. There are a few other poems that are chameleon-like in this regard because of the book's context. However, I'm ambivalent about removing them.

In the haiku literature there are a few books that have appealed to a general readership beyond the haiku community. I'm thinking particularly of the haiku anthologies edited by Cor van den Heuvel and Bruce Ross.⁵ These two are good at showing the general reader the great breadth of life-content in English haiku writing. However, it's possible to do anthologies of great strength and weight on narrow aspects of haiku writing as long as the topic is meaningful and emotionally charged, and is not something relatively benign such as showcase collections for birds, various animals, flowers, tea, particular seasons, and so on. Death awareness is a charged topic, and as a result of its selected content, Epstein's book shows how great the breadth and depth of this particular topic can be in haiku writing. His book has the heft of an anthology of longer mainstream poems on death. Perhaps, Greg Piko's haiku was written about Hoffman's book or some other source, but I feel his sentiment also applies to Epstein's collection.

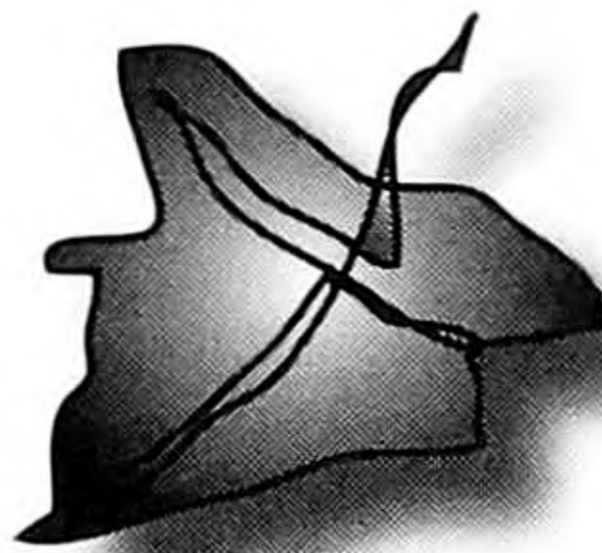
braver today
after reading all those haiku
about death

I hope this anthology will have a long printing life and at least one revised edition in its future. I want, simply and selfishly, to see and experience more of this collected terrain and maybe feel a little braver in the process.

Notes

1. Stryk, Lucien and Takashi Ikemoto (eds. & trans.). *Zen Poems of China and Japan: The Crane's Bill*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld. 1973, p. xxxiv.
2. Epstein, p. 11.
3. Hoffmann, Yoel (ed.). *Japanese Death Poems: Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. 1986.
4. Epstein, p. 7.
5. van den Heuvel, Cor (ed.). *The Haiku Anthology: Haiku and Senryu in English*, 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 1999; and Ross, Bruce (ed.). *Haiku Moment: An Anthology of Contemporary North American Haiku*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc. 1993.

Bruce England lives and works in Silicon Valley as a librarian. He discovered Japanese haiku in the early sixties and began writing in 1984. A chapbook, *Shorelines*, was published with Tony Mariano in 1998. In 2008, he began to seriously submit his work for publication. Other interests include haiku theory and haiku practice.



Anatoly Kudryavitsky. *Capering Moons: Haiku and Senryu Poetry*. Tralee, Ireland: Doghouse Books, 2011, 62 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 7.5. ISBN: 978-0-9565280-2-5, £12 <doghousepaypal@eircom.net>.

Maeve O’Sullivan. *Initial Response: An A-Z of Haiku Moments*. Uxbridge, U.K. Alba Publishing, 2011, 66 pp., perfect softbound, 5.75 x 8.25. ISBN: 978-0-9551254-3-0, 16 USD <www.albapublishing.com>.

Haiku from the Emerald Isle

by *J. Zimmerman*, Santa Cruz, California

Capering Moons is the third poetry collection by Anatoly Kudryavitsky, an internationally published and award-winning poet residing in Dublin, Ireland. Kudryavitsky devotes his book’s first half to haiku grouped traditionally into four seasons. The haiku are mellow and descriptive, such as his 2008 first-prize winner at the Suruga Baika International Haiku Competition, Japan (p. 13):

sheep unmoved
in the green grass...
a slow passing of clouds

The poem contrasts inactive sheep with barely moving clouds: all are leisurely and probably display similar off-white colors and frayed edges. Rich softness occurs everywhere: sheep’s wool, green grass, clouds. The consonance of the “s” in all lines (highlighted by the rhyme of “grass” and “pass”) reinforces the impression of softness.

Similarly Kudryavitsky’s 2009 first-prize winner at the Haiku Magazine International Haiku Contest, Romania-Japan (p. 23):

aspen in the rain
each leaf dripping with
the sound of autumn

offers not just a description. In addition to showing what is seen and heard, the poem suggests the tactile sense of rain that

drifts so gently from the sky that it allows a listener to also hear the water collected by aspen leaves and dropping from them. The slant-asonance of “a”-like vowels (aspen/rain/autumn) connect to the implied “fall.”

The second section of the book (“More Haiku and Senryu”) maintains the meditative descriptive voice.

The third section comprises two *rensaku*. Kudryavitsky subtitles each as a “Haiku Sequence.” He organizes both temporally, the haiku leading from dawn through a composite day to dusk. He sets one in Tuscany and the other in Flanders, and the haiku do give a larger picture together than separately. The “Ghent *Renkasu*” is a little more successful because its haiku, such as (p. 54):

castle keep
ninety-nine steps
to the rising sun

give a more individual sense of place.

The final section is a single haibun, of Ufa City and the Silk Road.

Another recent collection of haiku and senryu from the Emerald Isles is *Initial Response* by Maeve O’Sullivan (also from Dublin). This is O’Sullivan’s first solo haiku/senryu collection. (She co-authored the 2005 *Double Rainbow* with poet Kim Richardson.) At first glance it’s a more intriguing book than *Capering Moons*: the cover and interior of *Initial Response* dazzle with exuberant ink-scribble-and-splash art by the haiku poet John Parsons; its poems are sequenced alphabetically rather than seasonally; its cream paper and robust font are easy on the eye. Unfortunately, a typical poem such as (p. 18):

one hundred degrees
ice-cold lemonade
warm banana bread

or (p. 53):

Chinese restaurant
the bride throws her bouquet
we collect our order

feels like a list that fades away rather than a crafted juxtaposition. Similarly, a poem that tells the reader an emotion instead of showing it, such as (p. 15):

six months pregnant
she sizes up the new prams
with disbelief

would be stronger if the description of the emotion could be replaced by an image (perhaps but not necessarily a season word or phrase) to add depth and imply the emotion.

The section that has the strongest work is “F: Father’s Death Day” which does have powerful haiku, particularly (p. 20):

father’s death day
after hours of phone calls
soft November rain

A poem like this and the beauty of the book’s appearance show O’Sullivan has a love and respect for haiku. Readers will come away hoping that her next book shows a greater proportion of poems with haiku strengths such as in the last poem above, particularly its juxtaposed images and significant closing line.

However, readers will find that Kudryavitsky’s *Capering Moons* is the more successful of the two books reviewed here. It shows that the haiku spirit thrives in Ireland.

J. Zimmerman was born in rural north-west Britain and is now a resident of the western USA. She has written poems for 50 years. A haiku practitioner for 15 years, she started writing tanka three years ago. She has begun to learn introductory Japanese through a local community college.

Richard Zimler. *Love's Voice, 72 Kabbalistic Haiku.* New York: Tarcher Cornerstone Editions, 2011, 88 pp., perfect-bound, 8.5 x 5.5. ISBN 978-1-58542-893-9, \$10.

by *Bruce Ross*, Bangor, Maine

A Master of the Universe as Haijin

On the front cover of the early paperback edition of *Zohar*, the primary text of Judaic Kabbalah, edited by Gershom Scholem, the scholar who reintroduced Kabbalah to the modern world, is a woodcut by Hans Burgkmair (1473-1531) of an old bearded man in a meditative state. He is holding a scaffold. Superimposed on the scaffold by the cover designer are ten brightly covered circles. These are the *sefira*, the codified symbols of God's attributes. I once met a group who used these emanations as guides to balance their internal states.

The author of this collection is best known for his historical fiction, often with a focus on some mystery to be solved, most notably *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon*. In his short introduction Zimler traces his connection to Kabbalah from finding a copy of Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* on his mother's bookshelf. He goes on to acknowledge the influence of a number of familiar names in modern Kabbalah scholarship. He includes a short glossary of terms used in this collection.

Why haiku and Kabbalah? Zimler explains: "In large part because the idea of bringing together two such disparate traditions seemed an exciting challenge, and one that would force me to find poetic ways of expressing mystical ideas." He then discusses the haiku form which "often depends on astonishment and insight for its charm and beauty." Does he do what he says? Yes and no. First, all of his three line "poems" are in the 5-7-5 format. Secondly, he is using this "form," really statements, to express often amusing comments on the ways and means of Kabbalah, not unlike the understanding of haiku as wise sayings by the first haiku translators in the West.

Thirdly, there is only one haiku that is remotely like his definition of how haiku works and what most readers of the form would consider haiku:

God flutters onto
my finger and bats his eyes—
silver butterfly.

The rest of the “haiku” are really spiritual jokes or insights in relation to Kabbalah:

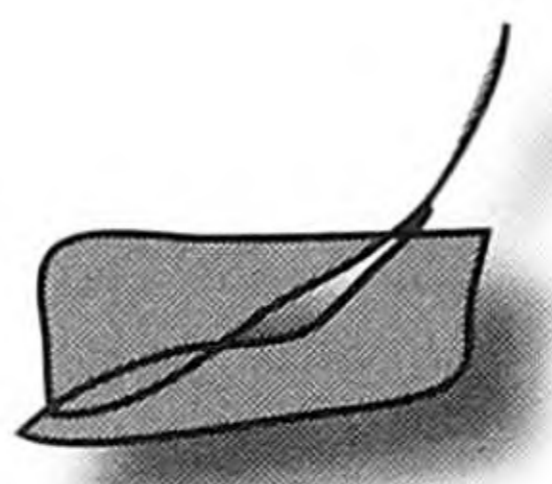
Deduce the presence of the infinite from His prints on your fingers.	A guide who’s hoped to meet you for eight hundred years waits in the <i>Zohar</i> .
--	---

These two are typical. Others are more obscure:

Abulafia opened God’s door with a key shaped like an <i>alef</i> .	Climbing twenty-two steps to the pyramid’s point, <<I>> and <<Thou>> unite.
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Kabbalist Abraham Abulafia (1240- after 1291) based a number of meditations on the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which begins with *alef*.

Some of these “haiku” have the “flavor” of mysticism. In the *Zohar* “masters of attributes” are those who understand the *sefira*. Is Zimler one of these? That is up to the reader to decide. For sure, he has great humor that would be of interest to those who are interested in Kabbalah, not unlike those jokes about frogs in haiku circles.



Ito Isao (trans.& ed.). *100 Selected Haiku of Kato Ikuya, Edo-style Aestheticism*. Tokyo: CHUSEKI-SHA, 2011, 104 pp., hardbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 978-4-8060-4752-0, ¥3500.

by *Bruce Ross*, Bangor, Maine

Iki Dukkah: Kato Ikuya's Poetics of Furyu

This handsomely put together (the slipcase has paintings of the Wind God and Thunder God), but modest, collection of haiku by a major figure in the modern (gendai) post-Shiki haiku movement offers a good insight into the poetics of Kato Ikuya. The translator Ito Isao (the English versions are nicely clear and reflective of the Japanese) who wrote the introduction and introductory comments, as well as extensive notes to the haiku based in part on interviews with Ito Ikuya, is the author of a study on this poet. Isao is also the author of studies on Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde, figures in aestheticism, and his comments on Ikuya and his poetics are probably derived from this focus on aestheticism.

Briefly, Western aestheticism, loosely connected to the epicurean, and the cultivation of taste, privileges the sensibility of the felt moment (Pater) and “art for art’s sake” (Wilde). To quote Pater:

Only be sure it is a passion—that does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments, as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake.¹

The Modern Haiku Association of Japan places Ikuya in the avant-garde movement of the 1960’s and specifically the “artistic” school, which sought for aesthetics of expression in haiku.”² Two aspects of Ikuya’s haiku are found in two of the three haiku chosen for the Association’s anthology of modern Japanese haiku:³

Oh elm tree!
how you show the shape
of noble feeling

My destiny is
to grow old with poetry—
the autumn nightfall

The elm tree haiku reverberates with Shinto-like appreciation of a tree's natural form that in some cases might be inhabited by higher spirit energy. The autumn nightfall haiku reverberates with Buddhist feeling and the idea of transience of reality (autumn is one of Ikuya's favored words in the collection). Isao discusses in his notes such allusions in some of Ikuya's haiku within particularly the Zen tradition.

Isao suggests, in fact, that Ikuya is "one of the comparatively few [post-World War II] artists who have secured the continuity of the long-held tradition of Japan and its beauty."⁴ Further he identifies the presiding haikai poetics of Ikuya as based on *Edo-furyu*. He delineates the characteristics of *furyu* in Ikuya:

. . . being always loyal to one's own nature beyond advantages and disadvantages and seeing oneself and reality so objectively, staying aloof, on any occasion, even if one is in the state of the greatest excitement, or faced with one's death, as to admire beauty of life and nature, rising above the world . . .⁵

Two haiku reflect the *furyu* connection as a kind of nostalgia for the Edo roots of a festival imposed on the present by the poet and as the cultivation of beauty:

one, knowing not
the festival of Hukagawa
talks about Edo (81)

aloof from the world
beauty is in the haze—
chrysanthemums in the drizzle (83)

Ikuya's poetics are also language based. Isao points out that Edo dialect is a "clear and crisp way of speaking."⁶ This direct speech is evident in this haiku:

absent-minded
just grating
a yam (18)

Isao claims that an “ardent spirit . . . lies behind Edo dialect” and equates this with the aesthetic of *iki*, the aesthetics and moral ideals of urban commoners in the Edo period (1600-1866) . . . an urbane, chic, bourgeois type of beauty with undertones of sensuality.”⁷

According to Isao, Ikuya has a “trust in words” and his poetics has purified “hypocritical” post-World War II words . . .

through an experimental process of his composing poems in which connotations of individual words are eliminated . . . [and he has] assembled materials from reality into a structure that corresponds to the particular paradigm of Edo-furyu.⁸

Ikuya is channeling the essence of Edo feeling in words that do not reverberate to undermine that feeling. His poetics is a carefully chosen order of words highlighting the affect that he wishes for them.⁹ He represents this process in a haiku referring to a single kanji (Chinese character):

today also
groping after one character,
to find the evening mist (62)

So with precise words as a kind of structure Ikuya according to Isao reflects an honesty of feeling linked to Edo forthrightness and energy. This procedure as evoked by Ikuya is seen by Isao as sincerity, what in other haiku poetics might be called *kokoro*, from one’s heart.¹⁰

Consequently, there are many tender haiku about his wife, her serious illness, and her death, such as this on the third anniversary of her death which is suggestive of Shinto belief in a kind of life after death:

remain fair as well
in the other world—
the autumn equinox (81-82)

There are also many haiku touching on a meditative Buddhist selflessness:

my own self
have I thrown aside—
spring breeze (37)

rising above self,
that person stays
still alone (54)

well into autumn—
sitting still all day
for two days (80)

In addition there are a number of allusions to classic haiku, one here clearly to Bashō and one possibly to Issa:

a day passed by
without a crow cawing
on the withered branch (13)

yesterday
the Old Year passed away,
another and yet another (58)

In the conclusion to the introduction of the Modern Haiku Association anthology, commenting on the twenty-first century, it is noted that “the spirit of innovation has become weaker and only one stable condition lasts: poets focus on themes related to the inner world of their own souls.”¹¹ Through his yearning for pre-war Edo liveliness and directness still in touch with deep Japanese roots, Ikuya has expressed in the idiom of *iki-dukka*, buoyancy of feeling and awareness of transiency, as well as a consistent awareness of beauty and mystery, a significant poetic testament to modern Japan in transition and the persistence of the Japanese character, as in this understated haiku from the heart:

nor a mentor nor students
to have associations with,
autumn evening (85)

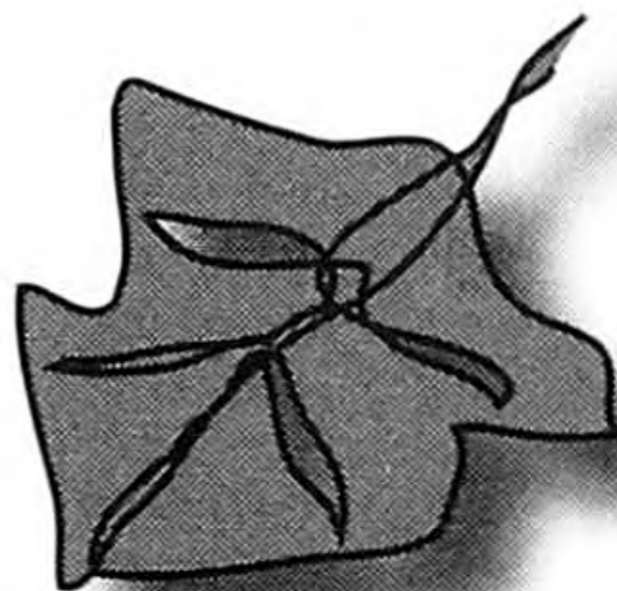
In sum, this collection of Ikuya’s haiku is a good, insightful introduction to the poet, despite some structurally difficult sentences in Isao’s critical commentary. The haiku themselves are a watershed of Japanese feeling and justify the many awards Ikuya has gleaned.

Notes

1. Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present, A Short History*, New York: Macmillan, 1966, pp. 287-288.

2. Modern Haiku Association (ed.). *The Haiku Universe for the 21st Century*. Tokyo: Modern Haiku Association, 2008, pp. 29-30.
3. Ibid, p. 90.
4. *100 Selected Haiku of Kato Ikuya*, trans. and ed. Ito Isao (2011), p. 4.
5. Ibid, pp. 4-5.
6. Ibid, p. 29.
7. Kodansha Encyclopedia (ed.). *Japan Profile of a Nation*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1994, p. 306.
8. *The Haiku Universe for the 21st Century*, p. 27.
9. *100 Selected Haiku of Kato Ikuya*, p.10.
10. Ibid, p.29.
11. *The Haiku Universe for the 21st Century*, p. 39.

Bruce Ross, past president of the Haiku Society of America, is editor of *Haiku Moment, An Anthology of Contemporary North American Haiku* and *Journeys to the Interior, American Versions of Haibun*. He is the author of *How to Haiku, A Writer's Guide to Haiku and Related Forms* and *If Not Higher, Lectures on the Poetics of Spiritual Presence and Absence*.



Briefly Reviewed

by *George Swede*, Toronto, Ontario

Baker, Winona. *Nature Here Is Half Japanese: Haiku and Senryu*. Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing, 2010, 52 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN: 978-1-4269-2801-7, 17.95 USD, <www.trafford.com>. In her seventh collection, Baker, a long-time British Columbia poet, has divided her 95 haiku into the typical four-seasons format. A number are too descriptive or involve simple cause-and effect with the result that they lack the expected resonance: *fishing with grampa / she wants to put the bullheads / back in the ocean; a jet enters / the afternoon / red poppies tremble*. But, a sizeable number reverberate with the unexpected: *heady odours / from the manure pile— / cock pheasant's cry; office party / all the happy faces / on the balloons*. Overall, as Michael Dylan Welch states in his intro: “This new book shows once again why her voice is worth a close listen.”

Beros, Achilles. *Haiku Forty-Four* (photos by the author). Amazon Digital Services: Kindle Edition, 2011, 402 KB, 51 pp. PDF. ASIN: B005GBPGBG, 0.99 USD <www.amazon.com/Haiku-Forty-Four-ebook>. Pitched on Amazon as, “a surrealist exploration of the world in haiku form,” the forty-four haiku in this collection are indeed bizarre and dreamlike. And, over half succeed in surprising us with the astonishing logic of the unconscious—not bad for a newcomer to the haiku genre: *A dream of a kiss. / I wake with tingling lips / hugging hollow-ness; Glass walls surround me. / Green light tints colorless skin. / Have I been here long?; With colossal grace, / icebergs slide into the sea / at the edge of dreams*. While Beros uses 5-7-5 almost exclusively, he manages to avoid being verbose, the downfall of most 5-7-5 poets writing in English.

Carter, Terry Ann. *Lighting The Global Lantern: A Teacher's Guide To Writing Haiku And Related Literary Forms*. Yarker, ON: Wintergreen Studios Press, 2011, 178 pp., perfect softbound, 7 x 10. ISBN: 978-0-9865473-1-7, 22.50 USD, <www.amazon.com>. The evocative title of Terry Ann Carter's ninth

book is sure to catch the attention of the target audience mentioned in the subtitle. How to capture student interest and how to write haiku and related forms such as tan renga, rengay, and renku/renga take up half the book. How to compose haibun, tanka and haiga take up the other half. To do justice to such breadth of coverage, Carter includes insightful chapters from prominent poet-educators such as Randy Brooks, LeRoy Gorman, Penny Harter, Jim Kacian and Michael McClintock as well as a number of expert others.

Accomplished poets and scholars, however, will have quibbles with a table of contents that does not identify who wrote what. For instance, “Part 7: Articles of inspiration for teachers and students” lists only the titles of the articles. Thus, one has to go to page 34 to find out that LeRoy Gorman wrote “The Haiku Roadshow.” Perhaps Carter figured that a harried teacher would consider the author’s name as information overload. A second concern for scholars, especially, is that Carter often does not reference her sources within the text. As a result, the reader has to frequently guess from where the information came when consulting the misnamed “Works Cited.” Also, sometimes Carter get the facts wrong: Patrick Lane was not the first Canadian to publish a collection of haiku (in 1984); Claire Pratt was (in 1965), a fact to be found in my article listed in her Works Cited, “The Haiku in Canada: The Formative Years.” Apart from such concerns, of little interest to most teachers, Carter’s book will be treasured by teachers desperate to come up with a lesson plan for next week’s poetry topic.

Enăchescu, Adina AL. *Esențe Nipone / Nipponese Essences: Haiku* (Sorina Crihană-Dascălu translator). Bucharest: Editura Societății Scriitorilor Români, 2011, 178 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8. ISBN: 978-973-7700-80-3, no price and no e-mail or street address. According to the “Foreword” and seven “Critical References” at the back, Enăchescu, is a major Romanian poet who turned to haiku about ten years ago. This book is a selection of the best haiku previously published in five prior collections from 2003 to 2008. When searching for good haiku to quote here, I was frustrated by two problems with

her work in translation. The first is that a substantial number of the 210 haiku are mired in the kind of prose found in the captions under magazine photos. Were they like this in the original Romanian or were they the fault of the translator who lost the poetry of the originals? The translator, however, can definitely be blamed for the frequent spelling and syntactical errors that mar what might have been an otherwise fine poem: *Northern lake border / the moon comes at the appointment— [sic] / but he not yet [sic]*. Yet, once in while there is clear evidence that Enăchescu can write good haiku: *Not a living soul... / only the faint echo / of silence; All in ruin... / Only a girl singing for / her broken doll*.

Hall, Carolyn. *How to Paint the Finch's Song*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2010, unpag., perfect softbound, 4 x 6.5. ISBN: 978-1-893959-94-1, 12 USD <www.redmoonpress.com>. This second full-length collection by Carolyn Hall is one of the four winners of the inaugural Touchstone Distinguished Book Awards given by The Haiku Foundation in 2011 for books published in 2010. Its 60 haiku are divided into four sections, but not the seasonal ones expected. Instead, the reader is intrigued by mysteriously evocative headings in the following order: “a word that will do,” “the spaces between waves,” all night something huge,” and “the dream continues.” Actually, the titles are taken from haiku within each section: *autumn dusk— / a word that will do / for the one I can't find; water colors / I paint the spaces / between waves; strawberry moon / all night something huge / romps in the attic; the dream continues / after I wake / morning glories*. Eventually, the reader comes to realize that the sections exist as a result of the subtly dominant mood each evokes— from one kind of sadness to another, but in combination with gently rising hope that is recognized as necessary and found in the minutiae of the everyday.

Hryciuk, Marshall. *Zenosex: the sex haiku of Marshall Hryciuk*. Toronto: Nietzsche's Brolly, 2011 120 pp., stapled, 6 x 8.5. ISBN: 978-0-920489-27-7, 20 USD postpaid <imagored-iron@rogers.com>. Hryciuk first read his sex haiku late at night at a Haiku Canada Weekend in the 1980s at (ironically) a

monastery in Aylmer, Quebec. After a few minutes, a husband grabbed his poet wife by the elbow and left in a huff. Afterwards, the general audience response was unfavorable.

Since then he has published his sex haiku in various places. The 200+ haiku in this collection seem to be the collected works. Readers are likely to react in the same way as the Aylmer audience. And, if the content isn't a turnoff, the booklet itself will be. Poorly stapled, unevenly cut, it certainly doesn't justify the price tag. The sloppy production is a surprise given the good reputation of Hryciuk's publishing house, Nietzsche's Brolly.

Hryciuk is an adventurous, taboo-breaking kind of poet. So, this collection is not surprising. What does bewilder, however, is the unimaginative language—the kind you expect a porn director to use with his hustlers-turned-actors: *hugging me under the arms / hard as you can / as i can fuck you*. What gives? Hryciuk is a fine poet, first and foremost. Why has he published poems many of which read like a crass sex manual? Of course, he could argue that during sex one shouldn't think of anything else, but the immediate details. Perhaps his agenda is to strip to their bare, verbal minimum all the acts he describes, both gay and straight—fellatio, cunnilingus, anal and vaginal penetration, masturbation, urination—in order to allow the reader to fill-in the love, the romance, the fantasy. Maybe he had Dadaism in mind, e.g., the Duchamp toilet as art.

Nevertheless, every so often, certain pieces in the collection have juxtapositions that generate feelings beyond the words on the page and remind us of Hryciuk, the poet: *fucked on the beach / our imprint / the waves through it; after / i dream i'm holding / my baby boy*.

Likely, one of Hryciuk's goals is to instigate change. After all, most haiku poets seem averse to writing about sex and Hryciuk is sending out a wake-up call akin to what Allen Ginsburg did in the last half of the 20th century. Then again, readers might want to re-discover *Erotic Haiku*, edited by Rod Willmot (Black Moss Press, 1983), the perfect antidote to *Zenosex*.

Kacian, Jim & Evetts, Dee (eds.). *A New Resonance 7: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, 175 pp., perfect softbound, 5.25 x 8.25. ISBN: 978-1-936848-00-3, 16 USD <www.redmoonpress.com>. This is the seventh anthology in the Red Moon series devoted to relatively new, but talented, haiku poets: Susan Antolin, Alan S. Bridges, Joyce Clement, Jennifer Corpe, Lorin Ford, Jeff Hoagland, Duro Jaiye, Colin Stewart Jones, Catherine J.S. Lee, Erik Linzbach, Chen-ou Liu, Tanya McDonald, Fonda Bell Miller, Renée Owen, Greg Piko, Melissa Spurr, André Surridge, and Quendryth Young. Of these eighteen, all but one have previously published their work in *Frogpond*, many of them in a number of different issues. Each poet is introduced by a photo, occupation, date of birth, place of residence a brief analysis of the haiku as well as publishing credits. The number of haiku on display for each is a constant fifteen, although some of the poets have been considerably more prolific than the rest. It's difficult to find a weak poem among the 270 featured. The series is invaluable as a barometer of climate change in the haiku world.

Maretić, Tomislav. *Leptir nad pučinom: sitnopjesni / Butterfly over the open sea: haiku* (Margaret Casman-Vuko & Tomislav Maretić translators). Zagreb: HKLD, 2011, 144 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 8. ISBN: 978-953-55125-2-3, no price and no e-mail or street address. This collection of 550 haiku (four to five per page) is arranged in eight parts: the first four according to the seasons, starting with spring and the last four a miscellaneous grouping that includes a solo ni-juin renku. Judging by the correctness of the English syntax and seemingly apt word choices, the translations seem to be accurate in depicting Maretić's range of work, perhaps because the poet himself assisted in the translations. A goodly number are merely descriptive: *before departing, / the loaded donkey grazes / near the path*. But, more than half are fully realized: *winter silence— / silvered by moonlight, / the leap of a fish; spring cleaning— / prosciutto from the attic / airs on the balcony*. In the course of reading the collection, the reader becomes seduced by Maretić's constant attention to the smallest details of our rich sensual world, so even the merely

descriptive eventually become appreciated.

Mosier, Paul. *Reflections on Initiation*. Smashwords E-Book, 2011, 15 pp. PDF. No ISBN or ASIN, 3.25 USD < www.smashwords.com/books/view/79030>. The E-publisher's blurb states:

This is a collection of haiku penned during three years of maturation in graduate school. Read moving words expressing the costs and benefits of choosing one's path in life.

An unusual theme for a collection. Too bad the haiku don't live up to the hype. The 120 or so pieces have the signature of a novice: *morning sun / promising great light / on winter fields; lofty summit / an idle ascent / frustrated descent; gecko on the rock / his head against the sun / a breeze saunters*. Mosier needs to learn that readers don't like being told what to feel; that implying works better than stating.

Ross, Bruce (ed.). *scent of pine: A Maine Haiku Anthology*. Bangor, ME: Tancho Press, 2011, 58 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN: 978-0-9837141-0-1, 14.95 USD, Suite 127, 499 Broadway, Bangor, ME 04401. In his informative intro, Ross describes how he was inspired by Thoreau's *The Maine Woods* to gather the haiku of the eighteen Maine poets included in this anthology, many of whom are well-known to readers of *Frogpond*. Each poet is represented by from three to six haiku for a total of seventy-nine. Almost all deal with Maine's natural world and almost all generate ripples of association with the wonders described by Thoreau.

Verhart, John & Verhart, Max. *Oh broer / Oh Brother*. Hertogenbosch, Netherlands: 't schrijverke, unpag., sewn, 4 x 5.5. ISBN: 978-94-90697-00-5, no price, <max@verhart.org>. This booklet is a reprint of the four-part haibun by Max that appeared in the 2010 Spring/Summer issue of *Frogpond* (33:2) about the last two years of the relationship with his older brother, John, who had lung cancer. It is also more, containing six illustrations (lino cuts by John that also appear in miniature on the cover) plus three more haiku as well as a six-line poem. It will resonate for anyone who has lost someone significant.

Welch, Michael Dylan (Ed.). *Tidepools: Haiku on Gabriola*. Gabriola, B.C.: Pacific Rim Publishers, 2011, 72 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN: 978-0-921358-26-8, 20 USD plus postage, <naomi@naomiwakan.com>. In 2002, Naomi Beth Wakan started a yearly event that involved a weekend of haiku poetry at her estate on idyllic Gabriola Island near Vancouver, B. C. This anthology is a mixed bag of stuff by forty-two participants over the years — haiku, haibun, renga, renku, tanka, two long poems (by Wakan and Welch, respectively), an essay (by Richard R. Powell), an interview (with Wakan) as well as an appendix on resources and notes on forms. The overall effect is that readers will wish to attend the next event on Gabriola (something I regret not doing in 2008 when I was invited to give a reading, but was denied by the fates).

Wilkin, Mike. *Venice Haiku*. Cullercoats, England: Iron Press, 2011, 64 pp., perfect softbound, 3 x 4. ISBN: 978-0-9565725-1-6, £5, <ironpress@blueyonder.co.uk>. As someone who has downed more than a few pints with the owner of Iron Press, Peter Mortimer, in his picturesque Northumberland town, I know he would not publish a manuscript unless it had *irresistibile* content, *vivace* language done *con stile*, and, above all, with *gusto*. Wilkin's three-liners have all these qualities: *Night rides the canals— / Ribbons of gaudy light / Going somewhere, nowhere; Alleys untangle / To a pristine square / Never visited; where we started from?; Across the lagoon, the factories / Of Mestre out-shimmer / The domes of San Marco*.

The trouble is that most are over 17 syllables and, inevitably, readers expecting *espressi* and *biscotti* will feel they have overindulged in *vino* and *antipasti* instead. Perhaps Wilkin's poetic observations would have been better served in a tanka format. Nevertheless, the collection of 51 poems makes Venice, the divine and the squalid, come to life.



Re:Readings

Of 34:1

Merrill Ann Gonzales, Dayville, Connecticut on a haiku by *John Stevenson*, Nassau, New York: *weight of a sparrow / shaking loose / a yellow leaf*. Why does this haiku remind me of my Father on his deathbed? As I read this haiku I have the feeling that the author had something else entirely on his mind when he wrote this... more to the effect of how lightly one can free oneself from chronological age. And yet for me the emotional content of a memory links itself to the weight of the sparrow and my mind goes back to the report of my sister regarding how terribly thin he had become in the nursing home after breaking his hip. Links between haiku and the effect on our awareness are not easily discerned. Reading this haiku allowed me to revisit my loss with a new tenderness. How lightly he shook off his life... as a sparrow might, the yellow leaf. I am grateful to John for this one.

Of 34:2

John Dunphy, Alton, Illinois on a haiku by *Anne K. Schwader*, Westminister, Colorado: *when did it start / to be about loss / Christmas lights*. This is a brilliant work. Somewhere in middle age, the Christmas season indeed becomes about loss—especially the loss of family through death, divorce and estrangement. The person who once enjoyed Christmas dinner at a table that was barely large enough to accommodate everyone finds himself/herself dining alone at a restaurant on December 25. The season that was formerly anticipated with joy is now an interval that one tries stoically to endure. For too many people, Christmas is the loneliest day of the year.

Of 34:1

Lynne Rees, Offham, England on “Privileging the Link: On a Poetics of Haibun” by *Bruce Ross*, Bangor, Maine. Reviewers are expected to express their critical opinion and I’d be the first to discourage an author from defending their work, but when

parts of a review are a misrepresentation of facts I believe they should be corrected.

1. *What BR reported:* The editors declare they are simply haibun practitioners themselves without authoritative or academic knowledge of haibun.

What the editors wrote: ...neither of us claims to be an ultimate authority on haibun or an academic expert in literary criticism.

2. *What BR reported:* They then list eight favourable qualities of haibun, though they chose the haibun by reading them aloud and not having any pre-conceived criteria other than those apply [*sic*] to writing in general.

What the editors wrote: Our critical approach has been based on what makes for good writing generally, and the sensitivity of each writer towards the haibun's unique form: the effective blend and juxtaposition of poetry and prose.

There are no definitive criteria for the haibun in English; it is an evolving genre which bears little resemblance to the original Japanese form whose name it bears. Nevertheless, for the purpose of selection, and despite our different writing backgrounds, we were easily able to agree on a list of desirable characteristics:

Strong Openings

Does the writing catch our attention immediately and encourage us to read on?

Effective Haiku

Do the haiku complement the prose and avoid repeating what has already been said, or what will be said? Do they add another dimension to the haibun, a layer that would not be present if they were removed? Do they feel consciously placed within and against the setting of the prose and create effective transitions?

Authenticity

Does the haibun "feel" true? Is it an emotionally convincing account, regardless of whether it is factually true or not?

Significance & Meaning

Is the writing more than a piece of description? Is the language significant, i.e., capable of suggesting more than its literal or primary meaning? Does a theme (or themes) emerge from the language choices, evoking speculation and insight?

Precision of Language

Is the writing concise? Does the language feel fresh? Does the writer avoid cliché and overstatement?

Form, Content & Point of View

Has the writing been shaped in the most effective way for its subject matter and emotional tone? Does the dramatic development feel satisfying? Is the point of view appropriate? Does the choice of tense serve the haibun effectively?

Poetic Closures

Does the haibun's conclusion retain a sense of openness or "possibility" rather than a solid, definite ending that controls the reader, or prevents further contemplation?

Awareness of Audience

Does the haibun transcend anecdote and/or personal experience and become universal, i.e., of relevance to a wider readership, to an audience who do not know the author, or even to an audience outside of haiku circles?

In spite of having the above **list of criteria** for selection, we did not consciously use these in our initial assessment of the haibun, just as we do not have any such list in mind during the drafting process of our own haibun.

We read each one, aloud, several times, to hear the sound and flow of the piece and to get an overall view. We tried to see what was interesting; not only in the subject matter, but in the way it was expressed. We tried to be open to what could be discovered in each piece, rather than waiting for pre-conceived ideas to be rewarded. It was after this stage that we looked more particularly at each piece, and selected the criteria that we felt were most relevant to the haibun under discussion.

3. *What BR reported:* The editors' comments are low key and a bit airy... and offers as an example an edited closing paragraph to one commentary: This is haibun writing at its best... the way it has been crafted and edited by its author... is one of delight, empathy and insight.

The editor wrote: *Commentary in full:* I know I am in the hands of a competent and confident writer while reading this haibun. Its construction is considered, the dramatic development rewarding, and the three haiku have been thoughtfully placed to create moments of contemplation and shifts of scene and time.

“The Sea in Their Blood” is less than 300 words long which is astonishing given that it is the story of several generations, from the unnamed “ancestors,” to the narrator’s great-grandfather and grand-mother, to their son, her grandfather, and to ultimately herself. The haibun does not feel at all rushed or compressed because of the careful attention to detail and to the pace: each word feels deliberately chosen and the syntax is varied. The best words in their best order, Coleridge said, speaking of poetry, and some parts of the prose have the quality of poetry about them. Take a look at the parallelism of the opening sentence:

There is no famous poet buried in the tiny churchyard of Sagard [/] the inscriptions on the ancient gravestones are in no way remarkable

and the precision of certain images:

A flock of seagulls pounces down on the newly seeded fields.

What I also like very much about this haibun is the sense of multiple voices: Yeats’ words in the epigraph, the narrator’s voice, the gulls’, the godfather’s, the death certificate, with each voice fleshing out the story a little bit more until I am convinced by its authenticity and its authority.

This is haibun writing at its best. **Not because I feel that autobiography is the better choice of content**, but in the way it has been crafted and edited by its author, **until all the hard work**

has been removed and the reader's experience is one of delight, empathy and insight.

Many thanks for allowing me to set the record straight.

Of 34:2

Hortensia Anderson, New York, New York on the *Editor's Note* on "deja-ku" by *George Swede*. [It] evoked the memory of a delightful email exchange I had with *Christopher Herold* in which I pointed out that a haiku of mine was remarkably similar to one of his. Mine, penned in 2006:

foghorn—
the heron dives
into the sound

has a startling resemblance to the one by Herold:

foghorns
we lower a kayak
into the sound

I knew Christopher had never read mine since I never published it. I also knew there was no mutual influence since mine came from an entry in my 1972 journal:

"Just lazing around in my canoe, with the foghorn blasts, gulls diving in the sound."

In fact, my original was:

foghorn –
gulls diving in and out
of the sound

I emailed Christopher and we exchanged stories of how our haiku came into being. They were, as in L2, completely different. The similarity, of course, is in the play on the word "sound" with "foghorn(s)."

Some writers get upset by “deja ku”. I don’t . As an admirer of Herold, I feel honoured to have written a haiku so similar to one of his, especially since he told me it is a favourite at readings.

Corrections to 34:2

p. 6: *Joseph M. Kusmiss* wrote to say: “Hi, I was happy to get a haiku published in this issue . . . but when I saw it it was:

the evening news
I communicate with
my inner sociopath

instead of what I sent (see below):

the evening news
I commune with
my inner sociopath

Typo or change? I like my version a lot better.”

Editors’ Note: And, so do we. Sorry for the error..

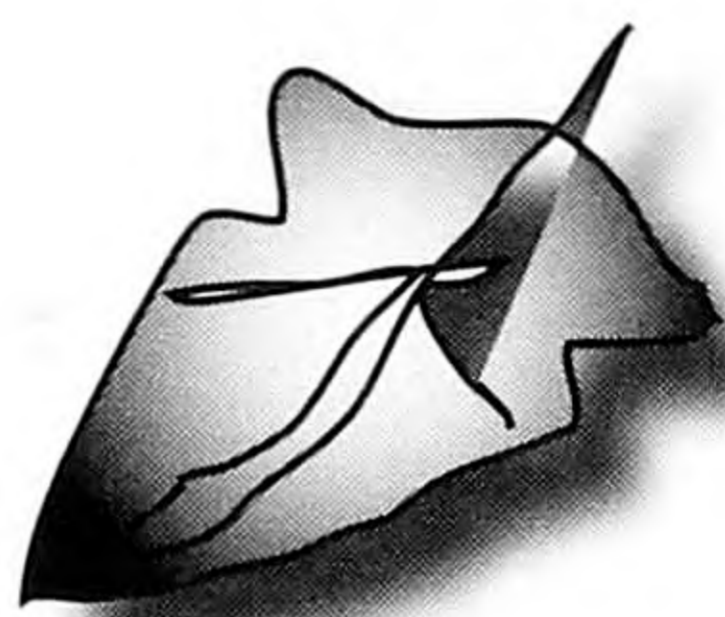
p. 22: *John Barlow* provides a rich background for the correction to his haiku: Unfortunately a couple of typos were introduced to my haiku [on p. 22], which should have read:

sparrowweight the groundsel bends to ground

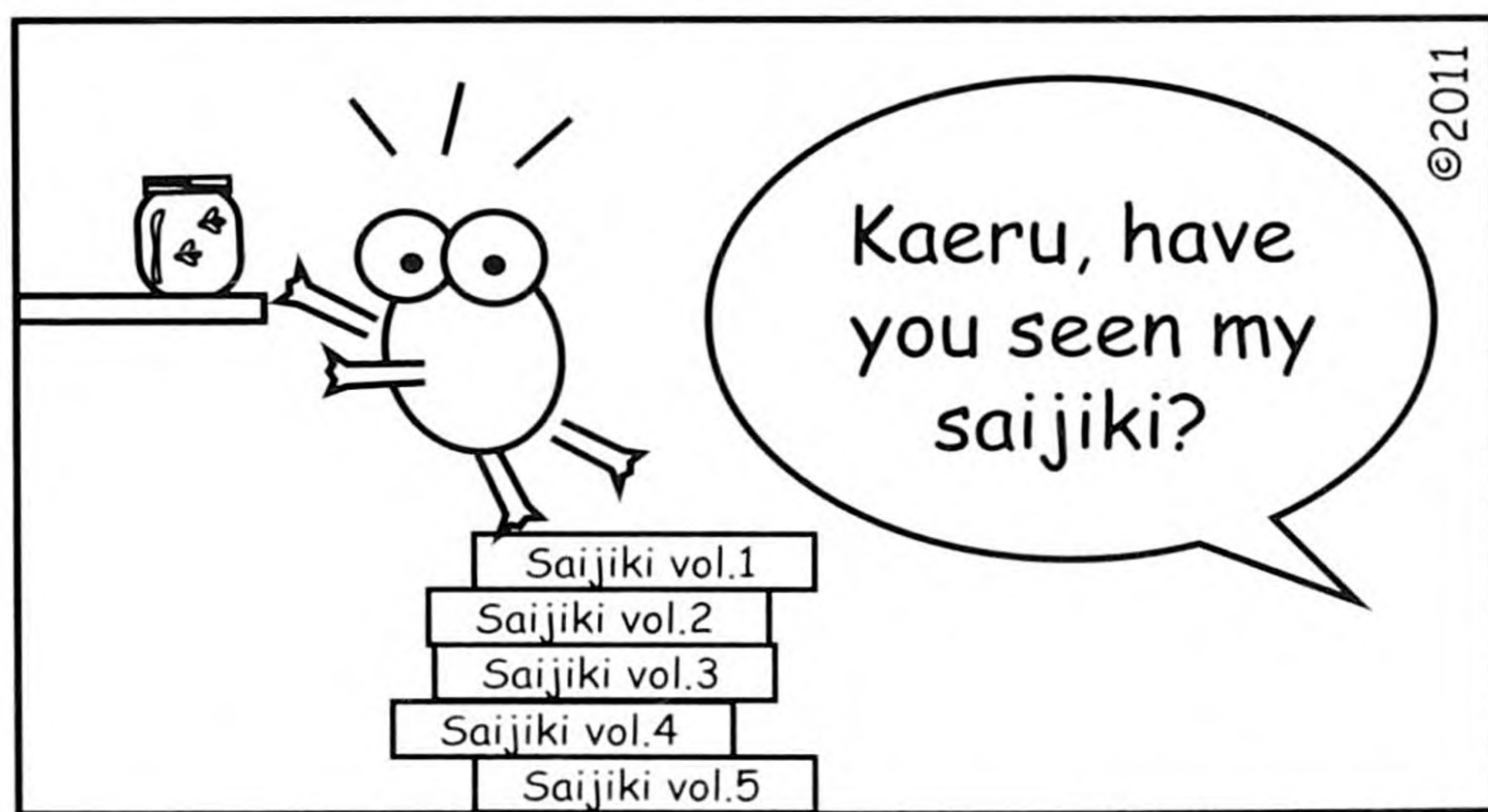
(Instead of: sparrowweight the groundsel bends to the ground)

While the introduction of a second article disrupted only the rhythm, the more conventional unhyphenated “sparrowweight” was further from the intention. In each instance that I use this technique the linguistic amalgamation is limited to only the last letter of the first word and the first letter of the following word, and as these are identical one is discarded. The resultant portmanteau then forms the first or last word

of a one-line haiku: another example being “lapwings wheel in the distant thunderain” from *Acorn* 25. These differ somewhat from Nick Virgilio’s “weirds,” which generally blended words of disparate meaning to create minimalist one-word poems. My intention is for the coined word to enhance both sound and meaning, and hopefully be more evocative in isolation and in the context of the haiku than the single words would have been had they been combined in a conventional manner.

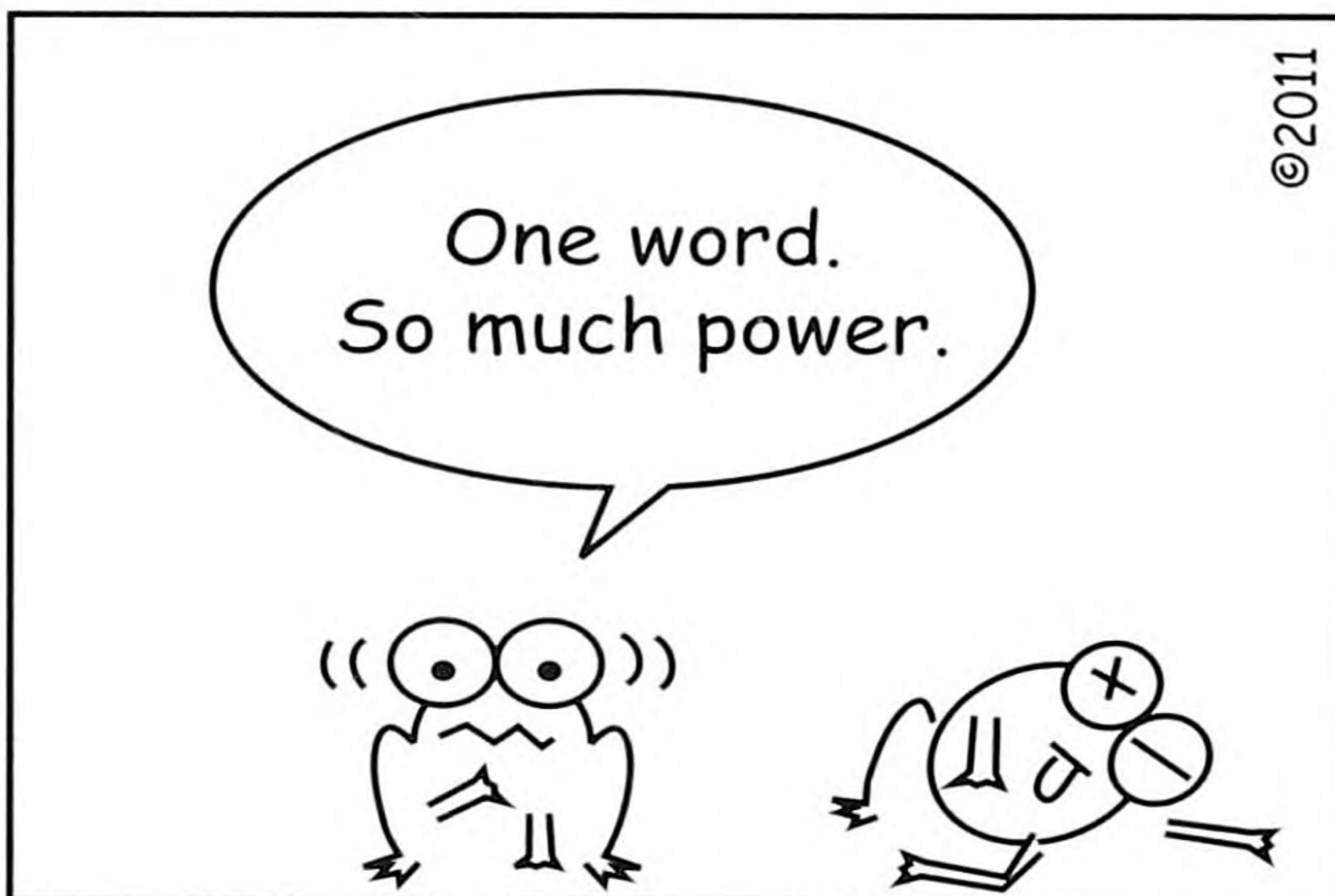
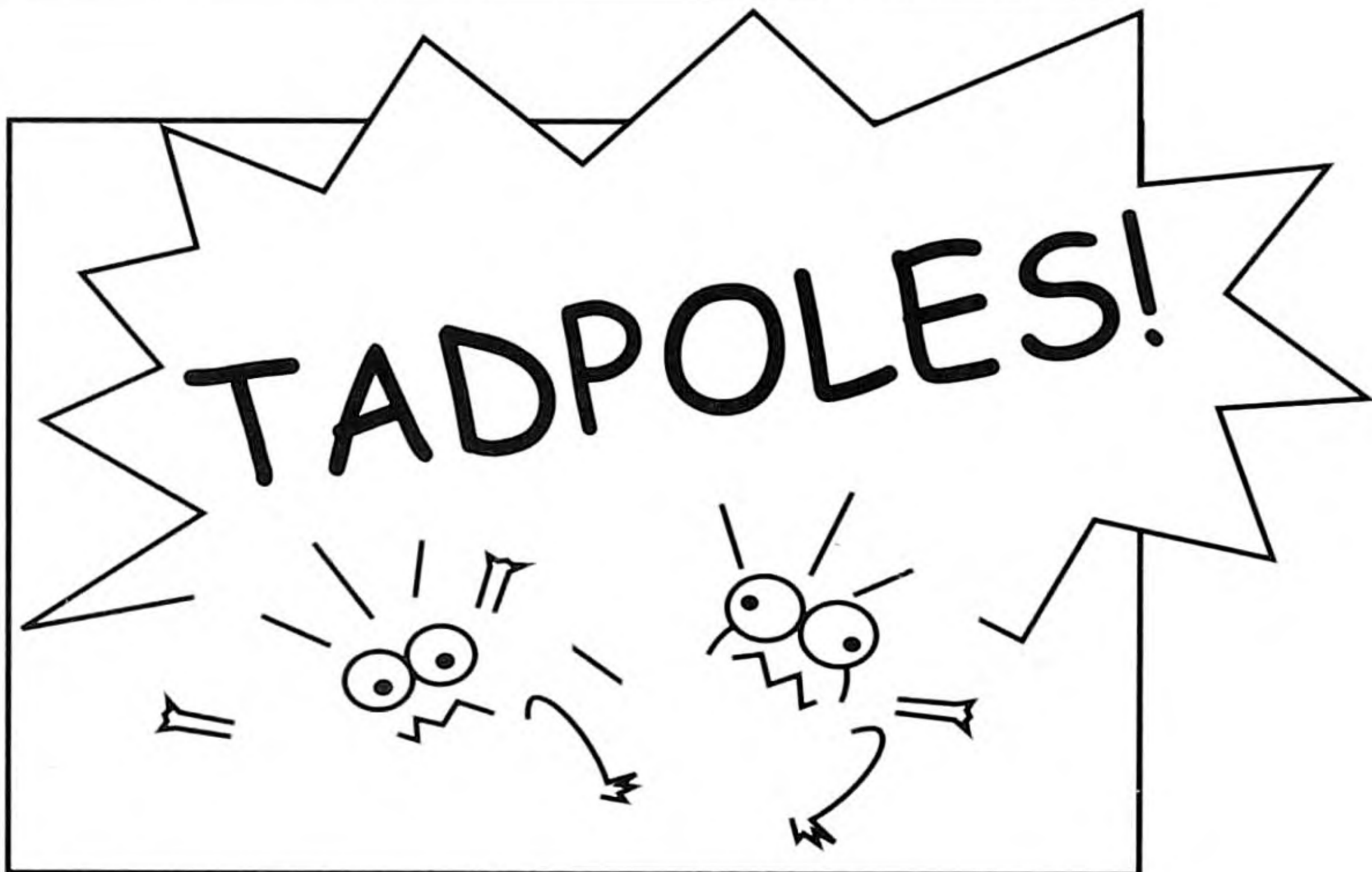


Old Pond Comics



Jessica Tremblay

Old Pond Comics



Jessica Tremblay

Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Competition 2011

Judged by

Merrill Ann Gonzales, Dayville, Connecticut

Paul Miller, Bristol, Rhode Island

First Prize

Twelfth Night—A Nijuin Renku

by

Diana Webb, Leatherhead, England

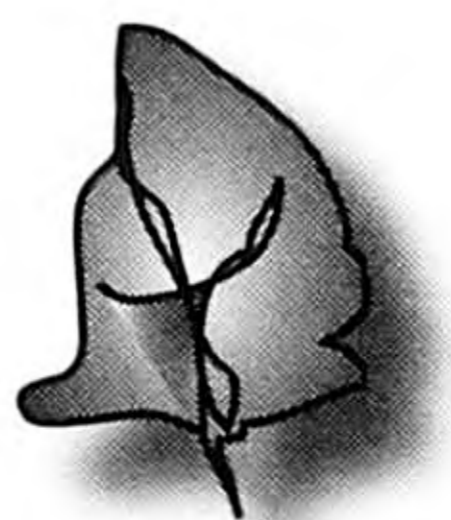
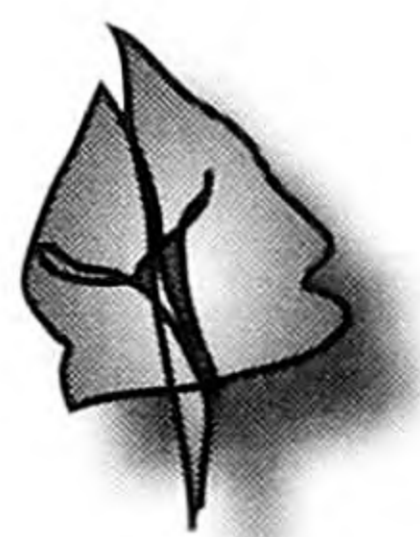
Frank Williams, London, England

1. twelfth night
glitter returned
to the frosted trees Diana
2. from the torn refuse bag
remains of a goose Frank
3. nursery rhyme tunes
again and again
weave through his work Diana
4. ringing through the pub
'one hundred and eighty' Frank
5. full moon circle dance
half the way round
and then the other Diana
6. clusters of toadstools
line the low bank Frank
7. halloween,
phantom boats
glide down the stream Diana
8. in the chamber of horrors
you propose we live in sin Frank

9. a bridal gown
from the charity shop
you're joking Diana
10. for uncle's birthday
an exploding cigar Frank
11. dad and the kids
spend the afternoon
combing the beach Frank
12. moon viewing obscured
by a sudden storm Diana
13. an unknown noise
sends a rabbit dashing
across the meadow Frank
14. who owns a stopwatch
for the race against time? Diana
15. your name
on the gravestone
now worn away Frank
16. christening mugs
along the mantelpiece Diana
17. her brand new
designer umbrella
patterned with drops Diana
18. frog spawn covers
our little pond Frank
19. white gleam
among the wood chips
cherry petal Diana
20. the dawn chorus
starts whilst dreaming Frank

Comments by Merrill Ann Gonzales and Paul Miller

Judging renku is different from judging other kinds of poetry. The judges must take into consideration not only the poetic value of each link, but also, and often more importantly, how the members of the group interact with each other across links, in addition to how they do or don't (usually with good reason) follow the format's many traditions and rules. This year's submissions were interesting and exciting in all those ways, and included both traditional and contemporary formats that included many delightful links. We would like to thank all the participants for the opportunity to read their work. While the winning renku is a fairly traditional Nijuin, that was not the reason we chose it. We felt a strong, playful rapport between the poets, started nicely in the hokku and wakiku, and then carried throughout the remainder of the verses. There were a good variety of voices and tones, some nice seasonal runs, and a pleasant expanse of topics. After careful examination and discussion of all the submissions we have decided to award the First Prize to Twelfth Night by Frank Williams and Diana Webb. Our congratulations to the winners!



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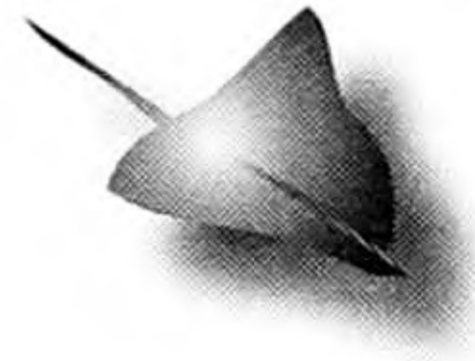
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From the Editors

The process of creating *Frogpond* is exciting because so much of it is the hands of the fates. As editors, we never know what we will get and from whom. Therefore, the pieces fall into place in a way that is different each time.

For instance, in this issue, all three of the essays (including the interview) are by women—a first during our time as editors. In fact, of the forty-four essays we published in our prior ten issues, thirty-eight were by men. Also, the gender balance among reviewers is slowly getting better. These totals, however, do not count **Revelations: Unedited**, the invitations for which we purposely alternate between men and women.

Further, we have great variability in the number and quality of poems we receive in any given submission period. As a result, how many we publish in the section **Haiku & Senryu** varies considerably. Take this year as an example. The winter issue (34:1) had 155; the total for spring/summer (34:2) dipped to 95, and then the current issue rebounded to 152.

One more instance of fluctuation is in the section **linked Forms**. In the last issue (34:2), it ran for seventeen pages, but, in this one, only for two, the lowest since 31:2 and 32:2 both of which had five.

Despite such unpredictable changes, we hope your positive feedback remains constant with this issue.

George Swede, Editor
Anita Krumins, Assistant Editor



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