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Anniversary
Year

FROGPOND XXV:3



FP

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Editor's Message

I like to tell people that except for the work involved, being editor of *Frogpond* is impossibly easy.

I tell people this in hopes that someday someone will come along and say, if it's that easy, maybe I'll try it.

Apparently my strategy is bearing fruit: an unsuspecting John Stevenson, former President of the Haiku Society of America and its current Treasurer, has agreed to step down from this latter position next year to take over as Associate Editor of *Frogpond*. Besides his years of service to HSA, John is also an internationally known and award-winning poet, with 2 books (*something unerasable*, *Some of the Silence*) to his credit.

Since I am such a good liar, John was eager to begin right away, and you will see evidence of that in this issue. In the "Haiku Workshop" column you will find our co-authored comments on poems from last issue. And of course you will find his Treasurer's Report in the usual place. But the greatest impact John has had on this issue is that he acted as co-selector for the haiku and senryu. This not only permitted me to share this time-consuming task, and offered me great companionship and enjoyment, but also allows me to blame him if there's something you don't like. I like this arrangement in many ways . . .

John's acceptance of this new role also will mean a change for you. Beginning immediately, we ask that you send your submissions for *Frogpond* to John. Please follow the usual guidelines—no more than 5 of your best previously unpublished poems, no more than 3 submissions of other forms at any one time—but add to this an additional one: due to the overwhelming amount of material we look at each day, we ask that you limit your submissions to no more than four per issue (that is, one submission of 5 poems and/or 3 linked forms per month). This will help us to stay ahead of the curve a bit better, and will also permit you the opportunity to be your own best first editor. These guidelines apply to both snailmail and email submissions.

You can send the former to: John Stevenson, PO Box 122, Nassau NY 12123, and the latter to <ithacan@earthlink.net>.

In the current issue, besides our usual offerings of fine poetry and linked forms, we include an exchange of letters between Cor van den Heuvel and Philip Rowland on Experimental Haiku, especially in relation to some contemporary "mainstream" poetry, plus the Virgilio and Merit Book Award winners. And Dee Evetts shapes his TCE column around the theme of 9/11 on this, the first anniversary of the event.

We wish you good reading and welcome your comments.

Jim Kacian

haiku

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

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

without a ripple
the cries of the geese
fall into the lake

Stephen Addiss

surprised in tall grass
the hawk's wings beat
faster than my heart

Rumi Hayashi

5

squash vines
long and hollow
the last late evenings

Burnell Lippy

harvest moon—
the ping
of canning lids

Timothy I. Mize

been there, done that
and then
coyotes

Leatrice Lifshitz

autumn morning
the first crease
in her new pumps

Rodney Stevens

choosing a melon—
a song so old
I forget why I cry

Billie Wilson

remembrance day—
a tiny flame
in the Japanese lantern

Cyril Childs

6

waiting for her birth—
one last peach
on the tree

Barbara Strang

Waking to moonlight—
a mouse in the wall
loosens a bit of plaster

David Elliott

A small white dog
Watches out the front door:
Rain cools into snow.

P. M. F. Johnson

half moon
shadows of flurries
on the white wall

William Cullen Jr.

7

above the kitchen radiator
steam rising
from the pond

Timothy I. Mize

a day of raw cold—
the peeled paint
on the window frames

Martin Lucas

blue winter sky
my mother hopes to die
before losing her mind

Zinovy Vayman

I rinse the rice
a second time—
New Year's Day

Peggy Willis Lyles

s n o w

Richard Kostelanetz

Easter morning . . .
the time just before
the snow falls

Bruce Ross

8

placed near granite
smooth as glass—
fresh flowers for Easter

Fran Witham

Plowing—
the actual feeling
of my living

Yasuhiko Shigemoto

morning bike ride
from the river
scent of the river

Zinovy Vayman

cycling
faster than we can pedal
the storm

Joyce Sandeen Johnson

9

highland wind the pipes

Ernest J. Berry

stones of Stonehenge
against the dark sky—
rain on the car windows

Edward J. Rielly

spring morning
the shadow of a building
on a building

Bruce Ross

lilacs
at the dooryard—
not cutting any

D. Claire Gallagher

for Robert Spiess

spring drizzle
the smell of pipe iron
on my hand

Victor Ortiz

warm April day—
in the park, a weathered bench
with one new plank

John Ower

10

spring twilight—
walking home with a neighbor
who wanders

Peggy Willis Lyles

Sundown—
all the shadows released
from their shapes

David Elliott

refugee centre
between the paving stones
blades of grass

Max Verhart

on the way home
more geese
on the way home

Tom Clausen

11

spring moon
where did it come from?
a small meow

Howard Lee Kilby

the turkey vulture's
widening arc . . .
halo round the sun

James Chessing

spring equinox
he frees
my stuck zipper

Carolyn Hall

bluff on the ohio
the river's arc
curves into me

Ken Hurm

boyhood home
a sculpted salt lick
the mare left

Darrell Byrd

morning comes
without her
the usual birds

Gary Steinberg

12

animal droppings—
the trail goes over the rim
into the canyon

H. F. Noyes

summer brook
which ones
are the stepping stones

Michael Ketchek

mountains
—shutting off the radio—
just the mountains

Mykel Board

vacation cabin
mosquito larvae swim
in the toilet bowl

Lynne Steel

13

wood flute music
through an open window
the crow's rasp

Naia

the yellowness
of my green tea
it's noon

Zoran Mimica

Ants' nest—
panic after a stone
was removed

Yasuhiko Shigemoto

The Conscious Eye

Dee Evetts

It was inevitable that poets around the world would feel compelled to write about the events of September 11, 2001. And haiku poets were certainly no exception to this. About a month after the attacks I began collecting material for an article in this series, intending it to be published for the first anniversary of the disaster.

I have in the process looked at hundreds of poems, and what strikes me first is the sincerity and depth of feeling expressed in so many different ways. However, my second observation has to be that the great majority are artistically weak. There is no doubt that the writing of them was cathartic, and that is important in itself. But good poetry is on another plane from good therapy. It must aspire to be an utterance that transcends the particulars while remaining rooted in them. At best it will be timeless, despite having its genesis in a very specific time.

Graphic depictions and patriotic declarations (two broad headings under which very many poems fell) are unlikely to reach this level of expression. It may take a very experienced poet indeed, and we have one in Cor van den Heuvel. Below are two of the several haiku he wrote after 9/11:

looking south	at the bar
the stain on the sky	my first ballgame since the attack
day after day ¹	blue sky ²

These are intimate poems, and that is the basis of their strength. Countless readers, today as well as in years to come, will identify with these experiences. Thus may a single voice acquire universal significance.

More specifically, in the first poem we understand that the stain on the sky—the column of smoke that dominated

Lower Manhattan for weeks—can also be seen as a stain on humanity. In the second poem the contrasting impulses, to mourn, and to affirm the persistence of life, are conveyed by an otherwise commonplace bar scene, rendered singular by the poet's response to a clear sky above the televised ballpark.

Closer still to Ground Zero, in Tony Pupello's

after the bombing
in the fine ash
pigeon tracks³

the poet is less visible. Nonetheless this too has the feel of immediate experience, offering an acute observation that locates the global within the personal.

It might be argued that these two poets had the advantage (if such a term can apply in this context) of being New Yorkers, who witnessed these momentous events at close quarters. My reply would be that they used the material to hand—and skillfully. At a greater distance Tom Painting was equally effective, focussing on that which touched his own life (and by extension, all others):

as our kids
sift the beach sand
reconnaissance flights⁴

By contrast, the many attempts by haiku poets across the country to represent the scenes in New York and Washington (though understandable enough, given the massive television coverage) were largely misdirected. Caroline Banks proved to be one of the exceptions, surprising us with irony:

9/11 migration	more anthrax
wondering what else	eating all the chocolate
the geese know ⁵	from our survival cache ⁶

That these poems come so close to being humorous could make some readers uneasy. I find them honest, and a refreshingly truthful examination of human responses to danger. (One might also ask: if we forget how to smile, then what is survival for?)

Predictably enough, the American flag appears with great frequency in haiku about 9/11 and its aftermath. Regretably few poets managed to go beyond some version of simple flag-waving. Two who adopted a more thoughtful approach were Charlie Trumbull and Judson Evans:

tangled in the neighbor's
Halloween cobwebs
his American flag⁷

after five months
seeing through
the overpass flag⁸

Both of these poems are firmly grounded in a literal level of meaning, with a phrasing that then suggests a great deal more. The key word in Trumbull's poem is "tangled", prompting us to consider just how confused our patriotism can become—how it gets caught up in so much else.

The play on "seeing through" in Evans' poem is quite masterly. As I read it, what the poet sees through in the larger sense is what any national flag ultimately represents: the naive and dangerous myth of a virtuous "us" and an evil "them".

* * *

With the passage of time, haiku have naturally appeared that have an elegiac quality. I particularly like this one by an'ya:

16

the passing year
a jetliner disappears
into gray clouds⁹

There is a sense of innocence lost (we will never again watch a jetliner slide into cloud with eyes entirely free of past horror) yet at the same time, of normality reasserted.

A more traditional approach is taken by Yasuhiko Shigemoto:

on the site
of the World Trade Center
summer grasses¹⁰

Although the last line is a common enough season word, used in this context I am led to assume that the poet intends a reference to Basho's famous

Summer grass—
all that's left
of warrior's dreams.
(translation Robert Hass)

This is an apt connection to make, enlarging our frame of reference and reminding us the more effectively that all things must pass, and equally that there will be regeneration of a kind.

17

* * *

1. Haikukai No 61, Dec 2002
2. *ibid.*
3. unpublished
4. unpublished
5. unpublished
6. unpublished
7. *South by Southeast* 9:1
8. unpublished
9. *Heron's Nest* IV:1
10. unpublished

The next column, and one or more to follow, will explore the subject of parent/child relationships. Submissions and recommendations from readers are welcomed. Please note that I am looking for work that is unsentimental and goes beyond the obvious.

(Send to: Dee Evetts, 131 Roszel Road, Winchester, VA 22601. Please state whether submissions have been previously published, giving details.)

a parking spot
in the shade—
summer market

Joann Klontz

cloudless sky
the roofers'
white caps

W. F. Owen

street vendor
bringing pineapples up
from a cellar

Barry George

18

Summer walk
just passing through
a woman's scent

Larry O'Brien

a scorcher—
skull-and-bones
on a biker's arm

Rebecca Lilly

hot day
a spider makes shadows
with threads

Yumi Nishikawa

an ant
with an ant
uphill

Odd G. Asknes

19

after seeing her
try on the wedding gown—
sunshowers

Joann Klontz

summer clouds
standing perfectly still
for a kiss

Tom Hoyt

blazing afternoon—
we breathe in
unison

piper

summer solstice
floating on our backs
watching the clouds

W. F. Owen

thunderstorm—
scratching a flea bite
until it bleeds

Mark Brooks

rain
drops

Dorothy Howard

20

summer rain . . .
the rearranging
of Scrabble tiles

Dan McCullough

white insect—
the long journey
across my page

Lee Giesecke

a pillow stuffed
in the basement window
summer heat

Mike Di Saverio

firefly viewing
afternoon's gardening
still under my nails

Ken Hurm

21

meeting by chance
in front of the jasmine
we discuss its scent

Tom Tico

twilight
a butterfly goes to ground
without colour

Ernest J. Berry

summer solstice
dew-dampened finger anoints
her infant daughter

John J. Dunphy

beyond the picket fence the great sea

Tom Tico

setting my focus
to infinity
ocean horizon

Jessica Stampfli

your bare foot
curved over a jetty stone—
the ocean's roar

Jack Barry

22

a sea anemone
closing itself
children draw nearer

Adelaide B. Shaw

ocean wind a blowfish tossed on deck exhales

Stanford M. Forresterr

small talk
between mainland and island
the rolling sea

Victor Ortiz

distant white caps
heading north
as dusk falls

William Fraenkel

23

kayaking at dusk—
one scoop of moon
after another

Maureen Gorman

night sea
I hear the murmur
of loneliness

Atsumi Hanaoka

end of vacation:
a collection of seashells
left on the dresser

Jeffrey Rabkin

washing a zucchini
the blossom
end

Joyce Payne Kincaid

the path to the garage—
their steps, too, but by now
mostly ours

Peter Meister

the slight slant
of the gnats' tall swarm
summer's passing

Burnell Lippy

24

the park at sunset
hot dog carts being loaded
onto a big truck

Doris Heitmeyer

counting the ravens
on a water tower
at night

Brent Partridge

sealed windows
on the psychiatric ward—
dark green woods

Jack Galmitz

poetry class—
the hard rain drips through
a cracked window sash

Edward J. Rielly

25

fireflies
in the wheat field
. . . Gettysburg

William Scott Galasso

from the heavy rough
looking up
at migratory birds

Michael Fessler

geese
leave us
clear sky

Brian Darnell

senryu

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

2: A foreign adaptation of 1.

dead last—
a still-burning cigarette
on the OTB floor

Anthony J. Pupello

slight dizziness
my breath inside
her birthday balloons

Raoul Fernandes

27

another year almost over looking in the mirror

Joan Sauer

fitness club
sizing up her biceps
my lower lip curls

Tom Painting

scrub football—
a rough comfort
in the contact

Brian Darnell

second marriage
his children standing
too close

Stanley Pelter

no showing up—
the woman I wanted
to snub

Mykel Board

saying goodbye
I avoid her eyes
in case she avoids mine

Paul Wigelius

28

putting his glasses
on the desk with some
of his sarcasm

Carl-John X. Veraja

no comeback
I rearrange the flowers
she arranged

Robert Scott

painting
each weekend
we talk about it

Tim Braverboer

painter's studio—
still-life objects
jostle one another

H. F. Noyes

29

watercolor class
in the crumpled paper towel
the freshest colors

Ruth Yarrow

Van Gogh's starry night
a dark spot
floats in my eye

Gloria Procsal

flea market—
a keen appraisal
of the frame

Makiko

garage sale
an old fly rod
catches my eye

Tom Painting

yard sale
kids testing the fit
of the toilet

Maureen Gorman

health food store
a stuffed owl in a cage
stares at the street

Winona Baker

30

thrift shop—
a plush teddybear
sits on a high shelf

Emily Romano

top shelf—
the slipping of silk
up her arm

Makiko

ex-junkie—
two bags
in his teacup

Owen Bullock

sophomore photo
he looks like someone
else's child

DB Devlin

31

12-step meeting
the Lord's Prayer
signed in unison

John J. Dunphy

hospital
I know my way around
a little too well

Carlos Colón

pew full
of fluttering fans—
the preacher's heat

Fred Donovan

like a rolling stone
everyone still here
still there

LeRoy Gorman

turning it down
at the red light
—oldies station

Tom Clausen

freight train
we take advantage
of the shaking

James Fowler

32

sitting perfectly still—
the bathtub water
pulses

Jessica Stampfli

shower song—
the rise in his voice
as I flush

Kathy Lippard Cobb

between Pompey
and Caesar
I place my bookmark
John Stevenson

a bag of papers
the weight
of last week's news
Peter Williams

33

newspaper story
on the origin of time:
beard trimmings
Russell Holder

Long freight train
a waving hand
in the caboose
Tei M. Scott

light snow up north . . .
the snowmobile speeds past
in a blue pick-up
Anne LB Davidson

linked

forms

Tan Renga

Fog clearing
finding myself
at the cliff's edge

*a wild strawberry
lures me closer*

35

Very late autumn;
the pumpkin that never got
a face

*one card taken
from the recipe box*

Garry Gay
Michael Dylan Welch

Unraveled Cassette

long drought—
the juniper bough
lowers its cones

soil in the cactus pot
sticks to my fingers

mirage—
the diviner points
his hazel rod

shifting dune . . .
two roadrunners shaded
by a dead manzanita

solstice heat wave—
the cassette tape unravels

Nevada river bed—
across fossilized sand
a pattern of ripples

Ash Wednesday

with the kindling
I bring in
dead wasps

her remains
still on the mantel

Valentine's day
a black and white movie
on TV

fish market
wrapping the day's catch
in yesterday's paper

fingerprints
on the Mother's Day card

Ash Wednesday
a smudge
on the baby's forehead

37

*Marco Fraticelli
Carolyne Rohrig*

The Word for It

THE BRUSH BURN OF SHAME, when my brother walked in on me wrestling another boy my age, our swimsuits around our ankles and he “knew the word for it”. Then the woods after school green branch of yew drawn across the white belly, the pruned wands of dogwood touched and retouched bodies uninflected still cloud-like with new names or pressed against the barrels in the dry heat of the barn where piles of rotting flags burned without flame or the padlocked nursery shed where the leaking bags of lime burned throat and nostrils the muffled friction like the tumblers in a safe . . .

under the railway bridge
broken stalks of jewelweed
bead with sap

I worked to impress them, the older boys, jammed the pistachio machine in the Laundromat with a screwdriver and filled the lining of my coat with lint-covered coins, bought a knife like theirs, put my hand on the target for a dare. Body of lapses and lucid elisions, the scar between my fingers, the suddenly opened door, the balsa light cone of laminations. . . . When I fell two stories down from the oak outside my window, my body broke its promise in the hottest August’s days, teeth clenched on the metal taste the sweat seemed to come from . . .

summer thunder
slow knit of bone
beneath the cast

38

Judson Evans

Blackout

THE DREAM is so familiar I must have had it before. Walking home at 3 a.m., I don’t see another soul on the streets. On empty avenues, traffic lights flash green, yellow, red. Then ahead of me the lights begin going out. I have not experienced such a blackout in twenty years. I leave the

lighted area and enter the dark streets ahead. Tall buildings loom on either side; I sense rather than see them, a denser black closing in on a canyon of darkness. I feel on the brink of some adventure, like a child trespassing where it has been told not to go.

Waking, I realize I have again forgotten to look for the stars.

the hour before dawn:
black snowflakes
from a red sky

Doris Heitmeyer

39

Deep Winter

IN THE LATE 80s, I was taking a course on human sexuality at the local junior college. One of the topics addressed was AIDS and the instructor informed us she had invited a young man afflicted with the illness to our next session. Despite fighting a cold, I was eager to attend, though several classmates chose not to, including a young pregnant woman who felt that breathing the same air as the AIDS victim was dangerous and could cause her to lose her baby.

I don't remember his name or where he said he came from. It was apparent he had once been very handsome. In spite of the room's warmth, he never took off his coat. Once introduced, he told us he would answer any questions we had except those regarding his family—he had been disowned. His vulnerability was palpable.

We knew AIDS was fatal; our curiosity was in homosexuality. We asked about that. One of the rare times he smiled was when he spoke about San Francisco. Listening to his story, a sudden insight came to me—I realized he was more in danger of catching my virus than I was of catching his.

deep winter
I time my breathing
with his

Yvonne Cabalona

Unnatural Amber

1

all day in spring,
deer cross the high meadow
into the clouds

I CAME DOWN FROM MY TINY WRITING CABIN in the mountains to accompany my friend George to the annual “Battle of the Robots” event at a small park in downtown Los Angeles. The place was surrounded by skyscrapers and next to a massive old cathedral. George, who teaches engineering and applied physics at the California Institute of Technology, lures me to the spectacle each spring. The contest engages the minds of students who are likely someday to see Jupiter rise over the frozen oceans of Europa, or to examine strange, broken, wall-like formations far back in some Martian canyon of the Nirgal Vallis rift.

But now, here, they create and fight small robot monstrosities intended to stop, dismember, and destroy other small robot monstrosities, the combat taking place within an area the size and shape of a boxing ring.

“Don’t pull that poetic sensitivity crap with me,” George says. “You know it fascinates you, but you don’t know enough about it to be a pessimist. Each year you try to figure it out, but can’t. Your poetic knowledge of the world shudders at the thought of raw conflict. What use is your poetry in this context?”

40

“Shut the hell up, George.”

But he had a point. I thought gloomily of a poem I had written a few weeks back, on a tangent theme:

a shining world—
dew drops for the duckling
and the beetle it eats

I’d shown George that poem.

2

We took our seats on high bleachers and watched the

mechanical slaughter through opera glasses.

All of the combatant machines appeared to be based on insectoid models, except one. The exception was a beautiful, gleaming white sphere, about eighteen inches in diameter. I searched through the printed program and found its description. It was named “Amber” and had been made by a team of paleontology, engineering and chemistry students. Its combat strategy was purely defensive and non-violent—simply to sit there and do nothing unless attacked. When touched or jostled by an attacker, Amber’s designed response was literally to expectorate glue. Chemically, the glue was approximately that of natural amber—the kind paleontologists love to collect and inspect for the twenty-million-year-old bugs preserved within it. The stuff inside Amber, held in a reservoir, dried to hardness in a few seconds upon exposure to the air. A gyroscope mechanism and a few balanced weights within the sphere controlled the ball’s movements; simple sound and motion sensors on the outer surface determined when and in what direction the goo would be expelled from a top-mounted spigot onto an adversary.

41

“Brilliant,” I said, reading the program’s description. “It intends to glue its enemies to the floor, or to muck up the moving parts of their weapons!”

George fluttered his eyelids and sneered. “The idea’s asinine,” he said. “Pacifist philosophy does not translate into the natural world, or into physics.”

In the first of five elimination rounds, Amber did well by gluing fast to the floor a mean-looking mechanical grasshopper with ice-pick mandibles. The thing had leapt onto Amber’s smooth surface, failed to get a grip, and fell off to its doom. It twitched just a few moments before becoming immobile in a glob of the maple-colored, unnatural amber. By winning just that one round, Amber went from one of thirty-two battling robots to one of sixteen.

“Pure luck,” said George. The man was clearly surprised.

3

city towers
brighten and dim
a gusting wind

The remaining sixteen paired off for the second round. Amber drew a match with a flat, segmented, worm-like device that destroyed its victims by getting under them, then flexing and flipping them over onto their backs. George scowled as we watched Amber handle that little horror with ease, gluing its head to the floor in seconds after the beast's first onslaught: it had no way at all of upsetting a sphere.

Amber was suddenly one of eight finalists. I could see alarm on George's face. His confident world was getting a shake and a goose-feather up the nose.

4

new ones appear
as others pass—
spring clouds

A light rain fell as the third round began. Amber was paired off against a monster whose one weapon was a buzz saw on a flexible proboscis-like appendage coming out of the center of a turtle-like body. The monster shot across the floor and cut through Amber like a melon. It was over in seconds—but for both of them. Amber died in a fountain of its own fluid, which likewise gushed over the monster turtle, puddling it and affixing it firmly to the floor. Officially, the contest between the two was a draw; of course, neither machine went on to the next round.

42

“What did I tell you?” George said, blinking at me. I thought he looked like a turtle at that moment. The rain had ceased; it was sunny again.

“Wait until next year, you gas bag,” I said. “A few tweaks, and Amber is going to give you a new lesson in physics, pal. It already has. Do the math.”

And of course he knew I was right. Just the concept alone had defeated three-quarters of the field that day. Poetic sensitivity, indeed.

the hiss
of a broom
on wet cement

Michael McClintock

Relations

Memorial Day

Visiting my father's grave, as I've done often over the past thirty years, I notice for the first time the stone of his immediate neighbor (my mother is still living). He is a boy of seventeen, buried without any apparent relations nearby.

Alzheimer's—
mom asks me
"Are you a doctor?"

Uncle

the way he
slapped his cards on the table,
as if it meant something

43

A relative by marriage. I didn't think much of him most of the time. He was crude and ignorant. But, to my surprise, he was the person in my family who inspired the most interest among my friends at college because he was the one who had done things. As a teenager in the late 1930s he had toured the country and much of Canada on a motorcycle. He had fought in North Africa, France and Germany. He'd had a long series of entrepreneurial businesses that he never stayed with long enough to become bored. He hadn't gotten rich but he didn't owe anyone either and he'd build most of the houses he'd lived in during the past thirty years—five of them.

the way he
slapped his cards on the table,
as if it meant something

Making and Breaking

An easy life punctuated by the making and breaking of inconsequential habits. A few weeks, during which a twenty ounce bottle of soda is consumed each afternoon at work, ends one day with a stomach ache or not enough change plus a reluctance to borrow. A couple of years in which the laundry and grocery shopping are done on Wednesday evenings. . .

names of the dead
in the newspaper
spoken once, out loud

John Stevenson

Wedding Day

THE DAWN announced a bright Wednesday. I phoned my daughter but she was not at home.

early morning —
my daughter picks daisies
for her wedding bouquet

She did, 57 daisies, on the meadow near her block of flats.

Yucca, grown in my vase, had already long roots. In April Maja and Thomas were ten years in love.

wedding day—
I plant
the tree of life

During my housework I often go to the balcony.

wedding—
the cherries
ripen

What a surprise in the neighbor's garden! I had not noticed before that day.

They got married at the ancient Ljubljana Castle.

wedding ceremony—
bells
from another church

44 The noon bells from the Franciscans and the Cathedral below.

It was sunny and windy.

just married—
her bouquet of daisies
trembles in the wind

The wind was blowing clouds away. May the same be in their marriage!

In the afternoon we had the lunch together.

wedding cake—
the bride and groom
eat sweet rings

Yellow rings on the cake. During the ceremony they only shook their hands and kissed each other not exchanging the golden rings. They don't like to wear them.

wedding cake—
on the last piece
two white doves

So beautiful.

my daughter Maja
born in June—
married in May

In the morning before their wedding I wrote haiku. I made a small and simple book as the present. With the title “Your Day” and with the motto for their marriage:

45

S trpnost (*tolerance*)
R azumevanje (*understanding*)
E rotika (*erotic love*)
Č ustva (*emotions*)
N avezanost (*attachment, trust*)
O dkritost (*openness, honesty*)

In Slovenian the acronym means HAPPY!

Alenka Zorman

Clearing

Just as I reach the river's edge, dark clouds hide the moon.
I feel a chill down my spine, but can't say why. But soon it
clears, and when I leave

a moonlit rock
in the middle of the path—
its wet footprint

Emily Romano

essays

A Dialogue on the Experimental

[Editor's Note: This dialogue, between two of the leading theoreticians of haiku in English today, was stirred by the article which appeared in the previous *Frogpond*, written by Mr. Rowland. This addressed the important topic of where haiku in English is headed, which certainly concerns all of us. This exchange further emphasizes how important it is to keep abreast of the latest developments in our field, and more than that, in poetry in general. Though at times we feel quite apart in our own little pond, haiku is certainly affected by the activities afoot in the mainstream, and knowledge of not only haiku's poetic heritage but our language's as well is of paramount importance as we come to see how the two come together, if for no other reason than to keep an open mind about what haiku is and what it may become.]

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From: Cor van den Heuvel
To: Philip JL Rowland
Subject: Avant-Garde Haiku
Date: May 28, 2002

Dear Philip,

Thank you [again] for sending me your essay. Reading it in *Frogpond* presented a number of difficulties, not only because of the missing parts, but because the quotations you indicate in the original by indenting the text were not indicated at all in the magazine. Though I enjoyed reading it in *Frogpond* despite the confusion, I certainly enjoyed it much more when I had its introductory first third, could see when you were quoting, and had the means to key the references in the footnotes to their place in the text. [Though *Frogpond* had all the footnotes, including those for the omitted third, they weren't numbered, nor were the places in the text to which they referred.]

At the start of your paper there is a reference to "The Nature of English Haiku. (1996)" You speak of it as a British Haiku Society "concensus." There is no footnote for this. Was it an article in *Blithe Spirit*? Was it by several authors? [Later, you mention a "BHS Pamphlet," is this the same thing?] You quote George Swede from it. I've long regretted that George

has not written more haiku criticism. I think from the discussions we've had at various haiku conferences, particularly the Haiku North America meetings the first five of which we both attended (he was not at the most recent, in Boston), that he has one of the most acutely critical minds in haiku. Yet the best-known piece he has published, "A History of English Haiku," mentions—and that just briefly—only one English-language haiku poet. Rather than discussing the haiku poets who made the real history of English-language haiku, his essay is all about mainstream, or near mainstream, poets who have occasionally flirted with the form or whose work seems to have been influenced by it. He brings in all the usual suspects, from Pound and Williams to the Beats. He even digs up Charles Reznikof and I think he, also, mentions John Ashbery. You would hardly know there was such a thing as a haiku movement—and yet he himself has been right in the middle of it. He used this essay as an afterword in the anthology he edited with Randy Brooks, *Global Haiku*, and it has been posted on several websites. It's title is appallingly misleading. He has done some pieces on the statistical popularity of free-form haiku versus the 5-7-5 and theoretical pieces on what the elements of a haiku should be, but he has not gotten down to the inner workings of actual haiku or the comparative worth of the output of particular poets. It is my feeling that if a critic doesn't do this, he is evading the most important part of his job. Of course, his editing of haiku anthologies serves as an indirect indicator of his evaluation of his contemporaries. [Though this may have been somewhat compromised in the case of *Global Haiku* by the publisher's insistence on the collection being representative of the different countries where English-language haiku were being written.]

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One of the great impediments to the haiku movement's success has been its lack of good critics. Compared to the number of great haiku poets—John Wills, Nick Virgilio, Alan Pizzarelli and the others I praise in the intros to the various editions of *The Haiku Anthology*—the number of outstanding critics is amazingly small. For several decades there were only a handful: Higginson, Eric Amann, and Rod Willmot were about it. [Though Anita Virgil and Michael McClintock were important critics as well as poets in the early years.] Willmot was almost singular in having the courage, or assurance, to say what was good and what was not, to quote and discuss actual English-language haiku, and to name names. Of course, I did not always agree with him, but his work was always incisive and stimulating. For several years he had a regular critical column called "The Woodcock's Beak" in Amann's magazine *Cicada*.

He dropped out of the haiku scene to write novels—and to race as an in-line skater. It would be a benefit to haiku, I'm sure, if he were to return to the movement, as McClintock has recently done.

Thankfully, more good critics have in the last few years begun to appear in the haiku magazines, especially in *Modern Haiku*. Among them are such sharp critical minds and talented writers as Charles Rossiter, Mark Alan Osterhaus, Paul O. Williams, J. P. Trammell, Edward J. Reilly, Marian Olson, and A. C. Missias. Several of the new, important haiku poets, such as Lee Gurga, Dee Evetts, and Michael Dylan Welch have demonstrated that they are also adept at examining the esthetics and philosophical implications of haiku and in getting down to the nuts and bolts of writing them, each bringing a sharp intellect and a penetrating pen to the process.

The critical awareness and acumen that permeate your article, and the toreador-grace with which your language confronts and analyzes each word in a poem, made reading it a pleasure. As I told Jim Kacian, I was delighted to see it in *Frogpond*. [It may interest you to know that Lee Gurga was also pleased with your article, and immediately looked up Perelman's books.] I hope you will in time deal with the world of American haiku and examine the works of its poets with the same detail and careful attention you've given to the work of those poets you discuss in your article—poets who have, or seem to have been, influenced by the genre but are, or were, not involved with it.

One criteria you cite for an avant-garde that especially caught my attention was that it should be considered, at least initially, unacceptable. Another aspect related to this one, and which you allude to, is that it be inaccessible. Literature, art, or music that is one or the other, but usually both, and that is ultimately found to be of value, has been considered avant-garde. Of course, it is recognized as such only in retrospect. Only its creators and initiates will know it at the time.

Usually avant-garde literature is thought to be obscure and hard to understand because of its complexity. That is what makes it inaccessible and thus unacceptable. However, I think, haiku as it has developed in English over the last half-century, could itself be considered avant-garde, though it has been inaccessible and unacceptable, not because of its complexity, but because of its deceptive simplicity. You have labeled "avant-garde haiku" works that depart from the way haiku has developed within the movement, but if we move back and take a deeper perspective, looking at English-language poetry as a whole, it is the haiku movement itself that has been unacceptable

and inaccessible to, not only the general reading public, but to the academy and the established community of poets. That includes the English departments in most institutions of higher learning, reviews like the *New York Review of Books*, the Poetry Society of America, and The Academy of American Poets. This is most evident by the way the representatives of such organizations and most mainstream poets have simply ignored the poets of the haiku movement—or have occasionally deigned to disdain them. As an example of the latter you might look at the correspondence between Robert Bly and me that was published recently in the second issue of *Tundra* magazine. Those letters written almost thirty years ago reveal that the works of the American haiku movement were both inaccessible and unacceptable to one of America's most respected and celebrated poets. They still are.

As I've mentioned, the avant-garde is expected to be complex and obscure. If I am correct about the American haiku movement being an avant-garde movement, one of the reasons it is so is because it does not seem to fulfill such expectations and yet it actually does. American haiku to the uninitiated seems blank and opaque because it does not possess those attributes thought to be essential to poetry by western standards. We expect poetry to have figures of speech such as metaphors, or to contain romantic expressions of feeling, or to have rhetorical flourishes, and to have some kind of musical rhythm, or at least interesting sounds, assonances or even dissonances. Haiku confounds these expectations or delivers them only sparsely. The general attitude has been that something so simple and clear and, particularly, so *small* cannot be poetry. Something so bare has to be banal and inconsequential: thus unacceptable. It's simple clarity appears as a fragment, inconsequential and empty. Because the reader thinks the poem should contain more he fails to see what is there.

But you do show all this—in passing—by quoting Barthe on how classic haiku does not contest meaning, but suspends meaning or is not concerned with it (or commentary). The haiku [only] presents an image. “So that,” you write, “from a Western point of view, paradoxically enough, the classic haiku has, in effect, something rather avant-garde about it.”

When you go on to consider haiku in contrast to the new poetics of the post-moderns and the language poets, you quote from Rothenberg and Joris in *Poems for the Millenium*: “the experimental moves [of the new poetics] on their structural/compositional side have involved a range of procedures that bring out the opaque materiality of language as a medium, as against a ‘romantic’ view of language as purely a transparent

window toward an ideal reality beyond itself.”

After mentioning how Shigenobu challenged this romantic view with his iconoclastic haiku [which I would have liked to see an example of since I could not immediately put my hands on the issue of the magazine you cite] you say: “This modernistic approach to haiku is bound to be transgressive simply because it is first and foremost language-oriented. It calls into question the received notion that haiku can point to (even if it cannot represent) ‘an ideal reality’ and thereby transcend language.”

But I would object that this romantic view is not haiku’s. Haiku does not look to an ideal reality, but to ordinary reality. If anything is ideal in the process it is the awareness of the poet and his or her reader. In contrast to the techniques employed by the poets of the traditional romantic “view,” haiku poets avoid figures of speech, emotional expressions, and rhetorical or musical decoration.

Related to this concern is something you bring up later in your article: Yatsuka Ishihara’s idea that the essence of haiku lies in its “telling the truth as if it is false.” I have never been able to get my mind around this formulation since I first heard its author state it at Haiku Chicago in 1995. I begin to get a glimmer of what he may mean when you point out that because truth-telling can never be final, never absolute, a poem must be false. Since a poem can never be the real thing it describes or points to, it can’t be true. But this is a failure of all kinds of poetry and could even be a truism (also dragging along a false-ism) about language in general. I believe that haiku is the way to overcome this weakness in language, so that we *can* come close to finding reality in words. After all, do we even outside language have a way of truly apprehending reality? To some degree it is illusory and limited by our perceptual powers. So though I think I see what Ishihara is getting at, I don’t believe it is true of the best haiku. It may be tied to a peculiarly Japanese way of looking at existence and poetry. I remember when Kenkichi Yamamoto was here in 1978 I could not accept his argument for humor being the essence of haiku. I remember his citing a poem by a haiku poet written during a serious illness in which the poet compared himself to an overturned turtle. The poet, he said, was making fun of himself. This is a kind of falseness, perhaps the kind Ishihara means when he talks about the “essence” of haiku. It is not the essence of the haiku I love. A stronger argument could be made for western poetry telling the truth in a false way. Metaphor and other figures of speech speak of reality in an unreal way. The “lamb” of God is not really a lamb. But the “false” depiction of him as one is supposed to tell us a truth about Christ’s nature.

I just received a notice for the next HSA national meeting to be held here in New York City in June and it says Patrick Gallagher will be talking about Ishihara's teachings and giving a workshop on the use of hyperbole in haiku. So exaggeration may be the linchpin of Ishihara's haiku poetics.

Of course, we shouldn't assume that when a particular Japanese haiku master or expert says something about the genre, that it represents the views of all Japanese haiku poets. Any more than we should expect such a concensus from all English-language haiku poets. I'm sure whatever the BHS concensus is on haiku, Marlene Mountain, for example, would disagree with a lot of it. And just as Hekigodo and Santoka differed from Kyoshi about how to write haiku, so there certainly must be some Japanese haiku poets who would say with me, "What the hell is Ishihara talking about?" Modern Japanese haiku seems generally headed towards the use of more western poetic techniques such as figures of speech and surrealistic combinations, while American haiku has gone in the other direction—towards simplicity and plainness. The Iron Press book of 100 English-language haiku, *The Haiku Hundred* (1992), seemed to indicate that British haiku poets tended to like figurative language in haiku, a continuation of their own poetic traditions. However, in the more recent *The Iron Book of British Haiku* (1998), an impressive collection of about four hundred haiku, one will look hard to find even a single example of traditional figurative speech, such as metaphor or simile. As in America, haiku in Britain seems to have moved into the paths of simplicity and directness of language.

Your argument that certain works of John Ashbery, Robert Grenier, and Larry Eigner represent a kind of avant-garde haiku is valid, I think, only if you consider them in relation to those works of American haiku that tend to be clear and simple. As you say, in that world they are generally "unacceptable." (Though some of Grenier's works, as I will try to show, could be considered not avant-garde haiku, but simply haiku.)

In the wider world of American poetry, Ashbery is part of the establishment, and just about anything he writes is now "acceptable." In the circles that "count" his work has been acceptable from the very beginning: when W. H. Auden accepted his first book for the Yale Series of Younger Poets in 1956. Ashbery's so-called haiku are closer to being snippets of his longer works rather than haiku, avant-garde or any other kind. If Ashbery was ever avant-garde, in the sense of being unacceptable to the inner circle of American poetry, I don't remember it. *The Tennis Court Oath* in 1962 was met with

puzzlement by many reviewers, but his defenders prevailed and by 1975 he had a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for *Self Portrait in a Convex Mirror*.

As for being inaccessible, even Ashbery's most disjunctive and obscure pieces have been carefully parsed and held up to the light by astute critics. Most notably for me by Sven Birkerts, who has shown how the mystery is composed of smoke and mirrors. [I sometimes think that some of Ashbery's most confusing pieces are continuations of Lucky's monologue in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.] The magician's tools Ashbery uses are such things as non-referent pronouns, jarred syntax, juxtaposition of phrases that don't coalesce into meaning, logical statements that veer off into non sequiturs, incomplete sentences, and so on. The result is that the poem (such as "Leaving the Atocha Station") is always on the verge of making sense, yet almost always slips away into meaninglessness again. As Ashbery says himself in one of his more coherent poems (of which there are many), "Hence, neither the importance of the individual flake,/ Nor the importance of the whole impression of the storm,/ if it has any, is what it is,/ But the rhythm of the series of repeated jumps, from/ abstract into positive and back to a slightly less/ diluted abstract." [from *The Skaters* (1966).] But, usually what you get in Ashbery is a dry, intellectual, but discursive, discourse. His poetry is interesting, often even fascinating, but it is as far from haiku's concerns as a sonnet by Shakespeare. And this includes his "haiku."

This is not to say, I don't find enlightening your pointing to elements of his "haiku" to fit parts of the "consensus" of what makes an acceptable haiku. I do. But for me the pieces beginning "You lay aside" and "Old-fashioned shadows"—which you seem to think come closer than his others to being (traditional) haiku, because they are more accessible—are as far from being haiku as his "inaccessible" ones, such as "I inch" (and all the other "haiku" by Ashbery). Neither bad haiku nor non-haiku can be "avant garde haiku," which to me is a term of praise.

Larry Eigner is a more interesting case. I was very excited by his works more than a quarter of a century ago. Probably even much earlier, for I associate him with the Black Mountain School, with Duncan and Olson, and I was very into their work in the 1960s after discovering it in the late fifties. I especially like what Eigner does with the space on a page and how the words work through and across it. But ultimately, for me, his poems fade into that space. The word combinations are not memorable, nor are the images. One of the poems you quote:

the fleering snow
off the eaves
of the garage

seems to me an attempt at an image that fails. In spite of all the nice things, as you point out, the “f”s do in the poem, the awkwardness for me of the word “fleering” upsets the sound and the image of the poem. I guess he is trying to create a neologism, combining the words flaring and veering. For me a simple word like blowing, or falling, would have given the image more immediacy. But, I suppose, for you the unusual word calling attention to itself as a word rather than as a mediating counter for recreating an event is what makes it an interesting poem. To find that there is an actual word “fleering” and that it means “to laugh or grimace in a coarse manner” makes the poem even less successful to my mind and I hope this is not what he intended. The other short poems you quote that “could well qualify as haiku” are, if any kind of haiku, failed haiku. From the reverse syntax of “shadows on a bush / the fading sunlight fills” which is antithetical to the common language necessary for successful haiku (and echoes sentimental nineteenth century phrasing) to the trite conceit of “pruning the tree / clearing the skies” which clouds the image with thought, they all—though similar examples *can* be found in the haiku magazines—fail as haiku, avant or otherwise.

When you cite the poem beginning “w i d e - r a n g i n g / cloud over” with reference to Barret Watten’s approving description of Eigner’s “syntactical jarring of the perceptual space,” and laud the fact that we are left to wonder what is “sunlit,” I am left to wonder to what end. You assert that it “serves to prevent disruption of the ‘nounal state’ into which the final thought dissolves—thereby achieving a haikuesque, Barthesian ‘suspension of meaning.’” I don’t follow this at all. It sounds very important and intellectual, but I am still left with an abstract, unresolved image: something sunlit on a cloudy day with “somewhere enough for a storm.” Supposedly enough clouds. This “jarring” leaves me not only with a “suspension of meaning,” but a suspension of any esthetic response. For me the physical space Eigner creates on the page with many of his poems is much more engaging than any “jarring” of the perceptual space within this poem. If there is space within the poem’s image, let us see it, even if it is artificially fractured, or even flattened like the space in a cubist painting.

Eigner, rather than creating an avant-garde haiku, is in his best works elaborating on the kind of space “fields” that Charles Olson experimented with, and which earlier had

fascinated William Carlos Williams and E. E. Cummings. So, again, in the wider field of American poetry, like Ashbery, though nowhere near as formidable, Eigner is a considerable figure. Yet he is solidly outside the American haiku movement and so cannot be seen as avant to it or after it. If it is avant-garde at all—and a case could be made for its being so forty years ago—I think it has to be in relation to that wider category of poetry of which he is an accepted part.

A haiku poet whose work on the page somewhat resembles Eigner's shorter works is John Martone—though the poems keep to a vertical line of text, they break up words and use spaces between the vertical elements. It might be rewarding to examine how Martone's poems fit your criteria for an avant-garde haiku. Which perhaps could be distilled down to: a poem that is a haiku but has such original or experimental new elements that to most readers it seems not to be. I think Martone's poems are avant-garde haiku because they deliver the immediacy of the natural world, relating the reader to existence as a haiku should, yet perform a further esthetic function by presenting us with the experience of words as words. He even breaks up the words so that we look at them differently and then puts them back together to get the image. Almost at one and the same time we can look at the words as words or objects and then we can look through them to the reality of the image. Our focus can shift back and forth between them, like looking into the kind of kaleidoscope that mirrors fragments of the outside world.

In a chapter I've written for a new book about American haiku, edited by Gurga and Welch, I discuss John Martone and his poetry. Perhaps you would be interested in reading the following part of that discussion:

John Martone has been publishing a series of very tiny chapbooks, about twenty of them from 1991 to the present. The poems in them are polished, lapidary, vertical constructions that, aside from a few startling exceptions, look little like regular haiku. They can be anywhere from three to fifteen or more lines long, but most run to between five and ten lines. Each line is usually only one word or one syllable long. The lines are grouped into two- or three-line "stanzas." These ultra-short lines perhaps owe their genesis to the typographic influence of E. E. Cummings. Other than to haiku poets, Martone has been especially attracted to the modern works of, among others, Cid Corman, Larry Eigner, and Frank Samperi. Corman's short poems, Eigner's use of space, and Samperi's short-short lines (creating narrow

poems) may be seen reflected in Martone's poems—a few words arranged vertically on an otherwise blank page. In a recent letter to me, John Martone said he thinks of the poem “as a charm/amulet/meditative object,” and “the book . . . as space, meditative precinct, garden.”

It is in his little books of poetry about potted ferns and everyday life in and around his house where John Martone's art shines brightest. As it does in these four poems:

not	por	across	kitchen breezes
noti	celain	2 lots	children
cing	shard		water color!
		shack-door	
breath	at	left wide	
until	bottom		
this	of	such	
		a day	
fern	one		
trembles	tree's pot		
	no		
	idea		
	which		

The first two are from his book *shards* (2000). In the first, the passage from the negative “not” to the selflessness of “noti” (not I) to the sing of “cing” to the life of the poet’s “breath” to the life of “this fern” swings the poem like a scented censer swaying at a religious ceremony. And the shards in the second poem become the mysterious hidden remains of some lost civilization. The second two are from *children's guide* (1999). Bob Grumman, who has reviewed a number of Martone's books for *Modern Haiku*, says of the last poem “I think it instructional to point out how much extra quick vividness Martone charges his picture with by drawing it in three short lines of unbroken words—after so many longer poems containing words cut up into syllables nearly as much as full words: a signal advantage of breaking with convention is that one can get a great deal out of the broken convention upon return to it.” That is, by writing a haiku in the conventional three line form.

Of the three poets you discuss in your article, Robert Grenier's poetry seems the most interesting to me. Probably because he comes closest to fulfilling what I hope to get from a haiku, plus giving me something extra in the way of playfulness

with words, a kind of word magic. (I find it interesting that Grenier is an anagram of Eigner with an added r.) I also feel a kindred (to myself) spirit at work. You quote a two word poem of his. I wrote a two word haiku for my first book, published in 1961: rain // tracks. (The two slashes are not part of the poem, but represent the line break and the line of space between the two words.) Grenier's poem:

two trees

While as you say, quoting Perelman and Barthes, this presents itself as two words written "just to write," the two words also vaguely represent two trees imagistically by their meaning, though without much immediacy. You add that the "visible language is just as much the issue as the concrete imagery." By concrete imagery, I suppose, since the words' meanings don't give us a very solid image, that you are referring to the words by their shape on the page suggesting two trees. They do so only vaguely. The horizontal shape resists this interpretation. You could, I suppose, look at the two *ts* as representing the trees, but this is stretching things. (*At* is a bit like the Japanese kanji for tree.) Compared to some of the concrete poems of Marlene Mountain, this poem is very weak indeed—as a concrete poem. Its value lies in the other attributes you discuss.

I included a number of Mountain's concrete poems in the second edition of *The Haiku Anthology* including her coyote, frog, peacock, and hoot owl. Also her two word "rain drop" arranged with rain as the first line and drop, without its *o*, as the second line, the *o* dropping down to the third line right under the space left by its absence in the second. I dropped all of these poems, except for the frog, from the third edition. Not because they weren't fine poems, but because I no longer considered them primarily haiku, not even avant-garde haiku, but rather as concrete poems with, to use your term, haikuesque attributes. I did keep the frog because though it too is a concrete poem it is also very much a haiku since it, I think, presents the reader with the *isness*, the essence, of a frog. Perhaps it is an avant-garde haiku, since I'm sure there are many readers who would not accept it as a haiku. It is also a two word poem, though the second word is the same as the first, only put back together.

This demonstrates how difficult it is to decide when something is avant-garde, for, as I think you point out, we can only know after the fact. An artistic or literary experiment has to be unacceptable when it is first presented to the public to be avant-garde, but it can only be considered avant-garde when

it is later proved to be of value. If it is not so proven, then it will continue to be unacceptable (and not avant-garde), or more likely, just forgotten.

I think you make a good case for Grenier's "except the swing bumped by the dog in passing" as an avant-garde haiku. I would consider including it in *The Haiku Anthology*—even knowing a good number of that book's readers would think it unacceptable as haiku. It is a radical departure from what we expect a haiku to be. I'm with you on his "or the starlight on the porch since when" also. I like the sense of mystery and suggestiveness this achieves with its incompleteness. The "starlight" has a sense of immediacy and presence because of its contrast with the more abstract connectives and prepositions surrounding it. Yet these latter by leading to the unspoken are what creates the suggestiveness. I suspect if there were a lot of such grammatically fragmented haiku being written that their effectiveness in creating an ambiguous suggestiveness would be lost. Readers might get tired of them and see the method as an arbitrary gimmick. [Perelman in a poem called "Chronic Meanings" does something similar. Almost every line in this long poem of twenty-five four-line stanzas is an unfinished sentence ending with a period. Yet none have the resonance of the two from Grenier—though perhaps I should examine them more closely. This poem is included in Paul Hoover's very interesting anthology *Postmodern American Poetry*.]

Your quoting Louis Zukofsky's "speculation" about the importance of the articles *a* and *the* was of interest to me. A number of years ago, I wrote a long article for *Woodnotes* about the importance of prepositions in haiku with special emphasis on the preposition *of*. I also pointed out how its counterpart in Japanese, the postposition *no*, plays a ubiquitous role in Japanese poetry, especially in haiku. [As you are probably aware, Cid Corman a few years ago published a two-volume collection of his poetry under the title *Of*, writing a kind of tribute to the word in his introduction.]

The two last pieces you quote by Grenier, "SNOW," with the line "snow covers the slopes covers the slopes" repeated four times, and the one liner "the snow with snow," are to my mind, if haiku at all, ordinary haiku rather than avant-garde. The first is similar to haiku written by haiku poets such as Larry Gates and LeRoy Gorman. If I remember correctly, Gates, about thirty years ago wrote a poem about grass that looked on the page very much like Grenier's SNOW. I think it was more successful. Looking closely one saw the word snake hidden among all the words of grass. Of course at that time it was avant-garde haiku.

One liners are now quite common in haiku. When people like Marlene Mountain and Matsuo-Allard were first doing them in the 1970s they were avant-garde. A special point you make about the Grenier piece,—“the snow with snow”—is that the word “with” helps to lessen the “referential bite,” of the poem. That would place it, I should think, in the category (genre?) of language poetry, not haiku. Another point you make about it is that there is a “significant difference between ‘the snow’ and ‘snow,’” and that the “small aural and semantic shifts” this presents cause the reader to find the “essence of snow” in the poem. I think a reader would become more conscious of the importance, in an abstract way, of the word ‘the’ and that the word ‘snow,’ in both instances, would continue to lose its referentiality. The essence of snow, not the word, but the stuff that falls out of the sky, is, if not absent, at least lacking any immediacy. Again, reason to give it to, or let it remain in, the land, or pages, of the language poets.

To return to Eigner for a few moments. You say of his work that you consider it the most haikuesque of the three poets discussed in your essay. And of several of the poems you quote, I grudgingly agree, up to a point. For example: the one with the “phonepole.” Just the combination of a few of the words—back yard, phonepole, branches, sky—are enough to start seeming haikuesque for me. But the beginning phrase—world without end—with spaces between the letters, is anti-haiku. It is abstract and a cliché—and it drains the immediacy out of any image trying to form in its wake. It reminds me of William’s “Red Wheelbarrow,” which has been wheeled in so often to show the difference between traditional western ideas of poetry and that of haiku. Without “So much depends upon,” the argument goes, the poem would be a haiku. “World without end” it seems to me is much more of an intrusion into the haiku spirit, if there were any of that spirit to begin with, of Eigner’s poem than Williams’s comment is to his.

I disagree with you about “the cat up/ the roof slope” poem. Though the image is haikuesque, I think the words “s t i l l” and “s l i g h t” add little to the experience, especially with what looks to me like an affectation: the putting of spaces between the letters. The word “still” written normally would add an effective element. The “uncertain process” you speak of, I guess, is the process of reading the poem and interpreting the image. Though you may also mean the process the cat used to get up the roof and under the pane? But why make the reading more uncertain by spacing out those two words? To call attention to them as words? Again, this may be an exciting exercise for language poets, but for most haiku poets, I think,

it would seem an intrusion on the haiku moment.

Although you say you are using the term senryu “loosely” when you find senryu-like elements in Eigner’s “happy chicken,” “bowels brewing,” and “that dog messing,” I think you are still reaching too far. I’m afraid I don’t find them funny. I don’t know why you bring in “O J e r u s a l e m,” (again with the spaces) here. You say it is “politicized and aphoristic.” That doesn’t make a poem senryu—or haiku. The only thing this piece has in common with either is that it is short—but not short enough.

Your last example from Eigner—of the Escher-like “up/ the wall” poem—is a nice way to segue into your appeal for more openness in haiku, but it is still just an interesting short poem with nothing to recommend it as a haiku or of even being haiku-like. However, I certainly agree with you that it would be interesting for poets to try new paths in haiku, in technique and subject matter. And your last paragraph suggests, as does your whole article, a number of ideas that could be rewarding for haiku poets to seriously consider.

Knowing how much your thinking is influenced by language poetry, I have also sought out *In the American Tree* to examine the phenomenon at first hand. I found a number of things to admire in the poetry of Grenier, Eigner, Ron Silliman, Lyn Hejinian and a few others. These four are all in Hoover’s book also, though the selections are less representative. I like what Hejinian does in *My Life*. In these prose poems the narrative at the same time all hangs together and falls apart. Many of the sentences, though seemingly out of synch with those immediately adjacent to them, pick up on the meaning of earlier sentences so that meaning weaves in and out of the text in new ways. Some of the sentences are freshly aphoristic—
60 “But a word is a bottomless pit.” Some make the reader conscious of the reading process—“Are your fingers in the margin.” Some of her phrases have a lapidary fineness, like haikuesque fragments—“A pause, a rose, something on paper.”

Well, I have gone on a bit. I hope I haven’t tried your patience too much. I am grateful to you for opening up new avenues of language for me to explore. Haiku poets should be aware of what other poets are doing with words. Thanks for helping me to take a look.

Yours for Poetry,
Cor

PS: If you don’t have the second issue of *Tundra*, I would be happy to send you a copy. Just give me an address to mail it to.

July 15, 2002

Dear Cor,

Thank you for your close reading and stimulating comments on my “avant-garde haiku” essay. I was glad that a few readers such as yourself found their appetites sufficiently whet to ask to see the complete version of the essay. Which was, no doubt, Jim’s main intention—mine also: to whet, provoke, open up (as you wrote) some alternate “avenues.”

Perhaps I should add that the version of the title as it appeared in *Frogpond*, “Avant-Garde Haiku,” was Jim’s. The essay embarked on life as a paper entitled “Avant-Garde Haiku: A New Outlook” (the title accorded to it by Susumu Takiguchi for his World Haiku Festival 2000); before which I’d conceived of it, more longwindedly, as “Towards a Poetics of Avant-Garde Haiku in English.” I mention this because these previous titles are, if rather pompous, also more precise in qualifying the “labelling” to which you refer when you say: “You have labeled ‘avant-garde haiku’ works that depart from the way haiku has developed within the movement.” This is basically correct, but I would emphasise that the labelling was tentative, and provisional—done more to open certain avenues in relation to haiku than to make bold claims for the status or quality of the works themselves.

First, I addressed the slippery notion of the “avant-garde” in theoretical terms, so as to open the field for consideration of poems not written as haiku. I underlined the “impossibility” of my case by appealing in the third paragraph to Ashbery’s paradoxical definition of the term, and to the spirit of Dada with its stress upon the need to be against itself, even, as a movement. You argue convincingly that “from a deeper perspective” the haiku movement itself could be seen as avant-garde, particularly with regard to its reception by mainstream poets. Your point reminded me of something I’d just read in *Modern Haiku* (Vol. 33.2), in John Stevenson’s review of Paul O. Williams’s book *The Nick of Time: Essays on Haiku Aesthetics*; where Stevenson lauds the idea “that those who believe themselves to be promoting the ‘avant-garde’ in English-language haiku through use of startling language or subject matter, or the heavy use of abstractions, metaphor, simile, concrete poetry techniques, etc. are actually taking a step backward from what is truly new to our culture by infusing haiku with the familiar mechanisms of Western poetics.” While I think this is a strong argument, I am sceptical of the notion of “the truly new,” not least because it presupposes a clear-

cut view of “our culture” and that of the Japanese, and primarily because it seems to me that the closest poets get to “the new” develops out of “infusion” of one kind or another. The “familiar mechanisms of Western poetics” also strikes me as reductive. Of course, I can’t speak for Williams or Stevenson, but find myself still (happily) grappling with the mechanisms of much Western poetry—much of that included in Rothenberg’s anthologies, for instance. The mechanisms of contemporary haiku in English can seem far more familiar, at least to those with an interest in the genre.

But to return to your own assertion: I wonder whether the practice and appreciation of haiku in English hasn’t, simply, become too widespread to warrant its being seen as avant-garde, even from that “deeper perspective” taking into account its neglect by academe and many mainstream poets. You mention your correspondence with Robert Bly as an example; and in a different context (in connection with John Martone), you also mention Cid Corman. Given Corman’s greater bearing on haiku, both as poet and translator, his dismissiveness with regard to the haiku movement in America—at least, as expressed in a conversation I had with him back in 2000 [[available at <http://www.flashpointmag.com>](http://www.flashpointmag.com) (issue 4)—is, perhaps, more unsettling. While acknowledging that there are “some people Ö writing pretty good haiku in English,” he is clearly unwilling to dwell on the subject; precisely because, it would seem, he resists the notion of a “movement,” or more specifically the homogeneity and hobbyism that can come of it. While I wouldn’t concur with his verdict on the state of contemporary haiku, I do feel that resistance in the form of continual questioning (of their own mainstream and that of the poetry establishment) and experiment is at least as important as the sense of community/identity that a movement provides. In the essay, my approaching the question of avant-garde haiku in English from (as you rightly saw) “within the movement,” was based on the assumption that there is, now, not just a movement but a veritable (if still incipient) “tradition” of haiku in English. Excellent anthologies such as your own—now from big, mainstream publishers such as Norton, Kodansha and Tuttle—indicate that there is.

I appealed, also, to a characteristic of much twentieth-century poetry that has been seen as avant-garde, quoting Rothenberg and Joris on its bringing out “the opaque materiality of language, as against a ‘romantic’ view of language as a purely transparent window toward an ideal reality beyond itself.” You object that “haiku does not look to an ideal reality, but to ordinary reality.” While I am reluctant to take issue with your

point, a cornerstone of haiku aesthetics, I should say that I intended mine more as an observation on the sort of imagery usually deployed by haiku poets in English, in line with Rothenberg's and Joris's speaking of "moves on the structural/compositional side." It still seems to me that haiku's "simple clarity" relies (as your phrase suggests) very much on the expectation of transparent reference to outside reality—even if, in its character as something "half-said," and less "romantically," not much stock is set in that capacity. So, for example, in the context of haiku we would prefer to see "two trees" as two trees, rather than, say, looking for trees in the shape of the *ts*. But because that's all there is to Grenier's poem, it frustrates our need to see through to a clear "idea" of a world in which to "really" see those trees. Whereas in haiku, language is not supposed to get in the way of the "ideal" (if still "ordinary"—or perhaps, ideal because ordinary) reality upon which our initial comprehension of the poem depends.

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Nevertheless, I would stress the word *toward* when speaking of haiku's "view of language as a transparent window toward an ideal reality beyond itself," because the interesting thing about good, "ordinary" haiku—and this is where our points, I think, converge—is that it subscribes to the "'romantic' view of language" only to suspend it. As well as Barthes, this recalls Alan Watts's idea of haiku as the "wordless poem"; and from that vantage the concept of avant-garde or, at least, experimental haiku strikes me very much as one of haiku *with* words. Precisely as you suggest when you describe Martone's haiku as, among other things, "presenting us with the experience of words as words." Like yourself, I admire most of what I've read of Martone's poetry. You mention the influence of Frank Samperi and Cid Corman, and it is worthy of note that Samperi was "discovered" mainly through Corman's magazine *Origin*; also that the first Selected Samperi is due to be published in December of this year, edited by Martone. Samperi's is another body of work that should be of particular interest to haiku poets. Here's one of his more haikuesque poems, from *sanza mezzo*, 1977. (Tellingly enough, my copy has Gary Hotham's name in it as, I suppose, previous owner):

over
bridge
down
road

stars thru
wood

However, the points at which many of his poems differ from the conventions of haiku as it has developed in the West may prove to be of as much interest—not least as foil for our assumptions. But that would be an essay in itself.

Incidentally, I wonder whether Martone has been influenced by the work of another late, expatriate American poet, Robert Lax. Your writing of how Martone “breaks up the words so that we look at them differently then puts them back together to get the image,” along with his thinking of the poem as “meditative object,” brings to mind Lax’s approach, as stated in a letter to Susan Howe, quoted in the preface to his book *A Thing That Is* (1997):

...
i like white space &
i like to see a vertical
column centered

...

verticality helps the
poet withhold his
image until
(through earlier
images) the
mind is prepared
for it.

64

Or as editor Paul Spaeth describes the work, in ways as applicable to Martone: “The poetry of Robert Lax is a simple affair—simple and contemplative. . . . Lax’s poetry is simple because he uses few words to say much. Not only is there an economy of words, but many times the line itself is pared down to the point of containing one word, a part of a word, or even a single letter. . . . There is also a singleness in the image and idea being brought across in Lax’s poems. The image and the meaning are not buried under excessive verbiage.” On the other hand, Martone’s poems are generally briefer, and Lax’s more various in style and subject matter. Martone’s vision of the poem not only as “meditative object,” but also as “charm/amulet,” could suggest a certain preciousity/ spiritual fancifulness—or risk of it; while Lax tends towards the “black and white” plainness of abstract, chant-like repetition. I hesitate to lift poems out of the context of their sequence or book, but the following poem by Martone (from *island*, 1999) could serve as an example of what I mean, as to his poems’ verging, sometimes, on affectedly refined understatement.

may
be

hear
a
mouse

to
night

The poem's carefully holding "a / mouse // to / night" may well evoke some wonderment, relating to the contrastive juxtaposition of the specific sound of the tiny, unseen but busy, living creature, and the diffusely large, visibly enveloping, silent entity, "night." A mouse and its noise are things we can "pin down," while "night" is a presence we tend more to "feel." And in various senses, we may well feel that night goes about its business unseen, too. The poem also foregrounds, with mouse-like hesitancy, little words such as "may" and "be." And so much depends on that stanza break between "mouse" and "to." Perhaps, I would suggest, a little too much depends on too little. Lax's objects of contemplation tend to depend less on our bringing our subjective sympathies to bear on them. For instance, a sequence entitled "Solemn Dance" begins with, well, little more than a dancing solemnity:

65

the
dance
of
the
waves

is
an
order-
'd
dance

the
dance
of
the
waves

is
a
solemn
dance

a
solemn
dance

an
order-
'd
dance

the
dance
of
the
waves

the
dance
of

the
waves

Turn the page and you find a further breaking-up of certain elements:

sol-
emn
dance

sol-
emn
dance

Becoming (a few pages on):

danc-
ers

danc-
ers

in
state-
ly

move-
ment

Here the stanza breaks lengthen to great effect; as, also, in the poem that succeeds it (the last of the sequence):

66

danc-
ers

danc-
ers

high

in
the
air

True, in poems such as these we may miss the more particular grain of the imagery to be found in haiku. But they are available objects of contemplation; going with the grain of things, rather than seeking to capture it. Of greatest interest to me is the way they really breathe—in acts of attention akin to haiku.

But to return to the essay and your dissatisfaction with the “unresolved image” we are left with in Eigner’s “w i d e - r a n g i n g / cloud over / sunlit / somewhere enough for a storm.” Indeed, one question I wanted to raise through Eigner was whether “ordinary reality” in haiku need be so “resolved”—given that in life it often isn’t. Even so, what I get from that poem is simple enough: a sweeping view, charged (or “lit”) with immediacy through the change of pace in the final line (largely created by the syntactic gap after “sunlit”), and the idea of the cloud’s being “somewhere enough for a storm.” My comment that we are left to wonder what is “sunlit” was, I now think, overstating the importance of what that “something” is. Incidentally, your criticism of the word “fleering” in Eigner’s poem, “the fleering snow / off the eaves / of the garage,” was particularly instructive as I hadn’t realized that the word (as used here) was a neologism! Which goes to show how subjective these things can be; the word had, simply, worked for me. But I do tend to find, like yourself, that the most stimulating thing about Eigner’s work is his use of “the space on a page and how the words work through and across it.” This is a feature of his work on which, I thought, haiku poets might want to reflect.

To recap and qualify a bit, particularly as to my suggesting, somewhat dubiously, that your “ordinary reality” is itself “ideal.” When you comment on Grenier’s work coming “closest to fulfilling what I hope to get from a haiku,” I can’t help wondering what scope this knowing clearly what you “hope to get from a haiku” would leave for the possibility of radical experiment. Which brings me to Ashbery’s haiku. I agree with your view of his “haiku” as being more part of his larger body of work than a departure from it, and I was interested to find you pursuing thoughts on his work generally, not least because around the same time I was gathering my own thoughts for a presentation relating to it. There I quoted Ashbery (from an interview) as follows: “I think every poem before it’s written is something unknown and the poem that isn’t wouldn’t be worth writing. My poetry is often criticized for a failure to communicate, but I take issue with this: my intention is to communicate and my feeling is that a poem that communicates something that’s already known by the reader is not really communicating anything to him and in fact shows a lack of

respect for him.” I don’t want to make too much of this, or to lift it, or indeed your comment, too much out of context, but it does provide a provocative contrast with your knowing what you “hope to get” from haiku. This contrast could also relate to a difference in our conceptions of truth-telling. You interpret Ishihara’s pronouncement about haiku “telling the truth as it is false” in a way that seems to locate “truth” primarily outside language, when you say: “Since a poem can never be the real thing it describes or points to, it can’t be true. But this is a failure of all kinds of poetry: I believe that haiku is the way to overcome this weakness in language, so that we can come close to finding reality in words.” I would conceive “truth” more as a function of language than as outside it. You suggest as much with your next sentence: “After all, do we even outside language have a way of truly apprehending reality?” But then this would call your notion of the general “failure of poetry” into question. If the poet were indeed to proceed on the assumption that there is no way of truly apprehending reality outside language, wouldn’t the fundamental strength or potential of language, as our basis for conceiving and mediating reality, seem more the issue than “its failure to be the thing it describes or points to”? This would suggest a different “end” of poetry, akin to Shigenobu’s seeking “to encounter a certain language cosmos in order to conjure up ‘the world that reveals itself only once and for the first time through written language’—where the encounter is seen to “transcend reality” (“ordinary reality”?) situated outside the poem. In his poems Shigenobu doesn’t seem to contest that “reality” as much as these words might lead us to expect—certainly not as much as the Language poets whom you mention—but here (as you requested) are a couple of examples—the first from the issue of *Modern Haiku* to which I referred in the essay, as translated by Masaya Saito:

68

the door being pounded
 a secret amulet prayed to
 this
 rope ladder

And another as quoted in a paper on “Free Haiku in Japan” by Ban’ya Natsuishi:

Toward the sea	(<i>umi e</i>
toward the night	<i>yoru e</i>
the river is perishing	<i>kawa ga horobiru</i>
a pistol of the estuary	<i>kawaguchi no pistoru</i>)

To address one other query: the British Haiku Society's pamphlet on "The Nature of English Haiku" (1996) was printed and photocopied on six sides of A4 paper; and distributed to new members—at least, it was to me. I don't know exactly who wrote it, but do remember reading somewhere in the society's literature that it was written collaboratively, or at least approved, by a number of (committee) members. I also saw, not so long ago, notice of a slightly revised version, available upon request. I described the document as a "consensus" following the lead of the authors, who in the introductory section write: "something like the following represents an informed consensus in the West."

Well, I hope this reply does more, on the whole, to clarify than obfuscate! I may well have misread some of your comments. But clearly we agree as to the importance of being, as you put it, "aware of what other poets are doing with words," even while trying—and probably I tend to underestimate the importance of this—to be clear about what differentiates haiku, and justifies the use of the term. Thanks again: it's good to be reminded so compellingly.

With best wishes,

Philip Rowland

* * *

Favorite Haiku

east wind
this inlet
of tossed stars
Laurie Stoelting¹

One of my all-time favorite phrases in a haiku: tossed stars. Don't we feel the waves' propulsion as if it were happening to ourselves? A haiku of great immediacy—in the sight of the sparkling spray, with the ear-piercing sound of the wind.

H. F. Noyes

1. 2nd Place, Hawai'i Education Association Haiku Contest 2000.

Haiku Workshop

Each issue of *Frogpond* contains 100-140 haiku and senryu. Some of these go on to have further lives by being anthologized or included in individual collections, singled out for analysis in a “Favorite Haiku” piece, or perhaps even winning an award. Still, it seems as though these poems are too fleetingly in our consciousness. In light of this we offer some comment on work which appeared in *Frogpond* XXV:2, and welcome your brief comments on what you may have appreciated about poems appearing in the current issue.

too hot to sleep . . .
from the fire truck’s siren
a map of the streets

Dave Russo

Some of us consider summer our least favorite season. Some of us can strongly identify with the struggle to leave the day behind and enter the relative comfort of sleep. And for us, too, the failed effort to sleep on such nights often manifests itself as near-hallucinatory thoughts, imbued with an obsession for ordering, counting, categorizing or, as in this case, mapping. While we may have suspected that others had these experiences or something like them, we may also have felt alone in this. Here is a moment of confirmation and, with that, a moment of comfort, which beautifully counterbalances the discomfort and disorientation of the original image.

We like the fact that humidity is not mentioned in the poem. For us, this makes it the air of the poem, the invisible element which is present everywhere.

70 And, we like the fact that this is the sort of poem that might have been written directly from experience. In other words, the author may have given up on sleeping, turned the light on and written this down. Whether it came that immediately for Dave Russo is unimportant. But the fact that it feels that immediate adds greatly to its appeal for us.

Spring too,
in ancient times;
snow on the mosaic

Erica Facey

Within the brief compass of a single haiku we rarely have the luxury of time travel, and when we do, it’s usually something

in the present which makes us reminisce. This unusual poem not only takes us centuries into the past, but returns us to the present in the same instant. We can't know exactly the theme of the mosaic, but we can surmise that it provides the same inspiration to the poet as it did to the artist so long ago, and was bound up with the eternal cycling of the seasons.

surprised by which
handbag she likes
mid-summer night

Michael Fessler

An ancient wisdom bound up in modern guise: midsummer night is the night of mutability, the night of the longest day, the feast of the Heras, those women in full communion with the mysteries of the Great Goddess. It is fitting that the poet, a male, be surprised by even the most casual choice of a woman on this day, and that while he notes it, it is really nothing out of the ordinary, either.

71

a path of leaves
our conversation
turns wordless

Christopher Patchel

It is an old truism that some people become such great friends that they can dispense with words. Whether that is the normal state for these conversers or not, they arrive at such a point during the course of this precisely articulated poem. The path of leaves does not mark an end to conversation, but to a different mode of it. The eloquence shifts from the human to the elemental, and the fallen leaves are the aural accompaniment to the continuing, unheard dialogue.

evening Mass
my father's voice
beside me

Cindy Guentherman

There are three fathers in this compact poem: the father (priest) conducting the mass, "our father who art in heaven", and "my father" who is "beside me" and has a voice we can hear with ease.

Jim Kacian & John Stevenson

books

&

reviews

Mice in the Living Room

American Haibun and Haiga (Up Against the Window, Vol. 1, 1999; Stone Frog, Vol. 2, 2001; Summer Dreams, Vol. 3, 2002), edited by Jim Kacian, et al, Red Moon Press, P. O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22605-1661, USA, each 120 pp., each \$14.95 plus \$5 postage. Publisher's email for additional information: <redmoonpress@shentel.net>

Haibun have been gnawing around the edges of English-language haiku and leaving droppings here and there since the 1960s. Most of the early magazines and journals that published haiku also carried an occasional haibun, and a few of those early pieces have made it to haibun's unofficial "hall of fame," like Jack Cain's haibun, "Paris," which appeared in 1964, and perhaps also Robert Spiess's *Five Caribbean Haibun*, published as a small booklet by Wells Press in 1972 and containing work that had first appeared in *Travel*, a popular mainstream magazine, and in *Modern Haiku*, then edited by Kay Titus Mormino.

While fine translations of Japanese haibun were appearing with regularity, no one felt ready to devote much space to the homegrown species of haibun. Among those notable translations were Nobuyuki Yuasa's presentations of Issa and Basho, respectively, in *The Year of My Life* (Univ. of California Press, 1960), and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches* (Penguin, 1966), Cid Corman and Kamaike Susumu's *Back Roads to Far Towns* (1968), and Earl Miner's book of translated haibun, *Japanese Poetic Diaries*, (Univ. of California Press, 1969).

Haibun have continued to appear in most of the haiku periodicals, but sometimes they appear still to be used as filler for that odd chunk or two of space left unfilled after the poems, reviews, and essays have been loaded in. Reading the haibun often confirms that impression.

And so over thirty years have passed. Haibun was not orphaned during this time, but has lived the life of a mouse in the attic of haiku literature.

This is not the case with *American Haibun and Haiga* (hereafter AHH), however, where haibun are clearly, at least, in the living room. Jim Kacian, owner and editor of Red Moon Press, launched AHH as an annual, book-

formatted, serial publication in 1999, with Bruce Ross as co-editor. Ken Jones joined as a third editor for the current volume, *Summer Dreams*. Though original English-language haibun are clearly the main course, the concept for the new publication includes haiga as an important second element. The first volume carries this simple, declarative, unadorned definition of the two on its back cover: “Haibun is a combination of prose and haiku. Haiga is haiku painting.” The introductory material at the front of each book is brief, just two pages. The “Historical Preface” in the first volume, *Up against the Window*, is concise and to the point, citing a modest and well-selected number of milestones, works and titles for follow-up reading. I particularly liked its insightful, uncomplicated thought that haibun strive to provide a “narrative of an epiphany.” The prefatory material in the other two volumes offers the editors’ comments on the haibun and haiga contained within and general observations about how both are being adapted in the west. The touch is a light one and inviting, with no top-heavy pre-conceptions fostered or advocated. The specific terrain and its features are left to the poets and artists to explore and fill in, to make human and essential whatever they will out of these simple challenges—how refreshing. There is virtually no heavy, theoretical freight, ponderous history, or critical scaffolding imposing intellectual clutter on any of the haibun or haiga appearing in these first three editions: what you see is what you get. And, not surprisingly, what you get is a mixed bag. But what pleasure it is to open each one upon arrival. There is presently no comparable source for English-language haibun to be found anywhere.

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These first three volumes of AHH contain a total of 138 haibun by over 100 writers, all of whom are also haiku poets, and over 90 haiga by about 40 artists. Virtually all the haiga appear with a haiku written either by the poet-artist or by another poet. I’ll discuss the haibun first.

The haibun in these volumes range from very short pieces of less than 100 words to a few pieces longer than 1000 words; the first volume contains a very welcome reprint of Jack Cain’s groundbreaking “Paris,” mentioned above. Only in the current volume, *Summer Dreams*, do multiple haibun appear by a single author. What distinguishes these mercurial, oddball siblings from related

work in short short fiction and non-fiction forms, flash fiction and anecdotal sketches, and from prose-poetry generally, is their distinctive use, or attempted use, of haiku at intervals in the text.

Perhaps a true, authentic epiphany is too much to ask of all haibun, but the artistic goal seems clear: to integrate the prose and haiku in such a way as to create a harmony of the whole, prose and haiku gaining by the context each provides to the other: an aesthetic unity. The misses and near-misses can be as interesting and intriguing as the hits: a really good, fully successful haibun, is a very difficult thing to write. As with all art, there are gradations of pleasure and pain to be experienced here, but even the failures can instruct, if not enlighten.

I have two primary quarrels with a minority portion of the work I find in all three volumes, but particularly the first two; the selection process and standards for inclusion appear to have undergone a general shift to the higher end in the third volume. (Of course, this is perhaps the result of more good poets taking to the form, and perhaps a result of these volumes, and as a result, a ready market, becoming available, encouraging greater experimentation.)

First, a fair number of the authors choose not to disturb their narratives by any reflection of their own, but content themselves with noticing objects as they appear before them, sometimes with snatches of conversation just as they were heard, setting down all with scarcely any kind of speculation, thought, or recorded response. That is a hard road for the reader to follow toward any sense of epiphany. Often the prose is flat-footed, the content or meaning fugitive or, seemingly, completely absent. It appears to be objectivism taken to the extreme, and the result is many a blank wall. Words are written there, but their meaning is a puzzlement. Weak or failed haiku contribute to this impression.

The other mode is an ubiquitous kind of travel sketch, or what might be called a “tourist occasion,” that neither conveys a sense of the place nor ever gives the reader much understanding of what or why the narrator ever thought it was worth writing about. Virtually none of these travel sketches compares well with the sophisticated, sensitive, adroit writing that appears throughout travel literature, in

non-literary, popular magazines ranging from *National Geographic* to various publications of the Sierra Club, or even as found in the Auto Club's various regional magazines, such as *Westways*, or in the Sunday travel supplement of any large city newspaper printed anywhere in the world. Why so many have chosen this subject matter for haibun is most probably due to the notoriety of Basho's much-translated haibun, *Okono-hosomichi*, which in the popular press is spoken of simplistically as a travel diary. Hence, the idea that a haibun must be a travel diary, "like Basho's." But no one has decreed such a fate or role for haibun. There are no constraints of that kind at all. Why do so many English-language haibuners seem to think so? In every line of Basho's *Okono-hosomichi* we are enriched and enabled by the poet's thoughts and responses to all he encounters: his journey is not merely a catalogue of objects, things and people seen on the way.

Far more successful are the haibun written in other modes. Happily, there are many kinds of narrative styles and devices exhibited throughout the three collections, taking us much further along that "narrative of an epiphany." Allegory, memoir, historical moment, naturalist sketch or meditation—the mercurial, oddball haibun is cousin to them all. Elements of folk tale, myth, popular or urban legend, modern fable, the slice-of-life vignette, anecdote, character portrait, dramatic monologue, private or literary reflection—all of these are here, and many haibun will fit comfortably under more than one category.

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delivered as a kind of short story and remembrance. Gerald George's "Arizona" is a highly topical, and funny, essay on man, nature, and the ridiculous.

Volume three, *Summer Dreams*, seems to be the most tightly edited collection, overall, with superb offerings from Cor van den Heuvel in "Hitchhiking" and "Snowstorm," from Alison Williams' in her short short, "Departures," with its sharp evocation of life lived and suffered in fragments, and Bill Wyatt's playing with myth and fable in "Ancestral Voices on Kos." For each volume, I could mention many more.

The haiga appear in the interstices between the haibun, and are intended to stand alone on their own pages. While many are simple, energetic sumi-e, there are a variety of alternative media and styles in use: watercolor, acrylics, needlepoint, collage, computer-generated graphics, and rubbings that appear to use graphite or ink. The media used is not identified; one has to guess. Within each book, the haiga are reproduced only in black and white, even though most are in fact color pieces; color is used only for the single haiga appearing on the book covers, which make these volumes very attractive. I especially like the frog on the cover of volume two, *Stone Frog*, by Zolo (John Polozzolo): it is a frog of enormous presence, soul, and centered power. While striking, even these covers do not reproduce the rich tones that are actually there in the originals, or in better reproductions. The images are a bit blurry. On the inside, where the work is reproduced only in black and white, little comes through of the explosive kinetics, form, texture and stunning beauty that many of the haiga possess. One can get the *idea*, but not the full force, of those haiga that do, in fact, have force, energy, and authentic magic in their originals, or as seen reproduced in other sources, especially on Internet web sites. A case in point is the work of Kuniharu Shimizu, who has perhaps created more haiga using haiku by international poets than anyone else. While well-represented in volumes two and three, *Stone Frog* and *Summer Dreams*, the reproductions of his haiga for Santoka's poetry (and others) is just not up to par. The same can be said for the magnificent work of Angelee Deodhar and Borivoj Bukva; Wilfred Croteau's abstract expressionist work, Jeanne Emrich's more traditional, delicate sumi-e,

and Zolo's simply stunning, jaw-dropping creations of color and movement. More successfully rendered are the more simple haiga, such as those by Karen Klein or Stephen Addiss, or some of the images by Kay F. Anderson.

I am familiar with some of the originals of the haiga on display, or with far better copies or renderings, and so I make allowances for the poor quality of the reproductions appearing in AHH. Printing art well is an expensive, highly technical process that many publishers cannot provide, or their readers afford to purchase. The problem is therefore not a simple one of neglect, I am sure, but of real cost. I hope Red Moon continues to look for a solution or, at least, some partial remedy. Despite these criticisms, the haiga do have a contribution to make to the enjoyment of AHH, and I hope to subsequent editions. Clearly, they are more than a trifle or diversion.

Overall, these volumes put on display nascent visual and literary art forms with exciting potential and, surely, more acreage just over the horizon than is currently in view. English-language haibun, and contemporary haiga in the west, are far, far from their Golden Age, but what we do see here are plenty of ducats strewn in the sand and leading up the beach toward hinterlands that just might contain unimaginable wealth.

As for English-language haibun, it has yet to pass through what most likely will be a long process that will involve moving away from certain elements in the Japanese models, while moving closer to others, and toward a greater comfort and willingness to explore contemporary western themes, life (post-modern and otherwise) and experience. Hopefully, included in that expansion into new territory will be a parallel effort to translate far more Japanese haibun than are currently available: we seem to be stuck on repeated versions of Basho, Buson, and Issa. As with haiku, we can never afford to leave behind this literature's homeland and place of origin, even as we use it ultimately to take our own journey, using the ample resources and traditions of our language and literature, to understand our moment in history, culture and lives.

Less is More

Baranski, Johnny *Convicts Shoot the Breeze* (Saki Chapbook #11) ISBN 1-893823-11-3.

Gallagher, Claire D. *How Fast the Road Moves* (Saki Chapbook #12) ISBN 1-893823-12-1.

Hazen, Elizabeth *Back Roads with a White Cane* (Saki Chapbook #13) ISBN 1-893823-13-X.

Major, Robert *Coasting Through Puddles: Haiku of Childhood* (Saki Chapbook #14) ISBN 1-893823-14-8.

All four books 4.25" x 5.5", saddle-stapled, from Saki Press, 1021 Gregory, Normal, IL 61761.

Before I opened any of these four chapbooks, I asked myself this question: What makes a chapbook successful? A chapbook, I decided after some thought, is too short to provide an overview of a poet's career or an in-depth treatment of a theme; instead, it is suited to exploring a single idea or subject through suggestion and well-chosen examples. A chapbook depends on evocation and focus, like a haiku, rather than on a sustained pact between reader and writer, like a novel. All four of the books considered here deserve credit for adhering to this chapbook ideal of concentration and unity even as they bring new perspectives to our attention.

Johnny Baranski's *Convicts Shoot the Breeze* gathers haiku written during the author's stint in jail for protesting nuclear weapons. For some writers, time spent in prison provides an opportunity to reflect on their life outside or to escape into fantasy. Baranski, however, seems to have brooded on prison life itself. In his brief but startling introduction, Baranski justifies his immersion in the minutiae of his surroundings: "in prison, stripped and emptied of all that is meaningless, the haiku poet is held captive instead by images that reflect the true nature of liberation." Prison life saturates this book from beginning to end:

Chilly morning—
in the jailhouse spider web
hangs a fly

From the jailyard
the sound of rioting
hailstones

As these haiku indicate, the haiku of *Convicts Shoot the Breeze* turn on a single device of allowing the setting to transform an innocent image into a meaningful one. The title phrase “shoot the breeze” is no longer a mindless cliché when you are speaking of convicts, and rioting and hanging become chilling metaphors inside a jailhouse. But as much as I enjoyed the book, I cannot leave it without presenting this criticism: although I can’t speak from experience, I suspect that prison is, contrary to Baranski’s declaration, anything but liberating. In this sense the haiku are wiser than their author, as the constant threats of violence and the recurring images of barred windows and high walls reveal that prison life is as frightening and claustrophobic as one would expect.

The theme of D. Claire Gallagher’s *How Fast the Ground Moves* is both more ambitious and abstract than Baranski’s. “This collection,” the author informs us, “focuses on nature, time, space, perception, attitude, and, in fact, all of life when a shift or transition, however small, occurs.” It takes an experienced poet to carry off a project of this scope, and Gallagher is equal to the task. These haiku are filled with crashing surf, waterfalls, twilight, budding maples and lilies, birthdays, and approaching death, all symbols of transience and change. But as heady as this theme is, the haiku never stray from their task of recreating the concrete reality around us:

spring forest—
her pale thighs parting
the bracken

path to the teahouse—
she shakes a pebble
from her shoe

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I liked the sensuality of the first haiku and the quiet humour of the second—a Japanese tea house is a place of serenity that is supposed to transcend distractions like a pebble in one’s shoe. The plain language of these haiku (at times too plain—one haiku begins by describing a waterfall as “noisy”) is typical of the book as a whole and helps to convey the theme without proseletyzing. On the whole, this is a satisfying and challenging work.

The theme of Elizabeth Hazen’s *Back Roads with a White Cane* is, as one might expect from the title, the experience of blindness. Hazen lost her sight for three years in the early 1990s, as the biographical note at the end of the book

informs us. When I read this fact, I dove into *Back Roads* eagerly to see how the author would invoke the world through her other senses. As expected, I found this collection alive to sounds, smells, touches, and tastes:

creak of the bare limbs
against bare limbs
another raven

a softer bud
the woody taste
of an icicle

How many poets would describe the arrival of ravens through sound, or an icicle through its taste? Hazen's other haiku remind us of the hard smell of leeks or the *shush* of sleet. I suspect that no haiku poet will be able to read this collection without experiencing some kind of revelation about his or her art. But as wonderful as these haiku are, I finished the collection wanting more: more synaesthesia (the mixing of senses), more of a sense of what it is like to be blind, more of a distinct idiom to convey the poet's impressions. That said, Elizabeth Hazen is a poet to watch, and I look forward to seeing how her art grows in the future.

After reading about weighty themes like imprisonment, transience, and blindness, Robert Major's *Coasting through Puddles: Haiku of Childhood* came as a relief. These haiku are meant to recall the pleasures of childhood and of being around children. Major does an excellent job of invoking the *busyness* of childhood, a trait to which every weary parent can attest. His children are always racing their bicycles through puddles, playing football, picking flowers, or generally exploring the world. Even when they pause for a moment to drift off to sleep, I felt that they were only pausing for their next adventure:

Standing on tiptoe
she offers us her bouquet . . .
wilting dandelions

Atop the seawall,
the children wave at their shadows
the shadows wave back.

As these examples suggest, Major's view of childhood is pure sentiment, and the children in his poems seem always to be on vacation. As a great fan of Dickens, I noticed the limitations of this perspective immediately. Major evokes the wonder of childhood but not the anxieties that come from being a small person in a big world (to see what I mean, skim through *Great Expectations* or *David Copperfield* again).

To give Major his due, at times he does step outside of his cloud of sentiment to invoke a darker view, as in this haiku: “Playing touch-football / by the war memorial . . . / first names like our own.” When describing the children themselves, however, the haiku wax nostalgic, making this an utterly delightful, if utterly limited, book.

The Saki Press is to be commended for publishing four chapbooks of such high quality—all of them received a Virgil Hutton Haiku Memorial Award for 2001-2002. The one thing that could have made them better would be if they were faultlessly edited, which, alas, they are not. D. Claire Gallagher’s chapbook arrived with three handwritten corrections in twenty pages, and I noticed typesetting errors throughout the other books, too. Surely award-winning manuscripts deserve closer attention, especially when they are so worthy of our notice.

Edward Zuk

A Beginning

Williams, Paul O. *The Nick of Time: Essays on Haiku Aesthetics*. (Press here, P.O. Box 4014 Foster City, California, 94404) ISBN 1-878798-23-5. 112 pp., perfect softbound. \$12.00. Enquire for postage costs with the publisher.

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This is an interesting and enjoyable book to read albeit that the title should be *Essays and Commentaries on the Form of Poetry Called Haiku*, and not *Essays on Haiku Aesthetics*. Interesting because it shows the author’s fine mind at work in a form of poetry which he has truly learned to love, the haiku. It also shows how a fiction writer adapted to a form of writing so different from his training and profession. In fact, I was taken by all the allusions to Henry James and the art of writing. I’m sure Williams has been a fine teacher and has helped many of his students enjoy literature of all kinds.

For me the most interesting chapters in this book of essays and commentaries were those on “The Limits of Haiku Form and The Question of Metaphor in Haiku”. Though I had many disagreements with the author throughout the book on many topics, at least he is tackling

the problems head on. That is, what does it mean to be an American writer using a form, which had, up until a few years ago, no cultural orientation with the United States? Williams is honest in his approach to the writer's craft.

Some of my concerns arise from the issues of defining the word "aesthetics." Does haiku written here in the United States and Canada, if not the rest of the western world, have a defined haiku aesthetic that differs from the Zen Buddhist ascetic religion and philosophy of Japan? The author definitely thinks so, and many writers here would agree. The next question is how to define that aesthetic.

Here I think Williams vacillates. His comparisons with the sonnet with its origins and development are an excellent critique and the conclusions just. But, if this is so, his definition of haiku and ultimately what rests in discussing its aesthetic, is less than perfect. In his own words:

I hope not to be doctrinaire about the subject [that is, the issue of how to define what haiku is]. I hope also, though, to inquire about what we seem to think we are doing in writing haiku and to ask to what degree form is involved in the definition and in what manner form is not involved. And perhaps we can ask if we are being so flaccid about what we are calling haiku that in North America, at least, we might say that a haiku can be defined as a more or less short poem about anything we choose, in a variety of forms, or, in simpler terms, that haiku is a short poem that usually avoids rhyme and meter.

Of course the true test of a poet's aesthetic is his style of writing and how it distinguishes their perceptions from other writers. I think of writers like Elizabeth Searle Lamb, Nick Virgilio, and John Wills to mention a few. There are many of Williams's haiku which are quite good, and many which help us understand our own perceptions, so we say: "Ah, yes, I do recognize that scene! And, yes, I know that feeling!" And then, we analyze the particulars with all its dimensions, sometimes to a greater degree than is necessary.

The elusive quest for an American haiku aesthetic continues until we know exactly what it is we want to define. *The Nick of Time* is a beginning, but only a beginning.

Raffael de Gruttola

Books Received

[Editor's Note: Due to a computer malfunction, the information for several books which were received in this period was lost. We ask authors and publishers whose work was submitted for consideration here to resend their information for use next issue. We apologize for this inconvenience.]

Yoshimura, Ikuyo & Hatsue Kawamura & Kazuo Hayakawa
Internationalization of Japanese Poems HAIKU TANKA SENRYU (Chugainippohsha Co.Ltd. Kyoto, 2002). ISBN 925003-07-0. 296 pp., 4" x 7.25", perfect softbound. No price. Enquire with the publisher.

And so finally the roles have switched: a book, intended primarily for use by Japanese college students of international culture or comparative literature, which explains English-language haiku and related forms to the Japanese. Sorry, this book is only in Japanese, but it is beautifully produced and full of auspicious intent, crammed full of poems which will make us more understandable to our first teachers.

Sterba, Carmen *sunlit jar* (Private Press, 't Hoge Woord, Rijsterdijk 25, 8574 VW Bakhuizen, Netherlands, 2002). No ISBN. 32 pp., 2" x 3", handbound. No price.

A lovely little volume and an argument for world haiku. From the foreword by Max Verhart: "[the poet] is American by birth, with Czech roots, and though she is living in Japan, her first collection of haiku is published in the Netherlands—in English of course!" Recommended.

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baatz, ronald *at herring cove* (lockout press, po box 12434, milwaukee wi 53212, 2002). No ISBN. 36 pp., 5.25" x 8.5", saddlestapled softbound. \$x ppd. from the publisher.

This volume continues in the same lyrical vein which the author displays in his previous volume, Mt. Tremper Haiku. These haiku feature a goodly play of imagination, unusual juxtapositions, a length of line uncommon in English-language haiku, and . . . well, you get my drift.

Cobb, David *Palm* (Equinox P ress, Sinodun, Shalford, Braintree, Essex CM7 5HN, UK, 2002). ISBN 0-9517103-4-6. 96 pp., 5.4" x 8.8", perfect softbound. £8 ppd. from the publisher.

A varied collection from one of the very best writers of English-language haiku not living in the United States, this features a great deal of haibun as well, including the unusual "a day in twilight," mixing as it does classical learning with new-western form. Recommended.

Balabanova-Karakehayova, Ludmila *cricket song* (Jannett-45, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 2002). ISBN 954-491-107-3. 72 pp., 5" x 7.75", perfect softbound. Illustrated with childrens' drawings. No price given, enquire with the publisher.

This book provides a good indication of the direction Balkan haiku is taking. There is a greater animism present in these poems, and those of the region, than is generally admitted here, and an emotional energy which is challenging and exciting. Quite an interesting volume.

Hardy, Jackie (editor) *Haiku: Poetry & Modern* (MQ Publications Ltd., London, 2002). ISBN 1-84072-307-6. 256 pp., 5.75" x 5.75", hardbound. £10 at bookstores.

This is a beautiful production that is sure to please every haiku lover—a collection of great work new and old, aptly illustrated with Japanese sumi-e, woodblock prints and paintings, with good typography, attractive layout and a very modest price. Highly recommended.

Barlow, John & Martin Lucas (editors) *The New Haiku* (Snapshot Press, PO Box 132, Crosby, Liverpool L23 8XS, UK, 2002). ISBN 1-903543-03-7. 224 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", perfect softbound. \$15 from the publisher.

Another important volume from the UK, this one may be considered a rebuttal to The Haiku Anthology, insisting that haiku is not only alive but flourishing in the Kingdom by the Sea. A quibble might be that the poems have been selected only from work which has appeared in a quartet of English/Irish journals, and so no claim can be made that this volume represents the best work of those included. Nevertheless, recommended.

Beichman, Janine *Masaoka Shiki: His Life and Works* (Cheng & Tsui Company, Boston, 2002). ISBN 0-88727-364-5. 194 pp., 5.25" x 8.5", perfect softbound. \$15 at bookstores.

We are very pleased to see the reissue of this classic work, the best work available on Shiki in English, in a new and expanded printing featuring more photographs, a comfortable size and layout, and a modest price. Highly recommended.

Shigemoto, Yasuhiko *My Haiku of Hiroshima* (Keisuisha, 1-4 Komachi, Naka-ku, Hiroshima 730-0041, Japan, 2002). ISBN 4-87440-364-6. 124 pp., 5" x 6.75", perfect softbound with dustjacket. ¥900 from the publisher.

It is a remarkable thing that a poet might endure so colossal an event as the A-bomb dropped on his native Hiroshima: to take up the theme as the prime topic of his life is perhaps to be expected. To be free of bitterness or blame is what is outstanding of this recommended volume.

IHSIA

News

The Nicholas A. Virgilio Memorial Haiku Contest 2002

We each read and reread the 242 entries separately, then got together and compared our favorites. We discussed these, compared, and finally agreed on the following selections:

First Place:

hovering
over a damp field
a cloud of gnats

Colin Murray, Grade 8
School of the Arts
Rochester NY

We like several things about this haiku. The language is fresh and recreates a subtle seasonal perception with its sense of silence in a very early spring morning. The gnats seem to materialize out of the damp earth. The shape of the poem on the page reinforces the poet's observation, as the reader recognizes the way the "over" in the first line's "hovering" rests just above "over" in the second line. The poem interestingly connects the stillness and solidity of the underlying "damp earth" with the almost electric movement of the gnats.

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Second Place:

dawn
dust dances
on shafts of sunlight

Shannon Ryan, Grade 9
School of the Arts
Rochester NY

This haiku combines two phenomena about the given moment, the way dust moves haphazardly yet in patterns the wind creates and how a shaft of light in the early morning can capture a lively scene. A photographer friend once said to me that there is something magical about the early morning light when objects are seen so distinctly. In the eyes of the young writer the dust moves gracefully across a field or meadow and the sun's light reflects its every move.

Third Place:

summer dusk
throwing stones
through a broken window

Travis Moore, Grade 9
School of the Arts
Rochester NY

With this haiku we are taken to the other end of the day when the young person's mischievous nature begins to play havoc in the covering blanket of evening. One wonders if the broken window was the result of the first stone thrown or was the window already broken. We hope for the latter; however, boys will be boys., as they say, and

windows are just another entry into the world of the night. Again, we can imagine a city lot with an abandoned building where more than one window has already fallen to youthful play. How many of us remember the days of the slingshot when distance and accuracy went hand in hand.

Fourth Place:

on an old
cemetery stone
my name

James Isaak, Grade 12
Wahlert High School
Dubuque IA

Here we have, to quote the Proustian phrase, “remembrance of things past,” where we see our family name from generations before on a gravestone. There’s certain ambivalence about this fact. Am I really related to this person? Is this just a coincidence? And, if I am related how much to I know about this person? It’s all in the mystery of not knowing that keeps the charm of this senryu. for the young person, there is a fascination in knowing that somebody with the same name once lived in this city, and if for no other reason, I am alive and must carry on the tradition.

Fifth Place:

mountain stream
trout dart
around watercress

Cory Hanson, Grade 11
Wahlert High School
Dubuque IA

A true outdoors person is here proclaimed. Accompanying dad and/or grandfather by rising early in the morning to venture out to the wilderness. Then following the stream to where the trout are jumping. Sitting on a rock watching as father throws his line out and slowly reels it in hoping for a catch. the watercress acts as a cover, which makes the adventure that much more intriguing. You can sense the excitement in the moment.

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Sixth Place:

Monday morning
kicking the slush
from behind the wheels

Colin Murray, Grade 8
School for the Arts
Rochester NY

We were fascinated by the use of the word “slush” here. In the summer it connotes something refreshing; however, in winter it’s a nuisance. Of course Monday morning is the beginning of the workweek and you want to start the day without any inconveniences. Not so for this young person. Removing the slush in the quickest way from the mudguards means kicking it free and climbing into your car with dirty and wet shoes. That feeling of disgust is conveyed with determined abruptness.

Raffael DeGruttola & Judson Evans, *Judges*

The Haiku Society of America

Merit Book Awards 2002

The purpose of the Haiku Society of America's Merit Book Awards is to recognize the best haiku and related books published in a given year. Every year sees a fresh crop of fine individual collections, anthologies, translations, critical studies and innovative forms. Twenty-four books published in 2001 were submitted for the competition. We have enjoyed considering all these books and congratulate all those who submitted. This year's judges particularly recommend the following haiku books as the best of 2001. The Haiku Society of America encourages you to support the winning authors and publishers by buying and reading these books.

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First Place

monkandi by vincent tripi, illustrations by David Kopitzke
(Hummingbird Press)

Second Place

what's not there: the selected haiku of Jeffrey Winke by Jeffery Winke (Deep North Press)

Award for Best Translation (Tie)

Einstein's Century: Akito Arima's Haiku by Akito Arima,
translated by Emiko Miyashita and Lee Gurga
(DecatBrooks Books)

Tsuru by Yoshiko Yoshino, translated by Lee Gurga
and Emiko Miyashita (Deep North Press)

Award for Best Criticism

The Nick of Time: Essays on Haiku Aesthetics by Paul O.
Williams (Press Here)

Award for Best Anthology

A New Resonance 2: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku, edited by Jim Kacian & Dee Evetts (Red Moon Press)

Honorable Mentions for Anthologies

A Glimpse of Red: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2000, by Jim Kacian, editor-in-chief (Red Moon Press)

Voices and Echoes: HSA Member's Anthology, edited by Carlos Colon (Haiku Society of America & Tragg Publications)

* * *

Judges' Comments

monk & i by vincent tripi. Preface by Cid Corman. Illustrations by David Kopitzke. Hummingbird Press. (P.O. Box 96, Richland, WI 53581) 64 pages. \$12 postpaid.

90 *This is an exceptional collection of haiku, senryu, and small poems. Tripi's voice is original, alive and authentic even as he draws his themes from Buddhism and American transcendentalism. His masterful use of silence, space, and repetition, as well as carefully thought-out line breaks, elevate these poems to another level. David Kopitzke's judicious use of small, naturalistic line drawings perfectly compliment the well laid-out text and letterpress printing. From start to finish, this is a work of art.*

what's not there: selected haiku of Jeffrey Winke by Jeffrey Winke. Deep North Press. (2610 Central Park Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201) 88 pages. Paperback. \$12.00.

This contemporary selection of poetry is clearly American. Winke's haiku and senryu is always fresh and creative, no matter what the topic may be. He displays these traits best in his erotic or humorous poems where the reader is enticed by one thing and then is cleverly

and/or unexpectedly lead elsewhere by the poet's device. Yet throughout all his work, there is a profound feeling of insightfulness.

Einstein's Century: Akito Arima's Haiku by Akito Arima, translated by Emiko Miyashita and Lee Gurga (Brooks Books) 128 pages, paperback. \$18.50 ppd.

Tsuru by Yoshiko Yoshino, translated by Lee Gurga and Emiko Miyashita (Deep North Press) 116 pages, hardcover. \$20.00 postpaid in North America from Charlie Trumbull, 2021 Harrison Street, Evanston, IL 60201.

The translation team of Emiko Miyashita and Lee Gurga have done the English-language haiku community a wonderful service by introducing us to two contemporary Japanese haiku masters. Dr. Akito Arima is a professor, scientist and politician whose haiku, as Gary Snyder notes on the back cover, have a "traditional elegance" and "maintain the depth and lightness of true haiku." (Many haiku contain Christian themes and subject matter not frequently found in Western haiku.) Yoshiko Yoshino's haiku are deeply moving and are stunningly memorable. Both translators are highly accomplished haiku poets in their own rights, and the translations are beautifully rendered in English.

The Nick of Time: Essays on Haiku Aesthetics by Paul O. Williams. Edited by Lee Gurga and Michael Dylan Welch. Press Here (P.O. Box 4014, Foster City, CA 94404) 112 pages. Paperback. \$14.00 ppd.

This wonderfully provocative collection of 16 essays addresses many key topics in haiku and its writing. Williams puts his arguments out on the table and holds his own. Also included in the book is a strong and even collection of 40 haiku and senryu by the author. A very important book for English-language haiku theory and practice.

A New Resonance 2: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku edited by Jim Kacian & Dee Evetts (Red Moon Press) (P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22504-1661) <redmoon@shentel.net> 176 pages. Paperback. \$14.95 (plus \$3.00 postage).

New Resonance 2 is evidence of the fecundity of contemporary haiku. Following upon the heels of its critically-acclaimed predecessor, this volume presents 17 leading haiku poets through a representative sampling of 15 of each of their best haiku. This is a must-buy for all haiku poets. It supplements—and deserves a place on the bookshelf next to—The Haiku Anthology by Cor van den Heuvel.

a glimpse of red: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku edited by Jim Kacian & the Red Moon Press Editorial Staff. Red Moon Press. (P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22504-1661) <redmoon@shentel.net> 168 pages. Paperback. \$14.95 (plus \$3.00 postage).

The annual Red Moon anthology is always eagerly anticipated, and this year is no exception. This installment contains work by 120 poets, authors, and scholars from two dozen countries. Strong haiku, great haibun, wonderful linked forms and most of all a number of indispensable essays by leading scholar's and poets in the haiku world.

Voices and Echoes edited by Carlos Colón. \$8.00 U.S. & Canada, \$9.00 elsewhere, postpaid from the editor at 185 Lynn Avenue, Shreveport, LA 711105.

This is a solid anthology that rises above the risks inherent to member anthologies that promise to include all members. 222 of HSA's 800+ members chose to be represented here. Each has a single haiku, over half of which are previously published. Editor Carlos Colón's sound editorial approach and work with contributors makes
92 *Voices and Echoes an enjoyable read.*

Judges: Stanford M. Forrester & Bruce Kennedy

Erratum

The essay entitled "Tangible Imagination in Richard Wright's Haiku", which appeared in *Frogpond* XXV:2, was incorrectly accredited. It is the work of Jianqing Zheng, whose fine work has appeared several other times in these pages. We regret the error.

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THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Treasurer's Report April-June 2002

Balance from 1st Quarter **\$14,407.79**

Income

Dues and Contributions	3,270.00
Museum of Haiku Literature	300.00
Education Packets	145.00
<i>Frogpond</i> samples	119.00
2001 Members' Anthology	85.97
Contest entry fees	80.00

Income Quarter **+3,997.97**

Income Subtotal **18,407.76**

Expenses

<i>Frogpond</i> account	\$4,330.47
HSA Newsletter account	2,221.71
Office expenses	124.35
Returned check and fee	88.00

Total Expenses **-6,764.53**

Balance 15 June 2002

\$11,643.23

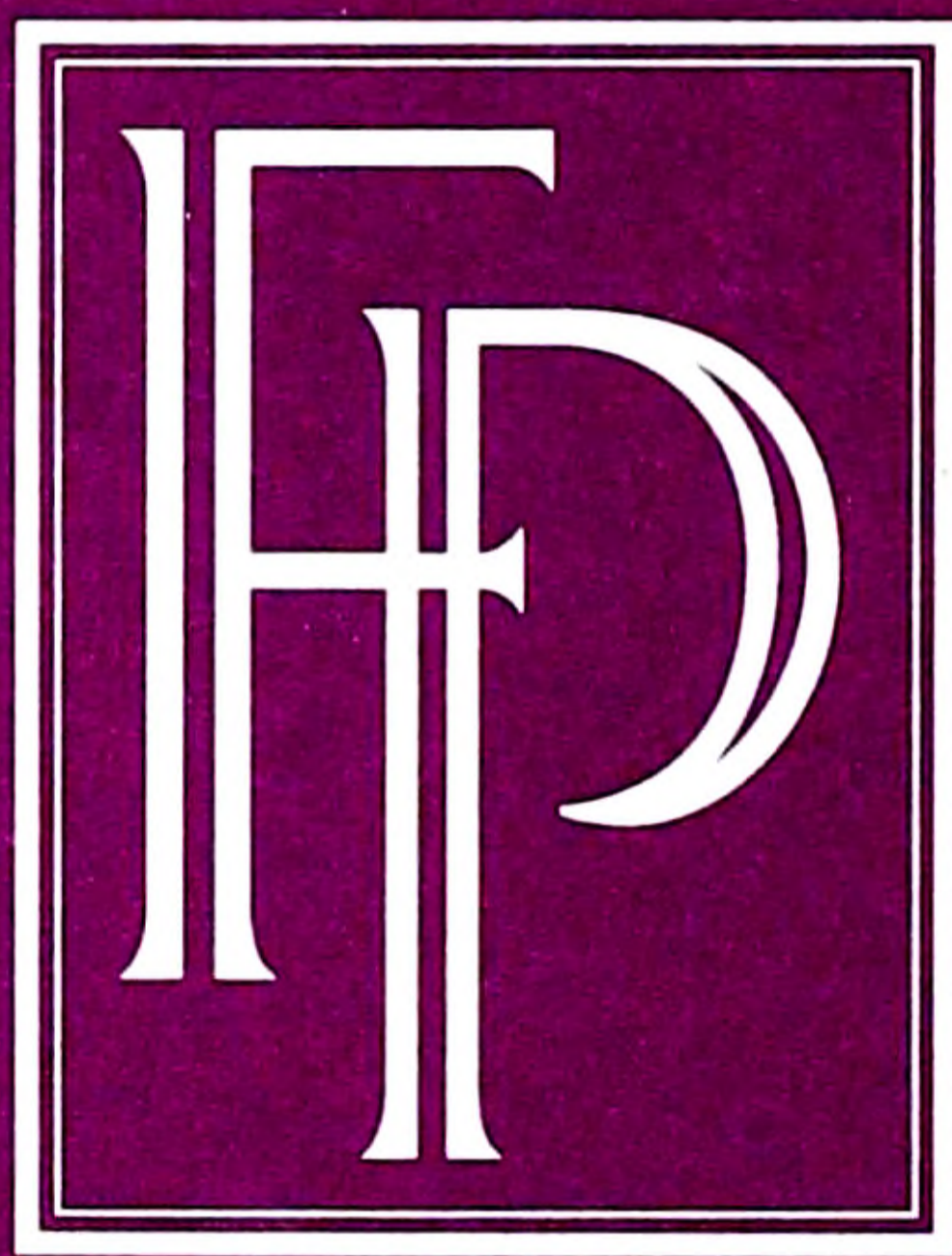
Respectfully submitted

John Stevenson, *Treasurer*

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

*spring plowing
a flock of blackbirds
turns inside out*

Tom Painting



*nostalgic Frogpond
on facing pages
Jack Barry & Bill Cullen
Carlos Colón*

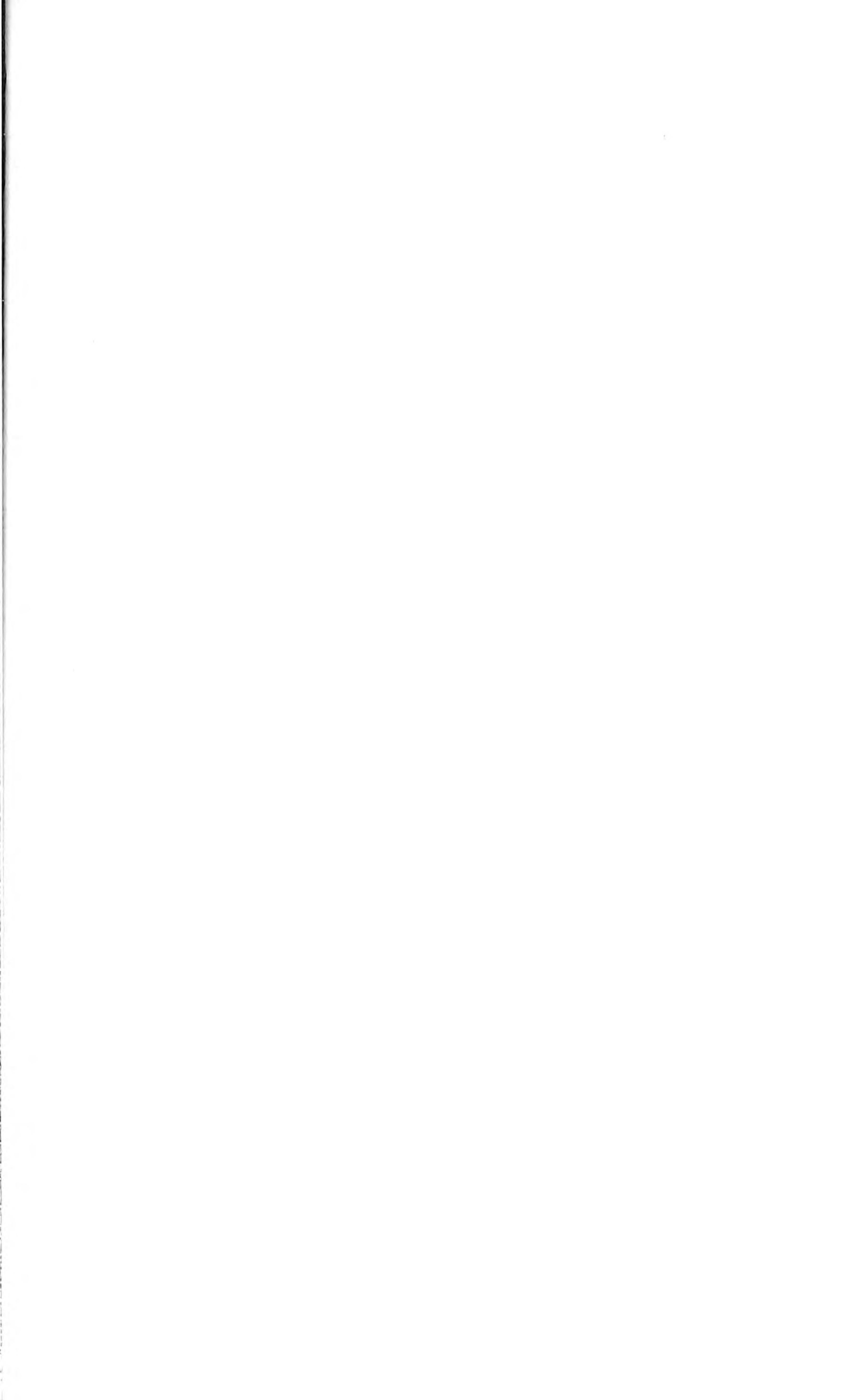


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