

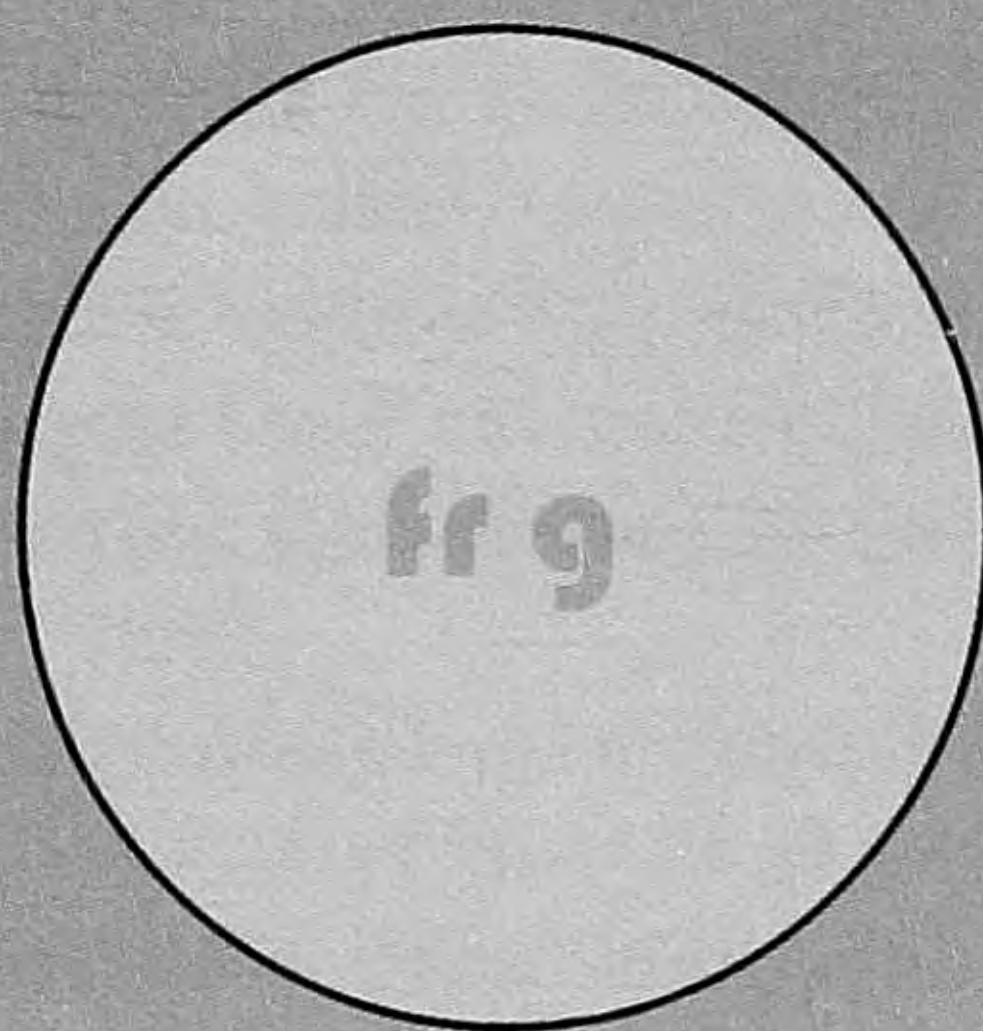
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**Volume 34:2, 2011**



# **frogpond**

**The Journal of the Haiku  
Society of America**



**Volume 34, Number 2  
Spring/Summer 2011**

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### **The Submission May Include Any or All of the Following:**

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3. Up to three (3) renga or other short sequences
4. One (1) renku or other long sequence
5. One (1) essay
6. One (1) book review

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**From Issue 34:1**

whale songs...  
when did we stop  
talking

*Bud Cole*  
Ocean City, New Jersey

# Haiku & Senryu

foreclosure  
echo  
in the naked room

Jörgen Johansson, Lidköping, Sweden

blind spot at dusk  
where once I  
thought I'd belong

Philip Rowland, Tokyo, Japan

prideful story her fingers swell around the ring

w.f. owen, Sacramento, California

a rusty windmill  
wrestling with  
the sky

Larry Gates, Portal, Arizona

Lost in the other  
One's own face in the mirror  
A surprise.

Constance O'Keefe, District of Columbia

snow geese  
in so many words  
good-bye

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

how some things end—  
onion flakes  
in the market sack

William M. Ramsey, Florence, South Carolina

the evening news  
I communicate with  
my inner sociopath

Joseph M. Kusmiss, Sanbornton, New Hampshire

sweet olive  
moonglow  
on the salt lick

Bill Cooper, Richmond Virginia

the breeze  
lifts her summer skirt—  
celandines

John McManus, Carlisle, England



behind the soft petals  
behind the orange folds  
my eyes

Richard Schnell, Guanacaste, Costa Rica

first morning of summer—  
*it's sweet, it's sweet, it's sweet*  
goes the goldfinch song

Wally Swist, Springfield, Massachusetts

silence  
when I should have spoken  
faded roses

Stephen A. Peters, Bellingham, Washington

nightfall  
the weight of her sigh  
on my cheek

Bob Lucky, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

coastal caves  
inhale exhale  
the sea

Peg McAulay Byrd, Madison, New Jersey

wringing out the chamois  
why didn't you  
tell me

mother's crewelwork  
these scars  
down my arm

Nancy Carol Moody, Eugene, Oregon

leaves in the light—  
melodies  
the eye can hear

Dave Sutter, San Francisco, California

winter wind  
secrets come in  
from the cold

Glenn Coats, Prospect, Virginia

texting dissimulation under an eroding sphinx

Susan Diridoni, San Francisco, California

carrying rain  
from door to door  
the salesman's umbrella

B.T. Joy, Glasgow, Scotland

Sunday morning  
rain coming down  
at righteous angles

Michael Fessler, Kanagawa, Japan

hum of a hive  
in a dark crease of the wood—  
the heat

Jeffrey Woodward, Detroit, Michigan

she and he—  
a half moon  
in each cup

Dorota Pyra, Gdansk, Poland

ice blue morning  
a snow-covered mountain ridge  
slices the sky

Katrina Shepherd, Dunblane, Scotland

waiting till it passes  
skylight rainbow  
in the toilet bowl

Robert Seretny, Milford, Maine

milkweed pods  
the silken tufts  
in grandpa's ears

Barbara Snow, Eugene, Oregon

Route 66  
the derelict cafe's ceiling fan  
spun by the wind

John Dunphy, Alton, Illinois

harvest moon sliver  
the pond no longer reflects  
her darkness

Fran Ostasiewski, Greensboro, North Carolina

dad's directions  
landmarks  
that used to be

Julie Warther, Dover, Ohio

my father waiting  
for the nurse to use my name  
before he greets me

PMF Johnson, St. Paul, Minnesota

quiet rain—  
slowly letting go  
of this sultry night

Adelaide B. Shaw, Millbrook, New York

Massive quake—  
sea gulls skimming  
the tsunami

Yasuhiko Sigemoto, Osaka, Japan

out of a horse's skull  
a flower  
gallops

Lucien Zell, Prague, Czech Republic

thinned by time  
her laughter, the hue  
of her eyes

Marian Olson, Santa Fe, New Mexico

our bedsheet  
its gentle curve  
between clothes pins

Ruth Yarrow, Seattle, Washington

tornado shelter—  
everyone snickers until...  
the second fart

Del Doughty, Huntington, Indiana

a whole winter's snow  
heaped on the steps—  
foreclosure

Judson Evans, Holbrook, Maine

long winter day  
entertaining ghosts  
where to sit?

Susan Nelson Myers, Mayodan, North Carolina

a sharp edge  
even in spring  
holly leaf

paul m., Bristol, Rhode Island

cedar waxwings  
sharing yew berries—  
I decide to say yes

Terri L. French, Huntsville, Alabama

robin  
after a long stretch  
half of the worm

Elinor Pihl Huggett, South Bend, Indiana

childhood photos  
before we knew  
we were naked

Gregory Hopkins, Weaver, Alabama

full of fury  
he scolds me for it  
winter chickadee

Bruce Ross, Bangor, Maine

morning dew  
an easy lie  
is all it would take

Angela Terry, Lake Forest Park, Washington

hawk's  
slow hang  
in the volcano's  
shadow  
spots of rain

Marshall Hryciuk, Toronto, Ontario

my touch  
becomes yours...  
morning light

Wende Skidmore DuFlon, La Antigua, Guatamala

following a path  
of pale light across the lake  
all the way to Jupiter

Michael Ketchek, Rochester, New York

lost in the symmetry  
of elk droppings  
my discontent

Dee Evetts, Winchester, Virginia

aftershocks  
the straight back  
of the fortune teller

Patrick Sweeney, Misawa-shi, Japan



for Double-Word score  
I add an "s" to "haiku" ...  
distant thunder

Charles Trumbull, Santa Fe, New Mexico

puddle ice  
cracks underfoot  
how I hate the word *whatever*

Hannah Mahoney, Cambridge, Massachusetts

A train passing in the night the length of the chain

Paul Pfleuger, Jr., Chiayi, Taiwan

silent films—  
our laughter  
flickers in the dark

Ruth Holzer, Herndon, Virginia

sleeping alone  
the freshness  
of sun-dried sheets

Carolyn Coit Dancy, Pittsford, New York

mother's day visit  
a splash of vodka  
in the peppermint tea

Carolyn M. Hinderliter, Phoenix, Arizona

seems like everyone  
is trying to tell you  
fireflies

Dan Schwerin, Greendale, Wisconsin

red sunrise  
a taste of the campfire  
still in his beard

an'ya, Gilchrist, Oregon

in his backpack  
the weight of the world  
middle school

Deb Koen, Rochester, New York

drawing closer  
to the lip of the well  
birthday eve

Renée Owen, Sebastopol, California

a red sun  
rising from the sea  
wind takes her ashes

Robert B. McNeill, Winchester, Virginia

ripples  
on the lake  
the rumor is...

Mary Kipps, Sterling, Virginia

midnight kayak  
a dolphin curves  
into the moon

Linda Jeanette Ward, Coinjock, North Carolina

a shooting star...  
the peppercorn  
lingers on my tongue

Chris Bays, Beavercreek, Ohio

master rooster  
your disciples  
are hardboiled

David Gershator, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

Tanglewood dusk  
the shape of stillness  
after the violin

Ellen Compton, Washington, D.C.

night shift  
behind the scrapyard  
a rusty moon

Roland Packer, Hamilton, Ontario

when did it start  
to be about loss  
Christmas lights

Anne K. Schwader, Westminster, Colorado

tonight's forecast  
a storm brewing  
in your glass

John Soules, Wingham, Ontario

springtime  
every blade of grass  
a life of its own

Irene K. Wilson, Lexington, Massachusetts

the concert's  
last trumpet note

--

our place in the universe

Gary Hotham, Scaggsville, Maryland

crowded elevator  
the mixed scents  
of a long day

Melissa Spurr, Joshua Tree, California

Calm morning lake—  
its light inside our  
breakfast conversation.

Lou Pearl, Dearborn, Michigan

in the beauty of high def  
something  
for hemorrhoids

LeRoy Gorman, Napanee, Ontario

a gull's feather  
borne on spindrift  
her first day at school

Grace Galton, Somerset, England

sunbreak    the ornament in wasp wings

Cherie Hunter Day, Cupertino, California

whiteetholdingrudes

John Stevenson, Nassau, New York

cumulus...  
my eyelids  
little folds of cold

Helen Buckingham, Bristol, England

goodbye hug...  
I notice  
where my heart is

Susan Constable, Nanoose Bay, British Columbia

wind-whipped pine—  
admitting I don't like  
her children

Tracy Koretsky, Bellevue, Washington

empty yard  
silence is dreaming  
the sound of children

John B. Lee, Brantford, Ontario

the long night  
my loneliness  
curls up beside him

Carolyn Hall, San Francisco, California

flat calm  
the fog disappears  
me

Alice Frampton, Seabeck, Washington

meteor shower—  
the clatter of gravel  
under a passing truck

Chad Lee Robinson, Pierre, South Dakota

unbalanced checkbook  
I pause to count  
crow caws

Billie Wilson, Juneau, Alaska

she says I'm a charmer spring thaw

April rain . . .  
the moment  
the heart softens

Francine Banwarth, Dubuque, Iowa

sparrowweight the groundsel bends to the ground

John Barlow, Ormskirk, England

northern flicker encrypting a birch

Scott Mason, Chappaqua, New York

a late oak leafs out her first word

Mark Harris, Princeton, New Jersey



summer lightning  
dragonfly  
fused  
to dragonfly

Melissa Allen, Madison, Wisconsin

words I can't take back—  
the earth's loose grip  
on winter weeds

plum blossom petals—  
mood and opportunity  
overlap

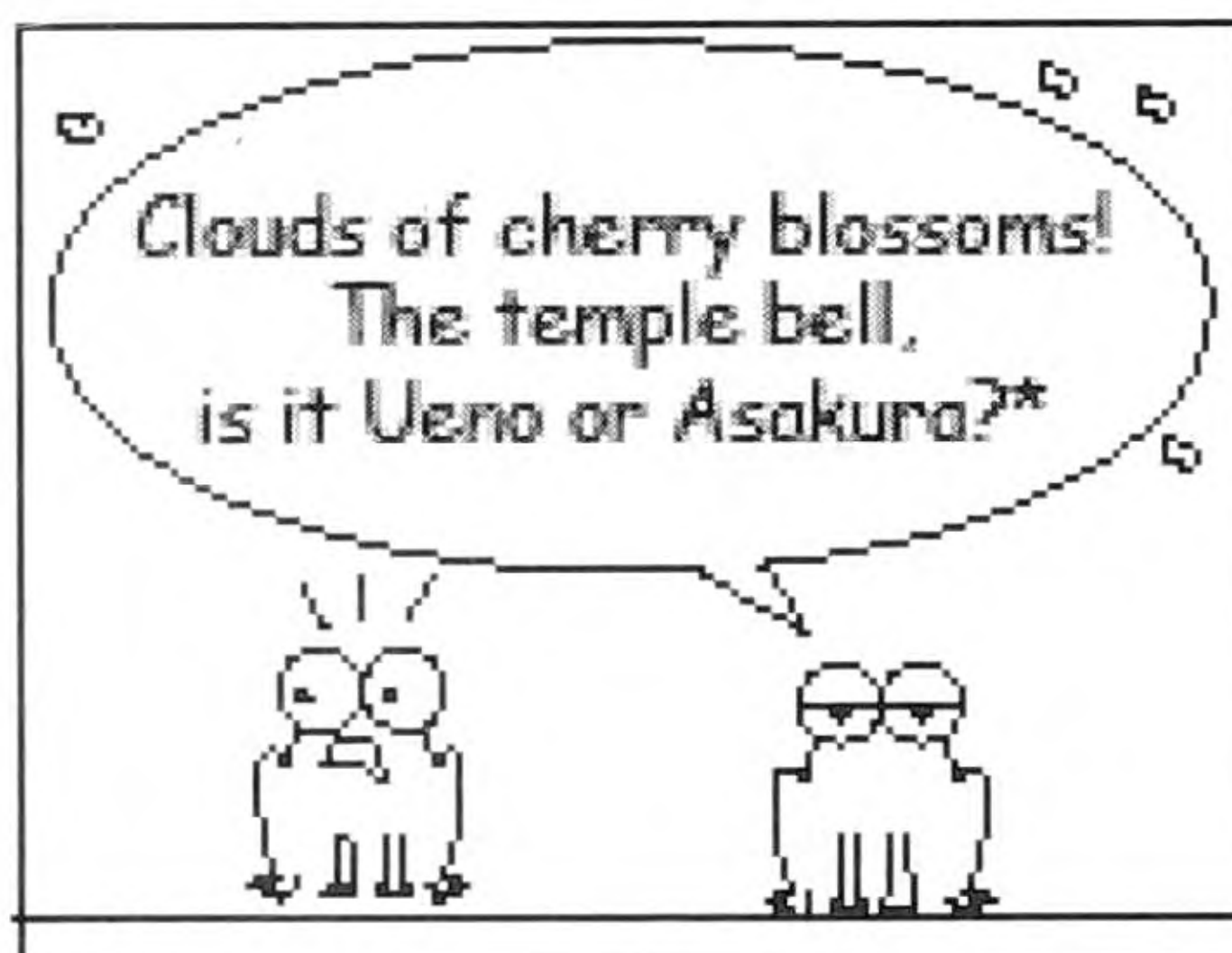
Susan Antolin, Walnut Creek, California

still shining  
above the old pond  
light from a fallen star

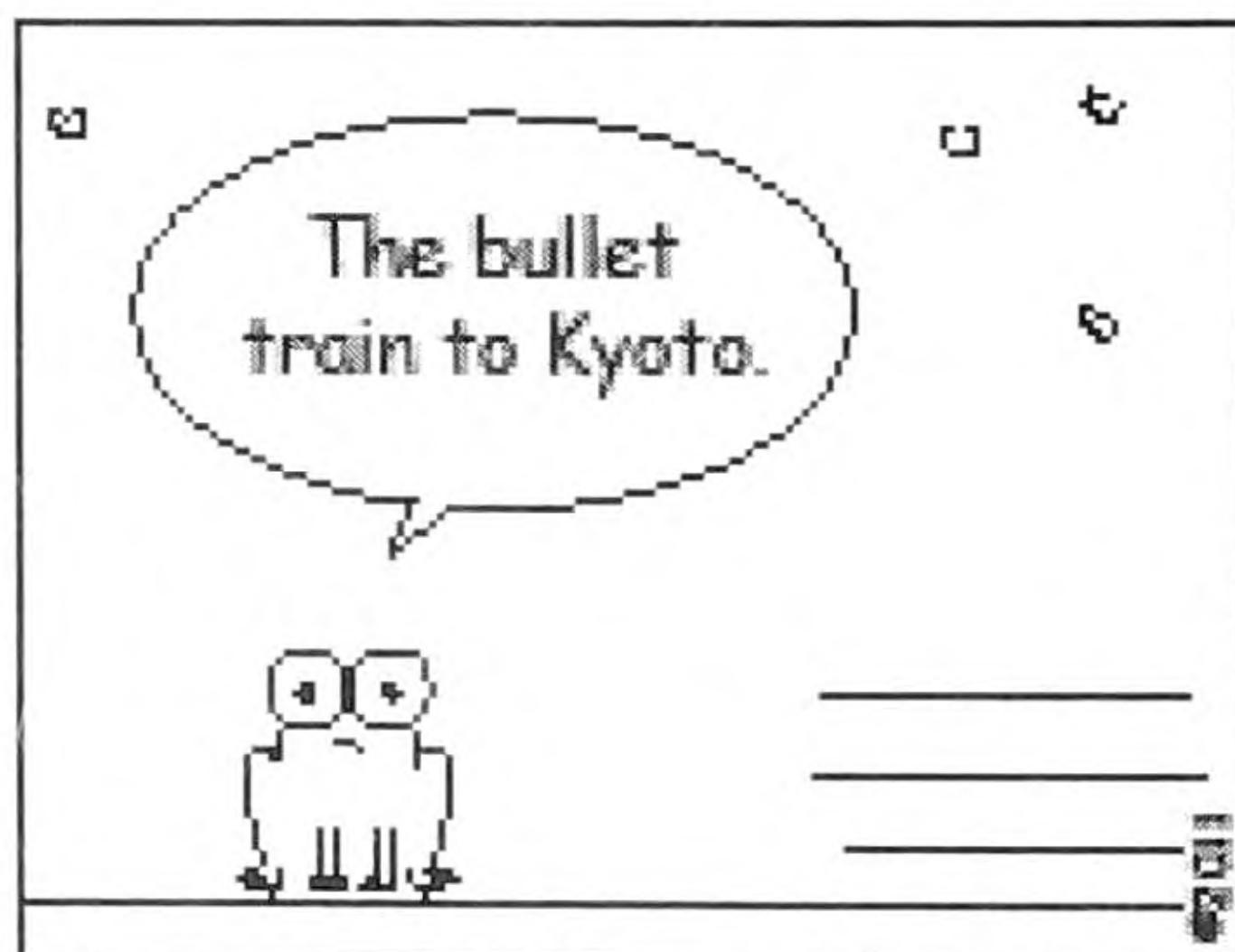
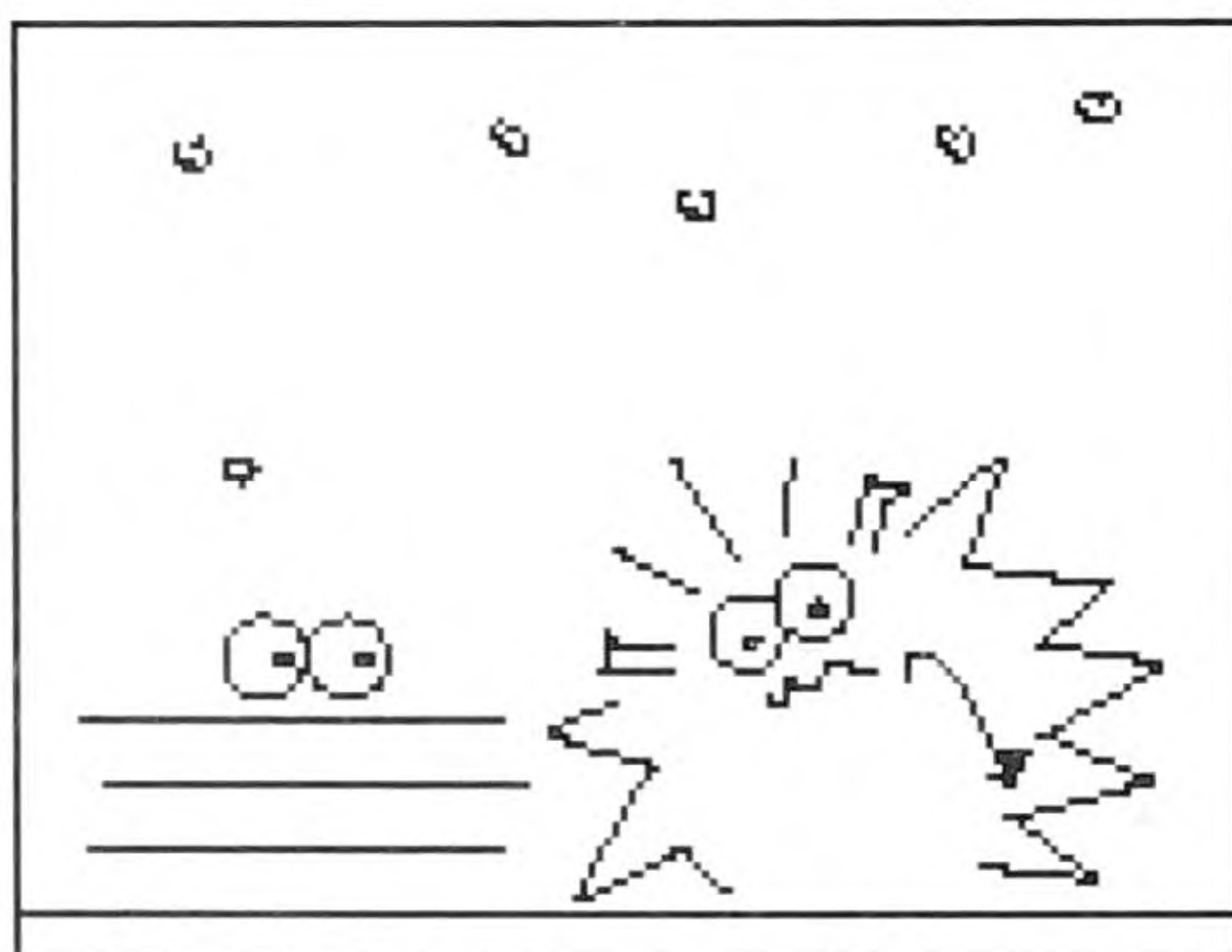
In Memory of Tom Noyes, 1918-2010  
Sylvia Forges-Ryan, Editor, *Frogpond*, 1991-1993

*Editor's Note: Tom Noyes received the HSA's Sora Award in 2004 and was appointed Honorary Curator of the American Haiku Archives for 2007-08.*

# Old Pond Comics



\*Haiku by Basho



<https://oldpond.com/haiku>

Jessica Tremblay

# Revelations: Unedited

## HAIKU POETICS: OBJECTIVE, SUBJECTIVE, TRANSACTIONAL AND LITERARY THEORIES

(The Second of Two Parts)

by *Dr. Randy Brooks*, Millikin University

Editor George Swede invited me to submit a “revelations unedited” for *Frogpond*, and I agreed to write a two-part revelations piece on theories of writing haiku. In the first part, “Genesis of Haiku: Where Do Haiku Come From?” I addressed the role of invention in writing haiku. In this second part, I address four broader theories of writing—objective, subjective, transactional and literary—and how each leads to different assumptions about the writer, the reader, reality and language in the conjoined twin arts of reading and writing haiku.

### Part 2

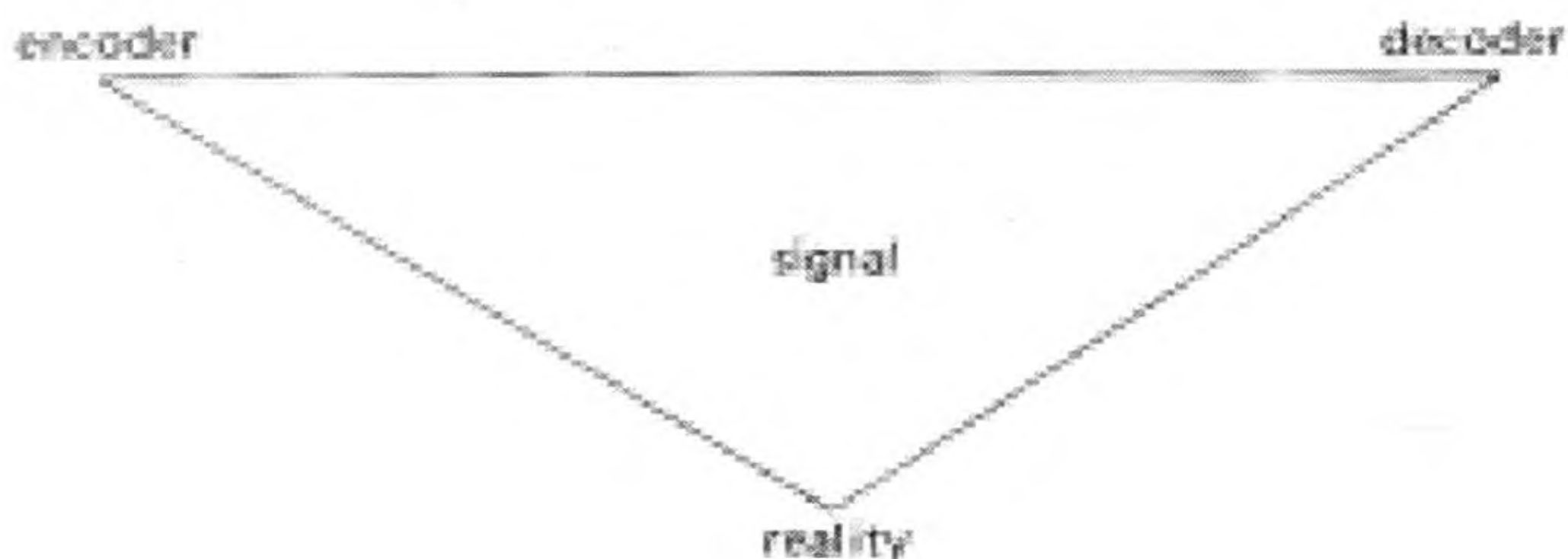
#### Haiku as a Rhetorical Act

In the western tradition, beginning with Aristotle and the Sophists, theories of writing have been constructed by observing the integrated elements of effective communication. As James Berlin explains in his book, *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges*:

Rhetoric has traditionally been seen as based on four elements interacting with each other: reality, writer or speaker, audience, and language.... Rhetorical schemes differ in the way each element is defined, as well as in the conception of the relation of the elements to each other. Every rhetoric, as a result, has at its base a conception of reality, of human nature, and of language. [1].

In *A Theory of Discourse*, James L. Kinneavy makes a similar claim that writing theories are usually based on “the very nature of the language process itself” [2] that can be expressed as the communication triangle.

Basic to all uses of language are a person who encodes a message, the signal (language) which carries the message, the reality to which the message refers, and the decoder (receiver of the message). These four components are often represented in a triangle [3]:



I prefer to label the triangle with “writer, reader, language, and reality” and will use these terms to refer to these elements of the communication triangle throughout this essay. When I consider haiku as the rhetorical (or literary) act being considered, I would say that haiku are not “about the writer” yet they include an expressive element that comes from the writer. I would say that haiku are not “about reality” yet they include a context of perception, referring to time (when) and place (where) and things (what) that are presented as images constructing an overall dramatic scene. I would say that haiku are not “about readers and their values” but invite reader participation in the act of imagination and enjoyment while reading haiku. I would say that haiku are not “about language” but haiku writers and readers enjoy how haiku are written and constructed as literary art, including the wide range of language techniques available. Haiku are a rhetorical act—an attempt by the writer to share with a reader an observation or heartfelt insight referring to a perception or imagination of reality through the use of artistically-constructed language.

In this essay I will explore a variety of approaches to writing haiku—a variety of haiku poetics—seeing how each broad haiku writing theory defines the elements of the communication triangle and the interrelationships of these four elements.

Please understand the importance of the following caveat: there is no “one way” to write haiku, no single haiku poetic or haiku tradition to guide the writing and reception of haiku as a literary art. There is no final list of “do’s and don’ts” that will codify the art of reading and writing haiku. Such lists are for beginners being indoctrinated into an approach by their teacher. On the broader level of haiku as a literary genre, we should embrace the observation that there are several ways, a multitude of traditions, a variety of haiku poetic theories. I believe that this variety is essential for the health and vitality of the global genre of haiku.

### **Broad Categories of Writing Theories**

I am eager to get to the exploration of haiku poetics, but first I need to briefly explain the three main categories of writing theories and how each defines reality, favors certain language preferences, and shapes the roles of readers and writers. The three broad categories are: (1) objective rhetorical theories; (2) subjective rhetorical theories; and (3) social epistemic or, more simply, transactional rhetorical theories. Writing theory scholars do not agree on this, but a fourth category would be to treat literature as a unique category of writing theory with its own configuration of reality, readers, writers, and language.

(1) In objective rhetorical theories, reality is defined as the external, material world subject to the laws of nature. The role of the writer is to observe reality as accurately as possible, using our limited sensory perception. The goal is to discover or find the truth and express it without bias or interpretation. Writing based on this approach often is expressed in a plain, scientific style, minimizing the personal pronoun because the focus of the writing is about observed reality. This type of writing theory places a high value on description and accuracy of the revealed truth. The role of the reader is to validate the descriptions and perceptions as accurate without the blurring bias of the writer interfering.

(2) In subjective rhetorical theories, reality is defined as a

personal construct of the individual. The goal is to develop and understand yourself and how you have constructed not only your own identity but also your own worldview. Writing based on this approach is usually very introspective and expressive, focused on the self, with a goal of “finding your own voice” and sharing your unique perspective. This type of writing theory places a high value on sharing emotions—letting others into your private, inner world. The writer lets readers see the world through his or her own perspective. The role of the reader is to validate the writer as authentic and genuine in expressing who the writer “really is” through the writing. The sensitive reader connects to or empathizes with the writer’s emotions.

(3) In transactional rhetorical theories, reality is a social construct created over time by a community or society and is sometimes referred to as “collective consciousness” or cultural awareness. The goal is to create new knowledge and better understanding through social interaction with others who are likewise collaborating in the social construction of new knowledge and understandings. Writing based on this approach openly invites dialogue (or polylogue) with others both present and from the past, in order to respond to previous work and to collaborate in the creation of new work. The role of the reader is to be an active participant in this ongoing polylogue and the resulting creative response process.

(4) While most scholars include literary texts within these first three categories of writing theories, some scholars consider literary writing to be a fourth category. Those who approach literary writing as its own category would say that literature is focused on imagination and imitation of reality (fiction). Literary writing theory often focuses on language itself as the primary basis for the theory. The role of the writer is to craft an imitation of life with language that engages readers’ imaginations. The goal is to create a literary experience through the crafting of artistic language. The role of the reader is to enter into the imagined space of the literary work and to enjoy the artistic craft evident in that work.

Let us consider how these broad writing theories can help us

explore and better understand different approaches to writing haiku—to various haiku poetics.

## Objective Haiku Poetics

Objective haiku poetics emphasize the importance of reality, usually referred to as nature. The haiku moment is characterized as an instance of sensory perception of reality, without the blurring lens of human values or perspective. On a larger scale, the movement of thinking is from the observation of particulars about reality (or nature) to broader universal truths (the nature of nature) that is often viewed in haiku as universal seasons. The writer is present as an “everyman” representative of human beings in general, perceiving nature (or reality) without interpretation, explanation, commentary, or emotional response. The writer is supposed to be ego-less, so that the haiku will be about the thing observed instead of the observer. The goal is to show things “as they are” without interpretation or emotional coloring of significance. Often a plain style is favored as the most effective language for this approach, so that the language is not distracting the reader from the reality being observed. Sometimes this style of language is characterized as “transparent” or “clear” as if you were looking through a window but forget that the window is there. Like the writer, the language is supposed to disappear as the reader recognizes the truth of the observation—“yes, that’s the way it really is.”

At the turn of the twentieth century, Masaoka Shiki called for a rejuvenation of haiku through a “shasei” approach which emphasized “realistic observation of nature rather than the puns or fantasies often relied on by the old school” [4]. He viewed the earlier approaches as antiquated literary traditions with too much emphasis on cliché subjects, stilted poetic language, and a focus on imaginary literary or artistic scenes from the past. As a war correspondent in China, he wrote haiku such as [5]:

The summer river:  
although there is a bridge, my horse  
goes through the water.

The role of the reader in objective haiku poetics is to become an “everyman” reader who imagines themselves reliving the experience of reality—the observation of nature being portrayed through the images of the haiku. The reader “steps into” the writer’s “everyman” perspective and imaginatively observes what the writer observed.

### **Subjective Haiku Poetics**

Although Shiki called for “sketches from life” and Kiyoshi expanded that to the “objective sketch” approach to haiku, Shiki is most beloved for writing poetic diaries throughout the course of his fatal illness. For example, in a sequence called “Snow While Sick” Shiki wrote [6]:

again and again  
I ask how high  
the snow is

As part of his autobiographical diaries, this haiku is clearly about Shiki and his limited perspective of the snow from his sickbed. More than an objective description of reality, it is a portrayal of his existence and his frustrated perspective of being sick. The overall effect for the reader is to imagine Shiki lying in the bed, and with some imaginative empathy, we become the person he is asking again and again “how high the snow is.” Shiki is the subject of this haiku and the language conveys his attitudes and inner emotions. This is an excellent example of a haiku written from a subjective haiku poetics approach.

Subjective haiku poetics emphasize the inner world and life of the writer. The haiku moment is characterized as an instance of self-awareness about the feelings and significance of “being in my own world.” When a collection of haiku is published by a writer in this tradition, these lived moments of insight and self-awareness often become a poetic autobiography. The writer explores his or her own identity and life’s experiences through haiku, writing about themselves, their family, their home town, their culture. Many haiku writers in this tradition embrace haiku as therapy or as a means of spiritual growth through meditation



and self-contemplation. Subjective haiku writers often embrace opportunities to employ idiosyncratic language or playful language resulting in a unique voice. Among the Japanese haiku masters, Issa immediately comes to mind as a poet who wrote autobiographical haiku with a playful voice fitting his Buddhist perspectives and values. For example [7]:

Lean frog,  
don't give up the fight!  
Issa is here!

Although writers employing subjective approaches appear to use language that is spontaneous or conversational, most carefully craft their haiku to create a voice with the illusion of spontaneity and intimacy. The subjective haiku writer hopes readers are very interested in his or her life and wants readers to accept his or her haiku as genuine, authentic expressions of the writer's inner world. The subjective writer pretends to ignore the readers, as if the readers aren't really examining what the writer is experiencing. The writer wants to be "true to herself" and not pander to the desires of readers. The overall goal for subjective haiku poetics is for the writer to convey heartfelt responses to being alive in his or her own worldview.

The role of the reader in subjective haiku poetics is to get to know the writer and the important moments of insight and feeling they express through their "bits of life" haiku. The reader seeks to understand the writer's perspectives and attitudes. The reader doesn't "enter into" the writer's perspective, but instead lurks outside the writer's life as if he or she is spying on the inner secrets and experiences the writer is going through. There is often a sense of becoming an intimate friend to the haiku writer, because the reader is given access to the inner thoughts, feelings, and concerns of the writer. The reader doesn't have to become Shiki to understand and feel the frustrations of a limited sickbed life. Writer-based haiku are often enjoyed because the reader does not have to take the writer's perspective. The haiku are so focused on the writer's life and feelings, there is little room left for the reader. In literary theory, subjective haiku poetics is similar to the poetics of the Romantic poets who were

admired as individuals with unique sensibilities and expressive capabilities. This theory tends to view the best writers as more gifted and talented than others by their innate nature. Readers are encouraged to explore their own inner thoughts and feelings, therefore developing their own individualistic sensibilities and artistic abilities by writing subjective haiku about their own lives like those admired by favorite writers.

### **Transactional Haiku Poetics**

Transactional haiku poetics emphasize the social nature of haiku as a call and response process of creative collaboration between the writer and reader. The haiku moment is characterized as a union of reader and writer who meet in a beloved haiku as co-creators of the felt significance of the poem. This approach seems especially fitting to haiku traditions, given haiku's origins as the hokku, or starting verse, in Japanese linked poetry. In transactional haiku poetics, reality is socially constructed as images and language connected to culturally shared memories and experiences (a community's shared collective consciousness). Language is also viewed as a shared social construct, with culturally sensitive word choice and phrasing being another primary means of sharing significance between writer and reader.

The reader relates to the images in the haiku through his or her own memories and associations with the things mentioned in the poem, in order to create their own felt experience and understanding of the haiku moment. The transactional haiku poetics place a high value on reader response — sharing the imagined experience of a poem with others, including the writer. A variety of responses and associations are expected from a variety of readers. The joy of haiku is in sharing this variety of reader responses, and, of course, one possible response is to write a haiku in response to a previously enjoyed haiku. In other words, this approach values the linking process — connecting to haiku others have written before, yet creating new haiku that shift beyond previous haiku. As collaborative readers and writers of haiku, we revisit haiku from the past and collaborate in the process of making them new for the present in our own time and culture.

This social collaborative process works within the form of haiku as well. The cut or “kireji” of haiku provides a miniature version of the linking process. A haiku begins with one image or phrase that stimulates a reader to anticipate what is coming next. In that silent pause between the first and second part of the haiku, the reader enters into the haiku’s space, imagining and feeling the initial associations provided. Then the reader finishes reading the second part of the haiku and considers how that image or phrase alters their previous expectations. The reader then re-reads the entire haiku, letting it expand out into possible readings, associations, memories and points of felt significance.

The role of the reader in transactional haiku poetics is to be a co-creative, collaborative partner. The writer starts the process and the reader completes or fulfills the creation of meaning or feelings elicited from a haiku. The reader is expected to be a socially responsible partner, entering a haiku’s gift of shared consciousness. The transactional haiku poetics depend on the active cooperation of a good reader. To be a good reader requires a certain amount of trust and expectation that both writer and reader understand and appreciate the arts of reading and writing haiku.

### **Literary Haiku Poetics**

Obviously literary haiku can and have been written based on the objective, subjective and transactional theories of writing. In fact many writing theory scholars would argue that all haiku are necessarily written from one of these three broad theoretical approaches. However, some scholars claim that literature is a special category of writing and should therefore be considered a fourth broad approach. I indulge those scholars and include literary haiku poetics as a fourth approach to haiku poetics, although I agree that literary haiku poetics is actually a subset of concerns within the other three theories, primarily addressing issues about language and fiction.

Literary haiku poetics emphasize language, through which the writer crafts an imaginative stage of possibilities—a fiction.

The writer crafts a literary artifact with all of the linguistic tools and imaginative resources available in his or her poetry toolkit. The haiku moment is characterized as an experience of the poem itself—its sound, its structure, its images, its characters and its overall felt significance. Literary haiku are written from memories, experiences, imagination and other works of art. Some literary haiku are episodic, capturing a scene from other literary works, art, movies, popular locations, rituals, holidays and songs. Other literary haiku are narrative, written from a fictional writer's voice and perspective. There is a long-standing tradition of "haigo" or haiku identity in the Japanese traditions. A few American haiku writers, for example Raymond Roseliep, have employed such haiku narrators. Recent haiku novels, such as *Haiku Guy* by David Lanoue, create a group of semi-fictional haiku writers engaged in the art of haiku.

As anyone who has participated in linked verse writing knows, the hokku may be directly tied to the events, immediate experiences, specific location and season of the gathering, but all subsequent links are imaginative creations. They are fiction, created to be realistic or fantastical depending on the imaginative movement of the collaborative participants.

A wide range of language is employed in literary haiku, depending on narrative voice and the variety of language that is an experience in itself. As a language-based approach, literary haiku enjoy playful language employing puns, slant rhyme, alliteration, allusions, implied analogies, metaphors and other poetic techniques. Sometimes literary haiku appear to ignore the reader, favoring dense, oblique language that celebrates ambiguity or abstraction. The goal is not to be realistic, but to provide readers with a language-intensive experience. Although a wide-range of works fall within the literary haiku poetics, some, like abstract paintings, deliberately attempt to avoid any apparent reference to reality. The primary goal of literary haiku is to be an engaging literary artifact with an immediate aesthetic experience and lasting resonating value to readers.

Buson's famous haiku about the "dead wife's comb" is an excellent example of an imaginative literary haiku translated by Harold G. Henderson [8]:

The piercing chill I feel:  
my dead wife's comb, in our bedroom,  
under my heel . . .

This haiku expresses an emotional response to an imagined experience. It is written as if it was an actual experience, but as R. H. Blyth noted in *The History of Haiku*, "In actual fact, Buson's wife Tomo died in 1814, thirty four years after this verse was composed in 1780" [9]. Therefore the haiku is written from a fictional narrator, based on an imagined experience, resulting in a engaging and emotional literary artifact.

The role of the reader in literary haiku poetics is to imagine the feelings and perspectives of characters in a fictive scene. Instead of imagining themselves as a fictive self re-living the writer's experience of reality, literary readers enjoy a more external audience perspective observing things happening on the haiku stage. The reader maintains the perspective of the audience outside of the events unfolding in the literary artifact. In this approach, good readers know the literary haiku tradition, including allusions to other poets and other well-known haiku. The reader appreciates the craft of the haiku as a literary artifact, including language usage and style choices. The role of the reader is to judge the literary quality of a haiku—does it have lasting value beyond the first reading.

### **Extreme Disjunctions of the Communication Triangle**

I would like to briefly note attempts to develop haiku poetics based on extreme disjunctions of the communication triangle. These approaches attempt to guide the art of haiku by deliberately omitting or ignoring one of the key elements of the triangle—writers, readers, language, or reality. The results have often alienated readers and have rarely resulted in high quality haiku that have value beyond being a "tour-de-force" for the attempted approach. I consider these to be interesting experiments

for alternative approaches to the creation or reception of haiku.

(1) Writer-less haiku. There have been several attempts to develop “random haiku generators” in which a database of phrases and images are randomly combined to generate new haiku. This has been a popular computer programming assignment in universities, resulting in randomly created haiku. Without a writer, these haiku lack the intuitive connections and artistic choice of words expected in haiku. Based on a shallow understanding of the haiku traditions, these random haiku generators create lines of 5-7-5 syllables, but the resulting haiku are nonsensical or chance accidents of enjambment. They lack emotion and connotations usually found in haiku. The role of the reader is to see if any of the random creations “seem to make sense” or appear as if they could have been written by a human. Ultimately, the goal is similar to the “Turing Test” in artificial intelligence—could a human tell which haiku were written by a human or generated by a random computer program? For all of the randomly generated haiku I’ve seen, it is easy to tell that they are not as good as attempts to write haiku by beginners.

(2) Wordless haiku. There have been experimental attempts to write haiku without verbal language including: typewriter art haiku, wordless visual haiku, and the infamous fictional character, the white poet, Shiro, in David Lanoue’s novel *Haiku Guy* [10]. What better way to eliminate the writer’s ego than for a haiku poet to merely think his or her haiku instead of writing them down? Of course, such an egoless poet will never have more than one reader (only the poet will experience his or her own thought haiku). And thinking haiku doesn’t have to be in words. It can be completed in mere “dibbits” of thoughts and images without the need to translate such thoughts into communication conventions. The typewriter art and wordless visual haiku usually employ kireji, the haiku cut, portrayed visually as a juxtaposition of images. In all of these cases, the role of the reader is to puzzle out what the poet might have been thinking or how the visual images interact with each other on the page.

(3) Language-only haiku. With no realistic nor imagined scene, what happens in language-only haiku is an experience of language. The language-only haiku approach attempts to deny the referential nature of language by omitting reality from the communication triangle. Of course it is impossible to eliminate all referential elements in language, unless the writer eliminates all nouns, most verbs and all sensory images from the haiku, so many of the language-only haiku appear to be a mix of images, abstractions, generalizations, adjectives, adverbs and surprising analogies or metaphors. Metaphors and analogies usually include at least implied referential elements, so it is nearly impossible to write a pure language-only haiku. A random accumulation of abstract words or collage of words layered on each other might be the exception. The main goal is to focus on language itself as the primary subject of language-only haiku. The writers enjoy playing with language and finding hidden nuances and new meanings through surprising juxtapositions and unusual enjambments of language. The only thing that is real in language-only haiku is language itself. The role of the reader is to experience the surprising constructs and enter into an exploration of language events. The haiku moment is primarily an experience of language outside the norms and conventions of language usage.

(4) Haiku as merely form. In the haiku community we are all aware of the popular conception of haiku as a closed form in which the defining characteristic is the 5-7-5 syllable count for a three-lined poem. This form-only approach to haiku ignores the various ways that haiku traditions typically define reality, language, and roles of writers and readers. Instead of being informed by the haiku traditions, according to this approach anyone can write a haiku with any possible content as long as the language is organized in three lines with 5-7-5 syllables. The result of this approach is that we see many mainstream poets “dabble” in haiku by writing the same things they always write, but organizing it into three line verses of 5-7-5. We see popular culture topics such as vampires, werewolves and computer jokes “turned into haiku” because they follow this form-only guideline. The writer’s conception of the poet

as “wisdom speaker” is often carried over into this form, resulting in several collections of so-called haiku that convey the writer’s maxims or “philosophical” wisdom statements in verse with 5-7-5 lines. Although these form-only haiku do not usually hold up for repeated reading, the humorous pop-culture form-only haiku can be funny as content the first time they are read.

(5) Writer-only haiku. Not the same as wordless haiku, this approach emphasizes the importance of haiku as a cognitive process in the writer’s head. The writer-only haiku attempts to block readers from participating or interfering with the writer’s cognitive processes. The writer resists or protests social norms and conventions of reading haiku—forcing the readers out of their usual expectations and processes. The writer-only haiku captures the sudden shifts and leaps of consciousness—not as a stream of consciousness but as breaks and disjunctions of thoughts. The goal is for the haiku to capture dream-like movements, surreal shifts, and unusual turns of thought out of the ordinary use of language. The writer-only haiku may be puzzling or disturbing to readers so much so that it could be called the anti-reader approach to haiku. It appears to be a club with NO READERS ALLOWED! Sometimes the goal is to repel or to shock the reader out of their usual social or political or cultural comfort zones. If the goal is to keep readers out of the writer’s head, the result may be similar to the fate of the white poet—the writer will succeed at exploring their cognitive states of being and end up writing primarily only for his or her own head.

(6) Reader-less haiku. See all of the previous five approaches that deliberately attempt to omit one or more of the key elements of the communication triangle.

### **Conclusion – Does Haiku Poetic Theory Matter?**

In the contemporary haiku community, most of us write not by following a theory, but through an intuitive sense of quality and imitation. We write haiku like the ones we’ve enjoyed..



We want readers too, so we submit our work for peer review and publication. We share our haiku in small social groups and enjoy hearing each other read at gatherings of haiku poets. The responses and feedback we receive from our friends, editors and readers help shape our approach to writing haiku. So for the most part, we develop an intuitive “tacit” theory of how to write what we come to view as high quality haiku. As writers we form our own internal monitors and guides to writing haiku.

My goal in writing this essay on various approaches to haiku poetics is to help haiku writers examine their own assumptions — to help writers discover and become more aware of their own tacit theories, therefore making their choices and approaches more explicit. Understanding how our own approaches relate to long-standing traditions provides writers and readers with a vocabulary for discussing this rich variety of approaches. Understanding theories of writing haiku helps us understand and appreciate the rich diversity of haiku traditions and how each approach has its own goals, aims, epistemology, conception of reality, roles for writers and readers, and its own subsequent examples of excellent haiku. Theory helps us value the different approaches enriching the genre, so that we are not narrow in our conceptions of haiku. It should also help the haiku community be less susceptible to pundits who want to proclaim his or her own haiku poetics as the one and only way.

The haiku community has matured beyond the beginner’s need for definitions and “do and don’t” rules. We celebrate the diversity of a global haiku genre that is rich and strong only to the extent that there is a wide range of practice and a surprising freshness of voices and perspectives. We embrace and celebrate: haiku writers who relish dense language and the naming function of words; haiku writers who live in the woods and tap into the biodiversity of ecosystems; haiku writers who protest social injustice and go to jail; haiku writers who resist male ego dominance; haiku writers who meditate and seek a quiet voice within themselves; haiku writers who celebrate being social and the significance of being in community; haiku

writers who are religious within a variety of spiritual traditions; haiku writers who are all about people; haiku writers who write senryu and don't care about the distinction; haiku writers who are international citizens of the world using haiku to bridge cultures; and haiku writers who are so local nobody but friends at the local pub can understand them. This diversity of writers and approaches to haiku is the source of strength, health and rich elasticity found in this thriving literary genre.

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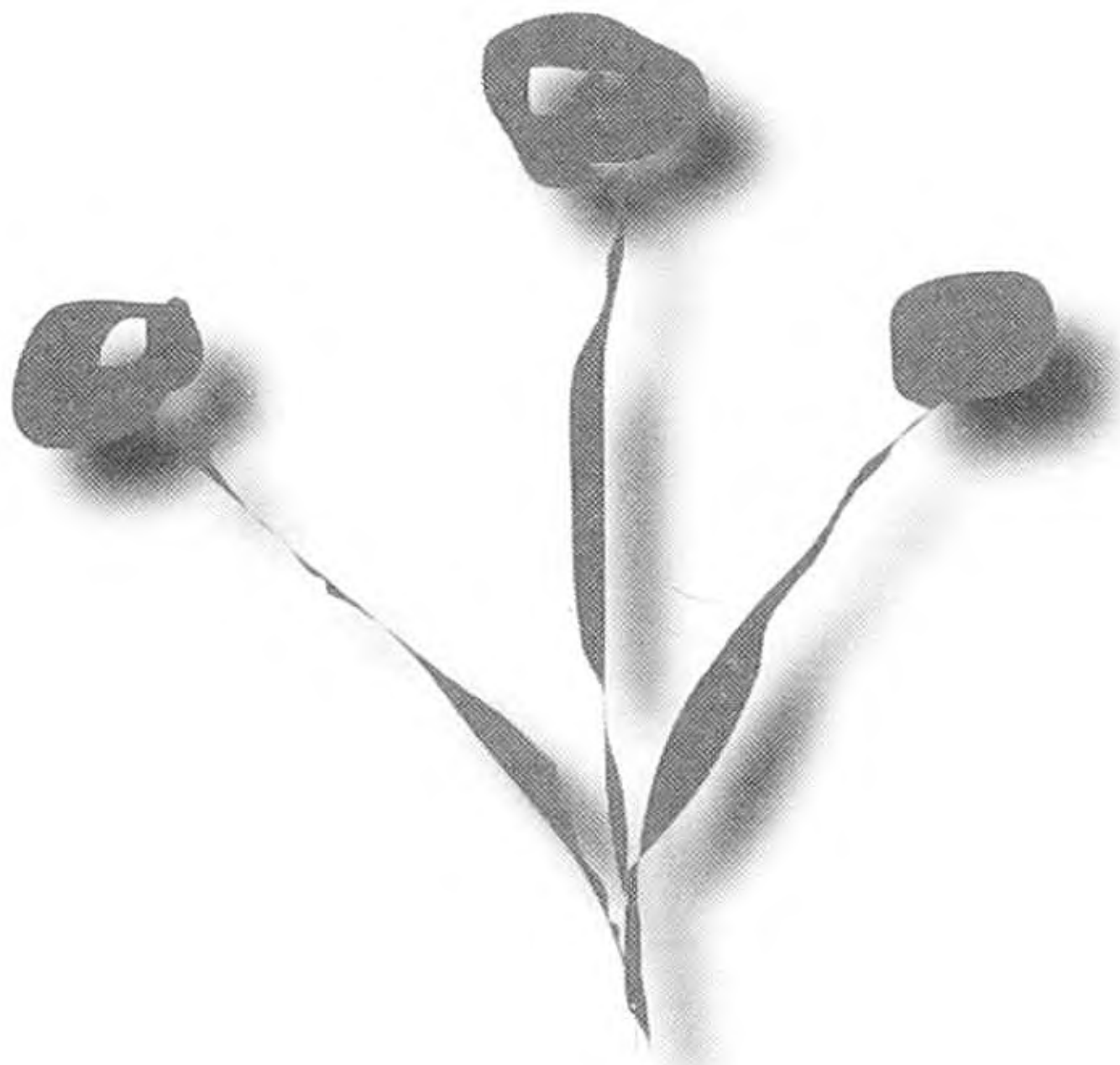
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# Rengay

## A RENGAY SEQUENCE LINKED WITH THEMES OF EARTH, WIND AND FIRE

by

*Ron Moss*, Leslie Vale, Tasmania; *Jennie Townsend*, O'Fallon, Missouri;  
*Ferris Gilli*, Marietta, Georgia

Themes of Earth, Wind, and Fire link the rengay in this sequence. The first, "Deep Inside," reflects how life on earth is essentially grounded, literally, in Mother Earth. In "Jet Stream" living creatures are released, however briefly, from the bonds of earth, and a sub-theme of freedom and free spirits unfolds, along with a sense of "anything is possible." The final one, "Cauldron," brings us back to earth while strengthening the focus on human affairs. Together, the three rengay reflect reverence for the earth and the circle of life. They reconfirm the strength and resilience of the human spirit. (*Ferris Gilli*)

### Deep Inside

mountain mist  
a tip of wild lavender  
touches the earth rm

deep inside a coal mine  
the start of a song fg

piping plovers  
traces of their day  
in the mudflats jt

streetlights turn ochre  
in the dust storm rm

daybreak  
just-dug potatoes  
in a clear glass bowl fg

a vine-covered home  
sinks to the ground jt

### Jet Stream

red oaks  
the dance of two hawks  
crosses the sky jt

the toy plane released  
with a jet stream of glee rm

day moon  
a flying dragon  
glides away fg

all sooty and drunk  
sparks around the bonfire jt

a para-sailor  
lets go of his tow rope  
splitting the sunset rm

spiderling gossamer  
adrift through the town fg

### Cauldron

midnight  
the cozy scent  
of an oil lantern fg

tiny witches cackle and stir  
the school play cauldron rm

blind date  
with a smile he offers  
charred burgers jt

the glowing tip  
of a shared cigarette fg

rolling thunder  
flames from a 57' Chevy  
racing in the canyon rm

the grit, these ashes  
I hold so dear jt



## The J Street Underpass

by

**Cherie Hunter Day**, Cupertino, California  
*Carolyn Hall* San Francisco, California

downtown traffic  
the bloom of umbrellas  
as rain begins

*mushrooms through pavement cracks  
poisonous or not*

corner boyz  
hands in their pockets  
hoodies pulled tight

*faded awnings  
shroud doorways—  
a shadow stirs*

the latest tagging  
on the J Street underpass

*a pile-up of leaf boats  
beneath the moon bridge  
starless night*



# The Lodgepole's Deep Scar

by

**Billie Wilson**, Juneau, Alaska  
*Carolyn Hall*, San Francisco, California

haze from distant fires  
deer feed  
in the willow grove

*wind in the canopy  
a sapsucker taps the oak*

rabbits nest  
under sheltering pines  
the slow drip of rain

*a chrysalis  
in the lodgepole's deep scar  
last rays of sunlight*

starless sky  
an owl flaps over clearcut

*from the woods  
a muffled cry  
pale dawn*





## Wee Hours\*

by

**Roberta Beary**, Bethesda, Maryland  
*Ebba Story*, San Francisco, California

2 a.m.  
purple ink stains  
my left hand

*in the wee hours  
that forgotten phrase creeps in*

midnight oil  
a notebook slides off  
the blue couch

*eyelids drooping  
she re-revises  
tomorrow's speech*

after the book-light  
random raindrops

*pale dawn  
the fountain pen  
capped*

\*Ebba Story's links were recited at the 2010 Two Autumns Reading of the Haiku Poets of Northern California and a copy given out to attendees.

## On the Move

by

**Francine Banwarth**, Dubuque, Iowa

*Mike Montreuil*, Gloucester, Ontario

waking up cold—  
night wind  
through the pines

*the cats huddled  
against my legs*

the acrobat falling  
from the tightrope  
lands on her feet

*defying his age  
the gray-haired rocker  
struts his stuff*

river ice thinning—  
wild geese on the move

*in my hand  
the weight  
of her wedding ring*



# Renku

## OVID'S METAMORPHOSES

by

*Karen Klein*, Cambridge, Massachusetts

*Judson Evans*, Holbrook, Massachusetts

*Raffael de Gruttola*, Natick, Massachusetts

### Part 1

1. Cancer wheels to Leo  
far below the stars  
scuttling blue crabs kk
2. oil plumes  
no burrow deep enough je
3. pelicans in the marsh  
their dance of death  
shakes the wind rdg
4. warming Zephyrs  
bring no relief kk
5. becalmed pleasure craft  
pirate radio  
playing reggaeton je
6. spy swap in the comic strip  
marijuana legalized rdg
7. betraying Mercury  
means you get  
stoned kk
8. only the bloodied head  
Shabab je

9. driven mad  
by the Furies  
disowned by his parents rdg
10. rocking her baby  
ancient lullaby kk
11. the waterfall weeps  
down seven steps je
12. Aurora rises from her couch  
the session's over rdg

## Part 2

13. sweeping the cobwebs  
many arachnids  
in the gut-rehab kk
14. now a text message  
who once was a girl je
15. loosestrife  
the judge gives breath  
to the Constitution rdg
16. low pressure  
oxygen masks drop kk
17. high octane  
NASCAR dad  
hands Phaeton the keys je
18. guest in my house  
"you're nothing but a wolf" rdg
19. mortals  
competing with a god  
zero sum-game kk

- |     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 20. | bark across the lips<br>raw with insult                                     | je  |
| 21. | reliving his youth<br>Jet Blue attendant<br>slides to infamy                | rdg |
| 22. | no ladies at her wedding<br>pomegranate seeds                               | kk  |
| 23. | cornering the market<br>on genetically modified grain<br>the starving world | je  |
| 24. | carnival, the unicyclist<br>on the dodgems                                  | rdg |

### Part 3

- |     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 25. | Rio<br>Orpheus still searches<br>for Eurydice                    | kk  |
| 26. | sound sculpture<br>tuning the underpass                          | je  |
| 27. | <i>Ars Amatoria</i><br>escaping on Roman roads<br>poet from Suma | rdg |
| 28. | amateur night<br>meter all wrong                                 | kk  |
| 29. | so new to flight<br>the swallow<br>circles                       | je  |
| 30. | space station<br>astronaut repairs the Hubble                    | rdg |

31. Perseid shower  
stars remember  
Andromeda kk
32. washing vomit  
off the cruise ship je
33. fool's gold  
no relief  
from the Macondo Oil Well rdg
34. Danae got a surprise  
sex as money kk
35. inside the gift wrap  
dripping  
honeycomb je
36. following the sun  
bees return to the hive rdg



**Sacred May**  
A Kasen Renku

by

*Christopher Herold* (c), Port Townsend, Washington

*Hortensia Anderson* (h), New York City, New York

*Eiko Yachimoto* (e), Yokosuka City, Japan

*Karma Tenzing Wangchuk* (t), Port Townsend, Washington

A Note From *Eiko Yachimoto*

Last spring Hortensia Anderson invited me to write with her. I accepted and proposed to invite two more poets I had never collaborated with: Christopher Herold and Karma Tenzing Wangchuck. Except for Tenzing, three of us had the experience of being a judge of an HSA Einbond Renku Contest, though each in a different year. I hoped we could clarify each other's renku-related questions as we composed together. And Tenzing has been a good friend of mine for many years even though we have never met in person. I always wanted to write a renku with him someday.

For that matter I have never met anyone in person and I cannot believe it. I know renku has got a mysterious power of fostering a personal bond among participants, but this session by e-mail exchange went exceptionally well: we had a wonderful time all through the long session feeling comfortable in receiving advice, critique and help while respecting each other's sabakiship.

Alas, I never raised the questions I wanted to ask during the session, which must be a proof that I was using my right brain, and my left brain for logical analysis was turned off all the while! (I have forgotten what my questions were.)

*Editors' Note: Traditionally, a kasen renku uses two sheets of paper, each of which has a total of eighteen poems on its front and back sides (Miner, E. Japanese Linked Poetry. Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 132). To follow this convention, the typeface on the next two pages had to be reduced. We also did this for a renku by Eiko Yachimoto and John E. Carley in a 2010 issue of Frogpond (Volume 33:1).*

*First sheet, front: sabaki, c*

1. sacred May  
blue of borage blooms  
ready in my palette e
2. how soft the edge  
between cumulus and sky h
3. a mother sings  
"Row, Row, Row Your Boat"  
to her newborn t
4. among the relatives  
one is a rich man e
5. harvest moonrise  
begins as a fan of light  
spreading in the east c
6. scarecrow's face  
seems to glow with pride t

*First sheet, back: sabaki, h*

7. today's newspaper  
and grass seed sparrows  
loudly twittering e
8. everyone in the whole school  
now knows Jenny kissed me c
9. cornered to confess...  
his poem in chest pocket  
about to explode e
10. we recommend Remington  
for a shotgun wedding h
11. thick gobs of crude  
lap against the pilings  
of the shrimper's deck t
12. a bit too much horseradish  
in the cocktail sauce c
13. taking the dare,  
she skis down the slope  
naked in moonlight t
14. snuggled by the fireplace  
they read a friend's diary c
15. the first sonograms  
with the dates engraved  
on sterling frames h
16. your breath will clean away  
all fingerprints e
17. fallen plum petals  
so soon translucent  
in the rain c
18. spring haze damps the sound  
of cars at rush-hour t



*Second sheet, front: sabaki, e*

19. through each conch shell  
the ocean's voice has  
a different echo h
20. climbing down the spiral stairs  
the observatory chief e
21. a special diet  
planned also for his bulldog  
with high cholesterol t
22. the third can of Drano  
for our clogged economy c
23. carried by cicada song  
the scent of earth  
to a trillion stars t
24. smoke drifts from fireworks  
across the vast horizon h
25. heartbeat slowing  
I begin to roam through  
more personal dreams c
26. at the Sorbonne,  
polonium at a petri dish c
27. with platinum rings  
that will remain untarnished  
they exchange vows h
28. the choice of miso  
finally agreed upon e
29. from the moon bridge  
we gaze as our reflections merge  
in the water h
30. the last light of day  
caught in a fallen leaf t

*Second sheet, back: sabaki, t*

31. cheers erupt at  
the cross-country meet's  
photo-finish c
32. in a hidden valley  
tortoises fast asleep e
33. a large round stone  
marks the northern limit  
of her property t
34. iridescent soap bubbles  
float into the neighbour's garden h
35. an old scholar lives  
in the depth of the blossom  
teaching math e
36. with each kick of my legs  
the arc of the swing widens c

# Haiku Sequences

## Salthouse Marsh

by

*John Parsons*, Suffolk, England

this lonely marsh  
    greyness envelopes  
        the plover's cry

board crossing  
    dark creek waters reflect  
        each careful step

shingle banks fade  
    sea blurs to sky  
        gull's measured flight

still brown swell  
    mist deadened  
        fog horn's muffled boom

stone's fall   obscured  
    slow sweep of wave's  
        slight sound

thick creek mud  
wreck's soft black ribs enfold  
    dark bladder wrack

tidespread stains tips  
    of dried sea purslane  
        picked exoskeletal remains

mute sounds   salt scum  
    percolates   tide returns  
        to cross liminal ground

we walk the dyke  
    path fused with sky  
        in isolation

## Castaway

by

*Fay Aoyagi*, San Francisco, California

why my motherland?  
I break the stem  
of a tulip

empty shelves  
in my hometown  
dandelion puffs

white camellias  
in bud  
a list of disaster victims

spring mist  
this luxury  
of morning coffee

snake out of a hole  
this year's sky  
lower than usual

cherry petals  
no Japanese coins  
in the pond today

misty moon  
I become  
a castaway

Daylight Savings  
I move the clock ahead  
to a day without quakes

**Jazz to Reset the Heart: a haiku string**

by

*Marian Olson*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

each note  
discovers more bone  
Parker at Birdland

*Dizzy all Night in Tunisia*

the tide comes in  
the tide goes out  
a day with Jobim

shattering stars Trane's gold horn tips up

the sandman  
jumpy with java  
Mose at the keyboard

*Blame It on My Youth*  
Levant's before Jarrett  
claimed it

Sassy's clown at last on the ground

without effort  
sun splitting pines  
Gillespie's chops

## In Pieces

by

*Susan Antolin*, Walnut Creek, California

New Year's Eve—  
staying resolutely  
one drink ahead

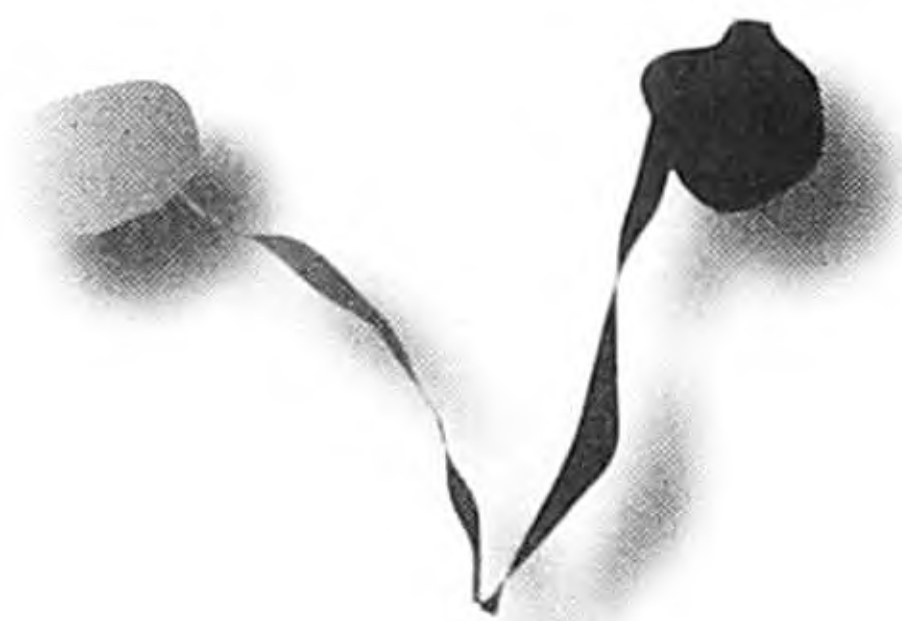
remnants of snow—  
that childhood dream  
of writing a novel

tangerines  
on the out-of-reach branches—  
late winter twilight

slipping on a rock  
I step into the stream—  
rushing wind

no full-length mirror—  
I view myself  
in pieces

to whom do I tell  
the unabridged version?  
spring longing



## Notes from a Disaster, Mar. 18, 2011

by *Michael Fessler*, Kanagava, Japan

George,

Just wanted to get back to you with an update, though my initial brief message ("Very spooky. Everything unstable.") still very much applies.

The endless aftershocks are hard, if not impossible, to adjust to. They have a cumulative, traumatic effect as well. Again and again, you replay the events in your mind: awakened by a tremor, you rush to the door, you ride out the shaking and shifting, you're exhausted and drained. The steps are seared into your consciousness.

In other cases you're not imagining it at all: you're actually going through the drill again, holding on for dear life during the latest aftershock.

Make no mistake: the Tokyo area (so far) is not at all the watery shaky nuclear hell of Sendai. Here it's power triage, occasional empty shelves at convenience stores, and minor modifications. But the event is always on your mind.

Sleeping is difficult for many people (including myself). You can't get settled, you're jumpy, you can't really rest. There's no down time.

Everything is changed. It's always stressful. Do you stay in your house or apartment (and get crushed) or go out (it's cold—or get contaminated—is the air contaminated?). Probably stay inside. For one thing, Japanese houses are built to be flexible like bamboo rather than sturdy as an oak—they take the punishment better, but because of that you feel the impact more and your natural reaction is to run out to open ground.

You become impatient. You make little mistakes. I scalded my hand today. Found myself pouring boiling water not into the soup, but over my skin. What was I thinking of? The tremors, the aftershocks, radiation, of course.

Is there a haiku dimension to it? You jot down little things, proto-haiku, lines, passing thoughts, dark humor, maybe some real haiku. Haiku on the run.

sleep fully dressed  
with my hat on  
socks, aftershocks

feet on the ground what ground

here I stand but can't

stand firm but how

no peace no calm  
I exhaust myself  
in order to sleep

thoughts of better times

Thanks for inquiring.

Mike



## To Taste The Ocean

by *Margaret Chula*, Portland, Oregon

is like tasting your own skin  
after sweat, after sex, after  
surviving the tsunami. The roar  
and rip and rumble of water  
as you race to higher ground.  
Watch as it swallows everything,  
then spews it out with its salty breath.

missing you  
this morning snowflakes  
in my empty cup



## current

by *Curtis Dunlap*, Mayodan, North Carolina

this lull of water; the underlying need to sit by an ocean or a  
lake; the music one finds in a mountain stream; streams becom-  
ing rivers like veins of life giving blood; the fact that our world  
and our bodies are mostly water...

in her absence  
raindrops swelling  
on bare branches



## Flight 519, Westbound in Midsummer

by *Patrick Pilarski*, Edmonton, Alberta

earth-shot in the glow: the canadian shield with its pock-marked teenage face sliding gently into wrinkles and the fingered shore of lake winnipeg. this is beyond bird's eye, the planet's principled curve lucid in cloud banks like pack ice or a sphere of brushed glass. placeless. through the dispassionate gape of estuaries and pine-frosted bedrock: breastplate, the vivisected heart of the prairies. an inverted museum specimen, where curator labels point inward, self becoming category, a small point looking up from the terrarium floor.

insects in the dwindled light of willows leaving it all behind

## Thin Mountain Air

by *Glenn Coats*, Prospect, Virginia

A few days after Christmas, thin ice forms across the marshes. Small deer dot the pastures along with clumps of snow. There is little traffic on the highway.

I follow behind a gray truck which is pulling a trailer. A make-shift pen rocks on top of it. The pen is wrapped in sheets of blue plastic. The sheets are torn and snapping in and out of the bars like curtains through an open window. Two calves huddle near the front. They are brown like rich earth. I pull off to find gasoline.

Miles later, I see the trailer off on a shoulder. A man and a woman are gathering shreds of plastic like streamers after a party. There is one sheet left and the calves are up against it, facing each other—muzzle to muzzle. Steam clouds the blue as they breathe the cold air in and out. Hills to the west are long and covered with snow, no end in sight, all that matters in their eyes.

old mountains  
the time it takes water  
to smooth wood

## Child Mind

by *Helen Ruggieri*, Olean, New York

I was teaching a poetry workshop on haiku in an elementary school and it was that awkward time of year here – not winter and not spring. It was gray and dun and mud was everywhere and then it snows just to let you know there is still power in the winds that blow across the Great Lake. Briefly that covering hid the accumulated litter and dead grasses and the world was all white again.

I usually start out by asking students what they'd seen on the way to school. Some claim they haven't seen anything. Others start yelling out names of friends and finally someone will say I saw black and white cows in a white field or I saw a yellow bus come down the road. Ok, now we're getting it. And I could paint the scenes they describe (after I nag them about adjectives, of course).

In the lower grades I usually have them try haiku because at this age the physical act of making the letters is difficult and sometimes they're just learning cursive. With a haiku we can finish at least one poem in the time allotted.

So they write down what they saw on the way to school this morning, and then we'll see what we have. And from these observations, we make our poems. Suddenly what they see, the usual, becomes interesting, and sometimes it assumes meaning. And what they themselves have seen becomes important. Aha. That little jolt of pleasure when realization snaps across a synapse.

In one third grade classroom a little girl wrote about the yellow hole in the snow her dog made. Issa, a famous 18th century Japanese haiku poet, had already written one pretty much like that:

by the gate  
a neat yellow hole  
in the snow

I smiled. Child's mind. Not plagiarism, but a great observation, seen again. The way a child's mind is not hampered by knowing the rules, the way a child thinks along a different plane, not in our box.

Please read it again, I asked. If you've ever been in a third grade classroom you know they don't listen to each other, but listening to it this time the class laughed. That's the aha, here, I think to myself. Their teacher tells them to stop it and settle down.

After class the teacher said in a pleasantly accusatory way, "You didn't make them count syllables."

"No," I agreed.

"I make them," she said challenging my weakness.

"Idea first, then form," I suggested, but she wasn't convinced. Today's small joy in creating something would be buried under a pile of syllables. And I went off and left that little girl with her.



## East Shore

by *Stephen Carter*, Tuscon, Arizona

No, the moon that astronauts played golf on isn't the same moon hiding behind clouds in haiku or haibun poetry. And yet (as the Buddhists say), the tiger seeks to persist as the tiger. But which animal are we talking about—the tiger in the jungle or the tiger in a poem? Which moon?

... And which you, sitting next to me on the beach, thumbing a smooth green stone?

mottled moon

not a word

ripples fading

## The Zen of Braiding

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

My hair has grown long enough to form a single braid extending down my back. A braid I cannot make satisfactorily. The finished product swings to the right or to the left. I feel unbalanced, lopsided.

“Don't talk.” My husband, standing behind me, gathers my hair in his hands. His expression seen in the mirror is neutral, as if his thoughts are elsewhere.

Divide the hair into three equal shanks. Right shank over the center. Pull taut. Left shank over the center. Pull taut. Repeat to the end. Secure with a rubber band.

He steps back and admires his work. I turn around and look with a hand mirror. I, too, admire his work. Neat, tight and centered.

“The secret,” he says, “is not to think about it.” To have a blank mind.”

spring dusk  
pulling in the silence  
of a white lily

## Will the Lotus bloom?

by *Sonam Chhoki*, Thimphu, Bhutan

*starting ... stopping ... starting... young bulbul's song*

The monk unrolls his yak wool mat, sits cross-legged and focuses on the altar. In a corner above the ushnisha<sup>1</sup> of the Earth-touching Buddha, empty cobwebs laced with soot and dust wobble like spectral bellies.

He closes his eyes and murmurs:

TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA<sup>2</sup>

Plaintive buzz of mosquitoes grows steadily. He rustles his prayer beads. A loud flutter, a shadow whizzes close past his face towards the butter lamps. Smell of singed wings. A thud. Something lands on the lap of the Buddha. He closes his eyes again, intones:

TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA

meatless month<sup>3</sup>—  
the butcher too lights  
butter lamps

### Notes

Dochula Pass—The National Highway connecting western and eastern valleys pass through this mountain pass. It is a pilgrimage centre where we offer prayer flags. In 2004 108 new stupas were added to the ancient stupa that commemorates this sacred site.

1. Ushnisha : It is a topknot on the Buddha's head. It symbolizes his spiritual attainment.

2. TAYATA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA : Mantra of the Earth-touching Buddha.

3. Meatless month: The sale and consumption of meat is banned in Bhutan during the sacred 1st and 4th months of the Bhutanese lunar calendar and other sacred occasions like the Descending Day of the Buddha, the 8th, 15th and 30th of every month.

## The Big Picture

by *John Stevenson*, Nassau, New York

I often have the same thoughts when I see a photograph of some world event from the nineteen fifties or sixties; the Beatles at their first US press conference, a monk burning himself in protest. I imagine that the photograph has not only frozen the moment of time visible to the camera but also the entire world of moments around it. And I'm aware that somewhere to the left, or right, or behind the photographer's back, a young version of myself is doing something in the world. For those photos taken after nineteen fifty-nine, the woman who would later be revealed to me as my life mate is also somewhere, doing something in the same instant.

dark outside  
the sound of thawing  
goes on

## Sceptred Isles

by *Diana Webb*, Leatherhead, England

The bus stop by the roundabout stands out against the dusk as my mother tells me on the way home from school, "The king is dead." A few months on, a gilded model of the coronation coach, complete with footmen dressed in red and six white horses, nestles in the pile of our front room carpet. I learn new words; "anoint" and "orb". Now, on the far side of the Thames, late on a bleak afternoon, I'm waiting for the 465 from Kingston. Ignored by shoppers with bulging bags from Primark, I focus on a stone. Surfaced with lichen, it stands on a plinth, encircled by sharp iron railings. Giving this place a name, it was used in the throning of seven Saxon monarchs.

perched starling—  
all the jewels  
in St. Edward's crown

## **dreaming the book**

by *Clare McCotter*, Kilrea, Northern Ireland

the room's heart dark-seasoned under a star struck cupola re-  
fracting the hunter and his dogs—glass censer dispensing si-  
lent benediction: first snow sky's augur of forgiveness falling  
whiter than ever before through it I approach a desk of turkish  
oak where his hands offer a manuscript of sixteenth century  
verse all unread all miraculous in cerulean and gold

dust motes  
in a lexicon of light  
the library's faded colours



## **Lecturer**

by *Owen Bullock*, Tauranga, New Zealand

He wants you to know that he knows, gives a plethora of ref-  
erences to books you will never read. No matter how he uses  
language, he can't edit his facial expressions and freudian  
slips.

Back at the flat, a student is listening to Pink Floyd.

incense smoke  
nothing but  
what it is

## The Psycho Therapist

by *Renée Owen*, Sebastopol, California

A tea kettle blares its harmonic whistle, a sound obnoxious as a scream. Still unable to shed the remnants of last night's sessions, I pace the cold kitchen in my nightshirt, unkempt hair hanging lank across my slack jaw. Their sobbing and gulping for air, their plaintive despair, that things will never, ever be different. The curtain of dark thoughts, no glimmer that something some day might change. For it always does, or does it?

grey morning  
ice on the birdbath  
too brittle to break



## Nightmare

by *Bob Lucky*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I go into the kitchen and turn on the light. My boss is drinking passion fruit juice straight from the carton. He looks at me and gives a shrug.

coffee break  
the bitterness of contract  
negotiations

When I recount my dream, my boss shrugs and says, "I hope I was wearing something."



## Andy used to say

by *Mark Harris*, Princeton, New Jersey

if he ever became old and feeble we should carry him into the hills and abandon him to the weather or any beast able to take him. We dismissed the notion, but lately I've been dwelling on his request. Last night I went to a bar, drank more than I should, and stumbled out the door. A figure stood in the alley wearing a Halloween mask. The sagging plastic revealed nothing. I tried to peer through the eyeholes, gathered my wits, and left the man or woman alone.

laughter  
a match clouds a bottle  
goes out



## Winter's Dawn

by *Marjorie Buettner*, Chisago City, Minnesota

Getting up early on my day off for just one chance to be alone — that rare commodity with three daughters and a husband. I take a walk to find snow frozen into that crunch of sound and a bitter cold. No animal tracks here, no stars to speak of, but a dark layer of clouds trapping the cold to the earth. Suddenly I remember my dream: In the middle of the night at my childhood home the back door is wide open; someone has left it unlocked, and there is this sucking sound as if it were a black hole in space vacuuming up everything in its path.

empty house —  
the dark of winter's dawn  
flooding in

## Fever Dream

by *Charles Trumbull*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

I can't seem to get anything done. I do it once then everything shifts around and I have to do it all over again. Or someone moves all the pieces and messes up what I have just finished. It's never quite right. On and on it goes till I wake to the ticking of a clock ...

along a string of barbed wire ... dewdrops

## Under the Gaze of Time

by *Chen-ou Liu*, Ajax, Ontario

New Year's Eve  
the waning crescent and I  
left alone

I have spent the day doing the shopping, making meals, cleaning, reading, and writing up to this moment. While going about the daily routine, days can slip away. That is the true king of terrors. With the end of the year in sight, I try to make sense of what I was, and of who I am now.

As I reflect on the past year, it seems I've achieved little beyond existing and I've charged through life in a kind of panic. Yet I'm haunted, still, by the conviction that everything is either preordained or accidental.

first dawn  
singing *Let It Be*  
to the attic wall

I walk  
down the yellow brick road  
morning mist ahead

## Paths

by *Deb Baker*, Concord, New Hampshire

The idea of a road less traveled, or on the other hand, even one that's well worn, appeals on days when it's all laundry piles and toilets that won't stop running and checking punctuation and eggs for dinner. When I think my life's statistically half over, and my children will go out into their futures soon, and here I am . . . my path is through these pages, I hope. Though I wouldn't say no to a fork in the woods.

strong wind  
the clock turns over  
a new day



## philantha

by *Roberta Beary*, Bethesda, Maryland

we never had a child together. we used to talk about it some-  
times. when it was still a possibility. what color hair, whose  
eyes, that kind of thing. we never got as far as names.

home again  
driveway daffodils  
come and gone

## reckoning

by *Susan Nelson Myers*, Mayodan, North Carolina

late winter empty nest and i don't know how many more times  
i can bear noticing when the heating system kicks on or how  
long it takes to accumulate a washer full of dirty laundry or  
how difficult it is to cook in proportions not resulting in a week  
of leftovers. but mostly i wonder if they enjoy their lives as  
much as i prayed they would and laugh with their lovers at odd  
hours and still make it to work on time and dream big enough  
and work hard enough to smile for really good reasons and take  
time to be thankful for them. and i want to know how many  
more days it will be before i can open my house's windows to  
spring breezes and warm winds and birdsong and take a really  
long deep breath

swell's cusp –  
standing on top  
of rain



## Just Yesterday

by *David Gershator*, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

Another birthday for Methuselah. How did this happen? Used  
to have sophomore moments, now it's senior moments, and  
just yesterday I graduated summa cum nada. More and more  
blank blankety blank blankout moments. But then I've never  
been good at remembering names. It's embarrassing, a serious  
flaw. I'll need a hundred years more to correct it. My lifelong  
partner seriously doubts I'll have that option....

found by her tongue  
the word lost  
on the tip of my tongue

## What a Wild Weekend Now Means

by *Bob Lucky*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Exercise is too grand a word for this stroll we take around the school's track. Hawks circle overhead, dozens of them, and higher up I spot an eagle, its white breast an occasional glint in the fading light. The moon hangs like a medallion above an acacia tree. We've lost count of the laps.

shadows merge  
the grunt of mating  
tortoises



## Gardening in Santa Fe

by *Marian Olson*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Elsbeth, a neighbor in our compound off old Taos Highway lived alone with her treasures. She was lean as a grasshopper with huge blue eyes, a tough woman weathered by desert suns and rich experiences. She had been a rancher in Taos, an ambassador's wife in Spain, and a friend of Bing Crosby, who shared his box seat at the races at the Caliente Race Track in Southern California.

During that first spring and summer, she almost always appeared whenever I worked on the flower beds around our rented casita in the compound, making sure I didn't waste water in this land where drought was real. While keeping an eye on me, she would stand there chatting, the blast of water from her hose splattering dirt on the faces of daisies and the adobe wall of her casa. And so the summer days passed.

snow forecast  
Elsbeth brings in pots  
of fake geraniums

## Raisin Cake

by *Rich Youmans*, North Falmouth, Massachusetts

“Eat,” I tell him. My father and I are sitting at his kitchen table. Before each of us is a slab of pound cake, rich with golden raisins. Usually it is my father’s favorite, but he does not eat, nor does he talk. Instead he looks out the window into the overcast sky. He looks at his cake, centered on a white plate. He looks into the kitchen’s corners, into space. He looks everywhere but at me. Only the rattle of my mother’s breathing interrupts the quiet. She is in the dining room, which is now empty save for her hospital bed, her commode, and the crystal chandelier my father bought for her when they were newlyweds, forty years ago.

hospice      marking her days bone by bone

My father picks up his cake. He turns it around as if counting the raisins, then puts it back down. He folds together his large hands—his fingers thick as hoses, hardened from years of wrestling with axles and engine blocks—and returns to staring out the window. He sits that way for a while, in his pine chair at the head of the table. Throughout my growing up, he always sat in that same chair, presiding over our meals. Summer Saturday suppers were my favorite: My mother would bring over dishes and bowls brimming with cold chicken breasts, salad tossed with tomatoes and asparagus, a loaf of French bread as large as my arm. My father would serve, piling our plates to near-overflowing, tearing apart the loaf and handing out fist-sized chunks. We devoured all of it.

small fingers find a wishbone      blue sky

“Eat,” I tell him again. I push his plate a bit closer to his stomach, as if that will make a difference. But he just stares into the gray day. My own piece of cake is long gone; stress only strengthens my hunger. The rattle in my mother’s throat is getting worse—the hospice nurse says it should be only a few days now. I’m about to get up and cut another slice when my father’s hands release themselves. He picks up his cake, breaks it in two, and places one half on my plate. For the first time that day he looks squarely into my face. “Eat,” he says. I stare down at the slice of cake. Its golden raisins gleam like suns.

## loose ends

by *Susan Nelson Myers*, Mayodan, North Carolina

the things you left in your sewing basket...all that was kept for "just in case." a button so generic it could be sewn on any shirt needing one. a softly worn leather thimble. your cloth tape measure and a nub of tailor's chalk. and then spools upon spools of thread organized into neat rows, color spectrum considered...ivories give way to pinks which eventually bleed into reds...you expected to be back.

meticulously organized disarray

one a.m. The Call. having to tell our parents. i couldn't even come to see you one more time. the doctor's untrained response to my saying "no, ship him home." the necessary unraveling. having to start anew.

and all these spools of thread. couldn't you have left one end loose?

autumn's palette—  
a flash  
of crow's wing blue



## I Never Knew

by *Bruce Ross*, Bangor, Maine

We are in an old graveyard in St. John following up unresolved references in our dead father's autobiography. We find the family name in a cluster of plots. My youngest brother works out the dates and we stand before our grandfather's brother's grave:

buried in the grass  
the headstone of a relative  
I never knew

A meditative cast in this isolated place where people do not often visit from the looks of it. Yet the isolation from someone I could have called close has me wander around the other names in the wild grass. I am stilled by those now gone as we shall all be sooner or later. Even worse for another once long ago:

old headstones  
flat in the earth  
MOTHER FATHER





## Research Note

### Revising Haiku: A Case Study

by *Charles Trumbull*, Santa Fe, New Mexico

This past winter, while I was working in the papers of Elizabeth Searle Lamb, I came across a yellowed newspaper clipping {Karen Peterson. "Spider Fears Spin Web of Phone Calls," *Albuquerque Journal* (North Edition), Oct. 3, 1992, 1 and 3.} that described the alarm of the population of Santa Fe, N.M., about an infestation of spiders whose webs seemed to be springing up everywhere. The article explained that these were a nonpoisonous, beneficial species called clown or cat-faced spiders, a type of orb-weaver. Their appearance in profusion was linked to an abundance of insects—spider food—caused by an unusually wet winter and spring.

One evening at this same time, Elizabeth Lamb's neighbor's cat went AWOL. Lamb took up a flashlight and joined in the nighttime cat-hunt. This was a situation replete with haiku possibilities, and Lamb, one of the founders of American haiku and thirty-year veteran haikuist at the time, did not pass up the opportunity. She quickly jotted down some notes about the strange apparition of the night trees covered in spider webs. Her compositional technique was always to capture ideas quickly and play with them until a haiku finally could be teased out. Thanks to her careful record keeping and preservation of her work, it is possible to reconstruct her compositional choices and revision of a single haiku. In this case we have the newspaper article, excerpts from the rejection letter of a journal editor, and the recollections of Lamb's daughter and son-in-law {Thanks to Carolyn Lamb and Steve Reed.} to help fill out the story.

Lamb's first notation was this:

a dark night  
a sudden flash shows a tree  
filled orb weavers webs

This proto-haiku was scribbled on a 4" x 6" sheet of paper and hand-dated 10.3.92—the same date as the newspaper article. (The word “with” and the apostrophe after “weavers” in line three are missing in the original.) It seems likely that reading the newspaper reporter’s explanation for the surprising appearance of spider webs throughout the area catalyzed the idea for a haiku in Lamb’s mind. This is not a full-blown haiku but rather a sketch of the poet’s observations. For example, “dark night” and “flash” need not both appear in the haiku, and the nature of the flash here is too ambiguous: a flashlight? a passing car? lightning?

On the same sheet of paper, typewritten, these variants appear:

the flashlight catches  
a hundred orb-weavers  
in this one tree

the whole tree  
festooned with intricate webs

this whole tree  
filled with orb weavers—  
webs catching moonlight

Here we see more details of Lamb’s observations being introduced: now we know it was a flashlight that caused the light—though the more romantic notion of “moonlight” is also being considered—and we begin to get the idea that there was an unusual number of spider webs in this one tree. The first version is not entirely accurate in that the poet could not have seen the spiders themselves—certainly not clearly enough to provide us with a count of them! This is poetic license (how much of that do we want to allow in our haiku?). Lamb noodles with some more fancy poetical language in the second variant, “festooned” and “intricate.” Neither of these words seems apt for the haiku moment, however, and they are quickly discarded. After “moonlight” in the third of these variations Lamb added in longhand “the moon.” The subsequent version, typed on a clean half-sheet of paper, incorporates that amendment:

this whole tree  
filled with orb weavers—  
webs catching the moon

This abandons the magical imagery of “moonlight” in favor of the more concrete “moon,” but in the process introduces the poetical conceit of the moon becoming entangled in spider webs and even suggests that the spider herself caught the moon. The new half-sheet of paper also contains Lamb’s name and address and is presented in the format she usually used for submissions to journals. There is no indication, however, where, if anywhere, she sent this version.

Also in the stapled sheaf of papers relating to this haiku are two 2” x 3” sheets of notebook paper, decorated with butterflies, that contain four additional versions. A new element—the lost cat—is introduced. This draft appears on one sheet:

the flashlight beam!  
apple tree netted with web  
but no lost cat

and these three, under a title, on the other:

hunting the cat

my flashlight beam  
spotlights a tree-ful of webs  
but no cat

orb weavers  
have webbed the apple tree

the old apple tree  
webbed by orb-weavers  
and morning mist

This suggests a completely different haiku from the one Lamb was working on earlier—was this her intention? The first line in the first of these version is a little lame, especially with the exclamation point, and there seems to be a misleading sug-

gestion that the webs appeared where the cat was expected to be. The second version is weakened by the sequence of redundant words “flashlight beam spotlights,” while “tree-ful” seems similarly contrived. It is hard to determine what the sequence of these tries might have been. The fourth of these drafts is marked with a handwritten bracket, as if it had been selected by the poet for further development.

All of the above work on this text took place over about one month. The following is the version that Lamb sent to *Modern Haiku*, together with other submissions, some time in early November 1992:

    this whole tree  
    filled with orb-weavers —  
    webs catching the moon

Editor Robert Spiess accepted one other of Lamb’s submissions and wrote back to her on November 17 the following about the orb-weaver haiku:

I like the concept of “this whole tree” but feel that it could be a bit more evocative if “tree” were changed from the “generic” to a specific tree—to perhaps make the image a somewhat sharper and clearer one. Also (as I have a bit of antipathy toward the moon being caught by so many things in haiku: trees, branches, nets, clouds, etc.) it might be better to have the webs silvered or reflecting ... or ...

Lamb’s files show the following text, apparently the final revision and clearly responding to Spiess’s suggestions.

    this old apple tree —  
    a hundred orb-weaver spiders  
    their webs in moonlight

I am not sure I would find “this old apple tree”—imaginative but clichéd—to be an improvement, and a construction such as “spiders / their webs” has always seemed to me a weak one for haiku. {I call it the “my brother he” construction in

honor of my fourth-grade teacher who told us that sentences with double subjects, such as “my brother he went to the store,” show poor grammar!} In any event, this haiku is typed on a half-sheet with Lamb’s name and address in the upper-left corner, just as she had done with the earlier formal submission, but this version apparently was never submitted or published. It is interesting to note that by now the syllable count has been padded up to almost the “traditional” haiku form (actually 5–8–5 syllables here) by the inclusion of the unnecessary words “this old,” “spiders,” and “their.” This suggests that Lamb may have been intending to submit it to a non-haiku journal or newspaper, where she often placed her haiku. I have found no evidence that this haiku ever appeared in print.

Charles Trumbull is a haiku poet and historian of haiku, past newsletter editor and president of the Haiku Society of America, editor and publisher of Deep North Press, organizer of Haiku North America 2001 (Chicago) and editor of *Modern Haiku* since 2006.



## More Serious Than I Thought

by *Bob Lucky*, Addiss Ababa, Ethiopia

Recently I moved to Ethiopia. After years of living abroad, mostly in Asia, my wife and I decided it was time to get things together, literally. We had been paying for a storage space near my parents' house in Texas for years. When you start counting the pennies, they become nickels and dimes and quarters and such-like until the sum is in dollars you can't imagine. The new school we were contracted to work at had a generous moving allowance, so we decided it was time to reunite with our belongings.

By most North American standards, I suppose we don't really own much. A variety of musical instruments, some china, two pieces of furniture, a few prized well-seasoned cast-iron skillet, and some art work. We were book-heavy to be sure. We contracted nephews to sell several of our books to local used-book stores and online. Much to our surprise, and our nephews' delight, many of our books and the comics I had saved from my childhood were worth a fortune of sorts. The trick with appraising books, or anything for that matter, is that ultimately the value of anything is only worth what a buyer is willing to pay. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm generated by a windfall is real enough.

Everything else, including a new car bought in Texas, we shipped to Ethiopia in a 20-foot container. The retelling of that tale is a tale to be told after I've calmed down. Suffice it to say, our belongings eventually arrived, not a thing broken. What's interesting is what I discovered upon unpacking – journals, at least nine volumes, though I haven't found them all yet, of haiku.

That's only from my undergraduate years. I know I kept a haiku journal while in high school, and have very strong memories of a Bashō-like journal recounting a trip to Monterrey, Mexico. A lot of cactus, as I recall. At any rate, it appears that while an undergraduate, I kept a haiku journal in which I tried to write at least three haiku a day – morning, noon, and night – coinciding with the three square meals.

The inspiration for this was clearly a copy of *The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse*, a copy of which I bought and inscribed while an exchange student in London in 1977. Although it wasn't my introduction to haiku, that was in 3rd grade, it was certainly the first time I had encountered tanka. I have to say, my discipline was admirable, though I'm ashamed to admit that the quality of what I wrote then was deplorable. If I were to be kind to myself, the best I could say was that it was sophomoric. Although I'm happy to report that back then I apparently knew the difference between haiku and senryu, at least volumes 8 and 9 indicate as much in the titles. I forgot the distinction until about 2005, and then I chose to ignore it for the most part.

When I came across these journals, it took me a while to remember that I had indeed been haiku-inspired in my youth. One of the first poems I published in college, "Three," was haiku-like in more than one way:

on the arm  
of the old chair  
an old arm

However, despite a brief euphoria thinking I could mine this shaft for new material, most of the haiku were absolute crap, if I may be excused the euphemism. Even in volume 9, most of my haiku were sentences broken into three lines, though I think I was beginning to get the juxtaposition of images down and ignoring syllable count. I was still attached to punctuation. Here is one of the better efforts:

family reunion—  
relatives bursting out the  
edges of a photo. (10 August 1980)

I would phrase the lines differently today, maybe, but my vision is there, such as it is.

Another problem is handwriting. Illegibility would appear to be some goal of mine. I combine block letters with cursive in

what over the years has begun to resemble the scribbling of a man dying of thirst in the desert. For a while I thought one haiku was about boys kissing in the bushes, but after some analysis it turns out they were hissing. Surely that was a desk-ku, or they were kissing and I chose to imagine something else.

The last "haiku" from the last volume I've found is

Passing in the sky  
wild geese call; that instant,  
a feel of freedom.

after (but no improvement)—  
Yamaguchi Seishi

On the next page is a note that reads, "I think I'll give haiku a break until I feel like really working at it." It's dated 22 November 1980. It took me a couple of decades to come back to haiku, and I still need to work at it, but somehow I feel that once one hears the call of the wild geese, he can never escape that freedom.

Bob Lucky is a History and English teacher at the International Community School of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. His work has appeared in various international haiku and tanka journals and he is one of the poets featured in *my favorite thing*, the first in a new chapbook/anthology series from bottle rockets press. He's currently working on his MFA in Creative Writing in the University of Texas at El Paso's online program.



## Social Media and the Haiku: Creating Meaning in the Kitchen

by *Dorothy Abram*, Ed.D., Providence, Rhode Island

I enter the class  
All my students bow their heads  
Hands busy texting.

Texting in the classroom is a challenge for both teaching and learning. Recently, poets and scholars have proposed an unexpected confluence of expression between the historical Japanese poetic form of haiku with contemporary social networking, texting, and tweeting.<sup>1</sup> They suggest that haiku with Twitter, Facebook, and other social media are a natural blend of linguistic expression and sources of salience. Similar in brevity with the tweet, haiku, through this perspective, may be a means to reach a depth of meaning in teaching and learning. Even as I write this essay, I am listening to the coup achieved in Tunisia via the means of social networking, texting, and tweeting. What example could speak with greater authority to argue for the ultimate connectivity and potential for liberation through this social medium than this? Still, we must question: Can this form of technological communication also offer us the depth of content that haiku promises?

I began to wonder if the structure of haiku, with its emphasis on insight through poetic juxtaposition, divulges a fundamental contradiction to the medium of texting. In other words, could haiku reveal a basic absence in the presence of social networking? Specifically, social networking functions in the domain of typing, the text, and information; that is, it works in the absence of the sensory clues of human interaction. Without the involvement of the senses—sight, sound, taste, hearing, and touch—in our human communication and expressions, social networks may ultimately deprive us of human engagement, intimacy, and responsibility. Accordingly, the revolution in Tunisia has been expropriated with the names the “Twitter Revolution,” “Internet Revolution,” or “Facebook Revolution” in the West, but the Tunisians themselves name their extraordinary effort to implement democracy in

their nation, “The Tunisian Revolution.”

The haiku, while it also employs text as its medium of communication, aims for a different outcome: not communication or information or networking. Instead, haiku proffers enlightenment and union through reference to sensory experience. Scholars, particularly those writers working in the fields of psychology and sociology, have recognized that social networking is, in itself, a contradiction.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, they identify the concern that this medium serves to alienate its participants rather than forge connections, contradicting our popular understanding of this medium. Certainly, social networking has its important role and place in our lives and in the world, but, have we given it more potency to knit us into community than it deserves? Additionally, we may ask in the classroom, whose purposes does this serve to shape such a population of youth without the complexity, aesthetics, and humanity of interaction through the senses?

Admittedly, not all students come to internet texting with the same background, interests, purposes, or goals. I began to wonder if my Johnson & Wales University culinary students—master texters, social networkers, and tweeters one and all—might have a special entry into this potential world of haiku feeling and expression. Their professional and personal lives revolve around the senses—preparing local and seasonal foods; blending ingredients; differentiating appropriate cooking methods; mastering the subtlety of spices; creating the sensuous scents of soup pots and the beauty of plated desserts; composing the magic of menus, music, and the motion of the meal; establishing serenity in a well-set table; and so much more. With this framework for understanding their senses and sensibilities, could my culinary students have a particular ease and depth of expression in writing haiku? Or, at least, could I identify an untapped source of poetry in their lives?

When I presented this possibility to my classes, I can't claim that the idea for them to write haiku about their culinary experiences evoked cheers; rolled eyes, yes, but certainly not exclamations of joy and anticipation. I decided to reduce

their anxiety by making the challenge short and sweet—an in-class assignment. Some daring students took on the challenge. What follows is a selection of their in-class writings of haiku. I hope you enjoy these haiku that are written by chefs who may someday be cooking for you.

You snap a carrot  
Water droplets flee the scene  
Chills run down the spine.

Time for the harvest  
Bleeding out to quench our thirst  
A full bodied glass.

Lucio Battista, Junior, Nutrition Major, Hopewell Junction, New York

A prickle of heat  
Cayenne awakens the tongue  
In a butter sauce.

Carrie Vail, Junior, Nutrition Major, Sasebo, Japan

Flour and water  
Sticky between my fingers  
Warm and soft center.

Tyler Reinhart, Senior, Nutrition Major, Holland, Massachusetts

Consider your own physical response as you experienced Lucio's crisp break of the carrot and felt the intensity of his poured goblet of red wine. How did you feel after Carrie's comforting application of butter to our shocked taste of a touch of fiery cayenne in the sauce? Tyler recorded the power of transformation of touch as his project of making bread turns from wet and sticky to warm and soft.

Cake made by GrandMa  
Strong and black from rum-soaked fruits  
Taste of Jamaica.

Anrika Colbourne, Junior, Baking & Pastry Major, Kingston, New York

Feel the pleasure and pride of Anrika who writes about her grandmother making traditional Jamaican cakes. She expresses her awe of her grandma (the language of Jamaican Patoise puts the accent on the second syllable: GrandMA), posing a poetic identity between the person and the plate in her suggestion that the words “strong and black” to refer to both.

Whisk against the pan  
Rich pan drippings and fresh stock  
The boat meets the table.

Sarah Baker, Sophomore, Nutrition Major, Elkridge, Maryland

The light glares sharp blade  
My hand is a stranger new  
Food has met its match.

Tauryn Carter, Junior, Nutrition Major, Bowie, Maryland

Hear Sarah’s ping against the pan with her repetition of the “p” sound in the first two lines and the magic of service as the pan pours into the boat to arrive at the table. There is also Tauryn’s first experience of being overwhelmed by the professional kitchen’s glare and demand for performance, and then rising with courage to the occasion.

Close your restless eyes  
Sizzling, chopping, yelling, steam  
Another late night.

Spanakopita  
Succulent and savory  
Simply tastes so good.

Brian Smith, Junior, Nutrition Major, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Lush brownie half-baked  
Luxuriant cookie dough  
Thanks, Ben and Jerry’s!

Samantha Krivorot, Senior, Baking & Pastry/Food Service Management  
Major, Brooklyn, New York

Brian, an aspiring chef, who also is a United States Marine Corps Officer Candidate, describes the late night labors of the food world in one haiku, while playfully using alliteration to describe the pleasures of Greek food in his next haiku. Finally, consider Samantha's prayer of gratitude to Ben and Jerry's for the delicious blessing of their novel ice cream flavor combinations!

Not being a chef myself (but identifying as a serious foodie), I do not possess the intimacy of the kitchen as my students do. I believe, however, that they demonstrate a capacity and capability to reveal that the domain of the physical is a means of achieving perceptions of the emotions and unseen worlds of the spirit. Considering the restrictions that were imposed on upon them, both in terms of time and syllabification (5-7-5), they composed some truly provocative first drafts. What they accomplished through haiku was a celebration of the senses that only they could write through their long hours and beginning years of labor in professional kitchens.

The culinary students' poems made me wonder if other students, who are not blessed with the life calling of the kitchen, could also employ haiku to articulate their experiences of the senses. In this way, they could retrieve the relational richness and dimensional connections of the human encounter. Haiku offers us a possibility of providing an antidote to the alienation of the text and texting. It enables us to dive deep into one's own alienation to retrieve the capacity to connect through the very mechanism that pushed us into such dislocation—text and texting. Can we use haiku as a paradoxical palliative for constrained young lives that are devoted to texting? Can we, as educators, make the writing of haiku available for all students who are disconnected in our connected world?

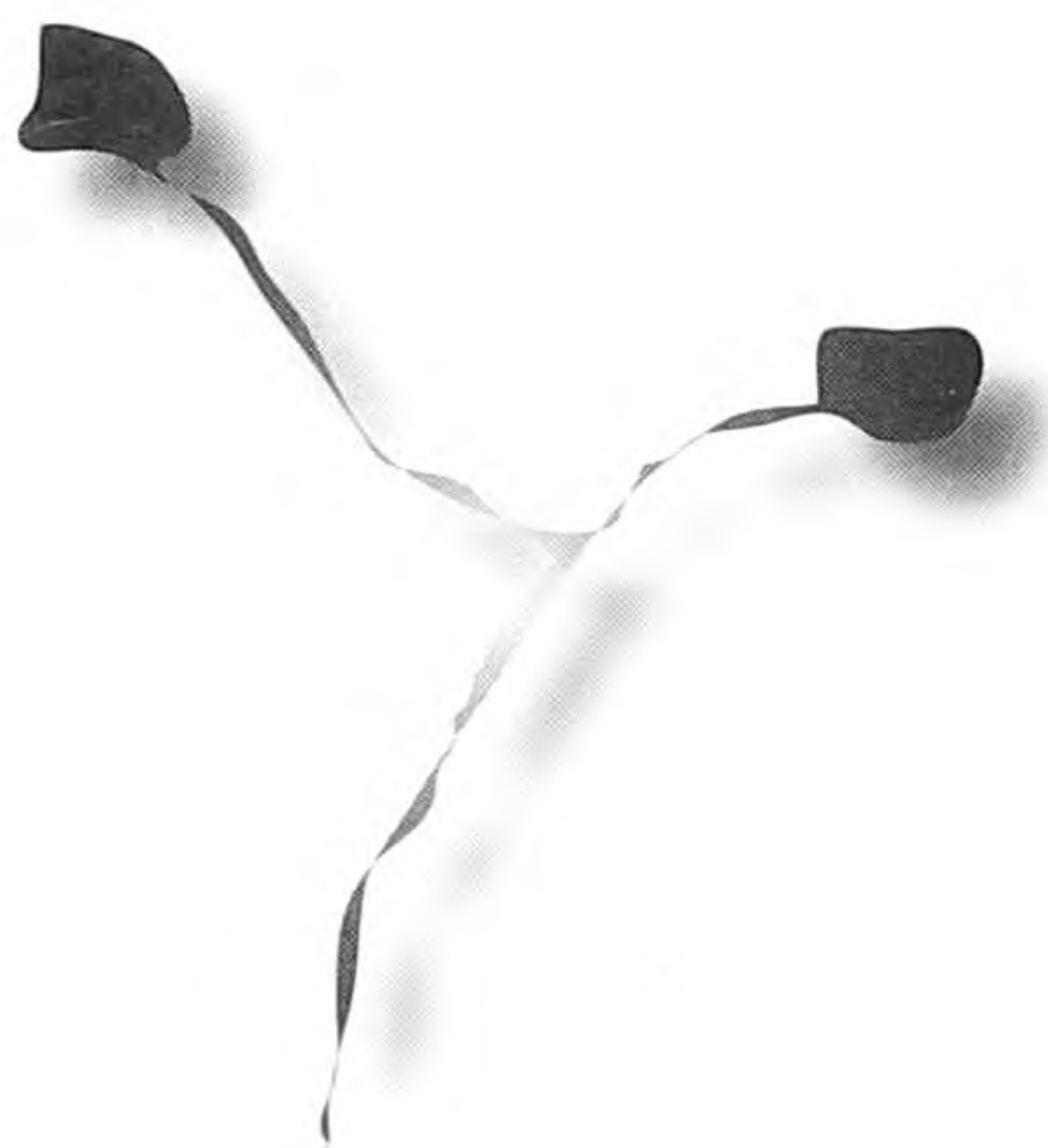
#### Notes

1. This article was inspired by the speakers on Tom Ashbrooke's radio program, *On Point*, National Public Radio, Wednesday, January 12, 2011. Ashbrook himself wrote a haiku in acknowledgement of this confluence of expression: *In the ages of tweets / We look back to haiku / And its new appeal*. Also on his program were the speakers: George Swede, poet and

Editor, *Frogpond: The Journal of the Haiku Society of America*; Dylan Tweney, Columnist for the Haiku Society of America, and senior Editor, *Wired* magazine; and Stephen Ziliack, Economist and Professor, Roosevelt University, and author of Haiku Economics: Little teaching aids for big economic pluralists, *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, 1.1/2 (2009), 108-129.

2. See, for example, the recent publication of MIT Professor Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other*. Basic Books, 2011. Also, consider the works of Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. PublicAffairs, 2011; and Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.

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## Two and Two

by *John Stevenson*, Nassau, New York

*Frogpond's* final issue of 2010 contained an article by Christopher Herold relating to a "deja-ku" experience that he and Connie Donleycott had shared. Since this phenomenon is all about paired experience and similar expressions, perhaps another such story would be timely. Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck and I have one.

In January 2010, she published the following poem in the on-line *Daily Haiku* ([www.dailyhaiku.org](http://www.dailyhaiku.org)) site:

more darkness  
more stars  
moving on

She reports that:

My haiku was conceived in early autumn 2009 on a prairie hill above the Pembina River on my retreat in northern Alberta, Canada. I have always been fascinated to look into a clear night's sky. The most memorable times have been when the deep darkness reveals layer upon layer of stars, the more darkness, the more stars. This image led to the last line of my haiku and contrasts darkness with the unknown of moving on (whether the journey is because of the end of a relationship, job or death) there is an afterlife in moving on, just as there are new possibilities full of light like the stars.

In the December 2010 issue of *The Heron's Nest*, I published:

more darkness  
more stars . . .  
autumn begins

As I explained to Sandra, when she contacted me and brought her previously published poem to my attention:

Mine was written in Maine in early September. I was visiting Paul MacNeil's camp on Onawa Lake. There is almost no light pollution there and I can see stars that I haven't seen since

childhood. This trip to Maine is an annual ritual for me, since 2000. The phenomenon of more darkness producing more stars is one that I have written about periodically in the camp log, beginning in 2000. This September I wrote about it again when I was the only one of the poets present (Hilary Tann and Yu Chang were also there) who was inspired to go outside and take in the stars on the one night when the sky was clear. We are all getting old. I offered my poem as a potential hokku for the renku we began writing the next morning.

The idea of more darkness relating to more stars is not likely to be something only Sandra and I have noticed and it seems to me that there are probably many Japanese haiku that touch upon this. But the nearly exact wording of our first two lines is, indeed, striking. Since simplicity of expression is one of the things we aim at in haiku, I would say that we independently hit upon a means of expressing a perception that many others must have shared.

While I am quite certain that I hadn't seen Sandra's poem, it is also quite clear that hers was both written and published before mine and the natural thing to do would be to withdraw mine. I offered to do so but I must admit that I was relieved when Sandra said she didn't want this. My poem had appeared in the memorial for Peggy Willis Lyles and I had selected it because it was written as she was dying and, though I didn't know she was dying then, I have since then felt that it was exactly what I was intended to write at that time. Nothing else that I could offer as a memorial would be in any way as apt.

Sandra had another thought. Might there be a way to republish our poems side-by-side? In contemplating this, a third poem sprang immediately to my mind. Sandra and I had both been struck by the same phenomenon of "more darkness / more stars." To this, I added the seasonal reference of autumn and she added the idea of a journey. While what inspired us was so similar and resulted in so similar an expression, it is more often the case that two people contemplating the same scene will see it quite differently. And so I thought of:



yuku ware ni  
todomarue nare ni  
aki futatsu

I am going  
you're staying  
two autumns for us

Masaoka Shiki

John Stevenson is a former president of the Haiku Society of America, former *Frogpond* editor, and current managing editor of *The Heron's Nest*. He is a founding member of the Route 9 Haiku Group, which publishes *Upstate Dim Sum*.

*Editor's Note: Deja-ku can indeed be startling. My latest experience occurred in Belgium at the international haiku conference "Haiku in-Gent-in Haiku," 13-19 September 2010. Jim Kacian handed out copies of fingerprints, a mini-booklet of eight of his haiku translated into three other languages—Flemish, Dutch and French. Its very first haiku caused an intense dej-ku:*

spring breeze  
the dog runs  
in its sleep

*During a free moment, I checked the Internet site Terebess Asia Online that shows a large number of my haiku. Ironically, the very first one is this:*

warm spring breeze  
the old hound runs  
in his sleep

*According to the credits in Jim's booklet, his haiku was first published in Iz Kamma (2000). My haiku first appeared in the Piedmont Review in 1983 and later in two of my collections, Night Tides (1984) and Almost Unseen (2000).*

*Jim echoes my thoughts about how this deja-ku probably happened:*

I wrote [my haiku] some time in the mid 90s, and it was taken from life.... given the same input and some similar ideas about form, it's not terribly surprising that we might arrive at much the same poem.

## Reviewed

**Steven D. Carter.** *Haiku Before Haiku—From the Renga Masters to Bashō.* Columbia University Press, 176 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8.25. ISBN978-0-231-15647-9, 22.50 USD.

by *Eiko Yachimoto*, Yokosuka City, Japan

Between the shipment and the arrival of this book fell March 11: The Great East Japan Earthquake, Tsunami and the Disaster at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. We now realize the fact that Japan is a country of immense natural disasters and, in the past, she had experienced just as violent tsunamis every 500 to 700 years.

*Haiku Before Haiku* focuses on the period when renga flourished, 500 to 700 years ago, especially during the tremendous social turmoils including: (1) the declining years of Kamakura Shogunate (—1333) when the nun Abutsu (p. 20) wrote her famous hokku; (2) feudal fragmentation even under Ashikaga Shogunate (late 13th century to early 14th century) when Shinkei (p. 48) wrote his renga theories along with superior hokku; (3) the Ohnin Civil War (1467—1478) that ushered in the Warring States Period, around the time Sogi (p. 58) compiled the New Tsukuba Collection. “Renga poets (were usually) subordinating their poetic conceptions to the aesthetic ideals of courtly discourse,” (p. 12) but earthshaking changes in society shifted major players of renga from aristocrats to monks/commoners rotating the evolution of Japanese linked verse. Our author emphasizes often that a hokku was/is composed in the middle of a tension; in my words, a tension exists between social needs of living people and aesthetic aspiration of eternal poets. Tension is a key word; tension existed/exists between elitist attitudes seeking for authority vs. common enthusiasts just enjoying a pastime.

Even today it is difficult to draw a clear line between the two attitudes for renga/renku composition. No wonder it is confusing to learn renga and/or renku only from reading books.

To me, it is more important to confirm the difference between the culture of *uta* or *waka* and the culture of *renga/renku/haiku*, which Carter does:

One difference between the institutions of *uta* and *renga*, however, was that the latter was not so dominated by old court lineages that had a virtual monopoly on the highest levels of instruction and administration. Rather than bloodline, the world of *renga* revolved around relationships between masters—almost none of whom were of courtly lineage... Not surprisingly, most of the major (*renga*) poets came from commoner origins, although some aristocrats did participate in *renga* culture (p. 9).

Regarding the attitude of most *renga* poets, he also writes (p. 11):

Participants in orthodox meetings continued to eschew the comic, the vulgar, and the colloquial in vocabulary, imagery, theme and style. In other words, late medieval and early modern *renga* masters (including Yoshimoto, Shinkei and Sogi) still considered themselves to be participants in the *uta* tradition.”

The shifting of their center of gravity towards the forthcoming culture of *haikai no renga* or Bashō's *renku* must have been happening in each *renga* master as something unconscious, something inevitable.

Indeed our author is very clever in naming this book *Haiku before Haiku*. The year of 2010 saw the inauguration of the *Journal of Renga and Renku* which included “Gradus ad Mount Tsukuba, an introduction to the culture of Japanese Linked Verse” by Professor H. Mack Horton. *Haiku before Haiku*, as a title, sounds to me a charming abbreviation of the professor's long title! Witnessing the arrival of these two important publications, I can't help smiling. As a practitioner of international *renku* who has been repeatedly asked questions on what constitutes a good *hokku*, I admire the three clear-cut questions the author raises and tries to answer before introducing 320 *haiku before haiku*.

*Question 1:* “When—if ever—did the hokku as a subgenre broke free from its identity as the first verse of a full renga sequence?” (p. 9)

*Question 2:* How do these early works differ from the poems of Bashō, from modern haiku? (p. 11)

*Question 3:* What continuity and connections are there between “haiku before haiku” and “haiku by Bashō and modern haiku”? (pp.12-16)

Our author answers question one thus: "It was in the space created by that tension that hokku became more than hokku over time." (p.10) You will understand what he meant by reading a case of one hokku written for a kasen renku transformed into a haiku for a famous haibun: *Narrow Road to the Deep North*. The author writes: “For Bashō the hokku was to that extent and in that context, at least an independent form—a form that was no longer an initiating verse.” (p.10)

Unlike Shinkei, Sogi or other renga masters, Bashō lived in a peaceful period under Tokugawa Shogunate and eventually developed a philosophy of life he called *fuga*, which involves leading a simple, yet graceful, existence. Such a lifestyle can be fraught with problems that create tensions. Yet Bashō believed *fuga* was essential for creating masterful haiku. It is to his credit that he never let himself live in comfort with the result that tension pervaded his life as well as death. It is true that most of his famous haiku were written as initiating verse for kasen, but our author believes he still is a father of modern haiku, because he clearly knew which “facet of the poetic past must be incorporated into the style that he hoped to establish for his time and the future.” (p.8)

The fact that Bashō seized the concept of *fuga* as the aesthetic that united Sogi (renga master), Sesshu (master artist) and Rikyu (master of the Way of Tea) explains his distance from “his more immediate forebears.” But I wanted our author also to reconfirm a role played by Danrin. In my opinion Bashō

was able to grasp the language in a new and liberated light in his Danrin-days. To me his finding Saigyō or Sōgi is remotely analogous to a rock musician finding Beethoven.

The author admits that “best answer to question one is that it never did, completely, certainly not in the period of time covered by this book.” (p. 9)

Thus I believe that all renku/haiku writers today can greatly benefit from these renga poets: especially Nijo Yoshimoto (his clear-cut definition of hokku is included in Carter's Introduction and six of his verses are translated; Shikei (19 verses) and Sōgi (21 verses). Rather than simply focusing on “here and now,” they also searched for classical examples, and based their linkages on the coded or pre-arranged harmony passed down from the previous age, but they did so sincerely. Each master's expertise as a hokku writer delights me.

For the answer to question three, our author writes: “The hyperbole of the older poem became the foundation for the hyperbole of the newer in a way that makes the latter a true variation on a topic—which is exactly what a skilled poet was expected to produce.” This facet of renga/renku culture will be welcomed as fresh wind by many modern writers severely bound by copyright laws. This is a unique genre in which a poet can collaborate not just with his contemporaries but also with respected poets in the past. I am happy to learn there was a time some renga poets loved to alternate the languages, Japanese and Chinese, in composing a renku! Bashō was not the only one who loved Chinese poetry.

Now I would love to pick up some of the poems I would never have read, had I not read this book. Thus I recommend this book to Japanese students learning Japanese Literature as well.

### Brilliant Poems or My Favorites

ah, the deep woods—  
so quiet one can hear  
blossoms fall

Shinkei, 63

Plum trees blossom  
and my spring wait  
is over

Sugiwara Soi, 93

Who could it be—  
up in the sky breaking ice  
into jewels of hail

Sogi, 110

In river mist—  
glowing leaves floating  
before they fall

Shōhaku, 136

And had he been out?  
Still I would hate to leave  
his snowy home.

Tani Soboku, 196

Fire sparked  
by rain striking stone?  
Rock azaleas

Oka Kosetsu, 247

### Interesting Poems and Whys

I would like to use my own translation for this poem:

Coloring thin snow  
from beneath—  
autumn leaves

Shua, 22

It is widely acknowledged that so called Japanese aesthetics and culture were established in the Muromachi Period (14th to 15th century). This verse clearly brings up the design of a delicate bun today: a thin layer of white dough with red bean paste in the center. The hokku aesthetics keep providing patterns for kimono fabric as well.

Sadly I live on—  
in a world of deutzia  
in full bloom

Hino Tomiko, 115

I have known Hino Tomiko as a monstrously political mother who caused the Ohnin Civil War in her maneuver to make her son ascend to the Ashikaga Shogunate. But this is the first time I got a glimpse of her inner feelings directly from her words:

Let me use my own translation for this poem

Sumi-dyed robes at dusk—  
his sorrow of parting  
dew on our sleeve

Hosokawa Yusai, 251

This hokku in mourning was composed in a renga session only one month after the death of Oda Nobunaga, the prominent historical figure. Akechi Mitsuhide, Nobunaga's important vassal who turned ultimate rebel, is known to have attended another renga party just before his Hon'noji Revolt, and some say his verse secretly predicted his intention. Renga was their way of life indeed. Yusai, a poet and warrior in one, declined to stand on Mitsuhide's side and foresaw the failure of Mitsuhide's short-lived victory. After Mitsuhide's death, Yusai, the top-notch waka master of his time, invited influential figures and gave a renga party for the late Oda Nobunaga.

New again now—  
that same old wind  
in the willows

Nishiyama Soin, 283

Lighter  
after an evening shower:  
summer robe

Nishiyama Soin, 286

Bashō, 32 years old, met Soin when the latter visited Edo from Osaka in 1675 and led the session of 100 verses. Bashō became enthusiastic about Soin's new style: Danrin. Soin made waves with the majority of haijin under the umbrella of Matsunaga Teitoku, the influential renga-master headquartered in Kyoto. It is true that Soin's verses "reveal a sensibility slightly more plebeian than usually encountered in orthodox renga" (p.139), but Bashō liked the newness. We all know Bashō left Danrin and established his Shofu style several years later. Soin's

verse is realistic about the summer heat and his sweat that added weight to his cotton yukata!

### An Example of a Variation

In today's renga/renku composition too it is quite natural to use a renowned hokku, or to creatively quote a phrase from a past hokku. Let me pick up one example from Carter's book:

Fallen to the ground  
like those words of old—  
glowing leaves

Inko, 124

In addition to Inko, Noin and Minamoto Yorimasa also composed waka about Shirakawa no Seki, which today is known as Fukushima. The old aesthetics of waka dictated that travelers to remote spots, but with a connection to Japan's mythical past, should write poems about them. Such place names became known as *uta-makura*, or an inspirational poetic term.

In concluding this writing, I pray we can revive the respect not only for place names but also for *uta-makura* spots themselves. What a sad connotation we, modern Japanese people, have just added to the name Fukushima...

Eiko Yachimoto graduated from the English Department at the University of Minnesota. Her collaborations with poets from other countries have resulted in a large number of renku, including *Sea Bream*, *Midsummer Darkness*, *October Rain*, *Green on Green*, *Spring Melancholy* and *the Red Door*. With John E. Carley, a British renku poet, she is in the process of translating Bashō's renku. She is the editor of *Wind Arrow 1* and *Wind Arrow 2*, the renku anthologies of AIR, the Association for International Renku.



**Lidia Rozmus & Carmen Sterba** (eds.). *The Moss at Tokeiji*. Santa Fe, NM: Deep North Press, 2010, 48 pp., perfectbound, 8.25 x 5.25. ISBN 978-1-929116-16-4. \$15 to Lidia Rozmus, 1 Echo Court, #11, Vernon Hills, IL 60061-3003

by *Susan Antolin*, Walnut Creek, California

For over 600 years the Tokeiji temple in Kamakura, Japan served as a sanctuary for women seeking refuge from circumstances ranging from physical violence to failed marriage. Among the thousands of women who passed through the gates of Tokeiji were those of common birth as well as women with royal lineage. The stories each of these women brought with her contribute to the rich history of this unique place. It is appropriate then that in paying homage to Tokeiji's complex past, the collection of haibun *The Moss at Tokeiji* assembles a diverse group of literary voices, as no single perspective could adequately do justice to such a multifaceted history.

This slender yet attractive volume features beautiful color photography of the temple grounds by Mamoru Luke Sterba Yanka and ink brush paintings by the award-winning artist Lidia Rozmus to complement the haibun by eleven contemporary women writers. While the artistic presentation adds to the overall appeal of the book—and to my untrained eye the haiga are truly excellent—the haibun are the main attraction.

The list of haibun contributors is an all-star line-up of acclaimed women writers in the haiku community. Five of the poets are Japanese and the rest have significant connections to Japan, including four women who each spent years living there. Most, if not all, of the authors have personally visited Tokeiji temple multiple times, absorbing the atmosphere at different times of the year and reflecting on the lives of the thousands of women who were offered refuge there. Be sure not to miss the historical note nearly hidden in the back of the book between the glossary and the list of recommended reading. Written by co-editor Carmen Sterba, the historical detail is fascinating and places the whole work in context for those of us who are new to this piece of Japanese history.

The opening haibun “Reveries of the Water Moon Kannon” is by Margaret Chula, a well-known haibun writer and performance artist. Her haibun is at the imaginative end of the spectrum and begins by adopting the perspective and voice of Suigetsu, the Water Moon Kannon, goddess of compassion. The stories of three women, each from a different historical era and each in need of refuge, are heard by the goddess and are presented along with accompanying tanka. One of these women, called here Hanabusa, from the Edo period (1736), seeks escape from a difficult marriage. From the merchant class, she has spent years in hard, thankless labor for her husband’s textile business and is finally brought to Tokeiji by her sister. One of the tanka from this section shows the complex emotions of a woman both seeking refuge and looking back with a touch of regret on what she has left behind:

passing through Sammon Gate  
I hear the measured toll  
of the temple bell  
the shuttle of my hand loom  
silent and forsaken

Kayoko Hashimoto strikes a different tone with her haibun “Unforgettable Encounters,” in which she reflects on two particular visits she made to the temple grounds when flowers were in bloom. She describes a rainy autumn afternoon when she first visited the temple and saw pale purple asters, their heads bowed in the rain. The asters bring to mind the women who have fled to the temple over the years seeking divorce: “Such hardships they must have endured, just like the rain-beaten aster blossoms that drooped without falling to the ground.” On another rainy day she visited during the plum blossom season and was moved by the way each blossom seemed to be encapsulated in crystal as the light rain covered them in moisture: “Gradually the glimmer of the tear-like raindrops became that of women’s lives, those who wanted to shine no matter how unfortunate they were.” Hashimoto notes that her feeling about the temple transformed from a gloomy outlook about the sad circumstances that brought women there to a powerful sense of hope the temple offered these many women.

A contrasting approach is taken by Abigail Friedman in her piece “Regina of the Clouds,” in which the author tells the story of a friendship from her college years. The two women shared many interests, drank heavily, and worked part-time together at an ice cream store. As it became apparent that the friend’s excessive drinking was leading her on a self-destructive path, the author chose a different course and ended up losing track of her friend. After living in Japan for nearly eight years and becoming immersed in the culture there, she became curious about her long-ago friend. When she did a computer search of her name, she found her obituary. The only mention of Tokeiji temple comes in the haiku:

burning incense at Tokeiji  
you seep into my pores  
curls of smoke

Friedman takes a risk in her writing by expanding the subject beyond the women who actually sought sanctuary at the temple. The idea of a safe-haven for women is a powerful notion that crosses the barriers of time and place to encompass all women in troubled situations. Successful haibun, like good haiku, shift away from the expected and draw links to the less obvious. Friedman’s haibun does both.

While the temple stopped operating as a sanctuary for women in 1901, it remains open to the public as a tourist attraction and place of quiet reflection. In her haibun “At Tokeiji Temple,” Nanae Tamura recounts a recent visit to Tokeiji and describes seeing flowers and visiting the gravesite of one of the disciples of Natsume Soseki, who was the haiku poet Shiki’s dear friend. The presence of the gravesite brings Tamura a feeling of closeness with Shiki, and Tamura is left changed by the experience of walking the temple grounds: “At Tokeiji temple, being in its wondrous nature and the depth of the temple tradition, I felt I was reborn and encouraged to enjoy my life as it is.” One of Tamura’s haiku:

a hydrangea  
flowering and leaning  
to the sea

Among the shorter haibun in the collection is “Tokeiji Temple” by Patricia Donegan. Like Chula, Donegan imagines the story of a woman refugee to the temple. Donegan leaves the exact time period unspecified and paints a concise picture of an ordinary woman seeking rescue from her marriage and leaving her children behind. In the voice of this imagined woman, she says, “I had to go, just as a seed in the dark earth, has to finally push forth its tendrils and emerge into the light.” The accompanying haiku includes a mention of the moss which comes up repeatedly in descriptions of the temple grounds and which is also in the collection’s title:

the smell of moss  
in the night wind—  
this fleeting dream

Carmen Sterba, co-editor of the book, also invokes the voice of an imagined refugee to the temple in her piece “A Safe Place To Run To.” Sterba’s vision of the welcoming in of a refugee to the temple includes wonderful sensory detail, such as a simple meal of rice and vegetable gruel, hot barley tea, the sound of sweeping, the songs of birds, the voices of women and the “hush of the surrounding forest.” Her concluding haiku captures the sentiment expressed in several of the other pieces, that of the transformative power of the temple sanctuary:

warbler’s refrain—  
a shift from sorrow  
into hope

In her introduction to the book, Lidia Rozmus describes the beauty she found in the physical setting on her visits to the temple grounds as well as the emotional impact of learning the history of the thousands of women who sought asylum there. She writes, “The stories of these women were present in everything I saw: in the sky-touching trees, in the delicate, time-concealing moss, and in the cemetery on the hill.” She surmises that the temple is probably one of the first shelters ever created for abused women. In explaining her vision for the collection of haibun, she says, “Through our art we hope

to honor all the women who passed through the gates of Tokeiji.” She and the contributors to the project have more than succeeded in fulfilling that mission.

Susan Antolin serves as the president of the Haiku Poets of Northern California, co-editor of the HPNC membership journal *Mariposa*, and editor of *Ripples*, the Haiku Society of America newsletter. Her collection of haiku and tanka *Artichoke Season* was published in 2009. Her work also appeared recently in the anthologies *57 Damn Good Haiku* (edited by Michael Dylan Welch and Alan Summers) and *A New Resonance 7: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku* (edited by Jim Kacian and Dee Evetts). She posts haiku and related writing online at [www.artichokeseason.wordpress.com](http://www.artichokeseason.wordpress.com) and on Twitter@[susanantolin](https://twitter.com/susanantolin).



## Briefly Reviewed

by *George Swede*, Toronto, Ontario

**Compton, Ellen & O'Toole, Kathleen** (eds.). *a few stars away: towpath anthology 2010*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, unpag., perfect softbound, 4 x 5.5. ISBN: None, \$5 <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>. This anthology celebrates the Towpath group's fifteenth year of meetings along the shore of the Potomac River. Apart from the editors, the other members of the group featured are Roberta Beary, Elizabeth Black, Kristen Deming, Lee Giesecke, Fonda Bell Miller, Audrey Olberg, Patricia A. Rogers, Ellen H. Showell and Mary Wuest. The forty-three haiku are pleasant reading—full of gentle insights and wry humor.

**Härle, Helga**. *bollen rullar vidare / the ball keeps rolling / de bal rolt verder*. Den Bosch, Nederland: 't schrijverke, 2010, unpag. perfect softbound, 3 x 4. ISBN: 978-94-90607-05-3, \$12, <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>; €8, <[www.haikuschrijverke.nl](http://www.haikuschrijverke.nl)>. This miniature book is another design gem by Max Verhart's press and features forty-eight haiku by Sweden's Helga Härle in English, Swedish and Dutch. The English translations are by Härle and the Dutch by Verhart. Only one poem in Swedish comes first on the page with the English version second: *deep autumn— / a raft moored / to the fog*. This suggests that Härle wrote the other forty-seven first in English, an admirable cognitive feat.

**Ito, Shiori**. *Hong Kong Arts*. Tokyo: Privately printed, 2010, 39 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 6.5. ISBN: 978-4-939061-32-5, \$5, <[itokshiori@aol.com](mailto:itokshiori@aol.com)>. Almost all of the twenty-nine pieces in praise of Hong Kong and its culture are prose commentaries rather than haiku: *cantonese, chinese, english / young generations manage three / to develop something*. Shiori Ito only manages to give a few some poetic resonance: *small islands around tsing yi / looks like the back of a dragon / facing under the sea*.

**Kaneko, Tohta.** *Poetic Composition on Living Things* (By The Kon Nichi Translation Group: Richard Gilbert, Masa-hiro Hori, Itô Yûki, Koun Franz, David Ostman, Kanamitsu Takeyoshi). Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, 91 pp. perfect softbound, 4 x 6.5. ISBN: 978-1-936848-01-0, \$12 ([www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)). Tohta Kaneko began writing haiku at age eighteen. Now, seventy-five years later, he is still at work and considered a national treasure in Japan (see my earlier review of a CD on his life, *Frogpond*, 33:1). Some of his admirers (see the Nichi Translation Group above) decided to make a small book out of a lecture Kaneko gave in 2009 to the 46th Annual National Conference of the *Gendai haiku kyôkai* (Modern Haiku Association).

Kaneko's lecture argues against the widely-held view in both the East and the West that haiku should be "limited to *kachô* (birds and flowers)." He goes on to say "It is absurd to draw distinctions between human beings and nature. A human being is the same sort of living being as a cockroach or a weasel." Kaneko credits his holistic view to Kobayashi Issa who treated all living things equally. Thus, all aspects of humanity belong in haiku, even the most raw. Of course, this view is not new. A number of Eastern and Western poets, including me, have made the same argument, but not quite so forcefully. The translators/editors include a piece by Kaneko that vividly illustrates his point: *splendid field of gravestones / labia uncovered / the village sleeps*. Also included are a succinct introduction to Kaneko's life and work by Gilbert, translators' notes by Hori and Franz and extensive endnotes.

**Lee, Catherine J.S.** *All That Remains*. Highland Park, NJ: Turtle Light Press, 2011, 30 pp., handsown, 5.5 x 4.5. ISBN: 978-0-9748147-2-8, \$17.95, [www.turtlelightpress.com](http://www.turtlelightpress.com). Catherine Lee is the 2010 TLP Haiku Chapbook Competition Winner. With its special papers, fonts, two photos by the author, as well as its fine design elements, her booklet signifies that it is a work of art in its own right and explains a price expected for a much heftier volume. However, the wrinkles left from gluing the photos on the front and back covers raised this.

reviewer's eyebrows. How does the content fare in comparison? About the same—high expectations followed by a slight letdown. Lee's thirty-nine haiku are low-key observations of the rural life. They are well-wrought, but don't create resonances in unexpected directions, that is, they echo too much what has been written before: *sandbar / a stranded canoe / points at the moon; camp road / plumes of dust eddy / in the heat; hard frost / she remembers / how he lied.*

**Miller, Mike.** *Miller's New England Haiku Dictionary* (Revised Second Edition). Stockbridge, MA: Drafty Attic Press, 2011, 44 pp., stapled, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN: None, \$5 + \$3 s&h, <[www.draftyatticpress.com/](http://www.draftyatticpress.com/)>. Mark Miller is editor of the online *High Coup Journal* which has a publishing policy distinct from periodicals such as *Bottle Rockets*, *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku* and *The Heron's Nest*. Here is part of its submission policy:

By "haiku," we mean anything as long as it's got three lines and follows a syllabic pattern\* of 5-7-5.... Meditative haiku about nature are bullshit. We want to laugh our asses off. Be clever. Or be raunchy. Or horrific.

Readers familiar with Miller's outlook, might enjoy a brief sojourn with this pamphlet of about one-hundred 5-7-5s split unevenly among the letters of the alphabet. Many can be pithy and funny: *Insomnia (n.): / haiku dictionaries come / at the worst of times.* And, a few have elements of what the mainline journals might consider real haiku: *Ibidem (adv.): / great-grandmother's heirloom rose / blooming in the spring.*

**Pelter, Stanley.** *aN ABuNDaNCe oF GiFts* (Izzy Sharpe, Cover; John Parsons, illus.). Easton, Winchester, Hampshire, England: George Mann Publications, 2011, 134 pp., 6 x 9. ISBN: 9781907640056, £ 8 <[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) >. This is Stanley Pelter's sixth collection of haibun. Its over seventy-five pieces show the same creative energy as those in his fourth collection, which I reviewed in *Frogpond* 32:3. According to Pelter's introduction, the innovations in this volume are found prose and music haibun. The former include snippets from lesser-known writers as well as famous ones such as



William Faulkner, Cormac McCarthy, Edgar Allen Poe, and Dylan Thomas, that are modified by Pelter's addition of two or more haibun. I could only find two music haibun: one contained part of the score of *Little Bird* by Edvard Grieg and the second an unattributed polonaise. The first included four haibun and the second had illustrations in place of haiku. No matter. Overall, the collection proves that Pelter has an abundance of gifts.

**Shettar, Girija.** *This year, daffodils: a collection of haiku.* London: Survivors' Press, 2010, 32 pp., stapled, 6 x 8, ISBN: 978-1-874595-30-4, £5, <[www.survivorspoetry.com](http://www.survivorspoetry.com)>. The back cover states that:

Survivors' Press is the imprint of Survivors' Poetry, a unique literary and mental health charity promoting the writing of survivors of mental distress.

In a letter sent with the book, Girija Shettar writes about her collection of sixty haiku:

[It was] written by me under a one-year mentorship programme awarded by the charity Survivors' Poetry. I am not a member or recipient of this charity—the mentorship was won by nine poets by way of a poetry competition.

The only credits given for the included poems involve an anthology published in 2010. Thus, one can assume that Shettar wrote the poems over the year of the mentorship. And, the lack of experience shows with haiku that describe situations but fail to connect their elements in way that exalts the reader: *by his grave / a struggling oak / this year, daffodils; pure water / runs over me = / clarity; low branches / in full bud = / an ideal shelter.* While such descriptions might resonate personally for Shettar, she needs to take that extra step to weave a poetic spell with her images. This will only happen when she implies more than she tells.

**Spinei, Vasile.** *Nimic despre iarnă / Nothing about Winter* (Mihaela & Ion Codrescu, trans.; Ion Codrescu, illus.). Chişinău, Republic of Moldova: Privately printed, 2011, 116 pp., 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN: None, \$ 12, € 10, <[accessinfo1@yahoo.com](mailto:accessinfo1@yahoo.com)>.

Almost one-hundred and thirty haiku in the original Romanian with accompanying English translations appear in this collection. While the reviewer acknowledges that much can be lost when trying to capture in English the poetry written in an unfamiliar tongue, he is left with no choice but to judge what is on the page. And, the conclusion is this: practically all the poems are mere observations, some sentimental, such as: *a rain of chestnuts— / a couple of kids / with schoolbags on their heads*; some cynical: *young folks / grandpa and father unload / the sacks at the mill*. Only once in a while do the translations make that magical leap into poetry: *the war is over— / in the pit made by the shell / a pond with fish*.

**Wirth, Klaus-Dieter.** *Zugvögel / Migratory Birds / Oiseaux migrants / Aves migratorias*. Hamburg: Hamburger Haiku Verlag, 2010, 200 pp., 6 x 8.5. ISBN: 9783937257273, No price, <kdwirth@t-online.de>. I first met Klaus-Dieter Wirth, the editor of the online haiku journal *Chrysanthemum* in September 2010 at the extraordinary international conference in Belgium, Haiku in-Gent-in Haiku. With a dozen or so different languages being spoken, several multilingual participants were asked to translate haiku for various presentations. Foremost among them was Wirth, fully conversant in six or more languages. This, his very first collection, showcases his linguistic gifts with each haiku appearing in four languages: German, English, French and Spanish. Some poems did not even originate in his native German, but occurred first in English, French or Spanish.

Linguistic skills aside, how good are the haiku? Following a quadrilingual preface in which Wirth describes his interesting journey in haiku, is a selection of 150 pieces (with dates of composition) drawn from forty years of writing. Generally, they use personification to a greater degree than we are used to in North America. Nevertheless, they still embody the very essence of haiku: *travelling by car / a fly is given a lift / into uncertainty; full of amazement / the bird-of-paradise flower / watches the day go by; Behind the window / a bonsai contemplating / the rampant weeds*.

## Re: Readings

*Robert Epstein*, El Cerrito, California, comments on three poets:

On *Michael McClintock*, South Pasadena/Los Angeles, California: *we've had a good year— / a bone for the dog / and a walk to go bury it.* There he goes again: Following Thoreau in all things simplified, Michael manages to take the prosaic and locate the poetic right on the perimeter. By inverting things, man's best friend gets to lead man to the perfect place for bone burying; both dog and dog owner get what they want. That is communion—between species, no less—and the very definition of not only a good year, but the good life.

On *Michael Ketchek*, Rochester, New York: *looking in the mirror / just the man / I wanted to see.* I love Michael Ketchek's timing when it comes to satire and other forms of humor. These days, I do my best to dodge my own face morning, noon and night when forced to look in the mirror. Those subtle changes, imperceptibly taking place over fifty years, add up one day and... Oh, God, no! That mug can't be ME staring back! As if waiting for the manager to show up to give him a piece of his mind, Ketchek is face-to-face with the guy he was intent on confronting. But, confrontation morphs into acceptance (or surrender, as in admitting powerlessness), and Ketchek's got me smiling, if not himself.

On *Nika*, Calgary Alberta: *family reunion / remembering why / I moved away.* As the only one of three siblings who relocated three thousand miles away, I am periodically filled with sadness and regret for all the birthdays, anniversaries and lesser occasions that I have missed over nearly thirty years. Then, out of the blue, I receive an angry email from a sibling who reproaches me for not getting in the middle of a family feud involving her, and I breathe a sigh of relief: Thank God I am three thousand miles away. I'm with Nika: Distance makes the heart grow more grateful.

*Joan Vistain*, Antioch, Illinois on **Randy Brooks**, Decatur, Illinois: *dirt farmer's wife / at the screen door— / no tractor around*. Near the close of his excellent "Genesis of Haiku" (Part 1) this haiku really resonated with me (a farm kid of the '30s). I saw it as an embodiment of the essay. His statement that "Haiku come from noticing and responding in the literary construct we call haiku," prompted me to recall May Sarton's words, "A poem is the result of a collision between an object and a state of awareness that registers sensation." How closely connected we all are!

*Jeannie Martin*, Salisbury, Massachusetts, on several contributors:

My favorite haiku are *autumn wind* by **Gregory Hopkins**, Weaver, Alabama and *hills* by **Gene Myers**, Rockaway New Jersey.

*Frogpond—*  
with with each page  
a new favorite poem

The review of *Seasons Rising* by **Matthew Cariello**, Columbus, Ohio, was great to read. He was honest without being unkind. I am going to pass along some of his insights to folks in my haiku class who right now are struggling with those "-ings" and cluttered lines.

*PMF Johnson*, St. Paul, Minnesota, on several contributors:

I'd like to take a moment to say how much my wife and I enjoyed the 34:1 *Frogpond*. I got a kick out of the logo, first off, but we both also enjoyed *we've had a good year* by **Michael McClintock**, South Pasadena/Los Angeles, California and Sandy laughed out loud at *a scream and a hiss* by **Mary Kipps**, Sterling, Virginia. I also loved *spring storm* by **Thomas Martin**, Beaverton, Oregon.

*Adelaide B. Shaw*, Millbrook, New York on **Randy Brooks**, Decatur, Illinois: Dr. Brooks' haiku, which he included in his

read it. *dirt farmer's wife / at the screen door / no tractor sound*. Written over 30 years ago, it retains a powerful image. I see *dirt farmer's wife*, not as someone waiting for the tractor sound as evidence of her husband's coming in from the fields, but as the wife of a farmer who has no tractor. She looks out at the field with resignation, or perhaps, with despair. The words *dirt farmer*, rather than simply *farmer*, convey to me an image of a less than prosperous farm, small and struggling. I'm glad that Dr. Brook's grandparents were in better circumstances than what I imagined in this haiku. Whether it is the absence of the sound of the tractor that is late in coming, or the absence of the sound because there is no tractor, it is the absence of that sound that clearly comes across.

**Brent Partridge**, Orinda, California on many contributors:

The comic style may be the most difficult type of haiku /senryu to write. A noticeable number of writers in 34:1 cheered me up. **Mary Kipps**, Sterling, Virginia: *a scream and a hiss / the garden snake and I / meet again*. Eden revisited! **Lorin Ford**, Melbourne, Australia: *withered fields— / one of the scarecrows / rolling his own*. This is a nice touch on the doubletake. **Bob Lucky**, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: *morning after / all the brown spots / on my banana*. Somehow this poem doesn't grow old, each time I read it, it works. **Michael Ketchek**, Rochester, New York: *looking in the mirror / just the man / I wanted to see*. Many readers will remember some striking portraits of him—adding to our enjoyment. **LeRoy Gorman**, Napanee, Ontario: *deafening rain / we talk of the dead / in whispers*. Ah! understatement. **S.B. Friedman**, San Francisco, California: *solitude my shakuhachi attracts only wild turkeys*. Here is an auditory equivalent of the landscape visual echo—a modern pied piper, and timeless. These poems stopped me—by making me laugh, or at least smile. They break away from the egoic.

**Eiko Yachimoto**, Yokosuka City, Japan and **Ella Rutledge**, Tokyo, Japan: "Dream of New Year, A Kasen Renku." Each link of this work flows smoothly, it's refreshing, elegant, and

profoundly original—as well as erudite. Link #28, by Eiko, is my favorite: *the harvest moon floating high / to lure out an old lobster*. The reader is drawn in to empathize.

## Corrections

p. 5: *John Dunphy* points out:

Thank you for displaying my haiku so prominently in the new issue. One thing; though—I live in Illinois, not Ohio.

p. 7: *Lanara Rosen* and *David Rosen* are described as living in California. Actually, they are new residents of Eugene, Oregon. David Rosen elaborates:

It was strange to be listed as from "California" .... As you know there is a huge difference between California and Oregon. Lanara, who I met in New Zealand, maintains that Oregon is the only state that is similar to N.Z. In fact, that's the reason we moved here.

p. 35: *Carolyn Hall* writes:

I was especially glad to have my tribute poem to Peggy published, as it was a "third" poem by me in one issue. Unfortunately it was published flush left. I had meant for the last line to be indented.

a hummingbird's tongue  
probes the sweetness  
summer's end

p. 114: In her article, "World Economy in Word Economy," *Ruth Yarrow* wrongly attributes one of the haiku she quotes to *Mike Spikes*. In fact, it is by *Bernard Gieske*.

no foot prints  
in the snow  
foreclosure

p. 150: *Cor van den Heuvel* specifies three errors at the end of the review of his book by *Nick Avis*:

There is a quotation at the end of the review that has a few printing mistakes in it. It's the last one, from the Christmas haibun, and as it is also the ending of my book and Nick cites it to sort of sum up his review, it is quite important. In its short (one sentence) paragraph of prose, the phrase "in a hotel lobby" is missing the article "a" so that it reads "in hotel lobby". The last word "square" in the paragraph has an extra "s" tacked on the front of it. And in the haiku ending the quote another article has been left out. In this case it is the word "the" and should be in the second line before the word "towns".

*Editors' Note: Here is the way the last bit of prose and the haiku should read::*

the middle of a crowded airlines terminal, in a hotel lobby, or  
draped in snow in a small-town square.

on a train  
Christmas lights in all the towns  
flicker into the past

p. 159: *Norman Darlington* indicates a problem at the end of the review by *Bruce Ross* of *The Unseen Wind* edited by *Lynne Rees* and *Jo Pasco*:

I just found a small error that has substantial consequences. On p159 the url of the BHS is in fact [www.britishhaikusociety.org.uk](http://www.britishhaikusociety.org.uk) (not [www.britishhaikusociety.org](http://www.britishhaikusociety.org) as Bruce wrote, which is non-existent).

p. 167: *Carolyn Hall* finds another error:

Another small error: you credited my Henderson third runner-up poem to "Caroline" Hall rather than Carolyn. I hardly recognize that name :-).

# Mildred Kanterman Memorial Book Awards for 2010

Judged by  
*Mike Dillon*, Indianola, Washington

*The First Place Award is made possible by LeRoy Kanterman, co-founder of the Haiku Society of America, in memory of his wife Mildred Kanterman*

It's standard practice, at this point, for the judge of a literary contest to note how difficult it was to pick the winners. Now I know: There is often a great deal of truth behind those obligatory disclaimers. As judge of the Haiku Society of America's Kanterman book awards for 2010, I thought the winnowing process would be easier than it was; that the stack of books "Not in the Running" would quickly mount toward the ceiling while those "In the Running" would remain a tidy foothill. Exactly the reverse happened.

This year's submissions were impressive in power of craft and perception, of lived moments that invite the reader in. W. H. Auden famously wrote, "For poetry makes nothing happen," but the English poet wore his self-satirical mask when he wrote that. More than looking for haiku that touch all the right notes—*kigo*, *yugen*, *sabi*, etc.—I looked for haiku that made something happen inside the reader, that triggered some incremental shift of understanding. Otherwise, what is the point?

There is an account of a Native American elder who, when asked why the stories of his people were so short, replied: "Because we know so much."

A writer of good haiku will know much.

First Place (\$500)

*Live Again*, by **John Stevenson**. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2009, 64 pp. Foreword by Carolyn Hall. Perfect soft-



bound, 5.5 x 8. ISBN: 978-I-893959-83-5, \$12, <[www.redmoon-press.com](http://www.redmoon-press.com)> or the author ([ithacan@earthlink.net](mailto:ithacan@earthlink.net)).

Some haiku are written from the outside, clamoring to get in. John Stevenson writes from close to the bone, sometimes from the marrow. In *Live Again*, Stevenson gives us memorable moments drawn from everyday life that reveal our existential loneliness.

long night—  
breathing until breathing  
is just breathing

we're here  
we might as well build  
a sandcastle

winter night  
I lie in bed  
imagining it

Readily accessible, seemingly effortless, Stevenson's haiku touch that unnamable confluence where our outer and inner worlds meet.

Second Place (\$100)

*Pacific*, by **Ce Rosenow**. Hillsboro, OR: Mountain Gate Press, 2009, 72 pp. Introduction by Michael Dylan Welch. Perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN: 978-0-9643357-2-1, \$14 plus \$2 s & h. <[www.mountainsanddriverspress.org](http://www.mountainsanddriverspress.org)>.

This is a modest book in what it proposes to do—reflect life in all its moods beside the Oregon Coast—and in its understated modesty lies a powerful undertow freighted with *mono no aware*, a deep appreciation for life's beautiful impermanence.

storm season  
again  
driftwood in different places

in this kiss  
all our other kisses—  
summer solstice

a year older  
I brace myself  
against the undertow's pull

Third Place (\$50)

*A Gate Left Open*, by **Alice Frampton**. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2009, 72 pp., saddle-stapled paperback, 4.25 x 6.5. ISBN: 1-978-893959-85-9, \$12 <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)> or the author \$12 plus \$1.50 s&h U.S. and Canada; \$3 elsewhere.<[a-frame44@hotmail.com](mailto:a-frame44@hotmail.com)>.

Frampton's small book is a moving human document that lets the reader walk in her shoes and look upon this fleeting world with bracing honesty.

white lies . . .  
one wave crashes  
into another

waning moon  
he's not the man  
I thought he was

Best Criticism (Tie)

*Walden by Haiku*, by **Ian Marshall**. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009, 272 pp., hardback, 5.5 x 9. ISBN 978-0-8203-3288-8, \$28.95 <[www.ugapress.org](http://www.ugapress.org)>

In *Walden by Haiku* Marshall, a professor of English and environmental studies at Penn State Altoona, has produced nearly 300 haiku extracted from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. Marshall's book opens up new insights into haiku, *Walden* itself, and the haiku-veins embedded in the 19th-century prose of an American master. In the second half of the book Marshall explains his methodology behind each haiku.

*Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, by **Yoshinobu Hakutani**. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 195 pp., hardback, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN 978-0-230-61655-4, \$8 <[www.palgrave.com](http://www.palgrave.com)>.

*Haiku and Modernist Poetics* is a book that was waiting to happen. After exploring the development of haiku in Japan, Hakutani devotes chapters to W. B. Yeats and his Noh plays, Ezra Pound, Jack Kerouac and the Beats, Richard Wright and others. As with R. H. Blyth's *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics*, Hakutani examines facets of Western literary tradition through the prism of Japanese culture. It is gratifying to see Richard Wright's haiku receive increased critical attention.

### Best Anthology

*Seeing Stars*, edited by **Michael Dylan Welch**. Seattle, WA: Haiku Northwest, 2009, 20 pp., hand-sewn paperback, 5.5 x 8.5. No ISBN Not available for purchase.

This category was a tough call—there were many worthy entries. Any Red Moon Anthology is the elephant in the room, and *White Lies*, the 2009 edition, is superb. But *Seeing Stars* by the Haiku Northwest group, produced from a retreat in Seabeck, Washington in October 2009, had enough breakthroughs to be an upset winner. Publishing haiku incubated during a weekend retreat carries inherent dangers: *Seeing Stars*, however, which reflects the group's "galactiku" theme, took chances and produced fresh surprises.

Full disclosure: I am listed on the Haiku Northwest roster. I attended one Haiku Northwest meeting several years ago but otherwise maintain what my dear wife terms my antisocial ways. I publish a group of community newspapers in Seattle. The first thing editors and writers are told is: We don't logroll or do favors for people. I've carried that inviolate principle over into my haiku life and my role as judge, in this case. It was the work itself in *Seeing Stars* that carried the day for me.

your hands on my body  
somewhere  
a sun goes dark

*Lana Hechtman Ayers*

oyster shell—  
one small spot  
still luminous

*Carole MacRury*

### Special Award for Fiction

*Haiku Wars*, by **David G. Lanoue**. Winchester, Virginia: Red Moon Press, 2009, 181 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 7.75. ISBN: 978-1-893959-82-8, \$17 <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>

A painfully funny, satirical romp through the inside politics of the haiku universe in the guise of a detective story set at a haiku convention. My wife (an innocent in the haiku wars) and I once made a pact: In bed at night, we would stop reading aloud from our books to each other to cut down on the interruptions of our own reading. *Haiku Wars* ended that conjugal cease-fire: I read her page after page until we laughed until we cried. I can think of no higher recommendation. A brilliant tour de force.

• • • •

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to read several boxes of haiku books, in all shapes and sizes, from over the world. The experience has renewed my respect for haiku and its possibilities as an art form. And I've been reminded, because it's too easy to forget, that many people out there know so much.

Mike Dillon's haiku appear in *The Haiku Anthology* (third edition) and *Baseball Haiku*, both published by Norton. His haiku have also appeared in seven Red Moon Anthologies. In 2004 he was awarded first place in the British Haiku Society's Seashell Game. In 2003, Red Moon Press published a book of his haiku, *The Road Behind*. Mike is a resident of the Pacific Northwest and is publisher of Pacific Publishing Co. in Seattle.

# Nicholas Virgilio Haiku Contest 2011

Judges' Comments

by

*Francine Banworth*, Dubuque, Iowa & *Tom Painting*, Atlanta, Georgia

November sky  
a lone seed drifts  
on wispy wings

*Martine Thomas*, 14, Grade 9  
Wilson Commencement High School  
Rochester, NY

November is the eleventh month of the year; the word itself suggests a feeling of longing as our eyes are directed toward the wide expanse of sky. Each line is balanced with four well-chosen syllables and a controlled rhythm that moves the reader through the poem. One can only wonder at the origin of the seed. Is it from a meadow, a vacant city lot? The November sky foreshadows winter, the imagery of which often centers on grief, distance, loss, and at times serenity. There is a vulnerability suggested in this haiku, but also a hint of hope. Will this seed come to rest on fertile ground? Will it fulfill its promise? The poet has fulfilled hers/his in this well-crafted haiku which gives us something to ponder.

August night  
eau de rain  
drifts on the wind

*Martine Thomas*, 14, Grade 9  
Wilson Commencement High School  
Rochester, NY

This haiku engages our senses – sight, sound, smell, touch, perhaps even taste. “Eau de rain” is in and of itself a lovely expression. In translation from the French, “eau de” may be

interpreted as “scent of.” The use of the French language adds a hint of mystery: nature’s perfume, or the scent of some human presence? Together with the opening line and the well-chosen verb “drifts” in line three, the poem flirts with the notion of change, a shift in the weather and for that matter the season that can be perceived through the senses.

AP Physics  
my eyes  
twitch

*Heather Zadra*, 18, Grade 12  
Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, CA

One measure of a successful senryu is to elicit from the reader a near instantaneous response. With a delightful and effective use of juxtaposition, there is no need to guess what this young author experiences as the brain tries to navigate advanced study in physics. If physics is the study of matter and its motion through space-time, then the poet has taken a moment along the continuum and made a precise and valid observation, the meaning of which registered with us at the speed of light.

story time  
under the covers  
the night’s warm whispers

*Mariah Wilson*, 14, Grade 9  
Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, CA

The alliterative quality of the words chosen by the poet is admired in this senryu. Upon reflection, Tom found himself remembering the bedtime stories told to him as a child and in more recent times having the pleasure of telling some of those same stories to his own children. The ritual of story time is timeless. The middle line of this poem serves as a pivot. It works simultaneously with the first and third lines and evokes a feeling of seamlessness. The poet is aware of the special

relationship between the storyteller and listener, a quiet moment of warm intimacy as the noise of the day fades away to sleep and dreams.

*Francine Banwarth* began writing and studying haiku in 1988. She is a co-founder of Haiku Dubuque and leads haiku workshops at The Foundry Books in Mineral Point, Wisconsin. She served as second vice president of the Haiku Society of America for three years and currently serves on the board of Modern Haiku. Her work appears in a variety of journals, anthologies, and contests. She is refining a workshop, "A Writing Life in Seventeen Syllables or Less," presented at the May 2011 HSA midwest regional meeting in Evanston, IL.



*Tom Painting* taught middle and high school creative writing for seventeen years at School of the Arts in Rochester, NY. He has been active in the haiku community for more than a decade. He served a first and second vice-president of the Haiku Society of America and was coeditor the editor of the 2005 HSA member's anthology. Most recently Tom taught a haiku course for adults at The Institute for Lifelong Learning at Emory University in Atlanta where he now resides.

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*Our thanks to these members who have made gifts in 2011 beyond their memberships to support HSA and its work.*

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## From The Editors

On page three, you will see a change in the submission policy:

All submissions must be original, unpublished work that is not being considered elsewhere and must not be on the Internet (except for Twitter and Facebook) prior to appearing in *Frogpond*

We have decided to accept Facebook and Twitter posts because they appear briefly to a selected audience before being replaced by a free-flowing and steady stream of new posts. Trying to find a haiku that was seen a week ago on either of these sites would be daunting.

On the other hand, what appears on e-zines and blogs is more permanent as well as more easy to access. Such sites are run by individuals who act as editors or gatekeepers. They decide what will appear on their sites and provide indices that make it easy to find the work of particular writers. In other words, they function much the same as print journals.

Because Facebook and Twitter are distinctly different from e-zines and blogs, we felt that it was only fair to allow authors who have posted original haiku on the former to be given the chance to have their work appear in *Frogpond*.

We have also expanded one of our innovations. In our very first issue (2008, 31:2), we added the general place of residence for contributors—the state or province for those from North America and the country (or perceived entity, e.g., Scotland instead of the United Kingdom) for those from elsewhere. For this issue, we have added the city or town as well. We feel that this extra information will help readers relate even more to the work of the contributors.

As always, we hope you enjoy this issue.

*George Swede*, Editor  
*Anita Krumins*, Assistant Editor



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