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frogpond



f r o g p o n d

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Submission periods are one month long: March for the spring/summer issue, July for the autumn issue, November for the winter issue. Send submissions to mketchek@frontier.com (preferred) or 125 High Street, Montclair NY 14609. See the submission guidelines at hsa-haiku.org/frogpond/submissions.html

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from the editor

I've never been good at hellos or goodbyes. And I'm not sure what to make of this whirlwind tenure of ours. It began, and now concludes, rather abruptly due to unfortunate circumstances. And for the duration—day to day, issue to issue—any charting of our course (or even personal recharging) had to be done on the fly.

Although our term was relatively short-lived (five issues, one shy of two years) I'd like to think it was a good run, and made some worthwhile mark. Creative excellence, in both form and content, has always been my passion, so getting to use my skill set in the service of *Frogpond* has been most rewarding.

Of course the demands of editorship also clarify one's limitations (an understatement). So I am deeply indebted not only to Joyce Clement, my conscientious coeditor, but to all those—too many to name here—who generously provided reviews, tributes, proofreading, copyediting, tech help, sage advice, and ideas. Their supportive contributions were invaluable.

Many thanks as well to our loyal readers, and a deep bow to everyone who contributed haiku, senryu, haibun, haiga, sequences, essays, re:readings, and what have you. Charles Trumbull's *Field Notes* series was also much appreciated.

I'm no better at toasts than I am with goodbyes, but here's to *Frogpond* holding to high journal standards and continuing to be a coveted showcase for haikai excellence.

We leave you with another brimful issue to enjoy, as those of us in the northern hemisphere at long last say goodbye to winter and hello to spring.

Christopher Patchel, Editor



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unable
to explain
wisteria

Mimi Ahern

haiku/senryu

morning mist
enough to make
the tractor shine

Rick Tarquinio

pigeons flashing
rubies and emeralds—
in love with love

Dian Duchin Reed

no wealth, no fame—
yet these minnows smooch
my ankles

William Ramsey

new moon
a swarm of hawk moths drawn
to my face

Lorin Ford

torchlight
 the gypsy horse's eyes
 shine back

Vanessa Proctor

to die
 knowing only stars
 of the northern sky

Billie Wilson

winter closing in
 or
 forest opening up

Mathew Kinsella

a crow departs
 from a standing stone's tenon
 hole in the clouds

paul m.

the view
from the high diving board
I saw it once

kjmunro

adult baptism
wet again
behind the ears

Ronald K. Craig

spring break
a familiar perfume
in the confessional

Joe McKeon

sitting with my accountant
all my little ways
laid bare

Michael McClintock

this year
no wishbone
big enough

Chuck Brickley

hovering
in the clinic doorway
a dandelion seed

Tanya McDonald

leaf drifts ...
an empty strip
of painkillers

Paul Chambers

winter wind
the corner oak swallows
barbs of wire

Mark Dailey

battle scars
the men
he couldn't save

Patricia Pella

the stray dog
he'd rather be petted
than eat

John Quinnett

the little things
that gnaw at me...
low tide

Julie Warther

frogspawn
the shape of things
that may never be

Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy

waiting room...
folding brochures
into cranes

C.R. Harper

bone tired
the maze
of hospital halls

Robyn Hood Black

convalescence
the clean clothes warm
from the sun

Els van Leeuwen

grandma's heart
still pumping for now
the last ripe tomato

Matthew Moffett

fading asters
the small favours
I remember

Martha Magenta

another moth hole
in my wardrobe...
still no Narnia

Scott Mason

family crèche
Jesus adored by the magi,
a unicorn, and Yoda

Hannah Mahoney

silent night...
stepping out of
the snow angel

Deb Koen

whiter
 than i believe in
 this full moon

Sondra J. Byrnes

taking me down a gravel road the blues man's voice

Chad Lee Robinson

talk radio—
 in autumn wind all corn stalks
 bend the same way

Ruth Yarrow

winter field
 furrow after furrow
 of fog

Steve Tabb

snowfall
a napping crow folds
black into black

Katherine Raine

eclipse
a rooster crows
at the second dawn

Barbara Tate

summer night—
my daughter brightens the moon
with her flashlight

Keith Polette

evergreen
our stories
taller now

Mary Hanrahan

supermoon
her outstretched hand
touches nothing

Adelaide Shaw

meteor shower
my wish list
in another coat

Robert Witmer

covering it
with duct tape:
the *check engine* light

John Budan

doomsday clock
this longing for time
before algorithms

Barbara Snow

premonition
 the moon above rimrock
 icy white

Billie Wilson

deer eyes . . .
 more an inkling
 than a thought

Claire Everett

twilight birds—
 the sound that comes
 from inside me

Sandra Simpson

winter stars
 the wind-blown voice
 of the creaking pine

John Barlow

forest bench
I sit where
the sun sat

Tanya McDonald

breathless heat
a cottonmouth stirs
the bayou shadows

Joseph Robello

mirror bending
beneath the weight of
water striders

David J. Kelly

self-awareness
the fingers that key
the idea

George Swede

the poet pecks
at his typewriter
hunger moon

George Dorsty

crowded bistro
only the bartender
knows I exist

William Scott Galasso

telling her
what he dislikes
the shortest day grows longer

Marian Olson

the cat
content to let me
do the talking

John Stevenson

raised paw
weighing all options
licking it

Peter Meister

adding some bite
to my bark
Year of the Dog

Marilyn Apple Walker

her bold questions—
clouds play hide and seek
with the moon

Sandra Simpson

pointing out
a winter butterfly
the shy girl

Peter Barnes

woolly bears
that moment
in autumn

Jeff Hoagland

leafmold
a salamander
winters alone

Bruce H. Feingold

the bed I'm not sleeping in moonlight

Brad Bennett

metallic sky
a decoy locked
in pond ice

Tom Painting

distant gunshot—
an ash leaf settles
on its shadow

Paul Chambers

before totality
a burst
of birdsong

Jeff Hoagland

ill wind
the sound of resistance
from the trees

Christopher Herold

turbulence
earth through a break
in the clouds

Tom Painting

high plains
 towns more and more alone
 with Orion's lean

Burnell Lippy

country church—
 on the steeple clocks
 four different times

Alan S. Bridges

Christmas service...
 the fresh and musty smells
 of clothes

Barnabas I. Adeleke

Holiday catalog
 the happy faces
 of paid strangers

Gregory Longenecker

psych ward
on family night
we play Scattergories

John S. O'Connor

a birth, a death...
the phone call
from the other coast

Cherie Hunter Day

the casket in cargo redeye

Roland Packer

home
town
hard
water

David Boyer

routines
will they be there
when I unpack?

Glenn G. Coats

same old quarrel...
alders catch a breeze
the firs don't feel

Aron Rothstein

not speaking
the sound of slippers
on pine floors

George Swede

beyond the patter
of dripping porch eaves...
the roar of rain

Wally Swist

howling wind
the kitten's purr
finds my palm

Sandi Pray

lamplight
on my bird's breast
shadow of his bell

Ruth Holzer

love—
the half question
in a cuckoo's song

Ashish Narain

riptide
her fear of drowning
in someone else

William Scott Galasso

standing my ground
 holes I leave
 in the sand

Julie Warther

beach rose
 the warmth of his hand
 in a daydream

Susan B. Auld

antiques
 for our anniversary
 a pair of red oars

Carol Ann Palomba

apostrophe moon
 the brides'
 I do

Carolyn Hall

break-up sex
unscripted
at last

Michael Henry Lee

empty lot full of improvisation

Sam Bateman

street art
neon
in the rain

Helen Buckingham

masked bandits
plunder the dumpster ...
harvest moon

Scott Mason

organic shop—
too broke to be
a hippie

Crystal Simone Smith

lunch hour . . .
we wait for a slice
of blue sky

Susan Constable

on the cusp
of promotion
dinner alone

Rick Carter

graduation cords our empty nest

Robyn Hood Black

a sketch before painting retirement

Victor Ortiz

yellowing leaves
a yen
to live simply

Michele Root-Bernstein

tiny cottage
a suburb
of bird houses

Michael Dudley

nesting dolls...
finding the child
I used to be

Rebecca Drouilhet

the baby feeds me
leaves from the cherry tree...
summer dusk

John Barlow

duraflame
my daughter & I
eat candy corn

Agnes Eva Savich

Thanksgiving night
 a full spread
 of black Friday ads

Jim Laurila

relaxed fit jeans
 unable to fasten
 the changing room door

John S. O'Connor

my resemblance
 to the Venus of Willendorf
 fallen leaves

Carolyn Hall

harvest moon
 the pickup low rides
 back to the barn

Lesley Anne Swanson

alone at dawn
signs of life
in the pelican's pouch

Lew Watts

morning dew
the little birds
on a rhino's back

Robert Witmer

tropical spring
the monkey's mouthful
of wildflowers

Malintha Perera

crimson sunset
the sugar cane blade
still warm

Ron C. Moss

after vacation
 the sunrise
 on my desktop

Jim Laurila

unpacking—
 the mountains stay
 folded inside me

Susan B. Auld

Chaco Canyon
 a corner window's
 ancient sky

Ann K. Schwader

heat shimmers
 a jellyfish fossil
 on top of the mesa

Rick Tarquinio

we stop talking
about the future...
goblin forest

Sandra Simpson

squall line
the leg band
on a red knot

paul m.

roiling white places the mountain in my river

Dan Schwerin

Mosses in rock cracks
sprinkled by falls—
some peace after sorrow

Rebecca Lilly

moon rabbit...
will I ever be
a grandmother?

Lorin Ford

her death day
abbreviates
the month

Francine Banwarth

keepsache

David J. Kelly

lavender—
when need and want
are one

Mimi Ahern

convalescence...
autumn revealing
the river

Paul Chambers

dry leaves
the last
little song

Ruth Holzer

hospice popsicle
how to blow the wrapper
free

Bill Cooper

visitation—
my hand print stays
on the casket

John S. O'Connor

talking religion
 the slipperiness
 of mossy stones

Bryan Rickert

ChristmasnowinGod

LeRoy Gorman

Mozart DNA we share with the pine

Michelle Tennison

first bees...
 in full flower
 a girdled beech

paul m.

a willow branch
 to strum the picket fence...
 sky full of stars

Robert Gilliland

Wordsworth country
I upload my walk
to iCloud

Claire Everett

penniless
from my travels
...a driftwood beach

Samantha Renda

where i fished as a boy
a boulder
just breaking the surface

Jeffrey Ferrara

opening day
last year's last place team
tied for first

Michael Ketchek

linked forms

Bending the Distance Between Space and Time

Some guy living in Einstein's old house in Princeton, New Jersey, once said he was fascinated by the light coming through the enormous picture window in the study. In the music room, too, he felt haunted by the physicist's benevolent ghost. The shivers down his back.

night passing
the almost scent
of a fox

Michele Root-Bernstein

Steady Breathing and Its Benefits

As the result of a simple misunderstanding with his therapist, Benny Newman has been circulating the city on a public bus, counting his breaths under his breath, for over five hours. In this time he has experienced zero anxiety, zero nausea, zero instances of misinterpreting the signals of strangers and has offered not one thought to the screech and hiss of air brakes or the mindless babble of passengers, which on any other day would press in on him like a lead blanket coated in spikes. When the driver rouses him at the end of her shift, Benny does not resist. He simply, with one final sigh, marks with his finger in the fog of the filthy window 4,348 and steps off the bus into the brisk and murky night.

fractals for which this breath cloud tends to infinity

Matthew Moffett

Respectable

When I brought Maureen, my college girlfriend, home to meet my parents, my mother gave her a separate room. Mom wasn't religious or opposed to premarital sex so privately I asked her what was going on. She said, "You will just have to sneak into her room later on." I replied, "Well, if you know we are having sex why can't we stay in the same room?" My mother gave me a look and answered, "Maybe Maureen doesn't want your dad and me to know you are having sex."

loose fitting gown
almost hides
the bride's belly

Michael Ketchek

Offerings

What I shall remember most is the way you come gliding along the paths of dawn, to your shrines, wearing brightly colored sarongs, and bearing woven bamboo trays lined with banana leaves, heaped with flowers and bits of fruit and other small mysteries...and incense smoke that drifts with the breeze. You place your offerings, one upon another, in temple niches...in *this* temple niche, a deep furrow in the trunk of an ancient banyan.

But no, that isn't what I'll remember most. What I'll remember is the one, slow, careful sweep of your hand guiding a scented breath of smoke to the nostrils of the great spirits who have always lived here in Bali.

offerings
heaped one upon another
gentle rain

Christopher Herold

An Even Trade: Confessions of a Wall Street Yogi

After the dharma talk, the market report. This, too, a matter of mind. How does consciousness arise with each of these Nasdaq gains? Follow the flow of Brent crude's dark fall? Find some commodity in the self?

breathing out the light on the monitor winks

To set this floating world apart just adds distress. Fretting the numbers. Bemoaning the tumbles. Riding too high on the bubbles.

ferris wheel revolution of the spirit

I wander away from the celebration. Back in the loft, I pull shreds of colored paper from my hair and sweater. Sweep something of the joy into a series of neat heaps. Make the mystical manifest. Add a bit of equity to the spirit. Offer a new valuation of the sacred.

ticker tape parade how to recycle it all

Matthew Caretti

Summer Posy

Woe is me at the kitchen table, stuck somewhere between dull and idea. My attention snags on an inchworm at the end of its petal.

every now and then
bubbles up
from the bottom mud

Michele Root-Bernstein

One Potato, Two Potato

My dad taught me on how to plant potatoes. His gnarled hands were still deft with a pen knife as he quartered the russets that he'd saved for seed. *Make sure there are at least two eyes on each chunk and put the cut side down in the furrow. Keep the stems buried as they grow. You can't eat sunburned spuds: they'll make you sick.* There were other things to watch for. Potato beetles weren't a problem for us but another small farm was inundated with the soft porn of orange instars. Plant and pest timed perfectly to grow together. When pit traps failed to stop the advance, the farmer sent his kids out to handpick the orange and black striped beetles before they could lay too many eggs on the foliage. On the afternoon before my dad died, I fled to his vegetable garden to pull the weeds choking his August tomatoes.

rain in the forecast
row after row
thirsty for water

Cherie Hunter Day

Fortune Teller

She or I could go any time. The house too big for one. But what do we do now? Some baseboards are warped. The stairwell wall needs painting. A door won't close completely. The back deck is rickety. Do we fix them or let time have its way?

grandson throws the ball
the arthritic golden lab
just wags its tail

George Swede

Trace

A dream startles me awake and then for hours the scent of that dream clings to my thoughts. Its urgency flares up even in sunlight.

letterpress
the bite of metal
into paper

Cherie Hunter Day

Of Mouse and Woman

Firstly, I will talk to my (almost) youngest self about that cottage by the sea with roses around the door. About the tall, handsome husband with dark hair and green eyes who will bring her flowers every day and never raise his voice in anger. I'll mention the four children—two boys, two girls (in no particular order)—the career as an osteopath (chosen because none of her friends could pronounce it, let alone knew what it was). And the cat called Marmalade (because Mummy hated ginger toms, whereas she liked them best of all). I will talk about life: how mostly, it just happens.

Then I'll talk to various younger selves about how plans are best laid with circumspection. We'll likely touch on never getting drunk. Or quitting college, or marrying too young. About never settling for second best, doing anything for a quiet life, or putting up and shutting up. And never ever getting divorced. Or sleeping with a stranger. (Hell, no.) We'll discuss never being so foolish as to fall in love a second time. Certainly, never remarrying. And one of them might ask, "What about saying 'never say never'?"

thunder stack—
a kestrel makes off
with something small

Claire Everett

Moving on, Sort of

The friend who collected our dreams and scattered them like seeds in his yard has died. Now we spend our days praying for rain and arguing over the afterlife and the disappearance of bees.

graveside
the thunk of a mower
in high grass

Bob Lucky

Jumping Rope in the Sky over San Antonio

Betty Fox, Stuntwoman and Aerialist, 1950s

The braided rope keeps me tethered to earth, my spangled blouse brushes the clouds. I make my living skipping rope over San Antonio.

Mother calls it child's play in a scanty costume. "It takes courage," I remind her, "to jump then land on a corner of the bank building's roof, thirteen stories above the ground."

"Edges, precipices," she says. "Isn't life dangerous enough?"

I don't share with her what joy it brings me: the rhythmic jumping, the slapping rope, the wind wafting my curls while below tiny heads turn skyward as secretaries, schoolteachers, and bank tellers sense how it feels to fly.

far away thunder only the sounds of bass

Doris Lynch

Narcissus Flycatcher

Window shopping. Suddenly confronted by my bewildered self. Almost instinctively, I clean my glasses. A pair of unprotected eyes. They draw me in like twin maelstroms. The swirling mixture of summer and autumn adds further confusion. Perhaps these are maps to explain the transition of seasons. The curious palette defies simple description, but they are most definitely not blue. Hurriedly, I conceal them, once again, behind large-framed spectacles and move off, hoping no one noticed.

hiding in plain sight
all the strangers
on a city street

David J. Kelly

In Good Company

Filling out the form with a trembling hand I am gripping the pen a bit harder than usual and the letters look tense and angular. Why? I am opting out of organ donation. As simple as that. I am not donating my eyes to anyone. And when it comes to my heart, I want to have a say in who receives it.

late autumn —
aboard the last boat
home

Stella Pierides

Bait and Switch

My favorite uncle was prone to mood swings, likely due to a stint in the navy during the Korean War and a propensity for shots and beers. So, imagine him cursing a bass until he landed it. Then, before slipping the fish into the water, drawing it to his face and kissing it on the lips.

mixing metaphors
a stranger in the barroom
mirror

Tom Painting

Keeping Score

Endless wildfires in British Columbia. Armageddon tornadoes in the US Midwest. The polar ice cap melting. Biblical flooding in the Great Lakes. Caribbean hurricanes like never before.

no-limit game
clubs
are trump

LeRoy Gorman

Arson

What she says next surprises me. "I've never made love to an Aries before." So, I buy her another drink and watch her stir the ice with an index finger.

crossroads
the burned-out foundation
of a farmhouse

Tom Painting

Sheen

My daughter tells me her name is too pink. Yet these were my considerations: That it begin with a warm round sound, like mine, like her grandmother's. That it tramp the woods, search for salamanders, sing the wind secret songs. That it stare down trespassers and maybe toss a pebble or two in the pond.

Years later I learn she's a synesthete, that the sound of me calling her to supper really does blow from my lips like bubble gum.

fresh rocks
in the garden
spring rain

Michele Root-Bernstein

Metastases

A couple of months on and the cygnets have grown almost to the size of adults, their plumage still grey but shaping nicely. A little further from the pond there's a twittering charm of goldfinches working cabbage thistles, a grey heron perched in a split-top pine, a slim figure of a kestrel on a power line overlooking the stream lined with colonies of himalayan balsam and japanese knotweed...

bone scan
you ask to keep it
between us

Polona Oblak

Italian Kiss Martini

Spirit forward, sweet around the rim, and served neat/up.
Painted face not required.

evening's last call
neon lights
the barroom floor

Francine Banwarth

Reaching

All Mike Samson can do is reach for things. He reaches for crayons, candies, the little cookies kept in a jar on top of the fridge. He reaches for Mom: her arms, eyes, the hem of her skirt as it swishes away. Reaches for Aunt Jenny, Aunt Molly, anyone, to pick him up. Little Mikey with the outstretched fingers. Little Mikey the invisible boy. Once, just to hear its strings, he reaches for his father's guitar, but the case is empty. Nothing but dust and spiders. He reaches for the sun, which blinds him; reaches for Jesus, which shatters. Little Mikey whose father is a wisp of smoke, whose father is a voiceless crow. He reaches for Grandma's razor, which cuts his fingers; reaches for Grandpa's whiskey and drinks it, scorching his throat, and everything's spinning, spinning, until he wakes up some distant morning in a smoky, piss-wet daze.

empty bottle
he retches, coughs up
a firefly

Matthew Moffett

Mountain Dweller

Every family needs its holy man. So I renounce. Not the world, but my attachment to it. Leave it all. Them, too. Try to find my way to simplicity. Humility.

But the gods have a great taste for irony. High in those foreign mountains I find only loneliness. Confusion. Soon I renounce renunciation. Return home to their simple ways. Their kind humility.

at the threshold
a churn of dry leaves
scratch of old scars

Matthew Caretti

Cells

wren song
not so much who I am
as where

This past week a lynx was slain in a Welsh town—it had escaped from a zoo. And a tiger that fled the circus was shot on a Paris street.

sun-tipped frost
a wish to magically
disappear

Claire Everett

Three Dreams in Winter

1.

Last night I woke up after a bad dream and felt around for my phone, either to link me to the real world or distract me from it, I'm not sure which. When I pressed the home button, instead of the picture of peonies I'd set on the lock screen, a picture of you appeared. It was that one I took of you on your new bicycle, about to ride off to work. I pressed the button again and shook the phone, as if this could make you dissolve. Instead you became animated, or perhaps I should say agitated. You lifted your feet from the ground, turned away from the camera, launched yourself forward, disappeared.

snow falling
the space
between branches

In the morning, the peonies were back. You were still gone.

in the afterlife just before it snows

2.

Over the weekend—I'm not sure whether you still pay attention to the weather around here—we had our first hard frost and I ran a fever, as if my getting hot could counteract the chill. I was lying in bed shivering and trying to read when the cat we had when we were first married started pacing around my head, lashing her tail gently across my face. I tried to bat her away, but my hands went right through her. No, she said in some language that was and wasn't English, I'm not a ghost.

snow forecast
it falls out
of my purse

She lay down in the crook of my arm and began to explain your side of things in a way that was very eloquent but didn't make any more sense than when you explained it yourself.

behind every snowflake one mountain

3.

I woke up early one morning and you were looking out at snow falling. The snowflakes started turning into butterflies. Is it a metaphor? I asked you but you shook your head.

heavy snow
the sound
it doesn't make

The metaphor is, I'm awake now.

snow anything yet I haven't unfolded

Melissa Allen

All Saints' Day

with such hope
we return them to the earth
funeral mums

going around with
the dirt under my nails

these acres of corn
each autumn a walk
with the dead

one more needle
for the path
others have taken

leaf vein imprints
on the sidewalk

streets of gold
her wish
to go barefoot

Julie Warther
Dan Schwerin

essays

JOHN O'CONNOR IS DEAD

John S. O'Conner

John O'Connor is dead. The other John O'Connor. I know I am two and a half years late with this news, but it saddens me nonetheless. *That* John O'Connor was a great haiku poet from New Zealand. He helped me understand haiku more deeply than I ever had before. Though we never met in person we wrote together, led somewhat parallel lives—as classroom teachers and poets—and for a few years we regularly exchanged letters from “the other side of the world.”

garage sale—
in the dressing-table mirror
a stranger's face

John O'Connor

In 1994 I received my first and only “cease and desist” letter, my first letter from John O'Connor. It came in one of those weirdly folded international letter-envelopes I always seemed to ruin when I sliced them open with a butter knife. I had written and received many of these letters since my parents were Irish immigrants and most of our relatives still lived in the old country. Relatives wrote me throughout my boyhood, asking for updates, exchanging gossip, and encouraging me to consider the priesthood. No one had received the calling in our family and I was, perhaps, the last hope. (My Aunt Catherine was a close call. She had entered the novitiate when she was a teenager, but in her late teens, after having been ordained, she hopped the convent wall and kept on running, all the way to Chicago.)

Nineteen ninety four was a momentous year in my life. I had recently returned to my hometown of Chicago, my father

had died the year before, and my wife and I just had our first child, our daughter Alison. It was also around this time when I started writing haiku fairly regularly. I was part of a fledgling haiku group in Chicago (Chi-ku) and found this new world to be both supportive and fascinatingly diverse: there was a dentist, a painter, a Jungian analyst, an encyclopedia editor, a yoga instructor, a retiree who delivered Meals on Wheels to shut-ins. I thought I was really on to something.

dawn approaching . . .

the terrier catches a scent

in the hedges

John S. O'Connor

I had just started writing and publishing haiku (in fact, “dawn approaching,” my first published haiku, had appeared in *Modern Haiku* a few years earlier). The other John O'Connor had read a few of them, and he wanted me to stop. His objection was not literary. Rather he was concerned about the use of his name—my name—our name. He was fifteen years my senior (not quite a historical generation), had been publishing haiku for a while, had won some international contests and some notoriety. Now that I had started publishing poems under the name John O'Connor, he worried that people might mistake my poems for his.

So, he proposed that I call myself “John O'Connor (Chicago).” This would distinguish my work from his (me from him). What an ego, I thought. This guy wants to preserve his haiku “celebrity”? Then I was outraged. Even though I loved my hometown, I didn't see why I had to change. Why couldn't *he* change if he was so concerned about the ambiguity?

nothing special the wind shifts a cloud

jso

Snail mail slowed down our snit. (Remember the old joke about the salesman snail who gets a door slammed in his face? He goes flying. Twenty-five years later he knocks on the same door and says, “What the hell was that for?”) I sent back my reply saying I would not change my name—but I asked about his middle name.

If his middle name began with a different letter than “S”—my middle name is Shanahan—I’d be happy to use my middle initial. Seven weeks later I received his reply. We had a deal. I’ve used my middle initial ever since.

electrical storm—
 my daughter practices
 the letter “S” *jso*

Over the next few years, John and I traded letters and we occasionally spotted each other’s work in international magazines. We even wrote a rengay, a poem of linked haiku where we each contributed a haiku in response to the other’s verse. I started by sending him several haiku and he chose one to which he’d write a response. Some of these poems arrived by regular post and some by e-mail—this was the era of that transition. It was like the poetry version of long-distance chess. Just two and a half years later we had finished our collaborative poem, “Multiples.” John told me it appeared in the New Zealand journal *Spin*, though I never saw it in print.

Multiples

spring rain
 fathers playing catch
 with sons *jso*

between each cloud
 a patch of blue *jo*

sunday morning
 the call and response
 of two cardinals

thunder—
 the parson bird’s lappet
 in mirror glass

shadowy tennis court
mixed doubles

receding hills ...
echo
of the last train

In response to my third verse, John noted that the then-cardinal of New York was also named John O'Connor. He did not, so far as I know, ask the cardinal to change his name to John O'Connor (New York).

I hadn't thought about "Multiples" again until last month when I came across the news that John had died. He died in 2015, but I did not hear the news until this year.

first flurries ...
reading online
obits

jso

They used to call obituaries "the Irish sports pages" but I hadn't set out to read John's obit. Rather, I wanted to see what he'd been up to, what he'd been writing lately. What I found instead were many beautiful tributes online. So many people admired John's poetry, his encouragement of young writers, his attentiveness to the world.

It is always a bit startling to see your name in an obit. It's something like the shock of seeing your name on a headstone, a frequent scene in literature. Think of the Ghost of Christmas Yet-To-Come in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*:

"Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point," said Scrooge, "answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be or are they the shadows of things that May be, only?" Still the ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

Or, think of our namesake John, from the Vonnegut novel *Cat's Cradle*, who sees his own last name carved on the pedestal of a stone angel in the salesroom of a tombstone shop. The sight is so stunning, it propels him toward an outlawed religion, Bokononism, a religion that admits its teachings are lies, but also encourages people to accept those lies in order to live happier and more fulfilled lives.

In James Joyce's *The Dead*, Michael Furey is buried in a cemetery in Oughterard, a tiny town in Galway. That fictional detail is based on a visit Joyce paid to Galway in 1912. Joyce cycled to Oughterard to visit his wife's relative's grave and was stunned to find a headstone with the name "J. Joyce" on it. I first heard this story in an Anglo-Irish literature class in college. It was the first time I spoke in that class. For the first time in my life I was proud of my Irish roots. We had visited a cemetery in Oughterard on the only family vacation we ever took. There were many headstones named O'Connor in that field, including one of Michael O'Connor, my father's father.

It was a special shock to hear John had died in 2015, another momentous year for me. This was the year in which my mom and my brother died.

My brother, who was named for our father (and his father), was actually named John O'Connor for three days. My mother had made that decision, but when my father found out, he had the birth certificate changed. I was named for my mother's father, another man I never met. My middle name was my mother's maiden name, Shanahan, hence the "S."

John O'Connor (New Zealand) died in May 2015, my mother three months later, and my brother just Mike died just three weeks after that. O'Connors, all.

address book
no one left
in the middle

jso

I've saved several of John's letters, just as I have saved every letter from my mother and brother. I have also saved my brother's last voice message on my cell phone. Even when my voice mail box was full, I couldn't bring myself to erase his voice, him. He says, "Happy birthday." He tells me about his daughter's birthday (we share the same birth date), and then he says, "There's no reason to call back or anything. I know I'll catch up with you at some point. Hope you're having a good day and hope you have a good year. Talk to you later. Bye now."

Like an archaeologist, or an archivist, I've saved every one of these artifacts. I pull them out every now and then. Why? To prove I was—am—alive. They tell stories, and I tell stories about them. Isn't that what storytelling is all about? Stories make the past present again. The literary present, the presence of characters who continue to populate the story of our lives, even when they're gone. It's an incredible magic trick. Every time a reader opens *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens' ghost speaks anew. And every time I hear my brother's voice saying "Bye now," it is the now of the present and not the now of the distant past. Stories are the best answer, maybe the only answer, to the question "What the hell was that for?"

The letters, the voice messages... sometimes I feel like I am curating a museum of my own life—and theirs—a docent to an ongoing exhibit, whose run has been extended indefinitely, an exhibit no one will ever fully see. Staring at these artifacts, I'm listening to the dead, celebrating their lives. Celebrating my own life. Celebrating the fact that it's not yet closing time.

attic dust
finding my mother's
footprints

jo

BETWEEN WORD AND IMAGE: A GALLERY WALK THROUGH CONTEMPORARY HAIGA

Michele Root-Bernstein

It's a good thing I broke my foot in the summer of 2017, because all the time I would have spent gallivanting around, I devoted instead to organizing an exhibit of haiga for the Residential College of Arts and Humanities (RCAH) LookOut! Art Gallery at Michigan State University (MSU). The idea for *Haiga: The Poetry of Images*, aka *Between Word and Image*, had come to me in a flash some six months before, as a means of outreach to students and community members for Evergreen Haiku, the monthly study group I facilitate for the RCAH Center for Poetry. With funding from the Haiku Society of America and MSU, and support from study group members, chief among them Steve Hodge and Michael Rehling, Evergreen Haiku put together a show focused on the picture-poems of two regional, yet very different haikai artists—Chase Gagnon and Lidia Rozmus—and placed them in a context of international English-language haiga.

The pairing of Gagnon and Rozmus evoked a number of apparent polarities, not only between word and image, but between novice and master, old and new visual arts, realistic and figurative approaches to representation, and the inspirations of man-made and natural environments. Gagnon is a young roamer of streets in down-and-out Detroit, relatively new to haiku and to the urban photography that lends his haiga their hyper-realistic power. Trained in the traditional black-ink painting called *sumi-e*, Rozmus has produced hundreds of ethereal haiga over the last twenty years or so, many appearing in her own books or as covers for haiku journals such as *Mayfly*.

At the exhibit opening, which attracted a good-size crowd, I made a joke about my walking boot and recalled that the word

haiga means “playful painting” in Japanese. Play in general is simultaneously purposeless and practical, subversive and affirming. Play is a mash-up of the literal and the figurative, a momentary improvisation for keeps. So, too, these haiga, which thrive on the separate, yet side-by-side fictions of poem and picture. The very incompleteness of their relationship is what drives their connection. That said, I invited gallery guests to peruse the haikai art on display and play around with meaning. I, too, immersed myself in the challenge.

I started with the twenty or so haiga Gagnon had chosen for display. Over and again, the haiku spoke to me of loss, hope, brokenness, persistence, despair, resolution, decay, and growth—his own and others:

old neighborhood
volunteers painting
over my graffiti

His gritty depictions of the urban underbelly, in grainy, stark color, drew me out of my comfort zone, to places I normally avoid and people I do not really see: ghetto streets, abandoned buildings, back alleys, homeless men, exhausted women. Haiga by haiga, Gagnon dragged me into the physical and emotional labyrinths of his reality—and pointed me the way through, to respite, beneath a desolate underpass:

dead of winter
my lungs fill
with moonlight

At their best, Gagnon’s haiga demanded my empathy for lives led in empty places—and did not take no for answer. *maybe they can / and there’s a reason they don’t*, insists the haiku he placed with a monochrome photo of an abandoned house on an abandoned street (Plate 3). For all the real decay, I suddenly realized, *these speechless walls* also let in light from a fleeting break in the clouds. The transcendent moment captured on film lends a sub-

lime dignity to the place and its people. In another haiga of an apparently well-kept house and walled-in garden, Gagnon once again gnawed through my first responses. *monochrome filter / how much of this life / have I suppressed* had me noticing that graffiti covered every surface of the story.

Limping from one side of the exhibit to the other, from Gagnon to Rozmus, felt like passing through the looking glass. Rozmus quells inner doubts and demons by turning away from the urban landscape to the natural environment, from distraction to simplicity:

silence
I hide in
for a moment

In her haiku, one feeling at a time gains entry:

nothing else matters
just this wind
touching my skin

Or say, rather, that the artist has created a cloister of her own imagining within which she strives to pin down the peace that so constantly calls and confounds us:

winter dream
I am sewing on the button
with one hole

There is an ecstatic element to Rozmus's art, as ably expressed visually as verbally. In one ink painting silence is rendered as a bending brush stroke, a heartbeat, a detour, a return. In another, breath becomes an infinity of circles scratched on black board. And consider the haiku, *starry night*. An objective observation in the second line, *I'm here*, is followed by the subjective realization in the third, *and there*. In a moment of intuition, the *I* diffuses into the nothing of everything. The insight is visualized in an

accompanying photo so close to its subject as to elude recognition. Thus the image complements and expands the verbal surrender of self.

Rozmus magnified this resonant effect for me by presenting each of her haiku in three languages and coupling them to three different art forms. Her haiku in English went hand in hand with the black and white photography of Iwona Biedermann. The same haiku in Japanese (calligraphy by Masanobu Hoshikawa) accompanied Rozmus's sumi-e painting. And, finally, the haiku translated into Rozmus's mother tongue, Polish, partnered with her spare pencil drawings on black board. (These collaborative haiga were all drawn from Rozmus's 2017 book, *In Silence*, published by Deep North Press.)

In each art form, the representation of reality is abstract, which is to say, whittled down to essence. I was free to see in the bare lines and shapes what I wanted and needed to see. In *starry night*, for example, I and other gallery guests might contemplate three times over the nature of our fusion with the universe: as a formation of frost on ground in Biedermann's "unrecognizable" photo, mentioned above; as a spray of ink in Rozmus's sumi-e; and as a constellation of points on an infinite plane in Rozmus's black board drawing (see Plate 5, the Polish translation replaced by the haiku in English). Each iteration of the haiga, each alteration of language and imagery, added nuance to the kaleidoscopic view of a singular feeling.

As I read Rozmus, art meant stripping experience bare of the very details that called Gagnon to expression. On the surface of things, these two haikai artists occupied opposite ends in the spectrum of practice. And yet, I felt some fundamental likenesses. Both artists appeared to value spontaneity of expression, both found sustenance in imagination and dream, both sought communion with what is other—Gagnon tiptoeing on thin ice to Nirvana (Plate 2); Rozmus in search of the brush stroke without beginning or end, in this instance paired with her own photography (Plate 1). Whether engaging or disengaging from a troublesome world, both chose the art of haiga to see and to understand more deeply.

The same must also be said for the seventeen haiga artists who contributed one or more images to the show's contextual display of English-language haiga from around the globe. These included Ion Codrescu of Romania; Ron C. Moss of Australia; Kris Moon of Japan; Adjei Agyei-Baah of Ghana, alone and in collaboration with Helmut Lotti of Belgium; Tatjana Debeljački of Serbia; and Guntram Porps of Germany, in collaboration with Robert Moyer of the U.S.A. The display featured other American haiga artists as well, notably Alexis Rotella, Sandi Pray, Roberta Beary, and the late Jane Reichhold. Four Evergreen Haiku members also provided haiga.

Making my way along this third display one step at a time, I looked for a sharing of purpose and meaning in an otherwise solitary game, the idea of which was neatly captured by Rotella's haiga, *Hey* (Plate 6). Agyei-Baah used photomontage to illustrate rather literally the words *leafless tree—/ lifting a cup of nest / to the sky*. Debeljački used mixed media to describe almost stroke for stroke the spoken scene in *sudden rain / waiting for someone's / umbrella*. Exploiting the same illustrative approach to the relationship of image and word, both haiga thematically explored the consolations that made up for pain and loss.

In similar vein, I found myself comparing Porps's scribbled figure of a woman, presented with Moyer's *10 years later / in your voice on the phone / salt air*, to Pray's pointillistic rendering of a tree, accompanied by her *seed catalog / the colors of / a winter daydream*. In both haiga the visual and the verbal go beyond simple illustrative connection to interpret one another and to evoke the imaginative powers that make of the past or the future a present thing.

Roberta Beary's haiku matched to a family photo, along with a multi-media dreamscape by Kris Moon, made one last matching set of haiga that resonated with one another—and with me. On the *church steps* (Plate 4), a space just shy of the contemplation of eternity, Beary sees *a mourning dove / with mother's eyes*. (The haiku won 1st Prize in the 1st Basho Haiku Challenge.) Moon's figurative image of a glowing lantern or a beer mug frothing with ethereal foam toys with conceptions of *moonlight*

escaped (Plate 7). Despite obviously different visual and verbal styles, both haiga take an expansive view of the relationship between image and word. And both evoke the call of this world as a summons to spirit.

Wherever they hailed from, however they expressed themselves, haiga artists in the global display made a point of noticing, questioning, crying out, connecting, and, yes, playing deep as if their lives, our lives, depended on it. And don't they? William Carlos Williams once suggested that without the insights of poetry we risk dying a little every day. Leaning on the crutch, I took one last look at two haiga by Ron C. Moss.

In the first, *winter orchard* (placing fourth in the Zen Garden Haiku Contest for 2007), a stark black and white photograph highlights the sheen on two lusciously ripe fruits (Plate 8). My first thought was to remember the play-with-your-food meme that has us carving faces in oranges and eggplants. My second was to deem Moss's play deeply serious and subtle, for without modification these fruit mysteriously stand in for other things: the huts of fruit pickers, as the accompanying haiku suggests, or a fruit picker and the poet, perhaps. There is a communion beneath the moon that eases the rigors of winter, of hard work, of difference.

In the second Moss haiga a black and white photo of a bird's head, vertically mirrored, is equally realistic and abstract in impact. Set in middle ground between the bird and its reflection, the haiku directed my gaze outward and also inward, to the creative tension between what breaks and what mends our lived experience:

refugee huts
ravens rest inside
their shadows

A slide show of Haiga: The Poetry of Images, featuring the entire exhibit, will be posted sometime soon on the HSA website.



one breath
one brush stroke
one

thin ice
I tiptoe my way
to nirvana



Plate 3: Chase Gagnon




*Maybe they can
and there's a reason they don't
these speechless walls*

on the
church
steps
a mourning
dove
with
mother's
eyes



Roberta
Beary



starry night
I'm here
and there



Plate 5: Lidia Rozmus

Plate 6: Alexis Rotella

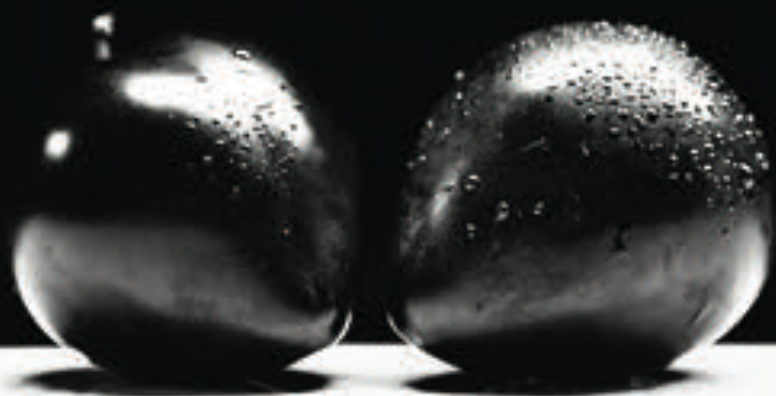
HEY
WE'RE
STANDING
UNDER
THE SAME
CLOUD

ALEXIS
ROTELLA

Plate 7: Kris Moon

moonlight escape

Acrylic on canvas



winter orchard
a fruit picker's hut
lit by the moon

BUT TELL IT SLANT

Anita Virgil

This poetry of implication. Why is haiku so broadly appealing emanating as it does from an agrarian society steeped through millennia in veiled emotions and intent? I can only speak for myself, but I sense others may feel the same. The later haiku of Bashō laid the foundations of what many of us write today—a haiku whose focus on nature deemphasizes the individual. Yet it allows for reaching deep inside one’s self to bring out through those nature images “objective correlatives,” T. S. Eliot’s term. Meaning, as I understand those two words: external parallels to internal matters. But I simply refer to this process with the more recent term “projection.” It allows one to vent surreptitiously. Thus we [certainly I] simultaneously veil certain of the most tender, unhealed wounds life has dealt us. Here I shall point openly to one set of connections I have drawn between haiku and my life experiences.

Reading R. H. Blyth’s *Haiku: Volume 1, Eastern Culture*, I came upon this:

A COURTEZAN ENCLOSURE

A *hotoguisu* sings;
 In the dawn
 I am made to buy an umbrella. *Kikaku* (348)

Whatever else Kikaku was describing about the Yoshiwara, it was “*I am made to*” that unexpectedly tore off a forgotten scab. Wrenched me back in time to my teens when I lived in New York City. Laid bare the most humiliating experience ever foisted upon me. One I never explored before.

on a hot summer morning
 I am made to pawn
 mother's mink coat AV

No need to go into how such a demand could be made. Years go by...

My thatched hut;
 In the world outside
 Is it harvest time? *Bashō (346)*

And this happens in my world:

my mother cracks;
 outside the ambulance windows
 it is lunch time AV

Many more years pass. I report her lack of progress to my beloved former step-father. In my head I hear his anguish:

Arise, arise,
 And be my companion
 Sleeping butterfly. *Bashō (43)*

At the last conversation I had with my mother, still tangled in her delusions, once again a haiku perfectly describes my internal landscape:

The coolness;
 The voice of the bell
 As it leaves the bell! *Buson (338)*

It takes so long, the letting go that has to occur. It is where I am now.

In the midst of the plain
 Sings the skylark,
 Free of all things. *Bashō (26)*

TOUCHING THE MOON: TWENTY-FOUR SHIKISHI

Michael Dylan Welch

come outside!
 we can almost touch
 the spring moon *Teijo Nakamura*

On September 17, 1978, for the tenth anniversary of the Haiku Society of America, the society's annual meeting in New York City was a particularly special occasion. It included a visit by a distinguished haiku scholar and notable poet from Japan, and the donation of twenty-four *shikishi*, or poem cards, to the society. The society's twentieth anniversary book, *A Haiku Path*, portrays the event as follows (163):

For the annual meeting of 1978, the critic Kenkichi Yamamoto and the haiku poet Sumio Mori were invited by the HSA to come from Japan to speak on haiku. Held on September 17 at Japan House in New York City, this historic occasion was opened by HSA President Cor van den Heuvel welcoming the distinguished speakers and thanking those who had helped make the event possible, especially the co-sponsor, Japan Society, HSA vice president Yasko Karaki, Kazuo Sato of Tokyo's Museum of Haiku Literature, and Japan Air Lines. A short address by Yukio Sugano, representing the Consul General of Japan, stressed the universality of haiku and the value of the HSA's efforts on its behalf. Yasko Karaki introduced the two speakers. Takako Lento interpreted for them as they gave their talks.

Kenkichi Yamamoto (1907–1988) is described in *A Haiku Path* as being “the most influential haiku critic and commentator in modern times” (163). Sumio Mori (1919–2010) was editor of

the haiku journal *Kanrai (Cold Thunder)* from 1957 to 1971, and was one of Japan's leading haiku poets. The talks given by these two poets and scholars appeared in *Frogpond* 1:4, 1978, and in *A Haiku Path* (pages 163 to 173).

As is common among the Japanese, the two visitors came with a generous gift, described as follows in *A Haiku Path* (174):

Messrs. Yamamoto and Mori brought with them a set of twenty-four haiku written on *shikishi* by contemporary Japanese haiku poets as a gift from the Museum of Haiku Literature in Tokyo to the Haiku Society of America. A *shikishi* is a more or less square decorative paperboard and is commonly used by the haiku poet to write his haiku for presentation or display. The twenty-four *shikishi* were displayed at Japan House during the HSA annual meeting.

Those in the audience each received a copy of *Haiku Selected for Shikishi*, with one-line translations of the twenty-four haiku by Hiroaki Sato. The booklet was published by Ikuta Press in Kobe, Japan, in an edition of 500, which were also given to HSA members until they ran out.

Over the years, the *shikishi* were displayed occasionally at HSA meetings, and were featured at the Dalton School in New York City at the 2003 Haiku North America conference. In 2006, the HSA deeded the *shikishi* to the American Haiku Archives, and joined the rest of the HSA's official archives at the California State Library in Sacramento. At about this time, William J. Higginson estimated the value of these *shikishi* at between \$100,000 and \$120,000, based on the typical rate original *shikishi* by these famous poets would sell individually. In the decade since then, their value has gone much higher. As a set, their value is now perhaps as much as \$500,000, but as a gift their value is priceless.

On September 26, 1998, HSA president Kristen Deming wrote to Dr. Kevin Starr, California State Librarian. She said "Thank you for your letter of congratulations on the Haiku Society of America's 30th Anniversary... You can rightly be proud of the Library's haiku collection, surely the richest and most inclu-

sive in the country.” She also said that the society “has an important collection of haiku *shikishi* (original calligraphy on special paper display cards) by some of Japan’s most famous haiku poets, which we would like to send to the Archives in the future. Perhaps someday you would like to exhibit them at the Library along with translations and some information about the poets.”

Kristen Deming’s desire is now reality. In December of 2017, and until the end of April 2018, the California State Library is exhibiting the Haiku Society of America’s twenty-four *shikishi* with new translations by Michael Dylan Welch and Emiko Miyashita. This exhibit helps to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Haiku Society of America in 2018, as do the twenty-four *shikishi* haiku translations presented here along with four *shikishi* color reproductions. A complete presentation of all twenty-four *shikishi* and supplementary material can be found online at the American Haiku Archives website (americanhaiku-archives.org).

The calligraphy of the twenty-four *shikishi* contributors varies from simple and utilitarian to flamboyant and decorative. Each poet created his or her *shikishi* by hand, including brush paintings as well as the calligraphy. These *shikishi* have importance beyond their significance as artwork, however. In describing this exhibit for publicity purposes, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts and current California state poet laureate Dana Gioia said the following:

The great haiku tradition of Japan has been part of California poetry since the beginning when Yone Noguchi arrived here over a century ago to introduce the form into English. The haiku tradition was carried on by Japanese Americans who practiced this exquisite art even in the grimness of World War II internment camps. Today haiku is a central poetic form in English-language literature. The public presentation of these twenty-four haiku on *shikishi* poem cards has a special resonance for California. They deepen our historic cultural link with Japan and recall our diverse past. There is no way to understand our poetry without recognizing the haiku.

These shikishi also resonate with importance for the entire United States and beyond. In Japan, the moon is revered as one of haiku's most important *kigo*, or season words. Through haiku, Japan has shown the moon to the world in a new way. And through the efforts of countless poets, translators, and scholars, the world can now see haiku. The poems in these shikishi represent not just their authors but also the light of the haiku moon as a gift to the world. As with Teijo Nakamura's poem included among these shikishi, we are perpetually invited to come outside to celebrate the moon. We trust that these shikishi created by twenty-four of Japan's leading poets of the twentieth century will continue to inspire all ages of haiku writers in the United States and beyond for many years. The Haiku Society of America and the American Haiku Archives extend much gratitude to the Museum of Haiku Literature in Tokyo and to all the contributing poets for their lasting generosity.

THE TWENTY-FOUR SHIKISHI

Translations by Michael Dylan Welch and Emiko Miyashita. Names are given in the Japanese order, surname first. Image scans courtesy of the American Haiku Archives, California State Library in Sacramento.

ささなみの国の濁酒酔ひやすし
sasanami no kuni no doburoku yoiyasushi Akao Tōshi, 1925–1981

raw sake
 from Lake Biwa's shore —
 soon makes me drunk

今日の月長い芒を生けにけり
kyō no tsuki nagai susuki o ike ni keru Awano Seiho, 1899–1992

harvest moon
 I have arranged
 silver grasses

らんぷ売るひとつらんぷを霧にともし
ranpu uru hitotsu ranpu o kiri ni tomoshi

安住 敦
Azumi Atsushi, 1907–1988

lamp seller—
 one of his lamps
 lighting the fog

火を焚きて美しく立つ泉番
hi o takite utsukushiku tatsu izumiban

平畑 静塔
Hirahata Seitō, 1905–1997

building a bonfire
 the keeper of the well
 stands beautifully

暁は宵より淋し鉦叩
akatsuki wa yoi yori sabishi kanetataki

星野 立子
Hoshino Tatsuko, 1903–1984

the dimness of dawn
 is lonelier than dusk—
 a handbell cricket

ふだん着でふだんの心桃の花
fudangi de fudan no kokoro momo no hana

細見 綾子
Hosomi Ayako, 1907–1997

in everyday clothes
 and everyday mind—
 peach blossoms

ねむる嬰兒水あけてゐる薔薇のごとし
nemuru yaya mizu akete iru bara no gotoshi

飯田 龍太
Iida Ryūta, 1920–2007

like a cut rose
 drawing up water
 sleeping newborn

原爆地子が陽炎に消えゆけり 石原 八束
genbakuchi ko ga kagerō ni kieyukeri Ishihara Yatsuka, 1919–1998

A-bomb site—
 a child disappears
 into the heat shimmer

梅咲いて庭中に青鯨が来ている 金子 兜太
ume saite niwajū ni aozame ga kiteiru Kaneko Tohta, 1919–

plums in bloom
 all over the garden
 blue sharks

原爆図中口あくわれも口あく寒 加藤 楸邨
genbakuzuchū kuchi aku ware mo kuchi aku kan Katō Shūson, 1905–1993

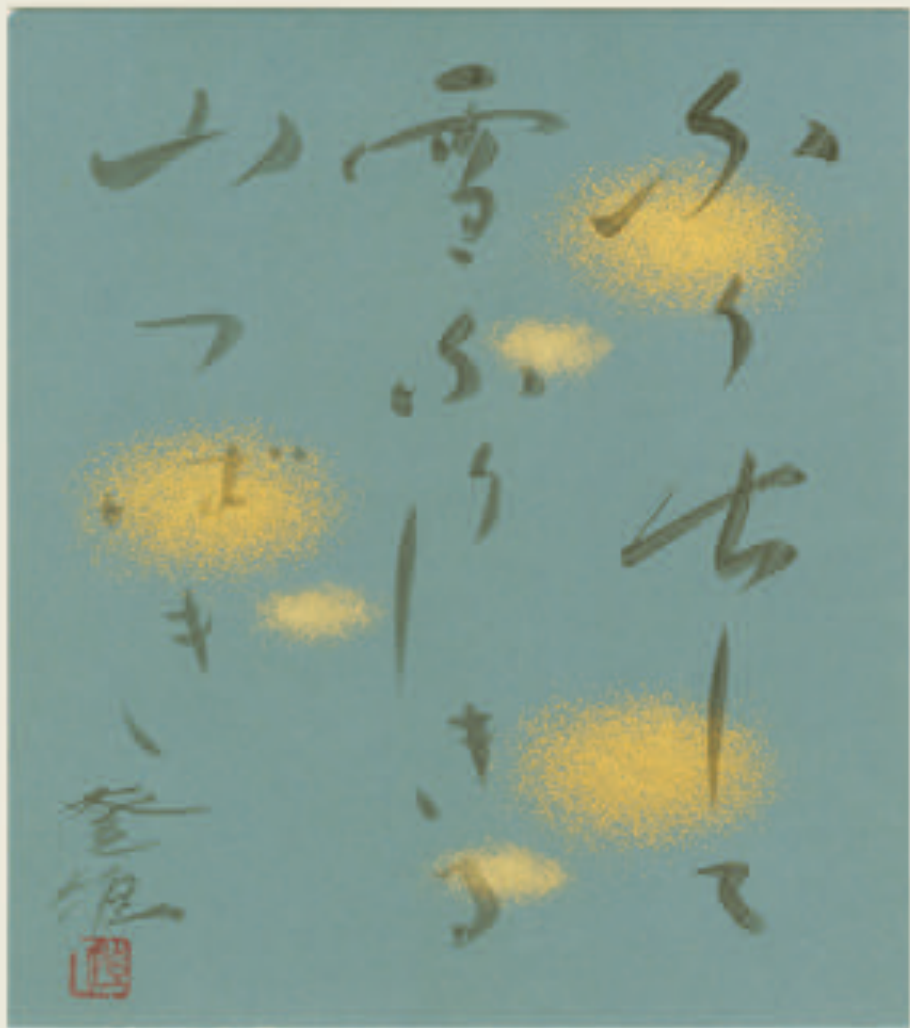
an open mouth
 in the A-bomb picture—mine too
 midwinter

春雨の雲より鹿やみかさ山 皆吉 爽雨
harusame no kumo yori shika ya mikasayama Minayoshi Sōu, 1902–1983

a deer out of the clouds
 of spring rain ...
 Mount Mikasa

月いでて薔薇のたそがれなほつづく 水原 秋櫻子
tsuki idete bara no tasogare nao tsuzuku Mizuhara Shūōshi, 1892–1981

emerging moon—
 twilight lingers
 in the roses



ふり出して雪ふりしきる山つばき
furidashi te yuki furishikuru yamatsubaki

森 澄雄

Mori Sumio, 1919–2010

snow falling
and still falling
mountain camellia



夢の世に葱を作りて寂しさよ

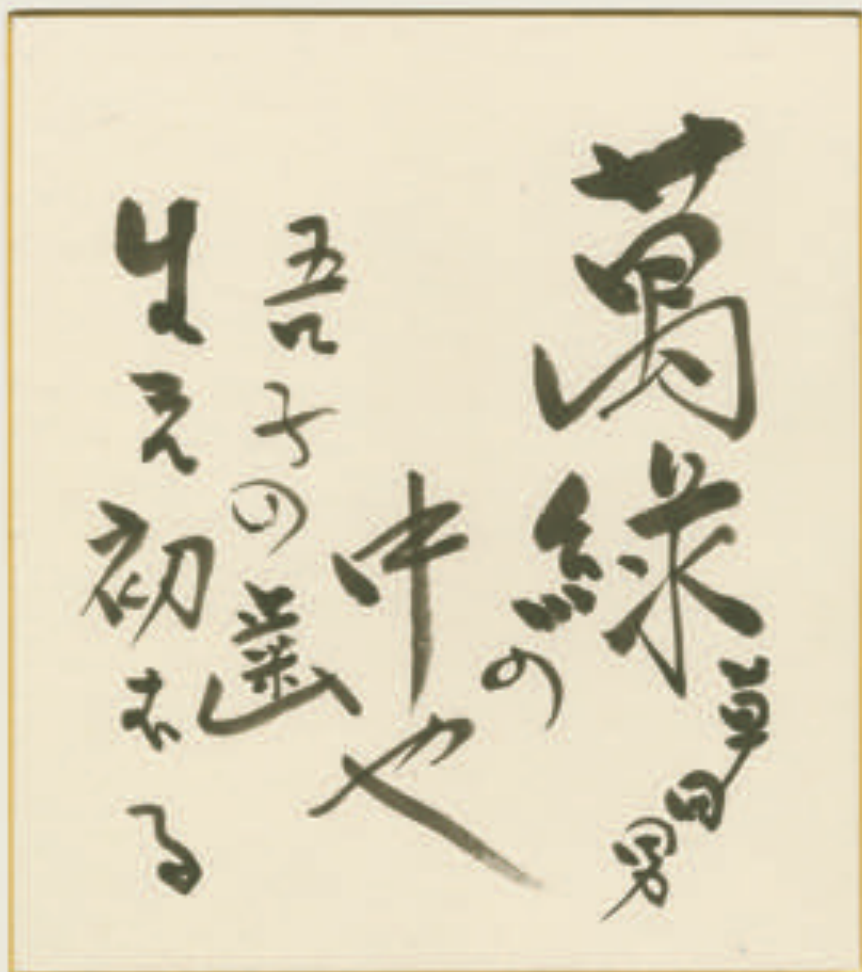
yume no yo ni negi wo tsukurite sabishisa yo

永田 耕衣

Nagata Kōi, 1900–1997

in this world of dreams

I grow leeks—
such loneliness



万緑の中や吾子の歯生えそむる

banryoku no naka ya ako no ha haesomuru

中村 草田男

Nakamura Kusatao, 1901–1983

leaves all green —
my baby's first tooth
begins to cut



外にも出よ触るゝばかりに春の月
to nimo de yo fururubakari ni haru no tsuki

中村 汀女

Nakamura Teijo, 1900–1988

come outside!
we can almost touch
the spring moon

春昼の指とどまれば琴もやむ

shunchū no yubi todomare ba koto mo yamu

野沢 節子

Nozawa Setsuko, 1920–1995

spring afternoon—
when my fingers stop
the koto, too, dies away

眠りても旅の花火の胸にひらく

nemuri temo tabi no hanabi no mune ni hiraku

大野 林火

Ōno Rinka, 1904–1982

even while I dream
fireworks from my travels
burst in my chest

塔ふたつ鶏頭枯れて佇つごとし

tō futatsu keitō karete tatsu gotoshi

沢木 欣一

Sawaki Kin'ichi, 1919–2001

like cockscombs
withering and standing still
two towers

摩天楼より新緑がパセリほど

matenrō yori shinryoku ga paseri hodo

鷹羽 狩行

Takaha Shugyō, 1930–

from a skyscraper
fresh green trees
look like parsley

沖に父あり日に一度沖に日は落ち

oki ni chichi ari hi ni ichido oki ni hi wa ochi

高柳 重信

Takayanagi Shigenobu, 1923–1983

father at sea—
once a day the sun sets
into the sea

初富士の大きかりける汀かな 富安 風生
hatsufuji no ōkikarikeru migiwa kana Tomiyasu Fūsei, 1885–1979

Fuji viewed at New Year
 from the water's edge
 so grand

海に出て木枯帰るところなし 山口 誓子
umi ni dete kogarashi kaeru tokoro nashi Yamaguchi Seishi, 1901–1994

gone out to sea
 autumn's withering wind
 has nowhere to return

雛の唇紅ぬるるまま幾世経し 山口 青邨
hina no kuchi beni nururu mama ikuyo heshi Yamaguchi Seison, 1892–1988

lips of the empress doll
 glisten with rouge
 through how many generations?

MEANING IN HAIKU

vincent tripi

Approach it and there is no beginning;
follow it and there is no end.

You can't know it, but you can be it,
at ease in your own life.

Just realize where you come from:

this is the essence of wisdom.

~Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching,

trans. by Stephen Mitchell

There are times when the meaning of a haiku can be as illusive as haiku itself. Malleable, candescent, crystalline, opaque, beckoning. One engages with the poem. Opens to it with curiosity and expectation. Expectation of what?

The following could prove to be a useful guide whenever we find ourselves activated outwardly as well as inwardly by the inevitable need-to-know.

Meaning Immediate. The intended meaning is completely available. Any discussion would weaken the moment. Would be superfluous...

another day
without sheep
our sheep dog

Tom Clausen

A longing-to-be and melancholia are in evidence, but no condescension to melancholia. The atmosphere is Stoic. The knowledge that the dog is loved provides counterbalance and is remedial. This is a poem that is best felt at the deepest level rather than commented upon.

Meaning Reinforced. Dialogue relevant to the poem appears spontaneously and with a cohesive effect. We come together in meaning. We stand with the poet, see what the poet sees, say what the poet says...

timing the eggs
with a tiny hourglass
deep winter *Peter Newton*

Whiteness prevails (eggs-hourglass, sand-snow) and works collectively in this poem. The result being a special and specific glimpse of winter. A glimpse which brings us closer to the poet, the season and ourselves. The dynamics here are intriguing, inviting, and worthy of discussion. Over and over the poet's message is reinforced.

Meaning Expanded. A poem about which everyone has something to say. Meanings emerge beyond the poet's original intent, awareness, etc. There are discoveries. The kind that haiku bring about.

bus ride home
the woman next to me
knitting too *Jeannie Martin*

Is it an accident that the two women knitting happened to sit next to each other? What is one to make of this? Surely there is a communication taking place between the two. The click-click of needles, the pulling and untangling of yarn, the hand-gestures, etc. We sense a meaning here, but not one that is readily available. The meaning must be explored. An exploration which takes us in, around, and in most cases is expansive of the poet's direction. Our relationship broadens with the poet and the poem.

Meaning in Place. The poem and its meaning have a close, collaborative relationship with place. A place which has had a unifying and personal effect on the poet.

Place can be stabilizing, nurturing, informative...the very air we breathe. If the poem is true, it will offer a place within the place for us to wander and wonder and be at home.

pine cone on a sill
are you the one
from Naples?

John Martone

The pine cone is symbolic. A close and intimate manner of a native returning. Our conception of a pine cone has been influenced. Perhaps changed forever. We have been to Naples!

Meaning Unknown. There is the meaning! But where? And how? The poem is particularly free of intent. Meaning is experienced in the search for meaning.

New Year's Eve party
my coat at the bottom
of the pile

Brad Bennett

Baffling isn't it. Baffling also is the realization that no amount of probing will bring us to a pacifying resolve. We respond to the poem as the poet, no doubt, responded to the situation. The not-knowing is accepted and embraced.

One last thing to consider. Is it indeed possible to know anything for certain? Yes and no. Yes, in that the heart is moved and our eyes are opened. No, in that we remain limited and vulnerable in any attempt to uncover the truth by use of reason alone.

Haiku-meaning is a kind-of-presence... a space-making consciousness. And why not just let it be. Let it do what it will! True meaning comes about largely by living it. And by living consciously we are serving and contributing to the whole.

field guide

ALL HAIL HAIKU!

FROM *A FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN HAIKU*¹

Charles Trumbull

You might think that “hail” would be a pretty straightforward word describing frozen hard things dropping from the sky. You’d be wrong. It turns out that there is a variety of frozen hard things dropping from the sky, for example, hailstones, soft hail, sleet, graupel, and snow pellets. Some of these happen in winter, some in summer. Moreover, various cultures regard these phenomena differently. There are even differences between British and American usage. Before looking at the way these basic terms are used in haiku, let’s dwell a moment on definitions.

Hail is the most generic word. *Encyclopædia Britannica* says “[any] solid precipitation in the form of hard pellets of ice that fall from cumulonimbus clouds is called hail.” Britannica then distinguishes three basic types:

True hailstones—“hard pellets of ice, larger than 5 mm (0.2 inch) in diameter, that may be spherical, spheroidal, conical, discoidal, or irregular in shape and often have a structure of concentric layers of alternately clear and opaque ice.”

Snow pellets or soft hail—“which are white opaque rounded or conical pellets as large as 6 mm (0.2 inch) in diameter. They are composed of small cloud droplets frozen together, have a low density, and are readily crushed.” Soft hail is also called **graupel** (from the German word *Graupel*) a term used by meteorologists and increasingly by the English-speaking public.

Sleet—“globular, generally transparent ice pellets that have diameters of 5 mm (0.2 inch) or less and that form as a result of the freezing of raindrops or the freezing of mostly melted snowflakes. In Great Britain and in some parts of the United States, a mixture of rain and snow is called sleet, and the term has sometimes been used to identify the clear ice on objects that is more correctly known as **glaze**.”² In the main “Hail” article, the encyclopedia calls this phenomenon **Small hail (ice grains or pellets)**.

Clear so far? Yeah, not to me either. But let’s turn to the Japanese equivalents. Gabi Greve, in her wonderful online *World Kigo Database*, identifies the following basic terms:

雹 *hyō*—**hail**, especially hailstones, a *kigo* for all summer. Greve writes: “Hail usually comes with the summer storms and is known to destroy the rice harvest in just one go. The grains range from rather small to big as an apple or a man’s fist.” Other related summer *kigo* are 氷雨 **hisame**—**ice rain** or **freezing rain** and 雹の大降り *hyō no ōburi*—**hailstorm**.

霰 *arare*—**snow pellets, winter hail, soft hail, or graupel**. *Arare* is a *kigo* for all winter. Greve also lists these related all-winter *kigo*: 玉霰 *tamaarare*—**jewel-like pellets** or **hail balls**), 雪あられ *yukiarare* (**mixed snow and hail**).

霙 *mizore*—**sleet**, as well as 雪交ぜ *yukimaze*—**sleet mixed with snow**.

It is also permissible to use the winter *kigo* in spring haiku by specifically mentioning the season: 春の霙 *haru no mizore* or 春みぞれ *harumizore* (sleet in spring), 春の雹 *haru no hyō* (hail in spring), and 春の霰 *haru no arare* (snow pellets in spring).

Hyō—**hail**—is a rarely used word in Japanese haiku; I find only five Japanese haiku translated into English that use this summer *kigo*. Perhaps the most interesting are these two:

雹はれて豁然とある山河かな
hyō harete katsuzen to aru sanga kana

The hailstorm cleared up,
 And hills and rivers
 Lie stretched out.

Murakami Kijō, trans. R.H. Blyth, A History of Haiku 2 (1964)

君はいま大粒の雹君を抱く
kimi wa ima ōtsubu no hyō, kimi o daku

You are now
 an enormous hailstone,
 so I hug you

*Tsubouchi Toshinori, Gendai Haiku Kyōkai, eds.,
 Haiku Universe for the 21st Century (2008)*

Although it is technically not “hail” but rather “graupel” or “snow pellets,” *arare* is the word most often used by Japanese haikuists for wintertime hail. The best-known and oft-translated haiku is surely this one of Santōka’s:

鉄鉢の中へも霰
tetsu hachi no naka e mo arare

Into the begging bowl, too, hailstones

Santōka, trans. Hiroaki Sato, Cicada 2:2 (1978)

Here translator Sato renders *arare* as “hail”; of the twenty-two versions of this haiku that I have found, all have “hail,” and both my English-Japanese dictionaries prefer “hail” as the primary translation of *arare*. Bill Higginson noticed this peculiarity as early as 2001 and reported his research to Gabi Greve at the *World Kigo Database*: “Collating the descriptions in the *saijiki* with North American weather guides has led me to believe that ‘hail’ is a bad translation of *arare*, which makes much better sense as ‘graupel’ (technical meteorological name) or ‘snow

pellets' (common name). *Hyō*, on the other hand, does seem to pair well with 'hail.'" [My dictionaries prefer "hailstones" as a translation for *hyō*. ~CT]

In *Haiku World*, Higginson calls *arare* "snow pellets" or "graupel" and explains the translation problem, writing "the [*arare*] phenomenon is common in Japan, where graupel frequently mixes with snow or rain, and is therefore the first image of hard precipitation that comes to mind, accounting for the fact that *arare* occupies the figurative niche in Japanese that is occupied by 'hail' in English." In accord with Britannica's scheme in which hail(stones), sleet, and graupel are all types of hail, and if one thinks "(soft) hail," I think *arare* can be translated as "hail."

Arare is, in fact, a popular *kigo* in Japanese haiku. Bashō and Buson each wrote six haiku on the topic, Chiyo-ni at least one, Santōka at least two, and Shiki more than a hundred. A first reading of the Santōka begging-bowl haiku above suggests that the hail emphasizes the emptiness of the bowl, the absence of anything but the hailstones. I submit, however, that the key sense involved is not sight, but sound. It is the rattling of the *arare* that triggers the pathos of the image. Here is a short selection of other Japanese haiku about the sounds of *arare* to make my point:

いかめしき音や霰の檜木笠
ikameshiki oto ya arare no hinoki-gasa

Harsh sound—
 hail splattering
 my traveller's hat.

*Bashō, trans. Lucien Stryk,
 On Love and Barley (1985)*

呉竹の奥に音あるあられ哉
kuretake no oko ni oto aru arare kana

there is a sound inside
 The black bamboo—

The hail!

*Shiki, trans. Michael F. Marra, Seasons and
 Landscapes in Japanese Poetry (2008)*

雑水に琵琶聴く軒の霰哉
zōsui ni biwa kiku noki no arare kana

with rice gruel
 listening to a lute under the eaves
 hailstones

*Bashō; trans. Jane Reichhold,
 Bashō: Complete Haiku (2008)*

Reichhold explains: “The sound of the Japanese lute (*biwa*) has often been compared to the sound of hailstones falling on a thatched roof.” Interestingly, Reichhold uses the words “jewel” and “hailstone” together for *tamaarare* in her translation of another Bashō haiku:

いざ子供走りありかん玉霰
iza kodomo hashiri arikan tamaarare

now children
 come run among jewels
 hailstones

*Bashō, trans. Reichhold,
 Bashō: Complete Haiku (2008)*

Mizore—sleet—is presented as an unpleasant aspect of winter weather in Japanese haiku. It is often visualized as mixing with *arare*—graupele—or, more often, with snow or freezing rain. In fact the translators of the following haiku use the kanji for *arare* but the *rōmaji mizore*:

琳しさの底ぬけて降る震かな
sabishisa no soko nukete furu mizore kana

Unfathomed loneliness
 Breaks through—
 Falling sleet!

*Naitō Jōsō, trans. Ichikawa Sanki et al.,
 Haikai and Haiku (1958)*

While puzzling over cold lumpy things falling from Japanese skies, I came across this haiku that sums it all up:

松山にひよおかあられか論じおり
Matsuyama ni hyō-ka arare-ka ronji ori

in Matsuyama
 heatedly discussing if it's
 hail or frozen dew

Dhugal J. Lindsay, Fuyoh 2 (1995)

Mizore is a fairly common *kigo*, used in classic haiku by Buson, Issa, Shiki, and many others, though not by Bashō or Chiyo-ni. Buson's "old pond" haiku is the most-translated sleet haiku:

古池に草履沈みてみそれかな
furu ike ni zōri shizumite mizore kana

In an old pond
 a straw sandal half sunken—
 wet snowfall!

*Buson, trans. Yuki Sawa and Edith Marcombe
 Shiffert, Haiku Master Buson, 1st ed. (1978)*

None of the translators I have seen make it clear exactly where the sandal is positioned in the pond: Eric Amann says it "sticks to the bottom," W. S. Merwin and Takako Lento say it's "at the bottom," Blyth has it "sunk to the bottom," Robert Hass has "half sunk," both Saga Hiroo and Allan Persinger have it "sinking," and Stephen Addiss says simply "submerged." I interpret the point of this haiku to be someone having lost a sandal in the pond, and his or her misery compounded by cold, unpleasant sleet. Such a dark mood is characteristic of other *mizore* haiku as well:

ゆで汁のけふる垣根也みぞれふる
yudejiru no keburu kakine nari mizore furu

steam from boiling soup
 a fence ...
 falling sleet

*Issa, trans. David G. Lanoue,
 Haiku of Kobayashi Issa Website*

Lanoue asks, “Is Issa implying that the steam from his soup will protect him from the cold world outside—the falling sleet?” I would think that Issa sees the steam from the boiling soup on the far side of the fence, while on his side is only the cold sleet—sort of “the grass is greener” idea.

しみじみと子は肌につくみぞれかな
shimijimi to ko wa hada ni tsuku mizore kana

Pressing the child
 Closely to my body,
 Sleet falling.

*Ogawa Shūshiki-jo, trans. R.H. Blyth,
 A History of Haiku 1 (1963)*

おもい見るや我屍にふるみぞれ
omoimiru ya waga shi-kabane ni furu mizore

Imagining sleet
 pelting
 on my corpse.

*Hara Sekitei, trans. Lucien Stryk,
 Cage of Fireflies (1993)*

Both Higginson and Greve mention *hisame*, “ice rain” (or presumably “freezing rain”) as a variation of hail and a summer *kigo*, but neither provides a sample haiku. My Haiku Database includes only one haiku using *hisame*, so I conclude that it is not in common use in haiku.

Haiku about hail—the large, hard, summer kind—number 275 (about one in a thousand haiku in English) in The Haiku Database, moderately frequently, I’d conclude. This category seems to invite many mediocre haiku as poets struggle to find meaning for their haiku beyond mere observation. Here are two exceptional

hail haiku that may at first appear to be simple observations but lead the reader to deeper thoughts:

Hailstones
through
the spider's web

Peggy Willis Lyles, Tightrope (1979)

deserted park hail on the chessboard

Michael Dylan Welch, South by Southeast 13:2 (2006)

Just as we saw with *arare*, the sound of hail is something that inspires poets. Falling hail is often described using violent verbs such as splatter, clatter, rattle, beat, drum, pelt, pound, or thump. Popping popcorn, war drums, music of various kinds, tennis balls, and other clamor are evoked:

hail in the woods
my maul and hammer
ring

Brent Partridge, Modern Haiku 20:3 (1989)

into
the
rain-
filled
bucket
so
softly
hailstones

Carolyn Hall, Acorn 5 (2000)

Mostly the sound of hail evokes human misery or isolation:

the sound of hail
knocking on the glass roof—
my loneliness

Olivier Schopfer, Modern Haiku 45:2 (2014)

summer hail storm—
 sharing the bus shelter
 with Mormons

Joanna Preston, Valley Micropress, Jan/Feb (2001)

A few haiku deal with the destructiveness of a hailstorm—nothing as terrible, perhaps, as the Seventh Plague that Moses faced (Exodus 9:13–35), but still enough to threaten life and livelihood:

hailstorm
 the farmer and his wife
 holding hands

Tim Jamieson, Haiku Canada Newsletter 17:2 (2004)

So close to harvest—
 hailstones melting in
 my father's hand

Shawn Klemmer, Modern Haiku 31:1 (2000)

Many more haiku are concerned about the effects of hail on flowers, especially, of course, cherry blossoms:

cherry blossom rain
 sunlit tulips crimson
 on hailstone bed

*Vicki McCullough, Angela Leuck, ed.,
 Tulip Haiku (2004)*

Not surprisingly, hail is often used as a metaphor:

the falling hail
 across the old battlefield
 cairn after cairn

David Cobb, Jumping from Kiyomizu (1996)

carving hearts in birch bark hailstones bruising

Bill Pauly, Cicada 2:3 (1978)

On the lighter side, people enjoy watching the antics of falling hailstones:

Yesterday locusts
 lunched happily here... Today
 hail jumps in the grass. *Evelyn Tooley Hunt,*
American Haiku 2:2 (1964)

left outside
 in a hailstorm
 a pogo stick *Alan Pizzarelli, The Windswept Corner (2005)*

Some people find unusual uses for hailstones:

summer thunder storm
 saving the hail stones
 for her iced tea *Patricia Benedict, DailyHaiku [Web] (2009)*

Family reunion...
 Grandma takes the hailstone
 from the freezer *Alexis K. Rotella, Modern Haiku 15:1 (1984)*

I have found no haiku in English using “graupel.” “Soft hail” is used only once, “ice pellets” three times, and “snow pellets” twice, including:

Snow pellets pinging
 glass—a cardinal
 flits to our feeder *Marshall Hryciuk, Asahi Haikuist Network (2014)*

I have collected about 250 English-language haiku mentioning sleet. For anglophone haiku poets, sleet can occur at any time of year, though the haiku tend to cluster in early spring. Again, sound is an important aspect:

sleet rattles
 brown leaves
 a hunter's distant shots *Jack Barry, Swamp Candles (2006)*

At the windowpane,
 sleet; and here in the dark house—
 a ticking of clocks.

O Mabson Southard, American Haiku 1:1 (1963)

sleet against the window
 at last mother threads
 the needle *George Swede, Almost Unseen (2000)*

breaking the silence
 of Mama's knitting needles
 the click-click of sleet

Raymond Roseliep, Sailing Bones (1978)

A more important aspect, however, is the sheer misery of being outside in a sleet storm and the way it engenders loneliness and despair:

death of an old friend
 a train's horn
 through miles of sleet *Dave Russo, Acorn 14 (spring 2005)*

sleet:
 the color of their eyes,
 these homeless *Geraldine Clinton Little, Frogpond 12:4 (1989)*

Easter sleet storm
 the parking lot full
 at the nursing home *Marsh Muirhead, Modern Haiku 38:3 (2007)*

invalid brother's molars in a jar soft sleet

Michael Dudley, Curvd H&Z #119 (1981)

Slush and sleet of March
and a small mutt at someone's door
wailing to get in.

Marjory Bates Pratt, American Haiku 2:2 (1964)

evening sleet
the koi wait it out
under the bridge

William Hart, Modern Haiku 44:2 (2013)

early spring sleet
driving through Switzerland
to where I might die

J. Zimmerman, Frogpond 37:3 (2014)

sleet
hones
farewell

Raymond Roseliep, Cicada 5:3 (1981)

Sleet seems to have a profound effect on interpersonal communications, both positive and negative:

St Valentine's Day—
sleetflakes drifting
into last year's nest

David Cobb, Snapshots 6 (1999)

the sound of sleet when there's nothing left to say

Gary Steinberg, Frogpond 23:2 (2000)

looking away from each other
tick of sleet
on the car roof

Rod Willmot, The Ribs of Dragonfly (1984)

rain becomes sleet
 the secrets
 we take to the grave

Billie Wilson, Mariposa 31 (2014)

In haiku, semi-solid sleet is often changing to another state:

asking him to stay—
 snow turns to sleet
 then to rain

Kathe L. Palka, Bottle Rockets 14:2, #28 (2013)

sleety rain
 the flowered umbrellas
 sold out

Adelaide B. Shaw, The Heron's Nest 12:2 (2010)

Many poets use sleet to express irony, and enjoy the contrast between the wintry sleet and the signs of spring:

Winter sleet—
 upon the poplar branch...
 a chrysalis.

John Wills, Back Country (1969)

dried tadpole
 stuck with a pin—
 ticking sleet

Michael Dylan Welch, Betty Drevniok Award, HM (2001)

as well as other incongruities:

cutting posts—
 the sizzle of sleet
 on the chainsaw housing

Lee Gurga, Modern Haiku 22:2 (1991)

winter wedding:
 sleet and rice together
 pelt the newlyweds

Emily Romano, Wind Chimes 3 (1981)

sweatlodge
 out of the earth's steaming womb
 into sleet and lightning

Don Eulert, Field (1998)

And to wrap up (so to say), we'll cite Bill Higginson again, this time with his grand summary of spring weather:

rain, sleet,
 ice pellets, snow, this
 hour of spring

William J. Higginson, Gossamer (2003)

•••

NOTES:

1. *A Field Guide to North American Haiku* is a long-term project along the lines of a haiku encyclopedia-cum-*saijiki*, a selection of the best English-language haiku arranged by topic and illustrating what it is about a given topic that attracts poets to write. When complete, the *Field Guide* project will comprise multiple thick volumes keyed to the several topics in traditional Japanese *saijiki* (haiku almanac) and Western counterparts, notably William J. Higginson's *Haiku World: An International Poetry Almanac* (1996). These topics are: Season, Sky & Elements, Landscape, Plants, Animals, Human Affairs, and Observances. The current compilation presents "Sky & Elements: hail; sleet; and grape!" The haiku are selected from my Haiku Database, currently containing more than 365,000 haiku, and are offered as prime examples of haiku in English that illuminate our points. Publishing these miniature topical haiku anthologies is an experiment to test the feasibility of the larger *Field Guide* project. Critique and suggestions, supportive or critical, are warmly invited; please comment by e-mail to trumbullc@comcast.net.

2. "Climate," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/science/climate-meteorology/Types-of-precipitation>; acc. Oct. 27, 2017.

3. "Sleet," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/science/sleet>; acc. Dec. 8, 2017.

4. "Hail," *World Kigo Database*, Feb. 8, 2005.

5. "Snow Pellets," William J. Higginson, *Haiku World: An International Poetry Almanac* (Tokyo, New York, and London: Kodansha International, 1996), 245.

in memoriam

JOHNNY BARANSKI: A POET OF CONVICTION

Michael Dylan Welch

One of North America's longtime haiku stalwarts has died. After a struggle with lung disease, Johnny Baranski passed away at the age of 69 on January 24, 2018 in Vancouver, Washington, surrounded by his children—and surrounded, through online messages and email, by a worldwide family of haiku poets and other friends. Johnny's family read many messages of love and support to him before he died.

On the back of *White Rose, Red Rose*, his December 2017 haiku book with David H. Rosen, we learn that "Johnny Baranski has been writing haiku and its related forms for over forty years. He is the author of several chapbooks, including *Pencil Flowers: Jail Haiku* [1983]; *Convicts Shoot the Breeze* [2001]; *Just a Stone's Throw* [2006]; and *Blossoming Pear* [2013]. His newest collection *Fireweed* will appear in the *Folded Word* chapbook series in 2019. A member of the Haiku Society of America, Haiku Canada, and the Portland Haiku Group, Mr. Baranski lives in Vancouver, Washington." What we do not learn, but see hints of, is that Johnny spent time in prison after his arrests for nonviolent resistance to war and the Trident nuclear weapon system. As a result of repeated protest actions over many years, he spent two to three years of his life in prison. He was also active with the Catholic Worker community, for which he fought for farm worker rights, social justice, and other issues affecting marginalized communities. He was a man of firm conscience, yet his resolve was quiet, as shown in his many poems about prison life and poems of social consciousness. No one can write prison-related haiku without standing in Johnny Baranski's long shadow.

Johnny also published *Poems from Prison* in 1979, *Silent*

Silos: A CounterBOMB Haiku Sequence in 1985, *Fish Pond Moon* in 1986, *Hitch Haiku* in 1987, and *Beads of Glass: A Rosary Haiku Sequence* in 2016. For the Seabeck Haiku Getaway, which he attended regularly, he also produced energetic and thoughtful trifolds of recent haiku to share with others. He received the 2001 Virgil Hutton Memorial Haiku Chapbook award, and numerous awards in the Haiku Invitational contest sponsored by the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival. He cojudged the Haiku Society of America's Henderson haiku contest in 2013, and edited the Haiku Foundation's "Per Diem" feature on the theme of war and peace for August 2014. Johnny's poems appeared in Jim Kacian's 2013 Norton anthology, *Haiku In English: The First Hundred Years*, in Dimitar Anakiev's 2013 *Kamesan's World Haiku Anthology on War, Violence and Human Rights Violation*, in the 2014 Haiku Northwest 25th anniversary anthology *No Longer Strangers*, and in many dozens of journals and websites around the world. Johnny also posted on Twitter as @haikumonk, and contributed regularly to various haiku-related Facebook pages. Here are three poems from *Jumble Box*, a 2017 anthology of poems by National Haiku Writing Month (NaHaiWriMo) contributors:

the food bank
shelves picked clean
snow moon

winter moon
the A-bomb dome
casting a shadow

our time together
short but sweet
prison yard snow

When Johnny died, hundreds of condolences appeared on social media. Writing on Facebook, Tom Clausen said "Johnny had a sage sense for the ages to go with an eternal child quality of wit and wonder that will live on in everyone who knew and loved

him,” adding that he was “Much beloved in the haiku community and well known for his political activism, his devoted faith, his love of his family and friends, the sports teams he followed [the Chicago Cubs baseball team, the Chicago Blackhawks hockey team, and Notre Dame—he was born in Chicago] and his interest and ability to identify classic cars no matter what condition they were in [Johnny drove a Mustang, and before that, a Camaro, and sometimes referred to himself as an old jalopy]. Although I never met Johnny he was someone I always admired and viewed as a kindred friend. Johnny leaves anyone who knew him with wonderful good memories and gratitude for the gift of his indelible being him.”

Here’s a selection of other Facebook comments in response to Johnny’s passing: Peggy Hale Bilbro wrote, “I felt as though I knew Johnny’s warmth and sensitivity through his poetry.” Cameron Mount said, “Everything I know about him and his history as a poet and political activist convinces me the world has lost a good man. He’d been writing haiku longer than I’ve been alive, but that didn’t stop him from encouraging new haiku poets.” Mary Davilla said, “I never met him personally, but was always encouraged by his faith which he showed in his poetry.” Gabriel Bates wrote, “The world has lost a one-of-a-kind poet and human being. You’ve left your mark.” Jerry Dreesen wrote, “I always enjoyed his poetry and his take on the world.” Susan Burch said, “Loved all his prison and old jalopy ku. He is a great writer who will be missed!” Kris Lindbeck said, “His poetry has touched me. His intelligence, faith, humor and toughness shone through in his haiku.” Beverly Acuff Momoi wrote, “I have been moved by his haiku for many years. He was a very special person and will be missed.” Jessica Malone Latham said, “What a spark of light that illuminated our world.” David John Terelinck said, “How rich we all are for having known and loved his work.” Brendan McNassar said, “I’ve been lucky enough to know Johnny my entire life. He was a formative force to me as a child and aspiring poet/lyricist. I keep a copy of his book *Pencil Flowers* with my treasured belongings. His art, his coolness and his smile will be missed.” Margaret Chula said, “I feel blessed to have known this

gentle, quietly humorous, and highly ethical man.” Yvonne Cabalona said, “I always enjoyed Johnny’s poems. I looked forward to them each day on Facebook.” Claire Everett wrote, “Such respect for Johnny and huge admiration for his poetry and the life he lived.” Michael Henry Lee said, “A great poet and champion of peace.” Randy Brooks said, “A wonderful haiku poet and man! We will miss his good humor. It has been such a joy reading his haiku over the years.” Alexis Rotella said, “We will all miss Johnny Baranski . . . a moment of silence heard round the world.” Rebecca Drouilhet said, “A wonderful humanitarian, poet and haiku friend. He will be sorely missed.” Michele L. Harvey said, “Johnny was a fine poet with a kind, generous heart.” Barry George said, “God bless you, Johnny. Thank you for your kindness, your courage, the spark in your eyes, your sense of humor.” Sandi Pray wrote, “I honor you, I learned from you, I laughed with you, I cried with you and now . . . I miss you.”

The following are six of Johnny’s poems, one each from *Frogpond* (36:2), *The Heron’s Nest* (13:4), the 2013 HSA members’ anthology, and the 2011 Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, and two from *Blossoming Pear*:

dragonfly
 where have you flown off to
 first frost

in ten summers
 the convict’s first visit
 dragonfly

a walk-off home run
 up and over
 the prison wall

for a moment
 the war be damned
 cherry blossoms

prison lights out
drifting off to distant places
a train whistle

long before I came
long after I leave
blossoming pear

The back cover of Johnny's last book, *White Rose, Red Rose*, says that "While the world is under threat from so many dangers...the language of flowers will prevail." This belief was central to Johnny's life, part of the thread that guided him. In his last few days, Johnny wore a mask to assist his breathing and could not speak. Before deciding to remove the mask, two days before he died, he motioned to his children for a pencil and paper and started writing. It was his last haiku, his *jisei*, or death poem. It is a poem filled with hope, the language of flowers, his last gift of haiku sharing:

one last breath
before dying—
plum blossom

Thornton Wilder once wrote that "The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude." The haiku community offers its deepest gratitude to Johnny and his family for his life and for his haiku. When others died, he was always quick to post the following message on Facebook as an expression of his faith: "Eternal rest, grant unto him O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him." Now it is Johnny's turn to receive this blessing. May the perpetual light shine upon Johnny Baranski.

re:readings

From *Frogpond* 40:3

fallen leaves
 the sound of my footsteps
 forever young *Rick Tarquinio*

Simple actions may trigger events from our past. A pile of leaves reminds us of an indelible moment, needing only a kick to rekindle it fully. This poem heightens our senses, encouraging us to re-experience the bliss of childhood. ~*Ronald K. Craig*

in a sky
 too blue for clouds
 seagulls *Thomas R. Keith*

The unrestraint of the gulls is superimposed on the immensity of the sky, creating a moment of wonderment. To see such bliss amid such beauty allows our hearts to soar along with the birds as we read this poem. ~*Ronald K. Craig*

There used to be
 love letters to burn—
 delete *Sarah Paris*

Which action is most satisfying: striking a match or striking a delete key? Both lead to unmistakable results. The delete key provides instant gratification whereas a conflagration deeply satisfies our olfactory and auditory senses, confirming our sense of justice. For me, I yearn for the good old days! ~*Ronald K. Craig*

understanding
 beyond language
 lichen on stone *George Swede*

I have a recurring dream in which I am looking at symbols or sigils on paper that I've never seen before but which feel familiar. Someone says "read it aloud." How? I am jolted out of the dream before I can speak. How little we know about what we know. Lichen patterns on an enigmatic stone, in keeping with the dharma, say it best. ~*Michelle Tennison*

bickering finches
 a path forks
 through the thorn trees *Samantha Renda*

From yet another very enjoyable volume of *Frogpond*, I chose this one because it is perfect to be read aloud. The repeating *k*, *r*, *f*, and *th* sounds are beautifully woven with changing rhythms—from the flowing syllables in line one to the staccato of the rest. One of the reasons I love haiku is that there are so many ways to put just the right words together, with the potential to convey awe, mystery, powerful juxtaposition, quiet beauty, haunting ideas, and much more. In this haiku, I am treated with poetry, music, and an invitation to wonder about the outcome of a journey through thorns. ~*Billie Wilson*

starlight
 every pore
 prickles *Lorin Ford*

Four words. Yet Lorin captures in this small space the immensity and mystery of the universe. Yes, I'll admit I'm a sucker for astronomical haiku. However the expansiveness of this haiku took my breath away. She incorporates two sense worlds: sight, the drama and beauty of a clear night sky with its thousands of stars, and

touch, how our skin—our very pores—receive this light. Then adding delight she uses the rare-in-haiku word “prickles.” Who wouldn’t experience goose bumps with that word or this haiku?

~Doris Lynch

sleeping
late
breath
beside
breath
both
dream *Jean LeBlanc*

This poem brings to my mind an intimate moment with many layers of complexity. Jean LeBlanc uses an engaging structure and the repetition of sounds to demonstrate how together two people may be and at the same time how different. The vertical line of words is visually compelling, just as if one might be sleeping close together with another person. And the repetition of the soft “b” sounds in breath, beside, and both draw me into the intimate mood of the poem. Even as the two are breathing together, their dreams are personal in a way that another will never know. The poem touches me, as one other person may, in a way that is beautiful, mysterious and timeless. ~Steve Tabb

foghorns
the night spent
in separate rooms *Sharon Pretti*

This adeptly reveals the risks of losing one’s way. A ship shrouded in fog, under the cover of darkness is likely anchored at sea. A married couple perhaps, at home, under a veil of recrimination and estrangement, creates a troubling parallel. The sound of the foghorn adds to the forlorn feeling this haiku creates for me. One can only hope that air will clear come morning. ~Tom Painting

code blue—
 the colors that hold
 the hillside in place *Francine Banwarth*

This poem has that intuitive connection of two things that are beyond rational. It's more than a smaller reality in the midst of the larger one. The poet arrests the reader in a breath poem that one could enter into and read, unwind, appreciate, and reflect in for a relatively long time. I have been around my share of code blue moments, and this poet wonderfully renders the desire to make the slide stop. Professionals come running to make it all stop, as the colors hold the slide of the hill's incline. If I may say so, I think Francine Banwarth uses "ma" or the space aesthetic as well as anyone in her writing. The em dash here signifies the great leap we all make into the code blue. For the novice writer, this is not just space on a page, or structure, but inner space and where we dawdle and lose ourselves in the poem. Francine doesn't use flowers, but "colors." What else would work? The poem is trans-seasonal—universally apt and grounded in nature regardless of the specific when that is held in place. I'm grateful for the poet and the journal that brings it to us. ~*Dan Schwerin*

the tractor's rumble
 during the night haying...
 June bugs thumping the screen *Wally Swist*

This poet has placed two sounds of constraint into a race in time. If I am reading this correctly, we are in the first hay cutting—June. If we are haying at night in June, it means we are racing—maybe against rain or volume or lack of workers or broken machinery. The rumble is slow, painfully slow. The poem is slow—there are lots of words but none distract. In fact, the poem repeats one word three different times—but the language is wonderfully transparent. I have been on hay wagons and wished the day would end, and that rumble, in fact, grumble, is echoed beautifully by the June bugs. We are in the longest hours of light and

still pushing—and arriving at creaturely limits. This is life against the screen, rendered in wordless thumping. I'm grateful for the poet and the journal that brings it to us. ~*Dan Schwerin*

waking from the anesthetic tail first *Julie Warther*

I love how the poem itself mimics the slow coming to consciousness of the dog and of the reader. We move from the unconscious and involuntary reflex to the way joy trundles around a body before the head wakens to it. Of course, a poet knows the poem suggests its form—here in one line. There is a body sprawled out, then attention arrives at the tail. It's just delicious that the last image is the tail, and this poet doesn't rest at: "waking from the anesthetic tail," but "tail first" delivers a moment, a juxtaposition with the body, joy in us, then cause to reflect on how mortals wake to our joy. These little friends draw joy from us we didn't know we had. Does the dog complete our joy in the way the reader completes the poem? I love how great haiku take us to intuitive worlds and then gently ripple us into ours.

~*Dan Schwerin*

This might be an observation from a nature program. The beast has been tranquilized with a dart and recovers self-control first over its tail. I suppose that one could explain this in some such way but, for me, that would spoil the effect. It's also possible to view this as a description of subjective experience. In that light it's enjoyable to be in suspense about whether this describes the experience from just inside or just outside of the anesthetic's influence. ~*John Stevenson*

jotted on a seed packet first draft *Jeff Ingram*

While this may be an invention, it is, for me at least, straight out of experience. All of my adult life I have jotted down bits of prose or poetry on any surface available in the moment of inspiration.

That it might have been a seed packet on some occasion is not at all farfetched. I know I've used my forearm at least once. It is also the case that what inspiration comes my way is rarely in the form of a completed poem, even as brief a poem as a haiku. But inspiration, once captured, can often be grown into something greater. In my local haiku group, we have a term for this kind of jotting. We call it "protoku." ~*John Stevenson*

mood ring the economy of colors *Cherie Hunter Day*

I've often thought that the round of emotions has much in common with a color wheel—the way in which combinations of primaries (mad, sad, glad, scared) can be combined and recombined to produce ever subtler gradations, tints, and variations. And the way in which mixing everything together can produce various sorts of "brown." ~*John Stevenson*

unable
to explain
wisteria *Mimi Ahern*

This haiku reminds me that there are some things in the world that can't be explained; at least not easily. Wisteria is a large spreading vine with huge blossoms and a scent to match. How do you begin to explain such beauty? ~*Gregory Longenecker*

thunderstorm . . .
woken from somewhere else
and still there *Bruce Ross*

A number of mornings I've woken up thinking I was in bed where I used to live—in a trailer amidst old second-growth redwoods. This poem, however, makes me think/feel of a better awakening, where good mysticism is more than real. ~*Brent Partridge*

guesses
 on a spring morning
 the colors of eternity *Gary Hotham*

The elusiveness of beauty, the interactions of light, color, and emotion—these have a liberating quality, and are connected with the invisible. A haiku like this has its own life that will not fade.

~*Brent Partridge*

I remember planting daffodils after a funeral years ago. Every spring they bloom again. A wonderful poem. ~*Ellen Grace Olinger*

louder now
 that days grow shorter
 field of crickets *Marian Olson*

I read so much between the lines of this haiku, which for me is a poem of protest. Not just one, but a field of crickets sings “louder now” as the season of light fades into the season of darkness. The natural and human worlds are intertwined. The darkness, in its many shapes and forms, will always be behind us, in front of us, all around us so that we must pierce it with the light of our own being. ~*Francine Banwarth*

distant hills
 that place
 without a story *Glenn G. Coats*

I find myself sitting with this haiku and thinking about all the places whose stories we cannot possibly know because we can't be in more than one place at a time. Life is impossibly short and constraining if we live by the rules of society and personal responsibility. We can only imagine how our stories would have unfolded if we'd chosen different horizons along the way.

~*Francine Banwarth*

speaking of loss
 she begins to fold
 my laundry *Elizabeth Nordeen*

How great love can be expressed in the most ordinary, often unnoticed, acts of “taking care of.” How great comfort also can be experienced through these acts. We do not know who is speaking of loss; we do not know who has experienced the loss; we do not know who or what has been lost. Perhaps it is the folder speaking of a lost child, parent, spouse—for whom she did laundry. Perhaps the folder is a mother comforting her adult daughter who has experienced an unexpected loss. Perhaps they are speaking of an impending loss. One of the strengths of this poem is that there is so much we do not know—yet, how clearly the deepest tenderness has been folded within it. ~*Joyce Clement*

From *Frogpond* 40:2

may our love last
 so long
 silver mylar balloon *Scott Mason*

I was so taken with this haiku that I immediately wrote to its author, Scott Mason. “Brilliant pivot and alliteration,” I said. “The echo of ‘may our’ with ‘mylar’ is [also] genius, and the image of love drifting away is, well, heartbreaking.” That was my feeling. Scott replied with thanks, but also pointed out something I had missed—that mylar has an extremely long half-life. He didn’t need to add “like all true love,” but I knew. How wonderful, and all this within twelve syllables. ~*Lew Watts*



reviewed

The Wonder Code: Discover the Way of Haiku and See the World with New Eyes edited by Scott Mason (2017, Girasole Press, Chappaqua, NY). 370 pages, 5¼×8", Clothbound. ISBN 978-0-692-93035-9. \$24.95 from thewondercode.com.

Reviewed by Randy Brooks

Scott Mason opens this anthology with Louis Armstrong's "what a wonderful world" and argues that:

Wonder abounds. What's more, it can be experienced by anyone, anywhere, and at any given moment. The question to ask—if we truly seek more balance and happiness in our lives—is how to tap into the wonder around us. The method I propose in these pages is to learn to see the world anew through "haiku eyes" (2).

Drawing on poems first published in *The Heron's Nest* online journal, *The Wonder Code* is a collection of examples demonstrating how writers discover and share the wonders of happiness and being alive through haiku. He declares that:

the practice of haiku poetry—especially the attentive reading and assimilation of haiku poems—can start to act as a corrective and even an antidote to wonder deprivation (3).

Mason organizes the anthology as five "galleries" exhibiting five imperatives for discovering and sharing wonders. Scott suggests that we: think small, come to our senses, feel the moment, prepare for surprise, and only connect. Following is a brief synopsis of each imperative with an example or two from each gallery.

THINK SMALL. The first gallery emphasizes “the wonder in what’s hiding, here and now, in plain sight” (15):

Haiku poetry brings us into the world of small wonders in multiple ways. First and foremost it plainly asserts, through its choice of subjects, that the modest things we tend to overlook and the common events we take for granted are worthy of our attention (13).

Here is one of the haiku from this gallery, by Jay Haskins (38).

high tide
a plastic dump truck
moves another shell

COME TO YOUR SENSES. In this gallery, Mason suggests that haiku can “serve as a gentle corrective” to lives of “electronic dependency” in which we are “cocooned and plugged in” but have “opted out—of a world filled with sensory wonders” (46).

He explains:

Comprised of mere words, how can haiku help us “come to our senses”? Quite simply, an effective haiku encapsulates an instant of keen perception in a form that can be released and experienced anew by the receptive reader (47).

So haiku “guide us back to what’s real and alive” (48). Two examples from this gallery, by Jim Kacian (58) and Peter Yovu (71):

catch and release
a little shine left
on my fingers

a shooting star—
the short grass
tickles my neck

FEEL THE MOMENT. The third gallery emphasizes the scene or aesthetic atmosphere of a haiku:

Haiku are recorded in the present tense. This practice is more than convention: it helps convey the freshness of sensations and the immediacy of emotions from poet to reader across time and space (108).

He concludes: “to develop a haiku sensibility is to live in the wonder each and every moment brings” (123). A haiku from this section, by Francine Banwarth (130):

our daughter’s wedding
dusting the room
she dreamed in

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE. Mason writes:

The most affecting “surprise haiku”...share the added quality of *veracity*. To surprise us with what also somehow “rings true” is one of the best ways not only to attract our attention but also to challenge conventional wisdom (173).

A haiku of unexpected wonder by Sabine Miller (189):

hide-and-peek
the weeping willow
giggles

ONLY CONNECT. The last gallery emphasizes the interconnection of things, including humans with the environment. Mason writes:

Spending time with haiku cannot help but activate a greater sense of participation, and ultimately a greater actual engagement, in the world around us (215).

An example from this gallery, by Julie Warther (245).

cloud of no-see-ums ...
bluegills
tease the bobber

The anthology closes with a selection of haiku by Scott Mason, also arranged into the four galleries of wonder. Here are a couple of his haiku (286, 325):

full moon
one giant leap
for a water strider

inchworm
how long it took to return
to wonder

This is an excellent anthology of haiku with just enough prose to help beginners understand that:

Haiku poets and their readers revel in what's found in nature, on their doorstep, or even closer at hand. All these discoveries originate with something "outside" the poet. The impulse to *share* such discoveries carries all the excitement of *Look what I found!* (277).

At the Top of the Ferris Wheel: Selected Haiku of Cor van den Heuvel by Cor van den Heuvel (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA). 304 pages, 5×8", perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9826951-5-9. \$30 from The Haiku Foundation.

Reviewed by Randy Brooks

At the Top of the Ferris Wheel features haiku by Cor van den Heuvel, one of the leading editors and writers of haiku in English, providing access to select published work from his books spanning nearly fifty years of writing. From his earliest haiku, he has demonstrated an artistic command of conversational language with surprising leaps of perception, as in this haiku from his first chapbook, *Sun in Skull* (1961): *in the toy pail / at low tide floats / the still ferris wheel* (21). Childhood play, often from a boy's perspective, is the most common theme throughout van den Heuvel's collections. For example, *through the small holes / in the mailbox / sunlight on a blue stamp* (38). He also likes to write from a sense of adventure about cowboys and Indians from the wild west, as in *distant thunder / Crazy Horse ties up / his pony's tail* and *snow / tombstones tombstones / snow* (61). Several haiku from The Komiku Kollection reflect his joy of comic book adventures, but the resulting haiku often provide a surreal leap from the imaginary world to the immediate, as in this one: *from the Tarzan / comic strip a rhinoceros / looks out at my mittens* (62). We see this same attraction to adventure and play in *winter evening / a pinball machine lights up / in the roadside diner* (101).

In 2002, Cor van den Heuvel was honored with the Masaoka Shiki International Haiku Award at the International Haiku Convention in Japan. In his acceptance speech, "My Haiku Path," he shared that in his earliest haiku he was trying to be poetic, employing western poetic practices such as "colorfully descriptive" adjectives and "interesting sound effects."¹ He also shared that "surrealistic-like juxtapositions, another carryover

from western poetics” are evident in some of his early haiku. Regarding his later haiku, he stated that “Though the use of mellifluous language and surrealistic juxtapositions may have a legitimate place in haiku, I think my path in haiku has been moving in a direction away from them.” He characterized later collections as portraying simple images of everyday life in his urban environment of New York City. For example, here is the title haiku from one of his collections: *high above the city / dawn flares / from a window-washer’s pail* (29). Other haiku portray the city life of music, as in *the blues singer / tells how bad it is / then the sax tells you too* (140). While exploring the cityscape, van den Heuvel experiments with minimal haiku and arrangement of words on the page: *snow / on the saddle-bags / sun in skull* (25). Of course his most famous minimal haiku is just one word, *tundra* (31) in which the white space of the page serves as the juxtaposed second image.

Starting in the late 1970s Cor van den Heuvel wrote and published haiku in short sequences. Some of his chapbooks were carefully arranged to read like sequences as well. For example, *The Wooden Indian* starts with *shading his eyes / the wooden Indian looks out / at the spring rain* (105). In the middle of this collection we find *a torn-up girlie magazine / at the end of the woods road / it begins to rain* (109), and the sequence ends with *drifting over the waterfall / a cloud / lit by sunset* (114).

In his 2002 award speech, it is clear that he considers haiku from the chapbook, *dark*, to be some of his best writing up to that time. Most of the haiku in *dark* are short one-line nature observations such as *a stick goes over the falls at sunset* (127). Was this a stick released by the writer to watch it go over the falls? All we know is that it goes over into the darkness of the coming night. I personally don’t care for most of the haiku from this collection because they seem to rarely transcend description. However, in a review of this collection, Rod Wilmot claims that Cor van den Heuvel goes beyond his usual spiritual quests to a psychological acceptance of loss as an essential part of the human experience.² My favorite from *dark* is *from behind me / the shadow of the ticket-taker / comes down the aisle*” (128). In this haiku the dark

shadow comes up “from behind me” but there is a suggestion that the train is going somewhere beyond just taking tickets.

After a short period of writing sparse, bare-reality, cityscape haiku, Cor returned to favorite passions from his childhood—baseball haiku published in *Play Ball* and haibun memoirs titled *A Boy's Seasons*. Here is a playful haiku from his memoirs: *hide-out in the woods / my bow and arrows / wait for me* (182). And two favorite baseball haiku: *lingering snow / the game of catch continues / into evening* (206), and *dispute at second base / the catcher lets some dirt / run through his fingers* (211). These are haiku with a passion for life and adventure. The circus is back in town in *standing on one foot / the bareback rider rides her horse / into my dreams* (187). I enjoy these haiku of adventure and play—American haiku written with a fresh voice of possibility, a boy's perspective that embraces views and adventures beyond the ordinary nature of things. Van den Heuvel's best haiku reach beyond the drudgery of everyday observations and let us remember that childlike sense of wonder: *alone / at the top of the ferris wheel / the moon* (279).

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NOTES:

1. Van den Heuvel, Cor, “My Haiku Path,” The Haiku Foundation Digital Library, accessed January 20, 2018, <http://www.thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/items/show/1519>.
2. Willmot, Rod. “Cor van den Heuvel: The Jazzman Cometh.” *Modern Haiku*, 20:2. Madison, WI: Modern Haiku Press, 1989, 27–39.

after/image by Jim Kacian (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 118 pages, 5×8", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-03-6. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Reviewed by Cherie Hunter Day

After/image is Jim Kacian's first full-length haiku collection in nearly a decade. The title of the book comes from an optical illusion. Afterimage is defined as "an image that continues to appear in one's vision after exposure to the original image has ceased." An afterimage results from prolonged viewing of a pattern or enough brightness, as in a bolt of lightning, to overstimulate the eye. It's not the initial image that lingers, but the residue of the image—the afterimage—that allows a longer look.

Haiku in the first section of *after/image* are reminiscent of a booklet by Kacian, *A Primer of Organic Form* (2013), which was presented at Haiku North America that year. In it he illustrates various adjustments to word order, unit, and field to shape the visual space and enhance meaning. We have become accustomed to the differences between one-line and three-line haiku to control the pace of processing words, but Kacian uses the full toolbox of graphic techniques such as alignment, fade or gradient, insertion of brackets and symbols, and a variety of typefaces and fonts to great effect.

one
 step
 farther
 than
 I
 wanted
 to
 go
 march
 wind

This haiku places as much emphasis on the typographical effect in conveying meaning as the words themselves. Words can be both evocative and demonstrative.

| a | nail | pops | in | the | dark | loneliness |

In this example the words are printed in a 70% grey screen, and the vertical bars (v-bars) are 100% black. This gives the v-bar punctuation a visual sharpness that may be felt as hardness—the stiletto of a nail. The v-bar glyph is used in mathematical notations: whatever is contained between the v-bars can be read as “the absolute value of.” The absolute value of a number is the same whether it is positive or negative. Similarly, both positive and negative experiences have a real value in our lives. A v-bar can also indicate division, restriction, or that a particular segment of a line is perpendicular. Those nails inserted into the surface with such precision are working their way out. Often the route out of our personal darkness is the same path as that which put us there in the first place. All this can be inferred from the choice and placement of a keyboard symbol, plus an adjustment to font opacity.

In the introduction to *after/image* Jim Kacian writes about looking “for ways to make these disparate moments cohere into something more than a ‘string of firecrackers.’” While the material in the first section of the book features Kacian’s dexterous use of form, type, and layout, he addresses text layering and haiku sequencing in the second and third sections of *after/image*.

“The social project” is the title of the second section, which presents one variety of palimpsest—writing over a ghost text. In this case the ‘ghost’ is four categories of white text on a pale gray-screened page. Each right-hand page has: “the political,” “the one,” “the other,” and “the future.” Over each of these phrases are a variety of one-line haiku printed in a dark grey ink. The background text is limited to these four phrases, which anchor and propel the haiku forward like voices in a Greek chorus. This section was performed by four readers at Haiku North America 2017. (A YouTube video of the reading is available online.) There is a bit of theater in presenting the work on the page as well.

To further the dynamism of the section, an abstract painting develops frame-by-frame on the right-hand page. Kacian is known for his video haiga, and this flipbook animation allows the reader to simulate a similar visual liveliness. This treatment reiterates that experience can be both intermittent and uninteruptable—light as particle and wave.

The third section is titled “after image,” and it introduces the drama of ellipsis—a text-inspired afterimage. One haiku per page in dark grey ink in the center of the page is written over a ghosted portion of an adjacent haiku. Again the undertext is barely perceptible, rendered as large white letters printed diagonally on the page in a different typeface than the haiku. Juxtaposition happens not only within the haiku, as expected, but the collocation extends to the haiku in the immediate vicinity. Consider the following example.

no
me
mo
ry
no
me

Written behind this vertical haiku is “into dreams” from the preceding one-line haiku: “new year’s eve the last dram weaves into dreams.” Starting with the verticality of the foreground presentation, the text falls down the page like one is falling asleep. The senses and the sense of self shut down through an ever-narrowing slit of consciousness. Aided by whisky, sleep comes easily. The “me” in the haven of dreams remains mysterious, shrouded beyond/within memory. It’s the perfect nexus: one haiku provisioning a second haiku.

after/image marries haiku with a high degree of creative expression and extends our notion of what haiku can be.

Pilgrimage by Michael Dudley (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 150 pages, 6×9", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271. Wood Engravings by Wesley W. Bates. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Reviewed by Nick Avis

Michael Dudley's poetry has been widely published since the mid-1970s and widely appreciated by poets and critics alike. This is an expanded version of an earlier edition from 2005, containing 400 poems or verses, some of which are in sequences. The range of subject matter, emotion, form and content is wide and varied. Dudley's poetry is playful, humorous, lyrical and at times musical. He uses every sound technique, including rhyme quite extensively, and makes free use of all western poetic devices. The layout on the page, the variety of line and spatial arrangements of the poems and Dudley's use of an array of concrete poetics make this a unique visual experience.

Every poem, we are told, is a haiku when well over half of them are not; and humour is prevalent throughout this book. Shiki emphasized, in order to distinguish haiku from senryu and other related verses, that "The haiku is not... a form of humour" (*Masaoka Shiki*, Beichman, 1982).

Many of Dudley's amusing, ironic and oftentimes whimsical quips are not really poems at all and have little or no life of their own. Since his ability to sequence and juxtapose poems is quite exceptional, these lighter poems or verses usually work well in context but not as often as they should: *blind date: / her mutt / humps my leg; laying down rip-rap / we sing a song / of knick-knack; keep walking / keep talking / keep warm*. The first is one of dozens of momentary light-hearted senryu with no context. The second and third are not poems and could be renga verses but the second one, of which there are too many, also has no context. The third is originally from a very fine sequence entitled "On Strike" in which it works well as a stanza. "On Strike" is an autumn sequence, so even this otherwise weak or failed poem

has a political and human story behind it, and is set against the harsher side of autumn with winter coming and no end in sight.

Too many of Dudley's poems are mere observations without any objective correlative (senryu) or seasonal reference (haiku) to take you outside of the purely subjective perception of the poet. I used to call these halfku because half the poem is missing. These five are from a sequence of eleven entitled "New-born": *she looks at me / for the first time / cross-eyed; suckling / tiny ears / wagging; my poor girl vomits / the cat / laps it up; poo check: Nope, / just a fart!; between bottles / she & I hold a / **belching** contest.*

If you edit out the weak and problematic poems, what is left is a very fine collection with some outstanding and extraordinary work, which is why Dudley is one of our finer poets. Haiku publications by single authors are rarely, if ever, edited in the true sense of the word, and this is one of them. Everyone needs an editor.

Much of Dudley's poetry is meant to be performed—all poetry is really:

Big Mac Attack another acre c l e a r c u t

In this concrete senryu, one of many environmental poems, the one-liner is the horizon. Dudley replaces quotation marks with italics, which are cleaner and visually less intrusive, but the difference in the print and the use of capital letters visually separate the culprit from the victim so to speak, and the italicised letters tilt towards "another acre" as if charging at it. The capital letters make the culprit bigger and more intimidating. In the first line an iconic phrase is given a whole new meaning with a sudden change in perspective—the haikai twist. Dudley uses space to indicate the rhythm and pace of the poem, which slows down and disintegrates in the last phrase emphasizing disbelief, fear or even horror. The capital letters in the first phrase mean it should be read louder than the other two and the voice trails off towards the end. The spaces between the letters suggest an image of the clearcutting. Throughout this book Dudley varies font and size; uses upper and lower case, bold or italics; and creatively uses

space effectively and imaginatively, all of which, as in this case, adds greatly to the poem, if not makes it one. The danger with concrete poetics, however, is that they can become too intrusive, especially with haiku, but Dudley, for the most part, avoids this pitfall. Besides, most of the poems are not haiku.

Another concrete technique that Dudley uses is a variation on the acrostic which creates a second image. In the first haiku, which is exceptional to begin with, the addition of the rain greatly enhances the mood of the poem, and the life-giving rain of spring compares and contrasts with the crucifixion and the resurrection and the deadly implications of our unlimited access to weapons. Dudley, however, does not make any judgment but reminds us that the rain falls on the just and the unjust. The second haiku, on the face of it, is a very basic nature sketch, and would not even be a poem without the second image.

Easter Monday still the gun shop OPEN ALL DAY

from cloud to cloud silently

Despite my grief with this book, it is a lot of fun to read and I highly recommend it. To end, here are two more of Dudley's best poems. Note the creative use of the period in both, including its absence at the end of the second poem implying silence, stillness, openness and something the poet cannot let go of:

A daughter, he answers,
 then looks to the moon.
Stillborn.

beep.by.beep.
 I.delete.all.of.her.
 messages. but one

The Searchable World by Peter Newton (2017, Maplevie Publishing, no place). 116 pages, 5×7", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-64007-528-3. \$15 from thepeternewton@gmail.com.

Melissa Allen

I opened Peter Newton's *The Searchable World* to the first haiku, the one from which the collection takes its name, and—I'll admit it—gasp.

tide pool
the searchable world
we live in

It's been a while since I've read a haiku that did so well what the best haiku do, which is make us forget exactly where the boundaries are around things. Do our lives take place in the solid natural world, or in the absorbing, half-real world of technology, mediated by Google? In the course of eight words, Newton holds both these worlds up together in the light and moves them slowly toward each other until they merge, like a cold front and a warm front creating a storm in our brains. There's a clap of thunder—a burst of syllables—and we're startled out of our ordinary, dull perceptions into a deeper understanding of reality. We'll never again forget that everywhere we go, we're searching.

This blurring of boundaries, it seems from Newton's introduction, is his goal as a poet. He says, "Ever since I started reading, writing and studying haiku seriously more than twenty years ago, some sort of barrier was removed between me and the rest of the world." The best haiku in *The Searchable World* show us the world from this undefended, fearless position.

birthday roses
adding the packet
that keeps them alive

timing the eggs
 with a tiny hourglass...
 deep winter

The collection is structured in a very natural, if traditional, way for a book of haiku—seasonally, moving from one new year all the way through to another. The movement seems graceful and inevitable, like the best renku, the communal literary game in which the genre of haiku was born: bound by rigid rules, like time itself, and yet utterly free within those rules to roam widely, to dare and to explore.

world news tonight candles vs. Kalashnikovs

mid-life
 a minor god
 in your average myth

If I have any reservation about *The Searchable World*, it's the same reservation I have about much other contemporary haiku, which sometimes seems too content to make obvious associations rather than reach for a more revelatory connection. Unless jokes and puns are merely the visible, floating portion of an iceberg of meaning that extends much deeper, they're bound to be ultimately unsatisfying.

stars and bars
 no changing
 someone's stripes

small town diner
 two guys question
 central intelligence

But pedestrian verse in this collection is far outnumbered by poems that drop us quietly into some corner of the world we thought we knew, tap us on the shoulder, and point quietly at

something we somehow have never seen before and might not ever have seen if Peter Newton hadn't happened by to make a note of it. I don't know how he does it, but I'm grateful that he does.

the moon knows
how I feel
5% full

headlong off the jetty
when I was
a superhero

BRIEFLY REVIEWED

by Randy Brooks

American Haiku: New Readings edited by Toru Kiuchi (2017, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD). 356 pages, 6×9", four-color laminated cover, casebound. ISBN 978-1-4985-2717-0. \$110 from rowman.com.

American Haiku: New Readings explores the history and development of haiku by American writers. In the introduction Toru Kiuchi writes "American haiku has never been more active than it is today in 2015. There are more major American poets writing haiku than at any time in this century. More scholars and researchers begin to pay attention to American haiku. According to 'Haiku Resources: A Scholar's Library of Haiku in English,' published in *Juxtapositions: The Journal of Haiku Research and Scholarship*, an online journal launched by The Haiku Foundation in May 2015, scholarly books and articles dealing with American haiku have appeared numerously placing American haiku into the broader contexts of criticism" (xvi). Edited by professor

Toru Kiuchi, *American Haiku: New Readings* starts with five chapters on the history of American haiku followed by nine chapters of literary criticism on African American haiku and the following individual haiku authors: Richard Wright, Jack Kerouac, Sonia Sanchez, Cid Corman and Burnell Lippy. Chapters include (1) “Yone Noguchi’s Invention of English-language Haiku” by Toru Kiuchi; (2) “Ezra Pound, Imagism, and Haiku” by Yoshinobu Hakutani; (3) “Mutual Influence between the American and the Japanese Haiku: The History of American Haiku” by Toshio Kimura; (4) “Years of Haiku in the United States: An Overview” by Jim Kacian; (5) “Haiku in Higher Education: A Bibliography of Articles & Theses on Haiku Concluding with a Model of Teaching Haiku as Performance Learning” by Randy Brooks; (6) “Richard Wright’s Haiku, Zen, and the African ‘Primal Outlook upon Life’” by Yoshinobu Hakutani; (7) “Zen Buddhism in Richard Wright’s Haiku” by Toru Kiuchi; (8) “African American Haiku and Aesthetic Attitude” by John Zheng; (9) “Jack Kerouac’s Haiku and *The Dharma Bums*” by Yoshinobu Hakutani; (10) “Sonia Sanchez’s *Morning Haiku* and the Blues” by Heejung Kim; (11) “Those ‘Negro slaves, dark purple ripened plums’: Black Atlantic Captives Revisited in *Cane* and Parodied in *Jazz from the Haiku King*” by Virginia Whatley Smith; (12) “Creating African American Haiku Form: Lenard D. Moore’s Poetic Artistry” by Toru Kiuchi; (13) “Cid Corman and Haiku: The Poetics of ‘Livingdying’” by Ce Rosenow; and (14) “Burnell Lippy’s Haiku in Relation to Zen” by Bruce Ross. This collection of recent scholarship on American haiku is an essential holding for all academic libraries and for anyone conducting research in this thriving literary art.

An Amazement of Deer: Our Cascade Mule Deer Neighbors in Haiku, Photos, and Solo Rengay by Carmen Sterba, ed. by Dianne Garcia, and includes 20 guest poets (2017, Cascade Deer Press, University Place, WA). 28 pages, 5½×8½”, hand-sewn Japanese style. No ISBN. \$10 from carmensterba@yahoo.com.

In this collection Carmen Sterba celebrates a herd of mule

deer that live near her home in the Cascade Mountains. The chapbook starts with a solo rengay that ends with *mating season—/ with gratitude we leave / all the fallen apples* (7). Each page features a photograph, short explanation about a particular deer, and a related haiku. For example, *what can I say / the doe is no longer / a stranger* (12). The book ends with a gathering of 20 haiku by various English and Japanese authors. My favorite is by Susan Constable: *day river bed / a fawn licks the color / from a rock* (23).

Birds Have Feathers, Lizards Have the Sun: Haibunies / Ptice Imaju Perje, Gusteri Iimaju Sunce: haibunci by Željko Funda (2017, *Varaždinske Toplice, Zagreb, Croatia*). 120 pages, 4¾×6¾", wraparound cover, casebound. ISBN 978-953-8020-66-7.

Željko Funda's latest collection of haiku, *Birds Have Feathers, Lizards Have the Sun*, is published as a dual-language edition. If you flip the book over, you read either English or Croatian versions of the haiku from start to finish. Funda refers to this book as a collection of "haibunies" which evidently refers to the running commentaries on his haiku. For example, here is a haiku *city cemetery / in the mouth of a bust / a petal* and the commentary, *Petals are not so trumpy as leaves. That's why dustmen aren't so busy about them* (11). The book is organized through the seasons with two special sections on animals and the sea. Here is another haiku *garden / laundry hardly visible / in the fog* and its commentary, *Grannie says fog also does its job. 'And rightly doesn't get paid,' says grandpa* (51). It is difficult to know if the original Croatian haiku have more nuances and subtle connotations than the translations, but most of these haiku do not seem to rise to a level beyond description of ordinary things and scenes. In English the haiku in this collection rarely achieve a creative spark of emotional significance or feeling. The commentaries reduce possible readings and don't encourage us to imagine the scene for ourselves. The title comes from the haiku, *poplar / from its top a hawk watching / a snail in the grass* and its commentary, *Birds have feathers, cats have hair, and lizards have the sun* (79).

The Color Blue: Short Poems & Haiga by Alexis Rotella (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 72 pages, 6×9", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-98-0. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

The Color Blue is the latest collection of haiku, tanka, haibun, haiga and mostly senryu by Alexis Rotella, an award-winning poet and visual artist. The book ends with the title poem, *No one left / to write to / except the color blue* (69) which suggests an artistic independence and confidence evident in her creative work. The mix of playful language and simple intuitions make this an enjoyable collection. Within a few pages her poems move from the more poignant *Mother's Day / the card / I would have chosen* (10) to *Good Friday / not for / the fish* (14). Her poems also range from minimal senryu to one image one-liners and an occasional typographical twist, as in *Things happen / in / t rees / H* (17) with the H placed below the missing space that would have formed tHrees in the line above. The few haibun are also very high quality although I was disappointed with the black and white versions of the haiga, having seen the vibrant colors of some of them online. This is a quality collection by one of our best haiku writers in English.

Earthshine by Chuck Brickley (2017, Snapshot Press, Ormskirk, UK). 112 pages, 5×7¼", french fold cover, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-903543-43-6. \$25 postpaid from www.snapshotpress.co.uk.

Earthshine is, surprisingly, Chuck Brickley's first published collection of haiku. It collects haiku written from two distinct periods, 1973–1984 and 2007–2017. In the preface he explains two different approaches to writing haiku. In the 1970s in San Francisco, he started by writing haiku from imagination or language experiments. As he explains: "A bit of research and a teen obsession with surrealism led me to apply dream logic, concrete, and E.E. Cummings–style poetics to hundreds of surreal haiku, relying solely on whatever conceptual oddities my imagination could muster" (11). After moving to a small town in British Columbia his haiku poetics changed. "My writing reflected a growing intimacy with nature, an immersion into real life, in real time. The moon, which often went unnoticed in San Francisco,

dominated this little village set in a ring of Coastal Range mountains. So did rain, snow. I was astounded by the myriad flora and fauna—and the townsfolk, each a part of nature as well—right there before me, day and night. I became less concerned with being clever and innovative than with how to express the daily revelations offered by this new life” (11). This book is arranged as a progression through a single year, starting with spring *predawn hush / the forest / still dripping* (15). While many of the haiku are placed within nature, they are well populated by people as in *forsythia / the widow’s blinds / part slightly* (21) and *the abortion. / her long drive home / through spring rain* (22). Because of the emotions evoked, I have often used the following haiku in workshops with young students: *spring evening / I play with the last kitten / to be given away* (24). Brickley does an outstanding job presenting moments as both natural, real and emotionally evocative. He especially enjoys portraying leaps in time and space as in *deserted schoolyard / the fence he climbed over / to Iraq* (54) and *black / berry a / tiny bug / explores / sun by / sun* which is arranged in a berry-shape. Here is another that reaches from the immediate to the grander space of beyond: *a car / at the cliff’s edge / the Milky Way* (62). This is a marvelous collection of haiku full of surprises, discoveries, and significance of being alive. In the afterword, Brickley explains the title of his collection: “Gazing at a crescent moon on a clear night, one may sometimes notice that the section not directly lit by the sun is graced with its own subtle shading of light. This faint glow is actually sunlight reflected from our planet. It is called *earthshine*” (112). When we take time to notice, look twice and consider what often goes unnoticed, like Brickley’s *earthshine* on the moon, haiku becomes a poetry of astonishment and wonder.

Eglantine Hedge: Haiku & Senryu / Gardul de măceși by Vasile Spinei (2017, Bons Offices Press, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova). 74 pages, 5½×8½”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-9975-87-296-6. From the author spineivas@gmail.com.

Vasile Spinei’s *Eglantine Hedge* is a dual-language edition of haiku and senryu, with both the original Romanian and English

translation on each page. In the foreword, translator and illustrator Ion Codrescu notes the refinement evident in this collection since his first collection, *The Monk's Smile*, was published in 1996. He notes that Spinei's haiku appeal "in a subtle way to the categories of Japanese aesthetics" (10) of *wabi*, *sabi*, *yūgen*, *mono no aware*, *karumi*, and *yohaku*. This book is organized into four sections: (1) "A Willow Twig" featuring haiku from the poet's village; (2) "To the Fountain from the Plain" has haiku drawn from the surrounding environment; (3) "Straw Hat" shares travel haiku; and a short section (4) "The Ephemeral Moment" features senryu. Here is a haiku from each section starting with *lilac perfume / from my neighbour's garden — / I forget my anger* (41) from the first section. From the second section I loved this one, *on the turret / of the fortified town / a thistle bush in bloom* (107). Here is an example of a travel haiku: *thousands of miles / to see the waterfall... / drought* (154). I will end with a senryu, *chuckling from the bush — / girls washing laundry / in the river* (189). Spinei's best haiku are from the first section, based on experiences in his own garden and home: *after rains / high weeds like the fence — / where and what did I sow?* (59). This is a pleasant collection of haiku.

First Flutter by Kevin Goldstein-Jackson (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 72 pages, 4¼×6½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-07-4. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

At the end of *First Flutter*, Kevin Goldstein-Jackson asserts: "All haiku in this book are based on my own observations of actual events and experiences" (no page numbers). The point of this claim is that his haiku are not imagined fictions. Many of his best haiku are observations of people as in *avoiding the snail / he wrenches his wheelchair*. Some of the less effective haiku seem to be merely poetic statements, such as, *Spring / the flowery language / begins to flow*. He has a couple that are commentaries on the haiku life: *Nature / in the name of love / haiku* and *in my dreams / I wander fields / looking for Basho*. Goldstein-Jackson is best at senryu, *in the park / two walking sticks / lean against their owners*, and his curious *crowded beach / I walk the shoreline / reading tattoos*.

The Haiku Life: What We Learned as Editors of *Frogpond* by Michele Root-Bernstein and Francine Banwarth (2017, Modern Haiku Press, Lincoln, IL). 94 pages, 6×6", perfectbound. ISBN 0-9741894-3-X. \$12 from modernhaiku.com.

In this book, *The Haiku Life*, Michele Root-Bernstein and Francine Banwarth share what they learned about excellent contemporary haiku as editors of *Frogpond* magazine from 2012 through 2015. This book is based on their presentation at Haiku North America 2015 in Schenectady, New York, as they were concluding their term as editors. During four years of reviewing and selecting haiku for *Frogpond*, they refined their own understanding of what they were looking for in haiku worthy of publication. In this book they explain the challenges of codifying high-quality criteria for haiku, a creative, social, literary art. A short example of this complexity is found in their discussion of three levels of context for creativity (personal, public/professional, and historical). They explain the distinction between each level: "If personal creativity involves what is novel and effective to an individual poet or to a small circle of her family and friends, public (professional) creativity depends on what is deemed novel and effective to select communities of enthusiasts. Historical creativity has to do with innovations in the art or craft of haiku that stand the test of time" (12). To simplify their conception of the best haiku, they employed an acronym LIFE to explain their goals for the best haiku. "L is for language that surprises" (22). "I is for imagery that is fresh" (24). "F is for form that functions" (26). "E is for elusiveness that engages imagination" (28). With examples and discussion of haiku representing each LIFE quality, this is an excellent primer for contemporary writers of haiku.

High Desert Cameos by Carl Mayfield (2017, Little Books Press, Cookeville, TN). 56 pages, 5¼×7", card covers, saddle stitched. No ISBN. From Carl Mayfield, POB 44472, Rio Rancho, NM 87174.

High Desert Cameos is a beautiful chapbook of haiku by Carl Mayfield capturing a quiet life of contemplation and contentment on the high desert of New Mexico. The haiku are illustrated by Wayne Hogan with stark silhouette-like shadow drawings, each

with an embedded recycle symbol. The haiku are written with an unpretentious voice of someone who knows his outdoor neighbors well: *unchurched, still I turn / when the meadowlark / begins to sing*. Not in a hurry to be somewhere else, Mayfield notices and writes *lizard's tongue / touching the water / once*. In my favorite, he shares the simple joy of falling rain: *in the wheelchair / tilting her head back / to feel the rain*. Throughout this collection he conveys a sense of being at home with an American western *sabi*: *solitary hiker—/ in conversation / between shoes and sand*. I find only one haiku of complaint: *wearing out / everyone's smile—/ the west wind*. The book ends with a poem in which our narrator faces a ravine and says goodnight to the badger.

In Search of the Hidden Pond: Little Poems by David H. Rosen (2017, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR). 48 pages, 7½×5½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-5326-3676-9. \$7 from wipfandstock.com.

Dr. David H. Rosen is a physician, psychiatrist, and Jungian analyst who enjoys a variety of creative endeavors. This small book is a collection of his "little poems" celebrating moments of insight and feeling. Some of these poems are haiku-like and others are simply light-hearted prescriptions for living: *Dream talking—/ pouring sake* (no page numbers). Playfully illustrated with a few strokes of a marker by Diane Katz, this is a fun chapbook in the spirit of maxim-poetry books by Paul Repts. I'll conclude with the title poem: *Sauntering through a forest / Finally, a hidden pond*.

The Kraken Latitudes or, Parallel Universes by Steven Carter (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 86 pages, 5×7½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-04-3. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

The Kraken Latitudes by Steven Carter reads like a disjointed dream journal or diary through time, memory, and an ever-shifting confusing present. The blurb authors, Amelia Eunice and Valentina Schiattarella, suggest that this book is "part satire, part bricolage" or it "is an assembly, a do-it-yourself puzzle with limited directions which allow us to put together, not object or objects, but a view on the world" (back cover). The opening

section, “Early onset Alzheimer’s,” provides the narrative frame for continuous fragmentation and leaps through time and place. The narrator talks about the tricks of memory and partial-amnesia: “I’m 74 now and frankly embarrassed in my poet’s Purgatory (the same inner weather-maker whose winds tousled the hair of women like imaginary women springing like Aphrodite from the half-shell of a haibun)” (8). This is a complicated narrator with self-references to memories and experiences of the author, referred to in the third person as Steve. Once in a while as a poetic interlude, a haiku ends one of the memory recall sessions *Lucky day / On the sidewalk / A ten spot* (27). I’m afraid this is too much of a puzzle for me to puzzle out.

Latitudes by Paul Chambers (2017, Alba Publishing, Uxbridge, UK). 92 pages, 5¾×8¼”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-910185-74-2. \$15 from AlbaPublishing.com.

Latitudes is Paul Chambers’ second collection of haiku. This book includes several haiku providing careful observation of scenes in nature, like *deep river bend... / the fisherman casts / into a cloud* (55) and a more competitive *church cross / a crow / displaces a crow* (16). There also are many excellent bird haiku, but my favorites are those catching both the inner and outer weather, as in *spring heat— / the imprint of grass / in her thighs* (20) and *midsummer dusk / a boy rides the farm gate / shut* (36). This collection of well-written haiku invites us to pay attention and notice what is happening out there and within us: *deserted beach... / a ball drifts back / to shore* (52).

Les Saisons du Parc / The Seasons in the Park / Las Estaciones del Parque by David Ball with translations into Spanish by Judith Alvarado (2017, L’Atelier du Grand Tétrás, Mont-de-Laval, France). 56 pages, 5½×8½”, perfectbound with French folds. ISBN 978-2-37531-0140-4. 12 euros from online booksellers.

David Ball has written haiku for several years in the park of a château in eastern France. This trilingual edition, *The Seasons in the Park*, shares haiku progressing through the seasons. Most of the haiku are descriptive with lines of commentary, for example

majestic / the old oak / in midsummer (12). A few provide more interaction from the poet: *two walnut trees / overhanging the path / both pockets bulging!* (18). Perhaps the best haiku is *the wooden bench / deeper by a year under / the moss and ivy* (44).

The New World by Keith Polette (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 74 pages, 4¼×6½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-04-3. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

Keith Polette is a professor of English at the University of Texas at El Paso. A scholar on literacy and English education, *The New World* is his first collection of haiku. The title comes from: *old map / the new world / drawn by hand* (no page numbers), which is illustrated by a photograph of an old hand-drawn map of the Americas. This haiku is an example of his theme of mapping out the journey of everyday life...trying to read the significance of signs, words, and marks left behind by those who have ventured ahead of us. Sometimes forces of nature change our avenues: *rolling stones / the river re-routes / the space between mountains*. Other times we follow a trail of writing: *in an empty parking lot / a yellow pencil / points the way*, or a literary work like *Moby Dick* appears to remind us of obsessive quests: *late night movie / the white whale / pulls ahab down again*. In another haiku he gives up on words, *we buried / the argument / zinnias burst into colors* but soon returns to words, *one lamp glowing / i read words of the dead / thunderstorm*. Then he revisits a favorite poem by Robert Frost in *fork in the trail... / how rusty / i have become*. Near the end of the collection he has a winter haiku where there is no map from our forebears: *buried under snow / the only path / through these woods*. But Professor Polette will continue to seek that invisible path he knows is temporarily hidden. It is the path of haiku. His collection ends with *crows caw in fog— / i awaken / to everything gray*.

Persimmon: A Harvest of Haiku edited by Stephen Henry Gill (2017, Hailstone Haiku Circle, Kyoto, Japan). 152 pages, 5½×6", perfectbound. ISBN 978-4-9822-8-4. \$18 from Hisashi Miyazaki, 54-16 Hamuro-cho, Takatsuki-shi, Osaka, 569-1147, Japan.

This collection of haiku provides samples of work from an active, international, English-language haiku community in Japan, Hailstone Haiku Circle. In the introduction, Stephen Henry Gill explains the significance of persimmons in his neighborhood of Saga in Kyoto, noting “Kyorai’s storm-damaged persimmon harvest and how it had led him to name his thatched retreat ‘Rakushisha’ (the House of Fallen Persimmons). This beautiful property, today run by a preservation society, is where Bashō had stayed to write his *Saga Diary*” (4-5). This site has become a common meeting location for Hailstone haiku group meetings. Citing two famous haiku, *Holding to her cheek / a red persimmon... / (my daughter sleeps)* (6) by Issa and *Eating a persimmon— / the bell of ancient Hōryūji / booms out* (6), Gill explains his poetic goals for selecting haiku from this community of writers. “Homely, as haiku should be, yet *transporting*—this is the essence of the persimmon, and it is these two features that I decided to look for in making my selections of haiku to go in this book. The pool from which I have chosen is simply any haiku submitted at Hailstone events or seminars since publication of our last anthology, *Meltdown*, in 2013” (6). The anthology is organized into four “haiku villages” in alphabetical order of authors. The collection also includes special sequences and haiku from events. The book ends with an ABC collection of haiku, highlighting the use of verbs such as admit, bend, cling, draw, etc. Here are a few of my favorites from the anthology that provide examples of the range of haiku written by this lively community: *Rose pink / after the first bath of the year— / a little girl* by Yae Kitajima (40); *The smiling stewardess, / between her breasts / a crucifix* by David McCullough (65); and *We watch the falls— / it watches us, / a lone monkey* by Hisashi Miyazaki (68).

Quaking Marsh by Stuart Bartow (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 60 pages, 4¼×6½”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-05-0. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

Stuart Bartow teaches writing and literature at SUNY Adirondack and is chair of the Battenkill Conservancy. An accomplished

nature poet, this is his first collection of love/nature haiku. The collection starts with the title poem, *quaking marsh / how she stirs / in her sleep* (no page numbers). I enjoy how this haiku instantly transforms the marsh into a living muse, a lover stirring with dreams and possibilities. Bartow is at home on the marsh or in the woods with *new neighbors next door—starlings* and often talks to small critters as in *stowaway in my kayak / where's home / wolf spider*. He also writes of human desire: *spring sermon / mind keeps wandering / to those legs*. One more favorite: *spring traffic jam / all of us stuck / in a dandelion storm*. Bartow's collection of haiku celebrates the human heart at home in nature.

Sanguinella by Helen Buckingham (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 80 pages, 6×9", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-11-1. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

Sanguinella is a type of blood orange dogwood tree, but in this collection it becomes a symbol of a life tinted by a difficult environment. As Helen Buckingham notes, "Fifty-eight years since the seed was planted, *sanguinella* provides a scrump back through the often bloody orchard that constitutes my life until now, from the rural pickings gathered over recent years in the bonsai city of Wells, to the tangled branches of a childhood spent battling various forms of blight in a mulberry-stained corner of South London" (80). Buckingham writes as a survivor of this childhood and life, but she is having a lot of fun writing all kinds of haiku, and I'm having all kinds of fun reading them too. Sometimes she characterizes this struggle in epic terms: *vacation over an industrial-scale cobweb* (8). Then again, she takes small victories, resisting the aging lost as in, *hiring deckchairs— / still young enough / to feel too young* (9). In this compressed minimal haiku, *maypolor* (13) we get both the fun of celebration and the fear of depression the next day. In some haiku, the struggle is with nature: *black ice / blue light / spinning* (16). Other times it is because of our fairy tale expectations: *midnight call / his car / a pumpkin* (21). Sometimes industrialization and new construction seems to be the enemy: *returning home / a builder's crane / gives me the finger* (25). Then we enjoy a brief moment with colleagues:

office workers / share the one / umbrella (35). Of course, Buckingham doesn't shirk the more difficult scares and challenges of contemporary life. For example, in this haiku *breast lump / I scrabble around / for my whitest bra* (36), we find her scrabbling not just for clothes but also for words. In another tender haiku of loss, she writes, *the week of her funeral / a moth brushes my cheek / goodnight* (44). The book ends with a minimal, playful, two-word haiku that is naturally literary: *ribbit / ibid* (76).

Somewhere Inside Yesterday by Gregory Longenecker (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 70 pages, 4¼×6½", perfect-bound. ISBN 978-1-947271-10-4. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

This collection is an interesting mix of traditional haiku and linguistically challenging monoku. The title poem, *music box somewhere inside yesterday* (no page numbers), is an example of Longenecker's broken linguistics. We try to connect the "inside" with the music box which is presumably open, playing its old tinny song. However, it is the music box that is out of place, out of its yesterday. Some of his monoku are less complicated, as in this humorous haiku: *stepfamily some assembly required*. Others often seem to be only half a haiku, lacking a turn or surprise or added depth of felt significance. His more direct haiku are very poignant as we imagine: *moving day / we take apart the bed / our parents' dreamed on* and *garden café / sparrows tend / the empty tables*. I enjoy Longenecker's surprising extended metaphors like *still fragile / out of the chrysalis / out of rehab*. We start this haiku thinking of a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis but soon shift into imagining a person coming out of rehab. Both the butterfly and former addict are fragile with reborn potential for beauty in the life after cocooning. One of the best in this collection is a traditional haiku: *summer twilight... / girls braid and unbraided / each other's hair*.

Star by Star by Rick Tarquinio (2017, Odd Duck Press, NJ). 36 pages, 5½×8½", holograph card covers, hand-sewn saddle stitched. No ISBN. \$10 from Rick Tarquinio at ricktarquinio.bandcamp.com/merch/star-by-star-haiku.

Star by Star is Rick Tarquinio's second collection of haiku, dedicated "to the farm fields and woods where I live in southern New Jersey. I grew up here, so every day I walk these dirt roads, trails and train tracks into both my future and past" (no page numbers). The first haiku, *country road / a field of wildflowers / for sale by owner*, is both a commentary on contemporary concepts of ownership and the beauty of nature. He writes haiku that call for a double-take, as in *sudden rain / an invisible man / left on third*, which places us in limbo between the recent past and near future of a postponed game. Sometimes, he brings us along as observers: *honeysuckle / through spider threads / the pull of youth*. A few share tender indoor moments: *spring breeze / the shy one singing / inside her room* and *glowing embers / I tell her a story / she already knows*. Tarquinio is a musician as well as poet and several haiku have allusions to music, as seen in *strawberry fields / forever ago / hung about* and *blossom rain / learning Beethoven / from an app*. This is an enjoyable collection of high-quality haiku evoking a wide range of emotions, including the subtle humor of irony found in *dentist office / the poinsettias / off-white*.

Still the Dead Trees by Robert Piotrowski (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 60 pages, 4¼×6½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-08-1. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

Still the Dead Trees is a collection of haiku and tanka by Robert Piotrowski, a teacher who lives in southern Ontario. Although the haiku occur in specific seasonal context, the focus is on the desires, hopes and inner lives of people. For example, here are two haiku related to aging parents: *snowy pine / my mother notices / the gray in my beard* (9) and *I work to fix / every mistake / my father's tools* (9). A bit of intrigue is evident in *seedless watermelon / last summer's / secrets* (11) and an intriguing, suggestive one *sundress / the shadow of her / new tattoo* (12). Piotrowski excels in romance, *holding the door open / for the wrong reasons / her soft hips* (33), and remembrance, *dashboard hula girl / the way you once / moved me* (32). A favorite from the perspective of an aging rocker, *electric guitar / I plug into a*

younger version / of myself (42). His tanka explore similar feelings, but in one he notes *the difference / between haiku and tanka / we linger / in the doorway / talking about rain* (48).

Through the Silence by David Elliott (2017, Nightshade Press, La Plume, PA). 136 pages, 5½×8½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-640420-7. \$16.95 from booksellers.

David Elliott's third book of poetry, *Through the Silence*, is a combination of short narrative poems and haiku. It is interesting to speculate on how haiku has influenced his short poems, with an emphasis on perception and themes such as impermanence and consciousness. Likewise, many of Elliott's haiku are miniature stories, as in *Making snow angels / with my son falling back / so many years* (19). In addition to teaching creative writing and literature at Keystone College, he taught the history of jazz, which is evident in several haiku such as *Billie's tremolo / the long reflections of harbor lights / shimmering* (42). The haiku are presented in clusters that almost appear to be sequences. For example, in a cluster called "All Night" we encounter *Cloudless night / crickets / brightening the moon* (55) and *4 a.m. / only two peepers / still at it* (56). The cluster of haiku "Through the Silence" shares haiku of grief and consolation as in *After Dad's death / so many Christmas cards / wishing him well* (70). David Elliott is an authentic poet whose poems tell short-short stories with precision and care. I'll end with a personal favorite: *How much I've forgotten... / my dog pulling me / into the mist* (110).

The Weight of Snowflakes by Mel Goldberg (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 74 pages, 4¼×6½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-07-4. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

Mel Goldberg is a retired English professor who, after extended travel, has settled in Jalisco, Mexico. He is the author of several books of fiction and poetry, and this is his third collection of haiku. The title poem is *blue morning / the weight / of snowflakes* (no page numbers), which I imagine as winter melancholy. Several haiku in this collection are written from a perspective of old age, looking back with a mix of nostalgia and a sincere

sense of loss. For example, *in my old age / every trail leads back / to where I have been*. Another sad one: *tears for one / who has died / or myself*. One of my favorite haiku by Goldberg is this tender one: *funeral home / she straightens his tie / for the last time*. Often, he enjoys mysteries, such as *mushroom circles / so much / we do not know* and *the saguaro / raises an arm / maybe it has the answer*. While his blue morning voice is consistent throughout the collection, there is always an underlying sense of hope that things are not done. He recognizes this questing in a friend, *hospice / he speaks of poems / he plans to write*, and in the final poem: *eightieth year / behind my eyes / a young man*.

Wind Man: Haiku at Work by Brian Chaffee (2017, 23rd Century Modern, Cincinnati, OH). 96 pages, 6×9", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-522091-43-1. \$11.79 from Amazon.com.

In *Wind Man: Haiku at Work*, Brian Chaffee offers a collection of short poems depicting a “day in the life” of a fictitious office warrior. His view of haiku is that it is “a kind of verbal Instagram—capturing a moment within a defined frame of convention.” All but one of his poems follow the 5–7–5 syllable pattern. The book starts with poems about the start of the day: *fumbled quarters, sleet / and hash browns hit the blacktop. / thanks. have it your way* (10). Later there is a coffee break: *dresses, ponytails, / heels chatter on break room floors / march of the admins* (15). Chaffee enjoys some poetic flourish as in: *like a fleece blanket / or a stuntman’s air mattress / inch-tall beery foam* (53). As a pop-culture book, this is a playful book of zappai—somewhat in the spirit of the television comedy, *The Office*.

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