

frogpond

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Frogpond

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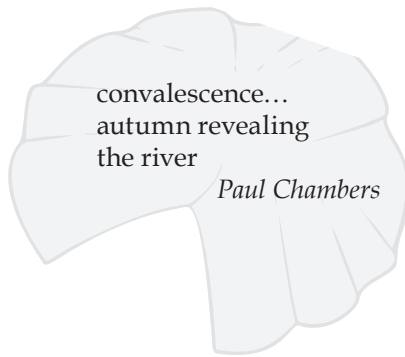
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Museum of Haiku Literature Award

\$100 for the best previously unpublished work appearing
in issue 41:1 of Frogpond as selected by vote of the
HSA Executive Committee.



Haiku & Senryu

sun-bleached bones
under the killing tree
the screech of a hawk
Mark Gilfillan

the hook
where granddad hung his gun
crescent moon
Sarah E. Metzler

the escaping steam
from the field dressed deer –
deep autumn
Elliot Nicely

campfire
in the cast iron skillet
three rainbows
Barbara Tate

last deer looks back
over the slope
of its shoulder
Adam Schaeffer

old stone Buddha
up to his hips with moss
end of summer...

Bruce Ross

steam room
thinking less and less
about less

Bill Cooper

in this grape seed
the design for
a universe

William Ramsey

leftover rain
lotus leaves collect
small round mirrors

Kathabela Wilson

tai chi—
a life
mostly posturing

Jeff Stillman

in the desk drawer
the yellowed ticket
to visit you in Paris
Frank Judge

pressed flower
a memory I've forgotten
to remember
Tia Haynes

new moon
you thought your absence
wouldn't matter
Jennifer Roman

his leaving
the bhodi leaf
drifts downstream
Elizabeth Black

searching through pennies my old thoughts
P M F Johnson

bluebell woods you left too early
Caroline Skanne

tulip petals –
the cheeks
of a young girl
Valentina Ranaldi-Adams

one drop of rain
on a leaf
sun sapphire
Arch Haslett

spring branches
heavy with buds
the same old love song
Jim Sullivan

fallen blossoms of pārijāta...
finally i stop
looking for meaning
Salil Charturvedi

dawn twilight lingering in the steam of horses
Lew Watts

ghost pigs
forage in the mud
misty March morning
Maureen Edden

empty field
a rain puddle resting
on the metal chair
Arlie Parker

opening measures
in Kind of Blue
soft spring rain
Jon Hare

my 58th spring
the field of blue lupine
never gets old
Kathryn Bold

sidewalk bistro
a floating blossom
starts a kiss

Marilyn Appl Walker

her fingers
stroke the stem of the wineglass –
check, please

Rob Grotke

the scotch and soda sway of the porch swing
joan iversen goswell

spring moon
what are you
waiting for

Francine Banwarth

her panties
dangling from the bedpost
blush wine

Greg Schwartz

the red tip
of a burning cigarette
in the midnight parking lot
Olivier Schopfer

dumbbells dropped
the sound of upstairs neighbors
fighting again
David Shultz

Back into the night
my shadow is swept
by passing headlights.
Sam Burbank

city street
in the cracked pavement
a blade of grass
Drew Oliver

after the fire
a staircase
leading to nowhere
R.D. Bailey

candle sputtering...
she wants me to believe things
that were never true

Bonnie Stepenoff

losing the argument
I look out a window
into space

Michael McClintock

more rain
the cat and I
talk things over

Joseph Robello

after rain
a blue sky
I don't trust

Robert Epstein

wild roses
she catches him kissing
her sister

Bee Jay

war monument—
the dead
carved in shadow
Mark Brager

guarded border
shadows from both sides
mingle freely
George Swede

one last fold
of an origami swan
night falls
Bryan Rickert
for Johnny Baranski

more automatic words about weapons
John Stevenson

freedom march
the sound
of color
Jayne Miller

your last email—
eight years
to click delete

Marita Gargiulo

three days holding out
your obituary from
the recycling bin

David Cashman

schoolyard fence—
memorial flowers wilt
in the chain link

Carol Raisfeld

months later
his number
still on my phone

Elizabeth Howard

names we can't bear
to cross out
address book

Lucy Whitehead

utah beach
standing where he stood
years ago

Debbie Olson

all the seasons
sitting
by her deathbed

Elmedin Kadric

watched clock
following each second
into eternity

David J Kelly

The wilted rose
still gives off strong fragrance
a widow

Sravani Singampalli

family gathering...
I try on the veil
mother left behind

Praniti Gulyani

flu shot
the nurse demonstrates
on a teddy bear
Neal Whitman

first grade...
shaping little lumps
of clay
Elinor Pihl Huggett

first grader's drawing
the sun's really bigger
he tells me
Dorothy McLaughlin

children's theater
my son tries out
a deep voice
Michele Root-Bernstein

paper boat
my daughter explaining the sea
to the dolls
Radostina Dragostinova

night fishing
the great blue heron
knee-deep in moonlight
John Quinnett

dot to dot
a flock of crows
in a contrail sky
June R. Dowis

drilling down
to the heart of the matter
a woodpecker
Elisabeth Liebert

flamingo
one leg
or the other
Christine Eales

the softness
of his feathers in death
winter redwing
John Barlow

tiny spider
your fragile web...
what could you possibly trap?
Julia Cousineau

Reading Issa,
when was the last time
I saw a fly
Bruce England

butterflies
emerge from their chrysalides
morning sun
Robert A. Oliveira

fleeting glimpse—
the stray cat I saw
when I was ten
Martin Vest

baby rattler
on a gravel path
I smile, walk away
Gil Jackofsky

past perfect
silently correcting his grammar
Julie A. Riggott

English Lit class...
to see eternity
in an hour
Julie Warther

reading poetry
to someone
who doesn't
Crystal Simone Smith

thrift store bookshelf
the copy I signed
for a friend
Robyn Hood Black

a banyan tree
grows beyond
the elder's story
Brent Goodman

almost dusk
the cuckoo's cry cuts
through the rain
Lucky Triana

loneliness –
the crows don't sound so bad
after all
Stanford M. Forrester/sekiro

the vastness
of a Condor's wings
Grand Canyon
Mary Kendall

a flight of swallows
around the jagged rocks
desert sky
Deborah P Kolodji

baby in a crib
spring breeze rocks
the sparrow's nest
Srinivasa Rao Sambangi

to us
they all look alike
fireflies

Jeannie Martin

to them
we all look alike
fireflies

Jeannie Martin

night lightning
alone in the room
with a hornet

Polona Oblak

grasshoppers everywhere
one jumps
into my scream

Jo Balistreri

yellow-jacket nest—
the lawnmower continues
without me

Aron Rothstein

crowded subway
I let him have
my wiggle room
Francine Banwarth

busy intersection—
the catholic schoolgirl
crosses herself
Dana Grover

rain puddle
in a busy parking lot
her makeup mirror
James Won

in the car park
in full evening dress
men turn to fisticuffs
Patricia Prime

a shift
in awareness
pothole
Joan Chaput

night sky
we're not alone
just not talking right now
Scott Mason

thunder without rain
saying just enough
then stopping
Mariam Kirby

tearing apart your photo tearing me apart
Warren Decker

night ferry
we cross paths
with the moon
Jacquie Pearce

north star
she says we'll find
a way
Joe McKeon

autumn—
done with being leaves
they fall

Keith Polette

cutting out
the bruises
fallen apples

Gary Hotham

fallen leaves
cover the backyard
summer memories

Mariela Coromoto Hernandez

half moon
I sit in silence
with my shadow

Agnus M. Sunjaya

the last page missing
from the library book—
late autumn evening

Stella Pierides

old song
just like that
I am 16 again

Christina Sng

retirement party
a balloon bursts
by itself

Muskaan Ahuja

home run
grandpa presses an ear
to the radio

J. Brian Robertson

lost grandchild nightmare—
waking to the gentle shush
of warm rain

Ruth Yarrow

sixty years...
his and her walkers
parked by the bed

Pris Campbell

four weeks in hospice
she ponders life and death
white roses still bloom

June Gray

another life
within this one
butterfly pupae

Sandi Pray

woman in black
kneels in front
of the teenager's photo

Slobodan Pupovac

cloud covered sundial
all time
stops

Lyle Rumpel

dad's ashes
the fish
take notice

Frank Hooven

first day of autumn—
cabbage whites fluttering
amid purple asters

Wally Swist

autumn breeze
the cadence of colors
across the hill

Ben Moeller-Gaa

August twilight
bucking bales...sweating bullets
to distant thunder

Mike Flanagan

horse training
the crack of the whip fades
into thunder

Stewart C Baker

sudden gust
a maple leaf stirs
my playful pup

Mike Nierste

pinewoods
scattered shards
of moonlight
Jeff Hoagland

in from the cold
engulfed by the fog
of my glasses
Michael Dudley

a field post
for all but one crow
autumn twilight
Claire Everett

golden hour
the farm stand girl
juggling apples
Rick Tarquinio

October
An urge to buy
an elephant
Trevor Kildiszew

bloody hell
the sideways charm
of beguiling curses
Fred Andrie

so she won't hear
when we talk about her
whispering "Alexis"
Scott Wiggerman

classic rock
he says change
isn't necessary
Jim Laurila

with one finger
he flips off the world
hearing aids
Ronald K. Craig

my life
on a screen
minimized
Renée Owen

her gnarled fingers
once planted flowers
in gun barrels
George Ochsensfeld

grandpa delivers his lies
wrapped in scotch and tobacco
my favorite smells
Chrissy Abruzzi

sitting on the stoop
a neighborhood's
broken dreams
D.P. Bishop

alone at midnight
one candle flickering
on a cupcake
Joe McKeon

widow...
she turns the dryer on
with pliers
Margaret Rutley

crows
settling among crows –
autumn evening
James Richardson

football field
black-backed gulls
in position
Barbara Strang

black night,
a lightning flash
still life
Shirley A. Plummer

missing moon...
the forest fuses
with a darker darkness
Jann Wright

snow drift
familiar things
in a new light
Corine Timmer

cool light of late snow early morning jazz
Beverly Acuff Momi

winter storm—
two crows trying hard
to stay black
Ashish Narain

one blond strand winter sunlight
Bill Gottlieb

snow day
long pauses between chores
stretching the quiet
Adelaide B. Shaw

coffee break
the lulling tempo
of winter rain
Joshua Gage

her last letter a mourning dove's flutter
Christine Taylor

cancer spreading
the way ivy
wraps around the house
Floki Moriarty

shadow snow that last hospice morning
Ann K. Schwader

after her death
putting puzzle pieces
back in the box
Devon Richey

cracked sidewalk
I step over thoughts
of my mother
Susan Constable

a dead key
on the grand piano
winter darkness

John Hawk

first snow
warming all ten fingers
on your mug

kjmunro

Between streetlights
a child's glove
sinking into the snow

Wyatt Mischler

leftovers
leftover again
winter rain

Nika

frozen night
I let the spider in my house
stay there

Seren Fargo

distant thunder
a collapsed barn
exposed to sky
Tom Painting

through the window
of an ancient ruin
spring begins
Victor Ortiz

flat-footed
finding a new warp
in the old floorboards
Robin White

rusty pick-up
the smell of wood chips
steaming in the sun
James Chessing

desert trip
the ghost town
too crowded
John Hawk

ice cream party:
a scoop of me
deep in the dip
R.D. Bailey

sprinkle of sugar
over orange pie –
springtime!
Gurpreet Dutt

cookie crumbs
my wide-eyed boy
blames the ants
Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy

child grimacing
at first taste of blackberry
reaches for a second
Lydia T. Liu

whoops of joy –
rag picker's children find
overripe watermelon
Angelee Deodhar

sunset...
rubbing a stone
smoothed by the sea
Carol Raisfeld

Summer haze
the city lights reflected
in the reservoir
Joseph Fulkerson

a piece of chalk in my pocket first day of retirement
Pravat Kumar Padhy

still lake
swimming into
the mountain
Barbara Ungar

Soundlessly
the setting sun
plays a waterfall
Jane Stuart

with twilight drifting in his kiss
Maxianne Berger

our toes touch
she turns off
her snooze
John S Green

her secrets
visible only
to the touch
David McKee

finding her affection in folded socks
Denise Fontaine-Pincince

Tanabata
the way you smiled
when we crossed the bridge
Natalia L Rudychev

spin the sunshine revolving door

Norie Umeda

warm night
after the guests leave
sound of the fan

Munira Sayyid

sleepless
the rustle of roaches
in the trashcan

Wendy Smith

on a bedside table a phone rings
in an old movie

David H. Rembert, Jr.

too sleepy to get up
the haiku
vanishes

Stuart Bartow

deep discourse
taking the high road
to Taos

Deb Koen

saké he warms to the subject

Carolyn Hall

what I'm not allowed to know the crow keeps repeating

Michelle Tennison

geologic time
waiting for my brother
to pick up the phone

J. Zimmerman

garden weeds
questioning my neighbor's
long term interests

Bryan Rickert

morning sun
the silver spin
of her baton

Skaidrite Stelzer

summer heat
waves
of wheat

Dianne Koch

I can't tell you
about the blue—
summer seashore

Linda McCarthy Schick

land ends
at the sea
in a spit

Jeffrey Ferrara

under our feet sand
that was once stone
that was once sand

Brad Bennett

roots and stump—
all that's left
of our childhood treehouse
Roy Kindelberger

old people's home
the Chanukah candles
almost spent
Guy Shaked

wind-bent pines
mother stands straight
as she can
Glenn G. Coats

bright morning sun
the creak of a neighbor's walker
from rose to rose
Robert Gilliland

after
his stroke
worlds
apart
Patricia McKernon Runkle

a patch of white crosses
among the piñons
winter dusk

Sondra Byrnes

"I'll be home for Christmas" —
you returned
as a flag

Floki Moriarty

pond ice
the shake
of the undertaker's hand

Katrina Shepherd

bitter cold
I warm a few pennies
in my pocket

Tom Clausen

midnight moon
a cat merges into
its shadow

Ben Moeller-Gaa

stacked on a truck
ivy still climbing
each section of pine
Mark Dailey

in the far pasture
father's Ford pickup sinking
into the soil
Edward J. Rielly

washing the car
a speck that won't sponge clean
from my reflection
Matthew Moffett

spring fever—
I let the trolley
pass me by
Patricia J. Machmiller

field of dreams grows green
white chalk cutting into dirt
new season begins
Michael Feil

clear-cut mountain
here and there strawberries
poke out from sawdust

Frank Higgins

Sunday morning
syrup in every divot
of the waffle

Tanya McDonald

countryside holiday –
fireflies
star the river

Steliana Cristina Voicu

long blue tail
of a damselfly
kite festival

Marilyn Fleming

still pond
a turtle pokes his nose
through a cloud

Laurie D. Morrissey

black-winged stilts wading through summer memories
Robin Smith

plovers
chasing the sea
back out to sea
Jeffrey McMullen

brazenly bathing
in the public fountain
— song sparrow
paul m.

open barn door
swallow!
make up your mind
Lori Becherer

geese waddling
across Main Street
so much honking
Noel Sloboda

underneath
the same moon
the ant and I

Lori A Minor

just another
anonymous kindness
wildflowers

Kat Lehmann

Dad's harmonica
hidden many years
among cutlery

Phil Huffy

the way the doe
collapses its legs
a card table chair

Michael Fessler

on the thirteenth green
deer quietly grazing—
par for the course

Lee Strong

a certain relief
after meeting with the boss –
“you’re fired”

Charlotte Digregorio

a fresh start
in a new town
the same girl

Angela Terry

lucky star
wishing on that one
in ten billion

Michael Henry Lee

spring thaw
I add another colour
to the canvas

Rachel Sutcliffe

nightfall
stepping out
without my shadow

Sam Bateman

deep in the hills
the sharp peak
of a steeple

Hannah Mahoney

thermal currents
mariachi music
drifts up from the valley

Alanna C. Burke

weather vane shifts
from north to south
off his meds

Scott Wiggerman

spring fever
tree roots cracking
the concrete

Debbi Antebi

scattered applause
among the dark trees
slow summer rain

Ed Brickell

sunset sky...
the emptiness
changing its color
Aparna Pathak

silent retreat
at a loss
for what not to say
Mary Stevens

In the coffee shop
small voices
hum out dharma
Justin Orlando

meditation
pouring empty
into empty
Mary Weiler

Kathmandu taxi
the bouncing head of a
bobble head buddha
Bruce H. Feingold

topless beach the whisper of waves
Bob Lucky

virtual reality my whole life an algorithm
Mark Meyer

bye Stephen Hawking
in a parallel world
hello
Amanda Reitz

clocks ticking
the timeless patter
of spring rain
Rick Jackofsky

antiques shop
all the watches stopped
at different times
Mary Stevens

New Year's Eve
on the last subway train
we swap regrets

Chen-ou Liu

Times Square
the new year emerges from
last year's breaths

Scott Mason

freight train
between the cars
the flicker of passing years

Robert Forsythe

drips of melting ice my resolutions

Robyn Hood Black

to get off
or not...
jury duty

Christopher Patchel

spring fever
he missed the same belt loop
two days in a row
Sondra Byrnes

school closing
one last
recess brawl
R. P. Carter

cleaning lady
her vocabulary
not so squeaky clean
Madhuri Pillai

peat bog—
a mudfish digs
into the past
Lysa Collins

eventually
we decide
the apple tree has died
Mark Gilbert

wall of self helps divide our bed
Helen Buckingham

farmstand
the way he fondles
the tomatoes
Jessica Malone Latham

long-distance romance—
his sunset becomes
her sunset
Alan S. Bridges

wildlife
I tread a path
round the lovers
David Jacobs

across
the mountain's face
cloud shadows crawl
William Scott Galasso

summer night squall
the rise and fall
of fireflies

Marsh Muirhead

tornado watch...
the first tinkling
of a wind chime

Dan Curtis

door opening
a candle gutters
into darkness

Raymond C Roy

spring rain
Christmas lights
line a window

Patti Niehoff

empty field
a rain puddle resting
on the metal chair

Arlie Parker

laying it on thick
her mascara
his invitation

Marietta McGregor

The fall
of breasts as
the sweater lifts

Nichael Cramer

home again
the smell of a strange cologne
on the marriage bed

Barnabas I. Adeleke

all night rain
the candle's light
in her tears

Mark Alan Osterhaus

spring melt
the ledge-rock
with its glacial scars

Cynthia Brackett-Vincent

victory parade—
palm fronds trampled
in the dust

Susan Beth Furst

hard border
both sides the same
moon

Martha Magenta

really quite friendly...
the tower shooter
who lived alone

Lee Giesecke

domestic fight
a young child hiding
in the fairy garden

Maureen Sexton

#MeToo
the changing colors
of the seasons

Lori Zajkowski

cyclone
a naked doll
with one blue eye
Robert Witmer

forgotten cemetery...
weeds and trees rising
from the dead
Keith Polette

life and death-
among the grey tombstones
evergreen bushes
Vasile Moldovan

Life
So many windows
—but only one door
Juan Edgardo De Pascuale

flying home
after the funeral
free to move about
J Hahn Doleman

frosty nights...
the way he doesn't reach out
for my hands any more

Sanjukta Asopa

long before
you walked away
winter moon

Sneha Sundaram

wee hours
the space around
each star

Matthew Caretti

deep solitude...
smaller than Planck constant
morning birdsong

Goran Gatalica

new year's eve
when did we stop
staying up

Carolyn Coit Dancy

sunset on the lake
all the colors
come ashore

Connie R Meester

Sundogs in the sky —
in the scat of a coyote
mouse fur and bones

Michael Kleiza

The wilted rose
still gives off strong fragrance
a widow

Sravani Singampalli

border sunset—
soldiers watch
the migrating birds

Salil Chaturvedi

Sunday millpond
the top of the waterwheel
dries in the heat

Michael Galko



Sequences & Linked Verse

Fading Away

seeping into
the sandcastle's moat
autumn rain

*seashells in buckets
on a garage shelf*

summer love...
her *Dear John* letter
already in the mail

*smoldering coals...
the marshmallow's
black skin*

suntan lotion
back in the cupboard

*fading away
by degrees –
the heat*

Angela Terry
Julie Warther

Baseball at Tule Lake
Japanese-American Concentration Camp, 1942-1946

long home run
off the guard tower
the crowd silent

desert wind
pop fly to center
going foul

stolen base
the runner shakes off dust
eyes closed

called in to pitch
the guard storing his gun
behind the rubber

watching his hero
the waterboy practicing
shaking off the sign

leaving the field
the underdogs even won
the champ's swagger

last on the field
a child knocking a bat
against his clogs

sleeping on the mound
searchlights find the missing boy
ballglove as pillow

Frank Higgins

Metacosms

dark matter
what goes unsaid
between us

multiverse
as if a universe
is not enough

event horizon
I draw ever closer
to nothingness

Mark Meyer

this way that way

swirling wind
the foals buck
this way that way

a new helper
jumps the fence

the mare calls
a small whinny
answers

barn swallows
work the fields long after
the tractor stops

stalls mucked
the pitchfork hung up

lingering day
the kids put their toy horses
in their cardboard barn

Joan Iversen Goswell
Alison Woolpert

Conversing With Her Absence

pulling on my boots
so Mother
will wear hers

*that story again
faded stain on the wallpaper*

alone at dawn
she whispers morning words
into her pillow

*silver tea set polished
now she entertains
dust*

circling her walker
attendant on her heels

*catching myself
conversing with her
absence*

Connie R. Meester
Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff

Indigo Night

from the classroom
a clarinet changes pitch—
night drizzle

bassist plucks chords
before the cymbals ting—
indigo night

cool jazz—
hot chili pepper burns
on my lips

autumn almost here—
trumpet solo refrains
without mute

night rain and jazz
I write a letter
to a childhood friend

Lenard D. Moore

Staples

compensation plan
the stapler jams
on my copy

*a password written
on a sticky note*

hole punch confetti
their office romance
no longer secret

*frosted windows –
whiteout
on the employee handbook*

our Christmas ornaments
hung with paperclips

*layoff notice –
she hands me
the staple remover*

Deborah P Kolodji
Michael Dylan Welch

Foreign Student

fifty years gone...
I relive the courage
of a foreign student

humidity lingers—
shop owners slosh
water on the sidewalks

university library
my head buried
in Chinese characters

cicadas screech
protests for the U.S.
to return Okinawa

life with a host family
I eat everything raw
or cooked

Carmen Sterba



Haibun

The Ones Who Leave

We like them so we leave them, to establish residency in one of the porch columns. They set up shop by entering through a loose place in the mortar. Soon, that side of the house is to be avoided, unless you want to have one buzz your eye or bounce off your head.

All is fine, for them, at least, until the landlords appear. Along with paint, they are carrying several spray cans of killer spray. Half relieved and half in grief, what happens next is beyond our control.

But by dark, it is the humans that are humbled. Outside, there is a familiar buzzing. In a place that never freezes, we may need to be the ones who leave.

new journeys
in every turn
another twist

Peter Jastermsky

Why I Would Like to Return as a Condor

For I would learn to fly on the scalloped red-orange slopes of the South Rim; for I would bathe in the swift Colorado, aligning my feathers with the sun's breath; for I would lay my eggs in crevices in cliffs and soar on thermals above the dark Inner Gorge; for I would thrive on what others refuse and know contentment; for I would sleep on a two-billion-year-old crystalline rock, dreaming of Cambrian seas.

hiking
Bright Angel Trail
afraid to look up

Joan Prefontaine

Haibun

I listen to a recording of Stephen Hawking explain quantum mechanics. I begin to wonder if I am a wave that becomes a particle in the instant of my recognition, and if aging is my particle dissipating back into waves, into boundless being.

sand prints
evidence of my time here
returns to the sea

Kat Lehmann

Cathedral

Angels lean in, listening
to every whispering thing,
hanging on each Hail Mary
Heart Sutra and Kaddish
beneath the gothic arch of trees

evening prayers—
whisper of the moonflower
unfolding

Susan Boyle

Assault

The call came as I was making copies at FedEx. My wife was crying and screaming something I thought was “She got away again!” I could only think of our pet hamster escaping. Something that seemed unlikely. And not worthy of this sort of reaction. I repeated back what I thought she’d said. “No!— I’ve been *raped!*” she cried.

It was unbelievable. Something from a horror movie. “Call the police!” I stuttered in shock, realizing immediately that would have been the first call she’d make. Wouldn’t *I* do the same thing?—“I’ll be right there!” I shouted, fumbling frantically with the papers I’d been working with and rushing to my car.

When I got home 10 minutes later, there was a platoon of cops but no wife. “She’s at the hospital,” one of them said dryly, adding “Do you know anyone who might do this?” *Know* someone who might rape your wife?! The question sounded like something from a bad episode of Blue Bloods.

At the hospital, I had to wait 30 minutes to learn my wife was still on the ambulance gurney in a hallway, the EMTs waiting indifferently. “We’re really backed up tonight,” a nurse said apologetically. When I finally got to see her, my wife looked like she was just sitting in a waiting room to have her rheumatologist give her the results of the latest fibromyalgia blood work. We hugged, but she wasn’t there. Her face had the clear blankness of shock.

We chatted, and I told her friends and relatives were waiting to see her. But only two could see her at once. More familiar faces could only help, I thought. So I exchanged places with two friends and sat down next to a woman I didn’t know. When I told her why I was there, she confided about her own rape as a teenager. Days and weeks later, I found other women, some friends, some strangers, confiding in me, as though the confession would help us both.

the waiting room’s
antiseptic smell—
confessing secrets to strangers

Frank Judge

Body for Soul

I'm a grieving widow and a senior citizen. It sounded obscene when a friend suggested that I should take up ballet. I used to love dancing as a child.

Months later, I look forward to getting up early and marching to the kitchen— to do a ballet *barre* workout for 40 minutes. I rarely think about my husband then.

Music is on. I give all my attention to keeping my big toe pointed. I'm forced to stand tall and proud regardless of how I feel inside. I follow fluid phrases—into my own poetic space and time.

to be . . .
a sumi-e artist's
brush

Haeja K. Chung

Lost In Time

I am on a ledge near the top of a cliff. These rocks date from the late Devonian period, some 360 million years ago, but the section in front of me represents only 624 years. I know because the layers are varves, thin bands of sand and shale, deposited in the winter and summer months in an ancient glacial lake—a varve represents one year, and I have counted them.

I am looking for a dropstone within the varves, a pebble or boulder released by melting ice that once floated on the Devonian lake. But the layers are perfect, undisturbed, and I follow them north until the ledge narrows and disappears.

so many years...
I still search for you
in traffic

Lew Watts

The One That Got Away

The room-size wool rug in a tiny shop in Lhasa is too large to unroll. The part I can see appears magical: a dark-blue celestial background, across which a huge dragon spreads its pastel body in an effortless glide. I am transported by its delicate grandeur. Alas, there is no way to transport the thing home. It must weigh several times my own weight, and—as much as I am in awe—I also sense that it wants to remain in its own familiar skyscape.

whale fossil
in the sea cliff
all of us stranded

Dian Duchin Reed

A Simple Thing

It's funny how they make it seem so easy on TV and in the movies. Those three little words are passed back and forth like there's no tomorrow. Why is it then that I've never quite managed to utter those words to my parents? Oh sure, I kiss Mom when we meet and give Dad some sort of manly hug, but every time I try, I feel like a shy teenager and nothing comes out. Mom had to become gravely ill for me to realize the urgency of telling her and Dad, "I love you!"

gentle breeze
touslingmy hair—
you're always with me

Martin Duguay

American Food

You know what I mean. The kind of thing you loved before mending your ways. I learned to love it in the days when my Dad let me skip school and go on the road with him. The places he liked were mostly family owned and operated, a mixture of the exotic and familiar, serving Americanized ethnic foods in an atmosphere dominated by a mural of the old country, probably painted by a third generation amateur, entirely from imagination.

family dinner
among Greek temples
a thermostat

John Stevenson

Zip-of-the-thumb

“Flipbooks” were a common thing when I was a boy. We carried them about. Showed and traded them. Took them to bed. Created stories for them... mostly treasured them.

Right there were our greatest enemies. And we took care of them with a zip-of-the-thumb, Here were stars just waiting to be sparkled. Stars ready to honor each and every wish.

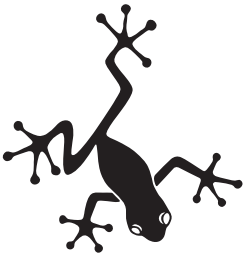
You might even say of haiku that it's sort of a master-flipbook. One we receive-from-life. One that we bring-to-life. Zip-of-the-thumb.

flipbook
just
holding-it

flipbook
still
tickles my nose

flipbook
wind
life

vincent tripi



Essays & Articles

Naked Haiku

from A Field Guide to North American Haiku¹

Charles Trumbull

In this installment of the Field Guide we consider the use in haiku of nakedness. English has many words to describe that state, principally “naked” and “nude,” but also “unclothed,” “undressed,” “in the raw,” “au naturel,” etc. Related words for part-nakedness such as “hatless,” “barefoot,” and the like, also pertain.

“Naked” describes a *natural* state, but not the *normal* one. “Naked” implies that one’s usual clothing is missing or has been removed. “Nude” is applied mostly to the human form. As a noun, “nude” suggests a naked human being, especially a model for a painting, sculpture, or photograph. As a simple adjective “nude” means “[naturally] bare” and, more often, in the attributive sense of depicting or performed by naked people: “nudist,” “nude beach,” “Nude” has overtones of the artistic, even erotic, that are lacking in “naked.” Both terms can be used to describe inanimate objects as well, “naked” much more commonly than “nude.”²

1 “A Field Guide to North American Haiku” is a long-term project along the lines of a haiku encyclopedia-cum-saiki 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 “Human Affairs: clothing: nakedness.” The haiku are selected from my Haiku Database, currently containing more than 375,000 haiku. 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. Many thanks to haiku translator/scholars Hiroaki Sato and David G. Lanoue for their help in interpreting the Japanese haiku, to Jim Kacian for insight into his haiku, and to Noriko Martinez, my Japanese teacher for help with translations.

2 There a number of excellent online discussion groups that deal with the shades of meaning. See for example, “English Language & Usage,” on *StackExchange*; <https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/106582/when-to-use-nude-and-when-naked>.

first the model gets naked
then nude

Larry Kimmel, *Bottle Rockets* 30 (2014)

The Japanese word 裸 *hadaka*, “naked,” is value-neutral, while *naked* in English carries a tinge of unnaturalness, impropriety, even shock. Consider book titles such as David Sedaris’s *Naked*, William Burroughs’s *Naked Lunch*, Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead*, Desmond Morris’s *The Naked Ape*, Penelope Ashe’s *Naked Came the Stranger*, and hundreds of others. In the *World Kigo Database* online, Gabi Greve identifies *hadaka* as a kigo for all summer in the “Humanity” category. She explains (text edited slightly):

The humidity and heat of Japan is quite something, and in olden times without air conditioning, getting naked was the easiest way to cope with it. Men and women would just wear a small piece of cloth to cover the private parts.... In many rural hot springs people enjoyed the bath naked and all together (*konyoku buro* 混浴) but with the advent of Western “civilization” this habit has been almost gone out of practice. The hot bath is still taken while naked, but now men and women are separated in different pools.

Naked innocence is the sense of one of Bashō’s three *hadaka* haiku, here translated about 2005 by Jane Reichhold on her *Old Pond: Bashō’s (almost) 1,000 Haiku* website:

花木槿裸童のかざし哉

hana mukuge hadaka warawa no kazashi kana

a hibiscus
worn by a naked child
in its hair

Inexplicably, though, Reichhold takes a turn toward the erotic in a retranslation in her print compendium, *Bashō: Complete Haiku* (2008):

hibiscus flower
naked I wear one
in my hair

Buson has a haiku about the naturalness and innocence of nakedness:

裸身に神うつりませ夏神樂
hadakami ni kami utsurimase natsu kagura

May the gods bestow
the Shinto summer blessings
upon those naked boys

Buson, in W. S. Merwin and Takako Lento,
Collected Haiku of Yosa Buson (2013)

Much more common in Japanese haiku, however, is the image of Man naked or baring himself to the Heavens, for example:

乞食かな天地を著たる夏衣其角
kojiki kana tenchi o kitaru natsugoromo

The beggar
wears heaven and earth
as summer cloth

Kikaku, in Stephen Addiss et al.,
Haiku: An Anthology of Japanese Poems (2009)

山の温泉や裸の上の天の川
yama no yu ya hadaka no ue no amanogawa

Hot spring in the mountains:
high above the naked bathers
the River of Heaven.

Shiki, in Makoto Ueda,
Modern Japanese Haiku: An Anthology (1976)

大空のした帽子かぶらず
ōzora no shita bōshi kaburazu

Right under the big sky, I don't wear a hat

Hōsai, trans. Hiroaki Sato,
Right Under the Big Sky, I Don't Wear a Hat (1993)

大海へとび込む前の裸なり
taikai e tobikomu mae no hadaka nari

Before leaping
into the great ocean
completely naked

Imase Gōichi,
in Bruce Ross et al., eds., *A Vast Sky* (2015)

さよならを言ふには遠き裸かな
sayonara o iu ni wa tōki hadaka kana

too far away
for good-byes—
this nakedness

Ishihara Yatsuka, in Patricia Donegan,
Love Haiku (2010)

On the other hand, in another instance Bashō's persona seems to flout the gods' intentions for reasons of personal comfort. In the following haiku, translator David Barnhill writes, "Bashō alludes to the story of priest Zōga, on pilgrimage to the Ise Shrine, who obeyed an order from a god to give all his clothes to beggars":

裸にはまだ衣更着の嵐哉
hadaka ni wa mada kisaragi no arashi kana

be naked?
not yet, with second month's
windstorm

Another “naked” haiku by Issa carries weighty philosophical overtones:

灯籠の火で飯をくふ裸かな
tōrō no hi de meshi o kuu hadaka kana

by Bon lantern light
eating my rice...
naked

I asked translator Lanoue why the poet would be naked while eating his skimpy meal, especially on the rather formal and serious occasion, the Bon Festival, which memorializes the souls of the departed. He replied that he pictures Issa naked because he is too lazy to put on clothes. Lanoue adds that this haiku was written at a very low time in Issa’s life, when he had lost two wives and four children to death and divorce, so he may have been reflecting on his own mortality, and is symbolically ready for the grave, postponing the imminent with one more bowl of rice.

Higginson³ says *hadaka* is a late summer *kigo* and provides a number of related words in Japanese: “For obvious reasons, people are more likely to remain stark naked (真っ裸 *mappadaka*), nude (まる裸 *maru hadaka*), or at least stripped to the waist (肌脱ぎ *hadanugi*) or barefoot (裸足 *hadashi*)— also summer topics— during the summer than at other times of the year, even in a nudist camp.” Some samples:

まっ裸を太陽にのぞかれる
mappadaka o taiyō ni nozokareru

my nakedness
highlighted
by the peeking sun

Santōka, in Stephen Wolfe, *Wreath of Weeds* (1977)

3 William J. Higginson, “Humanity-Summer,” in his *Haiku World*, 129–30. Higginson’s formatting removed and Japanese original added.

雨ふるふるさとははだしであるく
ame furu furusato wa hadashi de aruku

raining
in my home town
walking barefoot

Santōka, in Burton Watson, *For All My Walking* (2003)

いつも二階に肌ぬぎの祖母ゐるからは
itsumo nikai ni hadanugi no sobo iru kara wa

Grandma goes topless
so we always keep her
on the second floor

Iijima Haruko, trans. C. Trumbull, unpublished

Of course, nakedness is often sensuous, even erotic:

夕立や裸で乗しはだか馬
yūdachi ya hadaka de norishi hadakauma

rainstorm—
a naked rider
on a naked horse

Issa, in David G. Lanoue,
Haiku of Kobayashi Issa website

衣を脱ぎし闇のあなたに菖蒲咲く
i o nugishi yami no anata ni ayame saku

beyond the dark
where I disrobe
an iris in bloom

Katsura Nobuko, in Makoto Ueda,
Far Beyond the Field: Haiku by Japanese Women (2003)

Hadaka can describe nonhuman objects, notably trees. It is used in the phrase translated “utterly leafless” here:

裸木となりたる空の深さかな
hadakagi to naritaru sora no fukasa kana

The sky deepening
beyond the branches of a tree—
utterly leafless

Katō Kōko, *A Hidden Pond* (1996)

One other Japanese word, 裸婦 *rafu*, means “nude or naked woman,” and it can combine with nouns such as 画 *ga*, “painting”: thus 裸婦画 *rafuga* means “nude painting.” I have found only two Japanese haiku for which the translator chose the word “nude” over “naked,” however. Both are contemporary, both fall within the use of the word “nude” outlined above, and both, I find, are inscrutable:

金銭の一片と裸婦ころがれる
kinsen no ippen to rafu korogareru

One fragment of money and a nude woman lie about

Saitō Sanki, trans. Saito Masaya,
Frogpond 18:1 (spring 1995)

裸婦像は暗し外套群がりて
rafuzō wa kurashi gaitō muragarite

The nude sculpture’s dark with overcoats swarming.

Katō Minako, trans. Hiroaki Sato,
Frogpond 22:3 (1999)

Asked how he understands Katō’s haiku, Hiroaki Sato wrote, “Some say this haiku is puzzling, though I imagine it describes a scene in a museum: a nudesculpture...has a swarm of men in overcoats surrounding it, ever sexually unsatisfied, surrounding it, darkening the nude/sculpture.”

I have not found any Japanese “nude beach” haiku—but then I have not looked very hard!

English-language haiku are rarely as matter-of-fact or natural about nudity than Japanese. Senryu on the topic vastly outnumber haiku. But among the poets who have written on the subject of Man naked and confronting Nature or the Gods, we have:

facing the sea
i undress
Bob Boldman, *Eating a Melon* (1981)

stepping out barefoot to hear the night rain
Christina Smith Krause,
Frogpond 14:1 (spring 1991)

rather listen to night with nothing on
John Stevenson,
Roadrunner VII:4 (November 2007)

summer morning:
pausing in my nakedness
at the window
Michael McClintock, *Light Run* (1971)

barefoot in dew:
across the alpine lake
the sweep of stars
Ruth Yarrow, in Michael Dylan Welch and
Billie Wilson, eds., *Tracing the Fern* (2007 Haiku
North America conference anthology) 4

bareheaded girl
on a runaway colt...
spring wind
John Wills, *Mountain* (1993)

4 This haiku with “wildflowers” in place of “dew” was published in *Modern Haiku* 38:3 (2007)

DEATH POEM

I've loved these mountains!
reaching the end of the trail
I go nude
Marlina Rinzen, *Hummingbird* 2:2 (March 1992)

I thought I detected a pale reflection of Hōsai's hatless haiku in
Jim Kacian's

for his statue
the Great One hatless...
spring rain
Jim Kacian, *Frogpond* 31:2 (spring/summer 2008)

but the poet informs me that he was writing about the statue of
Lenin in Sofia, Bulgaria, now removed and replaced by a statue
of Saint Sophia, the city's namesake. The image of the communist
leader receiving inspiration from above is as distressing as it is
ironic!

Jack Galmitz offers a droll and curious inversion of Kikaku's
image of the beggar clad in only heaven and earth:

If I was the summer
People would remove their clothes
To adore me
Jack Galmitz, *Simple Circle* (2005)

Far and away, "bare feet" is the most appealing aspect of
nakedness for haiku poets. Sometimes the poet's direct
connection to the Earth is the subject:

finding time for the earth to feel my bare feet
Deb Koen, *The Heron's Nest* 15:3 (September 2013)

heartsong
bare feet
to bare earth
Joan Morse Vistain, *Modern Haiku* 40:3 (autumn 2009), 93

barefoot
the earth
pushes back

Bill Kenney, *Acorn* 21 (fall 2008)

Dozens of poets have written about waking barefoot across something appealing, such as grass (cool, frosty, wet, dew-dampened, newborn, newly mown, moonlit) or light snow, or something unappealing, such as asphalt, stones, or thorns. Here are a few pacesetting barefoot haiku:

lawn sprinkler
the child in me
runs barefoot

Roberta Beary, *Shiki Internet Kukai*, June 2013

late summer wind
covering one bare foot
with the other

Jack Barry, *Frogpond* 26:2 (2003)

the actor's bare feet
poke out from his kimono—
midnight galaxy

Patricia J. Machmiller, *Modern Haiku* 40:1
(winter-spring 2009)

As for nudes in art, Marcel Duchamp's masterpiece *Nude Descending a Staircase* has attracted the attention of some haikuists:

nude
de-
cend-
ing
a stare

Sidney Bending, *Haiku Canada Review* 9:1
(February 2015)

Nude Descending a Staircase
taping windows
before the hurricane

Raffael de Gruttola, *Modern Haiku* 35:1
(winter-spring 2004)

Regrettably, I have not found any haiku or senryu featuring other famous nudes such as those by Titian, Donatello, Goya, Renoir, Klimt, or Mapplethorpe.

Many people are self-conscious or shy about nudity...

the nude mannekin
in the dress shop window
... looks away
Cor van den Heuvel, *Cicada* (1980)

bulging eyes
of the goldfish...
I turn away to undress
Dawn Bruce, *Paper Wasp* 19:3 (winter 2013)

a shyness
as waves cover and uncover
my nakedness
Jane Reichhold, *A Dictionary of Haiku* (2nd ed., 2013)

then nude
normal silence
between fears
Richard Gilbert, *is/let*, Sept. 24, 2014

Nakedness made her visible
then she wore banana-leaves
and disappeared
Wazir Agha, in Zoe Savina, ed., *Haiku: The leaves are back
on the tree – International Anthology* (2002)

others not so much:

Without clothes
it's a different
conversation
John Brandi, *Weeding the Cosmos* (1992)

deliberately she undresses
as though someone were waiting
to see her naked
Audrey Olberg, *Modern Haiku* 43:2 (summer 2012)

Undressed—
today's role dangles
from a metal hanger
Alexis Rotella, *Modern Haiku* 13:2 (summer 1982)

Naked and nude haiku certainly can veer in the direction of the erotic or even prurient. I don't want to go too far in this direction, which will be covered (or uncovered!) in a future Field Guide installment, but I present a few fine examples here by way of suggesting the possibilities:

undressing
her moonlit shadow
on the tent wall
Charles Rossiter, *BrooksBooks* website

Long linen sleeping bag
cool and white
my nakedness
Ken H. Jones, *Snapshots* 5 (January 1999)

warm front
quietly i undress
the weatherman
Brent Goodman, *Cattails* [Web], May 2014

such heat
we share our nakedness
over the phone
Pamela Miller Ness, *The Haiku Calendar*
(Snapshot Press) 2003

lilac
the familiarity
of his nakedness
Carolyn Hall, *Modern Haiku* 40:1
(winter-spring 2009)

after the party
undressing
myself

Tom Clausen, *Modern Haiku* 24:3 (fall 1993), 28

I sit by my window eating an orange
you enter & undress me—
without a word.

Patricia Donegan, *Without Warning* (1990)

man in the moon
she floats nude on her back
in the lake

William Cullen, Jr., *Frogpond* 32:2
(spring/summer 2009)

nude swimming
not yet a Buddha
the penis stirs

William M. Ramsey, *Modern Haiku* 30:2
(summer 1999)

HAIKU

it is i who have
awakened in nakedness
o cold the morning cock.

Sonia Sanchez, *Like the Singing Coming Off the Drums* (1998)

nude in a stifling room
she opens her legs—
positions the cello

Larry Kimmel, *Still* 3:3 (1989)

a father undressing barbie
ai li, *Still* 1:4 (1997)

To end on a lighter note, we'll point out that "nude beach" is a very popular subject for the senryu writer. Often—too often maybe—the senryu are a variation on the same joke—what's covered and what's not:

nude beach
only his bald spot
covered

Yvonne M. Hardenbrook, *Raw NerVZ* 1:1
(spring 1994)

Guadaloupe beach
a towel covers her face
the nude sunbather

Mykel Board, in *Spring Street Haiku Group*,
Pink Bulldozer (1999)

At the nude beach:
even without the costumes
the same old roles

Tom Tico, *Spring Morning Sun* (1998)

nude beach
his enormous
sand castle

John Stevenson,
Gerald M. Brady Senryu Awards 1996, 3rd

really wrinkled
the map
of nude beaches

LeRoy Gorman, *Frogpond* 15:1
(spring-summer 1992), 17

nude beach
embarrassed
I'm the only one here

Michael Ketchek, *Modern Haiku* 36:1
(winter-spring 2005)

Bashō's frog, the great survivor

Geoffrey Wilkinson

古池や蛙飛こむ水の音

furuike ya
kawazu tobikomu
mizu no oto

The old pond—
a frog jumps in,
the sound of water.

Let's just call it the "What's all the fuss about?" school of thought. That is, there are those who think Bashō's frog hokku has been the subject of too much oversubtle interpretation—mystification, in fact—and accorded an importance it does not deserve. The scholar Naitō Meisetsu, for example, writing in 1904, put it as follows:

There was an old pond, a frog jumped into it, and—plop!—the sound of water was heard. That is all the poem says. The interest of the poem lies in its being purely descriptive of the scene. It goes without saying that this hokku does not rank high among Bashō's poems. I am certain Bashō and his disciples did not expect future readers to value [it] so highly or to attach so many surprising meanings to it.¹

This is a minority view, of course, and the consensus now is that Bashō's frog fully deserves the importance attached to it because it marks a dividing point, a pre-amphibian/post-amphibian moment, not just in but in the broader haikai tradition as well. Ironically, the roots of the modern consensus largely go back to a series of articles, *Bashō zatsudan* (*Small Talk about Bashō*, published in 1893–94), in which the poet and critic Masaoka Shiki set out, in effect, to debunk Bashō and his school. The idolatry that had built up around Bashō had to be stripped away, said Shiki, so that there could be a more genuinely critical reappraisal and appreciation of his poetry. The frog hokku was a good candidate for reappraisal because, for Shiki, its spare descriptiveness—

1 Translation by Makoto Ueda, in his *Bashō and His Interpreters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 141. Copyright 1992 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University

Meisetsu's "That is all the poem says"—was not a limitation or weakness but something new and unique:

This poem is nothing more than a report of what the poet's auditory nerves sensed. Not only did it include none of his subjective ideas or visual, moving images, but what it recorded was nothing more than a moment of time. For that reason, this poem has no breadth in time or space. That is why no poem can be simpler than this; it is why this poem is impossible to imitate.²

In a later essay devoted specifically to the poem, Shiki was clear that it is not Bashō's best hokku (and equally clear that Bashō and his disciples did not think it his best, either). That was not the point. The significance of the hokku, said Shiki, is that it represents Bashō's realization that he had been mistaken in supposing only thoughts of dying alone on a gloomy journey, sorrow for an abandoned child, or other such "extreme things" could be the stuff of poetry, and that, on the contrary, "something ordinary can immediately become poetry." Here the something ordinary just happened to be a frog jumping into an old pond.³

In our own day, Haruo Shirane has added another dimension to our appreciation of Bashō's frog hokku by exploring its subversive quality of "working against" conventional poetic expectations. To explain what he means, Shirane invokes the account by Shikō, one of Bashō's disciples, of how the hokku was composed on a spring day in 1686.⁴ A gentle rain was falling, says Shikō, and every so often could be heard the sound of frogs hopping into the pond in Bashō's garden. After silent reflection, Bashō came out with the last twelve syllables:

蛙飛こむ水の音
kawazu tobikomu
mizu no oto

a frog jumps in,
the sound of water.

2 Ueda translation, again from *Bashō and His Interpreters*, p. 141. All the remaining prose and poetry translations in this essay are my own.

3 Shiki's essay, published in 1898, is translated in full as "Shiki on *Furu-ike ya*" in R.H. Blyth's *A History of Haiku* (Tōkyō: Hokuseidō Press, 1969), Vol. II, pp. 46-76.

4 Shikō's account comes from his *Kuzu no matsubara*: first published in 1692, it is virtually contemporaneous with the events it describes.

Another disciple, Kikaku, suggested five syllables to begin the hokku:

山吹や
yamabuki ya

Golden kerria—

Bashō disregarded *yamabuki ya* and completed the hokku himself with the wording we know today:

古池や
furuike ya

The old pond—

The *yamabuki* (*Kerria japonica* to the botanist) with its bright yellow flowers was one of many associations with “frog,” itself a season word for spring, that haikai poets had inherited from classical poetry dating back to the Heian period and earlier. If Bashō had chosen *yamabuki ya* rather than *furuike ya*, Shirane argues, it “would have left [his] hokku within the circle of classical associations. Instead Bashō worked against what was considered the ‘poetic essence’ (*hon’i*), the established classical associations, of the frog. In place of the plaintive voice of the frog singing in the rapids or calling out for his lover, Bashō gave the sound of the frog jumping into the water.”⁵ Mind you, as Shirane himself points out, the same observation had been made not much more than eighty years after Bashō’s death, and more succinctly, in a hokku by Buson:

飛こんで古歌洗う蛙かな
tobikonde
furu-uta arau
kawazu kana

Jumping in,
washing an old poem clean—
a frog.

5 Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 15. Reprinted with his permission.

For Buson, we feel, it was not so much a question of “working against” as *breaking free from* the constrictions of stifling, codified convention.

Buson, Shiki, and now Shirane all help to explain why Bashō’s frog is generally held in such high esteem today. Along the way, though, and quite apart from the skepticism of people like Meisetsu, the hokku has had to put up with a variety of indignities, some mild, others more grievous. At the mild end of the scale is the ink drawing by Sengai (1750–1837, head priest of the Shōfukuji, a temple of the Rinzaï Zen sect in Hakata, Kyōshō) that depicts Bashō’s frog crouching under a banana plant. The plant is a visual pun on Bashō’s pen name, *bashō* being the Japanese for *Musa basjoo*, a variety of non-fruiting banana. Obvious enough. But above the drawing, in an imaginative leap of its own, the frog gently parodies Bashō with this mock-hokku:

池あらば飛んで芭蕉に聞かせたい
ike araba
tonde Bashō ni
kikasetai

If there were a pond,
I’d jump right in and have
Bashō hear the sound.

An almost exact contemporary of Sengai was the poet and Zen priest Ryōkan (who was considered an eccentric recluse, and spent most of his life in what is now Niigata Prefecture in northern Japan). His response to Bashō’s frog was as follows:

新池や蛙飛こむ音のなし
araike ya
kawazu tobikomu
oto no nashi

The new pond—
not so much as the sound of
a frog jumping in.

At first sight this, too, looks like nothing more than an affectionate parody. Yet could there also be a Zen element in Ryōkan’s poem? Is it intimating that, at one and the same instant, an old pond, a

frog and the sound of water are there and not there? (More on Zen below.)

Moving towards the more serious end of the indignity scale takes us, I think, into the realms of translation. As I am only qualified to speak about translation into English, I will confine myself to that, although I appreciate that the frog hokku must have been translated into any number of other languages. While there are lots of perfectly good English translations, it has to be said that there are one or two excruciatingly bad ones. The prize for the most excruciating should probably go to the following, collected by R.H. Blyth and identified by him as “No. VII of a Monograph Committee, Los Angeles, 1964”:⁶

Old pond, ancient pool:
A frog jumping plunges in:
Waterish splash-splosh.

(Albeit an extreme case, this strikes me as a perfect illustration of tail wagging dog: by insisting on trying to replicate the 5-7-5 syllable count of the Japanese, the translators have ended up with repetitive gibberish. Except in the fortuitous instances where it does work, the 5-7-5 scheme is an unnatural—and, in my view, unnecessary—constraint in English translation. I digress.) On balance, I suspect that Bashō would have preferred Alfred Marks’s limerick, which may be guilty of irreverent frivolity but not the crassness of the Monograph Committee translation:

There once was a curious frog
Who sat by a pond on a log
And, to see what resulted,
In the pond catapulted
With a water-noise heard round the bog.⁷

Arguably the greatest indignity suffered by Bashō’s frog—and whether you agree with this or not will depend on your own interpretation of the hokku—is its identification with, or some

⁶ *A History of Haiku*, Vol. II, p. 350.

⁷ From “*Haiku in Japanese and English*,” in *Chanoyu Quarterly* 9 (1972), p. 60. My thanks to the Uransenke Foundation, both for permission to reprint the limerick and for sharing their archive copy of the article. To be fair to the late Dr Marks, his intent was to illustrate how a particular poetic form or rhythm may work in one language but not in another.

might say its hijacking by, Zen Buddhism. On the face of it, this appears to be a phenomenon associated with the Western “discovery” of Bashō’s poetry and its popularization, in the English-speaking world, at least, by Blyth and others. Certainly we are familiar with Blyth’s conflation of haiku with Zen (and with aspects of Wordsworth), “Haiku is a kind of *satori*, or enlightenment, in which we see into the life of things,”⁸ but is that the full picture? Is there anything comparable in the critical literature written by *Japanese* scholars and commentators? The answer is not black and white. Yes, in Japan there is a history of interpreting the frog hokku in Zen terms, and it long predates the Western “discovery” of Bashō. Moreover, while some of these indigenous interpretations are cautious and nuanced in reading Zen content into the hokku, others do so very explicitly. To the best of my knowledge, however, no authoritative Japanese commentator has ever claimed, as Blyth does with characteristic extravagance, that “If we say... that haiku is a form of Zen, we must not assert that haiku belongs to Zen, but that Zen belongs to haiku.”⁹

In the Japanese literature, one of the most unambiguously Zen readings of Bashō’s frog appears in a commentary dated 1795. “[The hokku] should be taken in with one’s eyes closed, seated on a straw mat,” according to Shinten-ō Nobutane, who goes on:

In the Hōreki era [1751-1764] the Zen monk Hakuin often spoke about the sound of one hand [clapping]. Likewise, in this poem the sound of water is everything and nothing, nothing and everything.¹⁰

By contrast, the twentieth-century critic Yamamoto Kenkichi is more oblique in his reading. While he does not doubt that Zen played a significant role in the overall development of Bashō’s mature style, Yamamoto is circumspect about the frog hokku itself. The reason why it has been interpreted in Zen terms, he suggests, is to do with the nature of Bashō’s poetic imagination. In common with Shirane, Yamamoto alludes to Shikō’s account of how Bashō chose *furuike ya* over *yamabuki ya* for the opening

8 *Haiku* (Tōkyō: Hokuseidō Press, 1950), Vol. I Preface, p.vii.

9 *Haiku*, Vol. I Preface, p. v.

10 From Nobutane’s *Oi no soko* (*Bottom of the Knapsack*), an eight-volume critical commentary on Bashō’s hokku. Almost nothing is known about Nobutane himself.

phrase of the hokku. For Yamamoto, too, Bashō's choice is at the heart of the matter, and it is not, or not necessarily, a Zen matter. As he expresses it:

The phrase *furuike* is not a "combination" [*toriawase*] device like *yamabuki*. It is an essence, so to speak, distilled from the scene created by the next twelve syllables, and it reveals the core of Bashō's poetic understanding. Conversely, we might say that the poem is multi-layered: what is grasped immediately and intuitively in the first five syllables is grasped concretely, in more detail, and reflectively in the last twelve syllables. A "combination" device principally works by setting up a visual image that connects the elements of the poem at an outer level of consciousness, but here the elements resonate with each other at a deeper and more fundamental level of consciousness. Compared with a "combination" poem, Bashō's way of doing it works by evoking the auditory imagination and comes from his more profound experience of language.¹¹

Unlike Yamamoto, other twentieth-century Japanese commentators persisted with explicitly Zen interpretations. Among them was the philosopher Takeuchi Yoshinori, who, in an essay¹² that touches incidentally but tellingly on Bashō's hokku, speaks of its "dynamic character." By this Takeuchi partly means the "interaction and interrelation" between the stillness of the old pond and the motion of the leaping frog, which he accentuates by expanding and translating the hokku as follows (typography as in Takeuchi's English-language text):

The old pond—
a frog jumps in;
the water sounds—
The old pond!

Now this stillness—sound—stillness "dynamic," which suggests that, paradoxically, the serenity of the scene is all the greater for being interrupted momentarily, is also found in many

11 My translation is from Yamamoto's *Bashō: sono kanshō to hihyō* (Tōkyō: Shinchōsha, 1959), Vol. I, pp. 126-127.

12 "The Philosophy of Nishida," which originally appeared in the journal *Japanese Religions* in 1963. Takeuchi's essay is reproduced in full in Frederick Franck, ed., *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School and Its Contemporaries* (Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom, Inc., 2004), pp. 183-208.

interpretations of Bashō's hokku that make no mention at all of Zen. But Takeuchi's context is quite specific: the purpose of his essay is to discuss, approvingly, "pure experience" and later developments in the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō (which, very roughly speaking, seeks to express Zen insights through some of the concepts and language of Western philosophy), and it is clear that Takeuchi's own understanding of Bashō's "dynamic" is heavily influenced by Zen.

Perhaps the most striking Zen interpretation of Bashō's frog by a Japanese commentator (and surely one that would have made a great impression on Blyth) is offered by D.T. Suzuki in his book *Zen and Japanese Culture*, originally published in English in 1938.¹³ Suzuki begins with an alternative account of the composition of the hokku. While he agrees that it came into being back-to-front, with the first five syllables added after the rest, he suggests it was under very different circumstances. It is known that in the early 1680s Bashō practiced meditation under the guidance of a Zen master named Bucchō. One day, Suzuki says, Bucchō visited Bashō and asked, "How are you getting on these days?," to which Bashō replied, "After the recent rain the moss has grown greener than ever." Bucchō then asked, "What Buddhism is there even before the moss has grown greener?" And it was in response to this, according to Suzuki, that Bashō came out with the twelve syllables,

蛙飛こむ水の音
kawazu tobikomu
mizu no oto

a frog jumps in,
the sound of water.

The exchanges between Bucchō and Bashō are in the nature of *mondō* or *kōan*, paradoxical and seemingly meaningless utterances (including Hakuin's "What is the sound of one hand?," alluded to by Nobutane) that are typical of Zen. We are puzzled, and even more puzzled when Suzuki refers to St John's Gospel. Bucchō's second question, Suzuki continues, is equivalent in significance to "Before Abraham was, I am," Christ's rebuke to the Jews in the temple who accused him of insulting their patriarch.¹⁴ In

13 Daisetz T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 239-241.

14 John 8:58.

other words, implicitly both Bucchō and Christ are addressing the same question: what was there—or, as Suzuki is careful to say, what *is* there—before man, before nature, and before the world itself? Christ answers by identifying himself with God and asserting that *God* is and has always been, that is, by an appeal to Christian faith. But Bucchō's way of putting the question demands a more rigorous answer because Buddhism does not make a distinction between creation and creator, or split man and nature from some separate being above and beyond the world. Hence what Bucchō is asking is, "Where is God even before he uttered, 'Let there be light'?" which is to say, "What is there before the world, *and before any God to create the world?*" The Zen answer is that there is time without time, space without space, an undifferentiated nothingness that nonetheless contains the possibility of everything that is and might ever be. Which brings Suzuki back to Bashō's frog and the sound it makes as it leaps into the old pond.

It is a mistake, Suzuki says, to understand Zen as a "gospel of quietism," and it is a mistake to understand Bashō's hokku as an "appreciation of tranquillity." Bashō's insight, Suzuki insists, is not into the silence of still water in a shady garden, but into the sound of water as the silence is broken. The frog, the pond, the poet, the whole universe itself, are all dissolved in that one sound and united in the undifferentiated nothingness. "Bashō's old pond," Suzuki concludes, "lies on the other side of eternity, where timeless time is.... It is whence all things come, it is the source of this world of particulars, yet in itself it shows no particularization. We come to it when we go beyond the 'rainfall' and 'the moss growing greener'."

On one level, it is difficult to know what to make of Suzuki's interpretation. Although he does not identify it as such, his alternative account of the frog hokku's composition actually comes from *A True History of Master Bashō's 'Old Pond'*,¹⁵ published in 1868 by the poet Kitsuda Shunko, which Yamamoto describes as "nonsense" and others regard as a hoax. But maybe authenticity of source is not the issue here. Whether as an elaborate metaphor, imaginative license, or however else Suzuki might mean us to take the *True History* account itself, his own commentary on it represents one of the profoundest of the Zen interpretations of Bashō's hokku and, in my opinion, is the one that rings the truest.

15 *Bashō-ō furuike shinden*, purportedly transcribed from a rediscovered manuscript.

What is the moral of the story? How do we account for the fact that after more than three hundred years Bashō's frog hokku keeps drawing us back, and, chances are, will still be drawing readers back in another three hundred years? How come everything that could possibly be said about its seventeen syllables has not been said long ago, definitively, once and for all? Particularly as Shiki and Yamamoto have both picked up on the auditory element—the sound of water—in the hokku, an auditory, or even a musical, analogy seems apt.

In a rare interview in 1998, the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt was asked, indirectly, what he was trying to say in his music and what he thought his audiences expected when they came to hear it. Pärt's answer, equally indirect, was: "Perhaps together with the audience, we [composer, orchestra, choir and conductor] are at the same distance from something larger." For Pärt, a devout Russian Orthodox Christian, the "something larger" in music may well be God, but he does not assume that anyone else will perceive it in the same way. "There are as many different ways of perception as there are listeners," he adds, "and all of them are justified."¹⁶ Is the secret of the longevity of Bashō's hokku, then, precisely that it cannot be pinned down and interpreted definitively, once and for all? If there is something larger in it, and most of us feel that there is, it is something that no one can agree on. Whether we put our own interpretations on the poem, or accept it as an unadorned report of Bashō's faculty of hearing, a casting-off of tired convention, a moment of Zen insight, or, indeed, a case of "What's all the fuss about?," in Pärt's sense every one of our responses is justified.

¹⁶ Pärt's interview appeared in the Estonian-language newspaper *Postimees* on June 12, 1998. The translation is by Alan Teder, reproduced with his permission.

THE HAIKU AND THE KOAN ZEN

Antonio Sacco

Let's take a look at the relationship between haiku poetry and koan zen. Let's start by analyzing how the haijin arises toward to an object, then we will define what the koan zens are and how they relate to haiku.

A good haiku must be a means of meditation to arrive at the fundamental truth, in fact whoever presents himself doesn't look at an object but looks as that object; in other words, the haijin identifies himself so much in a given object to cancel the difference between subject / object. The poet doesn't have to describe what he sees, but to be, at that moment, what he describes.

The haijin must achieve a state of "identification" so close with the object to cancel its logical thinking; the more a haiku is deep, the more it makes the idea of this process.

Here is the relationship with the koans:

The koans are stories, enigmas, problems without solution, logical paradoxes, which make it easier to see how difficult the rational effort to penetrate the ultimate reality is. A famous koan, for example, reads: "Clapping one another's hands against each other produces a sound: what is the sound of a single hand applauding?"

Even a good haiku must be a means of meditation to arrive at the fundamental truth: in many good haiku thanks to the presence of kireji and, therefore, thanks to the juxtaposition of two images (toriiawase), often there is an apparently devoid of logical "leap" of rational connection. This apparent illogicality, on the other hand, becomes comprehensible when compared to the psychological sphere. It's no coincidence that Freud already intuited the similarity between the method of free association of ideas used in psychoanalysis and poetic production. In a sense, the creation of a haiku begins when the work on koans is completed; it's indeed the mature fruit of a suspension of logical thought, such as to allow a complete identification of the artist-subject with the object-described. Often a natural landscape in which the seasons and the daily experience crystallize into a significant detail. But who can say that he has reached such an advanced stage? I think that in the face of these issues and before the personal and spiritual journey of research (fūryū) we are all equally small.

And here we can reconnect to a type of composition called mondō:

The mondō or mondōka (問答, dialogic poem) is a kind of poetic composition that derives from the Zen practice based on a quick (often in the form of koan) form of the Master's (rōshi) and the response of his pupil. It consists of two stanzas written by two authors respectively in which in the first stanza we have the question of the Master and in the second stanza the answer of the student. It goes without saying that the answer should reflect the Zen spirit by taking inspiration from Nature.

From a metric point of view the mondō consists of three verses for each stanza for a total of 19 syllables per strophe or less following the pattern: 5/7/7 or, less frequently, 5/7/5 syllables. Basically two katauta written by two different authors and based on the the sedōka, which also has a similar metric structure, mainly because the sedōka is usually written by a single author. Here is my example of mondō containing a koan zen:

summer rest,
does the dream last the time
of the downpour?

soon I'm awake
have the same flavor
life and dreams

Obituary for Max Verhart (1944-2018)

Klaus-Dieter Wirth

On 17 April, Max Verhart, my dear old Dutch friend and internationally highly respected connoisseur of haiku, passed away after suffering a relatively short time from a brain tumor. In March 2017 my wife Beate and I visited him and his beloved partner Marlène Buitelaar in their new apartment in Herzogenbosch (North Brabant). Max was obviously quite proud and happy to show us his home and the scenic surroundings of the town. Full of good cheer we planned a return visit later that year in Viersen (Lower Rhine Region). All of us had always been very active and mobile. So we continued to have common expectations for the future. But then out of the blue the shocking news: *Wij kunnen niet komen. Max is ernstig ziek!* (We can't come. Max has fallen seriously ill) with the urgent plea not to tell anybody of his illness. Keeping up with Marlène, we continued to hope, right up to the arrival of her last wish to make the sad news of his death public for her.

Max was certainly a true "old hand" in the haiku scene, and seriously engaged with the genre for over thirty five years. He started writing haiku in about 1980. He served as a chairman of the Dutch Haiku Cercle HKN (*Haiku Kring Nederland*) from 1999 to 2003. From the summer 2004 to winter 2009 he was the editor-in-chief of *Vuursteen*, the oldest still existing haiku journal in Europe which had been founded in 1981 together with the Haiku Centre of Flanders HCV (*Haiku-centrum Vlaanderen*).

Very early Max attended a number of international meetings starting in 1999 in Great Britain and Slovenia. It was the time of those great global organizations: WHC (*World Haiku Club*) founded in 1998 under the aegis of Susumu Takiguchi with the major event of the *World Haiku Festival 2000* and the *London-Oxford Conference Manifesto* and the WHA (*World Haiku Association*) founded in 2000 in Tolmin (Slovenia) on the initiative of Ban'ya Natsuishi with such distinguished members as Jim Kacian, Alain Kervern (France), Dimitar Anakiev (Serbia) and also Max. He served as its European director from 2001 to 2002 when both the WHA and the WHC, after their initially rapid advancement, disintegrated due to internal squabbles. Max had also become a member of the Haiku Society of America in 2000, and since 2002 he belonged to the editorial board of the commendable *Red Moon Anthology*

published by Jim Kacian. He was a foreign correspondent co-editor of *Modern Haiku* from 2007-2013 and he managed a little publishing house for Dutch haiku poets 't *schrijverke* (*Whirligig*) since 2005. Finally from 2010 to 2015 he edited, in cooperation with Marlène Buitelaar (Netherlands) Norman Darlington from Ireland and me from Germany, the highly appreciated bilingual (Dutch and English) haiku journal *Whirligig*.

My personal acquaintance with Max dates back to the year 2003, beginning with the international encounter of haiku poets and translators in Soest near Utrecht (Netherlands). then we met again in 2005 on the occasion of the *1st European Haiku Conference* in Bad Nauheim (Germany), next at the *2nd European haiku Conference in Vadstena* (Sweden) in 2007 where we also got to know Marlène, furthermore in 2010 at the weeklong (!) *International Haiku Festival* in Ghent (Belgium), in 2013 on the occasion of the *25th anniversary of the German Haiku Society DHG* (*Deutsche Haiku-Gesellschaft*) in Ochtrup (North Western Germany), in 2014 on the occasion of the *25th anniversary of the Japanese Haiku International Association HIA* in the Swedish embassy in Brussels (Belgium), and in 2015, another multi-day event in Ghent at the *International Peace Festival*.

Max loved to visit haiku friends abroad including: David Cobb (England), Norman Darlington in Ireland, Jean Antonini in France or Antonella Filippi and Pietro Tartamella with their group *Cascina Macondo* in Turin (Italy). He used to combine these travels with his second hobby: searching for rare varieties of orchids. He was so competent in this special area that he most probably addressed his little darlings by their Latin names and was able to communicate with them as Kobayashi Issa did with his sparrows or snails. There is no need to say that many photos were taken of all those fortunate meetings. Yet he never picked the flowers. His third great interest was genealogy.

A matter of great personal concern to Max was to collect everything published documenting Dutch haiku poetry to preserve it for posterity. To his great joy, he finally, in 2016, succeeded in finding a worthy home for his archive material: the Flemish Poetry Centre (*Poëziecentrum Vlaanderen*) in *Het Toreken* (Little Tower), a medieval guildhall in the central marketplace, *Vrijdagmarkt* (Friday market), in Ghent.

Many of Max's haiku were also published in translation. He of course wrote a good number of essays and books. For example

in 2007 in *Modern Haiku* appeared his interesting survey article, entitled *The Essence of Haiku as Perceived by Western Haijin*. This article tried to compile different views on haiku to possibly arrive at a common denominator. In the recent past, Max increasingly turned to the genres of photo haiku and haibun.

No doubt, Max' death is a bitter loss for the international haiku community! I shall miss you, Max! Here is a small selection of his haiku, the first might be understood as some definition of the haiku, the last as his farewell haiku (*jisei*):

zo gewoon dat het menigeen niet opvalt	so usual that many people will not notice it
verblekende foto mijn toekomstige ouders zijn nog verliefd	fading photo my future parents still in love
voor ik de ganzen in hun vlucht heb geteld verschuift het patroon	before I have counted the geese in full flight their pattern has shifted
nog voor het riet zich weer heeft opgericht buigt het opnieuw	before the reed has straightened again it bends anew
het bronzen paard voor altijd op het punt te gaan lopen	the bronze horse forever destined to run in place
een beetje adem zweeft weg – gevangen in een zeepbel	a little breath floating away – caught in a soap bubble
in het dorpscafé oefent de fanfare hoe het bier smaakt	in the village pub the brass band practicing the taste of beer
lentekriebels – overall naakte vrouwen met hun kleren aan	spring fever – everywhere naked women all well dressed
het ijle fluiten van de wind in de fles is opgehouden	the weak whistling of the wind in the bottle has ceased



Book Reviews

beyond the horizon beyond: haiku & haibun by Kala Ramesh (2017, Vishwakarma Publications, Pune, India). 178 pages, 5 ½ x 8", perfectbound. ISBN 978-93-86455-01-7. \$11 plus postage from <https://goo.gl/eejbHE>

Reviewed by Scott Mason

Kala Ramesh is a passionate proponent of haiku on the Indian subcontinent with many outreach initiatives to her credit. The title of her latest collection of haiku and haibun—properly rendered on three lines as *beyond / the horizon / beyond*—could not help but remind me of the immortal *beyond / stars beyond / star* by another haiku trailblazer, the late American poet L.A. (Agnes) Davidson. Before reaching the Contents page I discovered that this title is sourced from one of the author's tanka (the only one in this volume): *beyond / the horizon / beyond... / waves of unknown oceans / inside this conch shell*

We've thus been properly served notice that these are poems of both the physical (and highly sensory) and the metaphysical. Ramesh buttresses her *bona fides* in the latter category with epigraphs by such notables as Kahlil Gibran, Lao Tzu and Omar Khayyam; and her introduction offers interesting perspectives on the physical elements and our individual senses from India's own wisdom traditions.

Understandably, then, the scope of Ramesh's work is both broad...

swollen buds
the fragrance becoming
a child's breath

burning ghat...
from the depths of grief
my friend's off-key tune

and deep...

bronze temple bell
the mingling undertones
of myriad thoughts

dense fog...
I dream walk
my sense of I

Often her poems feel distinctly (and distinctively) mystical,
happily at play on the unified field of all phenomena.

leafless tree
the sun rises
with a walking stick

bulbul
the wind
owns the song

Song is a recurring motif that wafts throughout this collection. This doubtless reflects the poet's own training in the instrumental and vocal traditions of classical Indian music. But it also helps us appreciate and experience firsthand the uniquely Indian sense of life as performance. The sound references and qualities that enliven these haiku connect them both to the particular (Indian culture) and the universal.

The forty-one haibun comprising the second major section of Ramesh's book read like personal and engaging journal entries, featuring not just family members but also a cast of soothsayers, flute players, an Urdu-quoting poet and other colorful characters. These are sketches to savor.

In a collection of nearly 300 haiku it may not surprise that not every single one rang my own temple bell. That said, there are many more than enough poems here to resonate, and Ramesh's very best haiku offer us a medley of sensory delights of unsurpassed delicacy.

taking flight—
a butterfly flicks off
its shadow

soap bubbles
how softly mother
bursts into laughter

liquid twilight
the tilt of a water pot
on her hip

summer moon
a wave's white foam
glazes the rock

sleepless...
a swaying web catches
and loses the light

receding wave...
crab holes breathe
the milky way

I am pleased to accompany Kala Ramesh (and commend to you)
beyond the horizon beyond.

Poetry as Consciousness: Haiku Forests, Space of Mind, and an Ethics of Freedom By Richard Gilbert, Illustrated by Sabine Miller, 2018. 294 pages, 5 ½ x 8", published by Keibunsha, Co. LTD. ISBN978-4-86330-189-4. \$38.00 direct from author poetry.as.consciousness@gmail.com

Reviewed by David G. Tilley

Poetry as Consciousness (PaC) requires concentration on the part of the reader; contemplation of the book's contents over an extended period is best. While the book contains many haiku, it is intended neither as a collection of haiku (though there are 216 in the book), nor as a *How To* book, nor as an introductory primer on the haiku form. We know from Gilbert's *The Disjunctive Dragonfly (TDD)* (a book I keep going back to over the years), that Gilbert is challenging and yet well worth the effort. While TDD is a small book of 132 (5.25x7.5) pages, *Poetry as Consciousness* is more than twice that length and covers more terrain. TDD focused on the notion of disjunction, particularly within the haiku genre, *PaC* sets out to explore and map "thoughtspace" tackling along the way *mind* (both philosophically and psychologically), *cognitive poetics*, and the *freedom to create*. Reading this book is not on the order of Heidegger, but it is on the order of Carl Jung or more closely, James Hillman in the realm of poetics and creativity. For those who have not delved into TDD, fear not, there is a several page adapted excerpt in the back of *PaC*, and even that is not required for reading *PaC* which stands on its own.

Poetry as Consciousness comes to us in six parts, the first five of which, lay out Gilbert's "manifesto on poetic imagination as soulful inhabitation." It's a lot to get through before hitting any haiku, but do not be daunted, press on. It is easy to get a bit lost as one reads through these five sections given the broad range of topics seen from the perspectives of various *ologies*, and to wonder "just where is he going?" He introduces many terms which can keep one trying to remember definitions. Happily, it's not like Heidegger who constantly invents words. At one point, I made a mind map of the Table of Contents just to keep the topology of the book in mind as I went along.

Gilbert begins in chapter one with a thirty-five-page exploration of the Space of Mind in which he deliberates on the mythopoetic nature of mind, how we perceive space and time, and the creative construction of imagined dimensions. Rather than thinking

through literal spaces, the imaginal spaces “inspire dwelling.” While literal spaces, our everyday world, have very direct implications within simplicity, we are encouraged to dwell in imagined spaces which can be much more complex and which can dynamically change in an instant. The reader should spend some time contemplating the Seven Properties of Thoughtspace outlined at the end of the chapter as these will be important later in chapter six when Gilbert embarks upon thirty-six qualities of Thoughtspace derived from these seven properties, illustrating each with several of the 216 haiku.

Chapters two through five cover volition, inhabitation and secrecy, privacy, and sanctuary. There is a discussion of anarchic sanctuaries which reads more like a set of interviews, which I found an odd way to explore this topic, and which seemed a little out of place, but that’s my opinion, your mileage may vary.

As previewed above, chapter six derives thirty-six qualities of Thoughtspace from the seven properties of Thoughtspace and illustrates each with several haiku. We don’t have the room to cover them all so I choose a few examples below.

One quality of the SPACE property is the quality of the new or novel worlds that we may explore. The fantastic or the nuanced differential world.

Novel Worlds

A philosophical-poetics utilizing new forms of language and thought spawns novel worlds of mind. These compositions reveal how imaginative modes that break with conventional thought – in language, image or story – not only surprise us, but may inspire revolutions in how a “world” is defined, or comes into existence.

MY LIFE BEHIND GLASS

so lonely, the little verbs¹

a blue coffin one nail escapes the solar system²

from somewhere else you’re a prairie skyline³

1 Sabine Miller Haiku 16

2 Peter Yovu Haiku 14

3 John Martone, Disjunctive Dragonfly 2012

Another quality, derived from the third property THOUGHTSPACE is the quality that Gilbert terms “spatial thermoclines,” in which we pay attention to the shifts in resonance.

Spatial Thermoclines

Regarding Thoughtspace the qualitative emphasis here is on nuance of thought, feeling, and landscape – and a melding; a volitional metamorphosis of such notions. The sensibility of thermoclines pertains to spatial ambiance (a sense of ambient atmospheres): delicacy of feeling, a resonance which lifts away from gravity; buoyancies, a softening in receptive tone. Hesitancy, gentleness, sadness, longing – distance and intimacies – these are given sensual expression.

Inside my laughter a stone looks at the sky.⁴

blossoming pear...
a dream slips
From its chrysalis⁵

moon beggar hesitant⁶

monologue
of the deep sea fish
misty stars⁷

autumn mist oak leaves left to rust⁸

Just enough rain
To bring the smell of silk
From umbrellas⁹

In *PaC* Gilbert lays out a typology of Properties and Qualities of Thoughtspace based on an extensive thesis that he has developed leaning on his philosophical and psychological perspectives.

4 Rob Cook, Haiku 15

5 Rebecca Drouilhet, Haiku 15

6 Alegria Imperial, Haiku 14

7 Fay Aoyagi, Haiku in English 2002

8 Marlene Mountain, Haiku 21

9 Richard Wright, Haiku in English c.1960

While the reader may or may not agree with the entire typology, or even Gilbert's overall thesis, Poetry as Consciousness is a wonderful exploration of the creative mind. As with the typology described in TDD, each reader can decide for themselves if the haiku used to illustrate the quality fits that quality. Regardless, the reader that sticks with this book and contemplates the thesis put forward will find that they not only are enriched by the contemplation, but will also find that the typology begins to have an impact on their own haiku. This book is essential reading for practitioners and readers of haiku and, for that matter, any creative endeavor.

Postscript:

A word about the illustrations by Sabine Miller. The artworks provided are not only beautiful and illustrate the concepts, but show a keen awareness of the soul of haiku. Beautiful.

They Gave Us Life, Celebrating Mothers, Fathers, & Others in Haiku, ed. by Robert Epstein (2017, Middle Island Press, West Union, W.V.)218 pages, 6 x 9", perfectbound. ISBN : 978-09980732-9-3. \$20 from middleislandpress.com

Reviewed by Tom Clausen

When I first saw this title, *They Gave Us Life*, it occurred to me that there might not be a more fitting subject for poetry and an anthology as this is. Then, when I first held this book and admired the beautiful cover art, "Hand in Hand" by Ron C. Moss it immediately conjured my childhood and the near invincible bond I felt for my own parents and the gift of life they had given me. The cover is an entirely warm inviting invitation to recognize and feel gratitude to our parents for giving us our life. In turn, before I even opened this book, the Buddhist parable about the chances of being born came to mind; "there is a very old blind turtle living at the bottom of the sea and surfacing for air every 100 years, and a wooden cattle-yoke waiting for it among the waves. The likelihood that the turtle pops its head through the hole in the cattle-yoke when surfacing is said to be greater than the likelihood of being reincarnated as a human..."As many humans as there are in the world it is a sacred thought to 'see' each life as the precious miracle that it is. That we arrive in this world through an act of love is certainly the ultimate expression of life and as worthy a quality to honor and celebrate as there might be!

In his introduction to *They Gave Us Life*, editor, Robert Epstein, identifies the loss of his parents as being the inspiration for his latest anthology. Epstein states: "For me, the heart of haiku is healing." The Introduction is exceptional and invaluable in presenting the range of ways poets might write about 'Filial Love.'

This anthology continues Robert Epstein's devotion for writing poetry as a way to work through the grief of loss and into the light of love that he feels for his parents and in recognition of parents everywhere who have given their children the gift of life and so much more. As Epstein notes this anthology collection mostly features poems that celebrate and honor and less about the sometimes troubling and dysfunctional aspects that can unfortunately burden and tangle some relationships with ones parents.

Beside haiku this anthology features tanka, haiga and a few longer poems too. The complexion of relationships with parents is certainly as diverse as the poets writing are and this anthology covers a rewarding range of expression.

If you are not familiar with the other anthologies and books that Robert Epstein has contributed to this is a great introduction and place to discover the succession of his works of love.

Here are a few selections that I found especially poignant and heartfelt.

my mother's diaries
I would have liked
this girl

Seanán Forbes

how mother & daughter
stuck together long after
the Holocaust

Robert Epstein

Afterschool kids
sort themselves
by mothers

Bruce England

Mother's day
one set of footprints
along the beach

William Cullen Jr.

winter afternoon
my father explains
the strength of a pawn

Peter Newton

mama's finger
star by star
the big dipper

Ebba Story

If nothing else, this collection will awaken readers to the breadth and depth of their relationship with their own parents and without doubt inspire thought and feelings for the inevitable love and sacrifices that any parents make to bring new life into the world. Anthologies by nature are a celebration of many and diverse voices gathered to showcase the way we all can add something unique to the whole. This collection wonderfully displays the many ways we relate to our parents and no doubt will promote any reader to contemplate further their own relationship with their parents and hopefully the creation of more poems on this timeless and precious subject.

White Rose, Red Rose by Johnny Baranski and David H. Rosen (2017, Resource Publications, Eugene, OR) 42 pages, 6x9", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-5326-4442-9. \$5 from amazon.com.

Reviewed by Shelley Baker-Gard

The collection of haiku by Johnny Baranski and David H. Rosen in *White Rose, Red Rose* can perhaps best be understood by imagining two old haiku poets deciding to take a long walk together. One of them (Johnny) has an earworm of a favorite Coltrane jazz tune that he hums along the way. It is this tune that mirrors the improvisational mood of their discussion on what is good and what is not good. As they travel along, some of the stories they share range from their personal experiences to the lives and actions of others. Some of these stories can be symbolized with the "white rose"—acts of altruism and non-violent protests (many members of the White Rose group in Nazi Germany died due to their protests of the Nazi actions toward the Jewish community) (The Language of Flowers, Wikipedia, Feb. 2018). Other tales told on their walk take on a spiritual tone, a love of nature, the divine, and romance—they are the "red rose" stories. As the haiku masters end their journey, they want to remember their path. The result is this exchange of white rose and red rose haiku.

Some of the white rose haiku concern self-sacrifice for good causes as evidenced by Johnny Baranski's time spent in prison as a result of a protest against nuclear weapons. Also remembered is Heather Heyer who recently died while demonstrating against Neo-Nazi hate groups. While in prison Baranski wrote:

short timers
in the prison yard
mayflies

The red rose haiku subjects are: Nature and Mary, lovers, music and insightful moments in life. A red rose haiku by David H. Rosen:

holding hands
our age spots
kiss

Perhaps to make their point even more poignant, Baranski and Rosen don't just speak of what is good, they also take the haiku themes to the antithesis of good: conflict, guns, and racism. When white roses and red roses are displayed together, they symbolize unity (ibid.). When one reaches the end of this haiku dialogue, it is clear Johnny Baranski and David H. Rosen are united in many ways on their views of the world. This collection of haiku makes it easier to believe they are right.

The Collected Haiku Of Raymond Roseliep edited by Randy and Shirley Brooks (2018, Brooks Books, Taylorville, IL) 223 Pages, 6¼ by 9¼, Clothbound ISBN 978-1-929820-15-3, \$40.00 or order directly from the Brooks Books website for \$33.00 shipping included, brookbookshaiku.com

reviewed by Michael Ketchek

This massive collection of haiku poems, both traditional and some experimental covers the career of one of the true giants in American Haiku. Presented in chronological order from his first poems in 1962 to his last published poem in 2015, found in one of his notebooks 32 years after his death in 1983. This book lets the reader follow not only the development of this fine poet, but in some ways the development of all of English language haiku. An example from 1964 has a title and the 5/7/5 syllable count:

WAKE

The roses I left
in your teacup, mother, grow
purple as my mouth.

By the 1970s, while not completely abandoning the traditional syllable count, most of Roseliep's haiku are no longer of this variety. A haiku from this period, now without a title or punctuation also shows off his humor:

after Beethoven
he gets the furnace
roaring

Raymond Roseliep, a priest, ordained in 1943, found inspiration in all of God's creation and felt that as an American that inspiration should come, not from what inspired the Japanese poets, but from those things found here in America. In an excerpt from "This Haiku of Ours," which is printed in this book Roseliep says, "Practically everything under the sun is valid subject matter for haiku..." Roseliep lists some truly American subjects that he thinks are could be used in a haiku, "outer space discoveries, hairy youth, mini skirts, bell bottoms, roller skates, pizza, saucer sleds, circuses, our enormous bird fish animal & insect kingdom..."

An example of incorporating popular culture in haiku can be found in this 1980 haiku:

the bat
upstaging
my disco cape

That is not to say that Roseliep shied away from more traditional subjects. Here is a haiku that is classical in theme and presentation:

a dime
into the beggar's cup
holding the moon

I will end with several more haiku from this collection of thousands:

hairline of sun
underscores a word
in Genesis

naked boys
plunge—
a frog too

trumpeting
the dawn—
day lilies

Poetry That Heals by Naomi Beth Wakan (2018, Shanti Arts Publishing) 104 pages, 5½ X 8½, perfectbound. ISBN 978-947067-28-8. \$18.95 from amazon.com

Reviewed by Carolyn Coit Dancy

Naomi Beth Wakan is a poet and personal essayist. She has produced over fifty books, including *The Way of Tanka* (2017). Wakan “came to haiku” while living in Japan, where she translated a Japanese friend’s book of haiku into English and became “hooked on haiku.”

In *Poetry That Heals*, Wakan seamlessly weaves her 30-year journey as a haibun into a narrative of personal growth that she attributes to the “power of both reading and writing haiku, the opening to oneself that tanka offers, and the opening to others that response tanka allows.” The book ends with brief sections on writing renku and haibun.

At first glance, this book appears as a haiku primer but, don’t be fooled, it offers far more for seasoned poets. In this memoir, Wakan shows how she found poetry writing enabled her to develop awareness, dispassionate interest, personal healing, and compassion. Furthermore, she indirectly encourages all haibun to hone their skills of observation and to read haiku to become better writers. The writing of other Japanese genres is also recommended, because Wakan found each genre revealed “new ways of living that fed my innermost yearnings.”

Not-to-be-missed are the book’s last five pages (end of haibun section) in which Wakan summarizes the wisdom acquired during her healing haiku/tanka/renku journey. Although not identified as such, this summary serves the purpose of an “afterword.”

“By sharing her insights, she encourages us to discover for ourselves the gifts of haikai.”

Christopher Herold, founding editor of The Heron's Nest

Briefly Reviewed for Frogpond

by Randy Brooks

Echoes of Flight: Haiku & Senryu by Jane Williams (2018, Ginninderra Press, Port Adelaide, South Australia) 66 pages, 5" by 7¾". Four-color card covers, saddle stitched. ISBN 978-1-76041-509-9. \$18.00 from ginninderrapress.com.au.

Echoes of Flight is Jane Williams' first collection of haiku and senryu. The title poem, *low tide / in the gull's footprints / echoes of flight* (20), is a wonderful image of the temporary signs left behind in our journeys. This collection demonstrates her growing haiku sensibility as celebrated in *haiku walk / we have to slow down / to catch up* (42). Williams is especially good at slowing down enough to connect the outer and inner life, as in: *night bloomers / under the moon / we too open up* (11) and *her playful company of ducks / when no one's looking / I quack back* (41). Two of my favorites involve water: *morning swim once again water carries my weight* (18), in which we feel the water lifting her and her burdens. In another water haiku, *floating village / the neighbours move / closer* (29), Williams leaves it up to the reader to imagine whether the distance or growing nearness results in a positive or negative feeling. As a general optimist, I imagine this move closer to be a positive thing in the relationship. *Echoes of Light* invites readers to draw closer to the haiku life of Jane Williams.

Elsewhere: Around the World in Poetry, Haiku & Haibun by Maeve O'Sullivan (2018, Alba Publishing, Uxbridge, UK) 110 pages, 5¾" by 8¾". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-910185-77-3. \$15.00 from AlbaPublishing.com.

In this fourth collection by Maeve O'Sullivan, she chronicles a year of traveling through an effective mix of poetry, haiku and

haibun. The mix works well because of the consistency of her voice as well as the poetic content derived from the shifting locations. The book starts with poems from home, which include the loss of both parents and even more recent death of her sister. The book is organized into four sections: Home, West, East, and Envoi – Back Home. Here is a sample of haiku from each section starting with home: *limo from the graveyard... / I remove a pine needle / from her daughter's hair* (21). And a poem of new life: *an Irish lullaby / for the infant... / kicking throughout* (25). The travel haiku are less evocative, seldom rising above the tourist observation as in a haiku about this famous battle scene, *Ventas de Narón: / my friend with the Achilles heel / catches up* (41). Here's another observation: *San Diego Bay– / its deep blue darkened / by an aircraft carrier* (48). It was an impressive year of travel for O'Sullivan. However, it is her haiku from home that move me most: *graced / by a single yellow iris – / retreat garden* (29).

Three Blue Beans in a Blue Bladder: Another Year in Haiku by Hamish Ironside (2018, Iron Press, Northumberland, UK) 160 pages, 4" by 5¾". Four-color card covers, saddle stitched. ISBN 978-0-9954579-3-5. \$10.38 from Amazon.com.

As explained on the back cover, Hamish Ironside wrote his first collection of haiku, *Our Sweet Little Time*, after a year of writing one haiku a day in 2005. This second collection, *Three Blue Beans*, is the result of writing a haiku a day ten years later in 2015. All of the poems in this collection are previously unpublished, which perhaps explains the uneven quality of the collection. Ironside's haiku have an unvarnished feel of having been jotted down spontaneously, without editing. For example, here is a senryu from the January selections *once the favour / is over, the resentment / can begin* (6). Also in January we find a tanka-like haiku: *crescent moon– / all those things / she might not tell me* (9). The author is a freelance editor and typesetter, which is evident in this poem: *in a bookshop / I make myself find / the typo I missed* (12). In February we find an interesting observation: *crossing the cemetery / light sent by stars / before the dead were born* (18). Each month begins with an interesting linocut print by Mungo McCosh. For example, the print for June illustrates *dentist's garden– / among pebbles and wild flowers, / a discarded bra* (67). Overall, the collection often conveys an urban angst or cynical outlook. From April, the cruelest

month, he notes, *the waitress rhapsodizes / about living by the coast; / a dog shits on the decking* (38). I suppose his rawness and poetic spontaneity is all a matter of taste for readers. Here's a final example from December: *on her Boggle list, / KIND and LOVE; on mine, / LUST and ANAL* (141).

Inhaling: 2016 Seabeck Haiku Getaway Anthology edited by Barbara Snow and Ce Rosenow (2017, Haiku Northwest, Seattle, WA) 62 pages, 5½" by 8". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. No ISBN.

Each year haiku poets from the Northwest community gather at Seabeck, Washington for workshops, readings and writing haiku together. *Inhaling* is the resulting anthology featuring 35 poets who attended the 9th annual retreat. The theme for this retreat was the sense of smell, so several haiku emphasize that perception. The title poem comes from the special 2016 guest writer, Jay Friedenbergl: *inhaling thunder / the weight / of heavy ozone* (9). Here are two of my favorite scent haiku: *worn headstones / the earthiness of / wet moss and pine* (13) by Marianne Dupré and *Day of the Dead / still in his jacket / a hint of tobacco* (16) by Ce Rosenow. In Barbara Snow's haiku, *a latecomer / to the breakfast table / a wake of shampoo* (39), I like the rippling double meanings of "wake". The collection also includes a few excellent color haiga from the retreat as well as the winning haiku from the annual kukai: *a pause in the rain – / she asks to see / my lifeline* (47) by Michael Dylan Welch.

Emptiness: A Digital Collection of Landscape Photography & Haiku by Gabriel Rosenstock and Ron Rosenstock with Japanese translations by Mariko Sumikura (2017, Long Exposure Press, Holden, MA) 42 pages. Digital book. No ISBN. \$6.99 online from ronrosenstock.com.

Emptiness is a creative collaboration featuring black and white infrared landscape photography by Ron Rosenstock and haiku (in Irish, English and Japanese) by Gabriel Rosenstock in response to the scenes. Ron writes "Through photography I have sought to explore the space between the finite and the

infinite. For me, infrared photography is on the borderline, the veil between the known and the unknown... a search for what is beyond the doorway of perception" (front flap). Several haiku allude to local sites with historic Irish cultural significance. For example, the opening haiku *pound us / until we are nothing once again – / the stones of Achill* (1) refers to a deserted village near a famous quarry. Several of the infrared photographs feel otherworldly with silver leaves and wispy clouds, and I especially like the corresponding magic in this haiku: *chorus of trees... / chanting the earth / into existence* (5). My favorite from this collection is a softened photograph of turbulent waves paired with the haiku *nothing to say / no decisions to be made... / incoming tide* (18). I will end with another water landscape that harkens to time before time: *before a human voice / spoke words in verse – / this rushing stream* (25).

Pagen Rites by John Dunphy (2018 bottle rockets press, Windsor, CT) mini-chapbook 4 1/8 by 2 3/4. Stapled, No ISBN \$4 includes mailing costs, from the author at The Second Reading Book Shop 16 East Broadway, Alton, IL. 62002

reviewed by Michael Ketchek

10 poems ranging from the poignant: *church ruins/ wildflowers scenting/ the sanctuary* to the outrageous: *genetically-modified forest/ a tree-hugger/ hugged back*. As always with Dunphy, poems that are thoughtful, funny and often both.

2018 HSA Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Competition: Judges' Results

Grand Prize: *From Branch to Branch*

The Process:

There were 17 renku submitted to the contest this year: nine *nijuin* (20-stanza) and eight *kasen* (36-stanza). We started by looking at how well each submission conformed to the chosen form. This screening resulted in seven poems making the cut. Each of these renku featured especially memorable stanzas. We both agreed that renku is a poem that celebrates diversity so we began by looking for variety in tone, subject matter, rhetoric, and high moments with quiet ones. But to be successful the renku has to hang together. So along with variety, the next most important aspect is how it reads as a poem. Does it cohere even as it moves and shifts? How does it sound when read aloud? We both feel that a strong opening and a strong closing are important and in these two aspects "From Branch to Branch" succeeded above the others. Finally we looked at how many "rules" were broken. Major flaws would be repeating words in the *hokku* elsewhere in the renku; breaks in verses other than the *hokku*; repeating syntax, subject matter, pronouns, proper nouns, etc. within a six-verse frame. We also looked at how well the the seven finalists moved from inside scenes to outside throughout the work, if the senses were adequately represented, and whether the presentation of human and nature references progressed in a balanced manner. The difficulty in judging renku comes with the weighing of regulatory conformity against poetic strength. To what degree does straying from guidelines result in distractions that weaken a poem's lyricism and flow? Is the poetic energy sufficient to quell whatever distractions are present?

About the Winning Poem:

What captivates us about "From Branch to Branch" is its lively energy. The clever links and shifts and some verbal acrobatics make it clear the poets are enjoying their word-jazz. The opening *jo folio* is particularly enjoyable. From the start, we were drawn in. The visually uplifting *hokku*, a tiny bird hopping from branch to branch, deftly evokes the season: early spring. The scene illustrated in these first two stanzas is quiet and welcoming. The glazed pastry offered up in the *daisan* is enough to make

one salivate, and after that, a dog romps in the waves mirroring our response to the pastry. We imagine the camera club using tripods to hold their cameras steady, linking playfully to the unrestrained three-legged dog. "Turning the corner," in the final stanza of the *jo* folio ramps up suspense, setting the stage for what's about to come in the *ha* folios: a world of Zambonis, of a marriage counselor, pills in a bottle, a kleptocracy, and the Great Khali. The beginning stanza of these sections is hilarious, and because the cut at the end of the second line of the stanza serves so well to intensify the desired effect, it isn't bothersome. The love sequence comes slightly sooner than commonly prescribed, but how could a poet resist being set up by that weather woman? "More guns are the answer... no/more guns are not the answer" is followed by "so many blossoms/taken down/by the hard rain." Have you ever seen "taken down" used as a description of fallen blossoms? The usage is wonderfully creative and provides a chilling link to the political debate going on in the previous stanza. The topic of current events is covered effectively here. There are also quiet moments: "pine needles whisked into/the shape of a heart," "the strum of a guitar/long after dark/under a barefoot moon," the latter wonderfully evocative both visually and auditorily. And, to begin the second *ha* folio, while "prepping the wash/she finds a pocket full/of periwinkles." This renku comes to a quiet, yet cleverly written, upbeat close. Verse #34, "our neighborhood coyote/slowly saunters down the street," is followed by a jaunty "I'll see you/tomorrow/cherry blossom." And then the final verse (*ageku*) written with ellipses, is almost a tease: "up... over the playground fence/... soap bubbles." Placed in a school yard, this verse transforms the "cherry blossom" of the previous verse into a child. Delightful. A big pleasure in reading this poem is the variety of voices—the differences add to the liveliness, and yet, there's a harmony here. You can tell these writers were enjoying the process, and each other. That maybe why, in their exuberance, they let in so many proper names, especially in the second *ha* folio. While this many so close together could be considered a rule-breaker, they do add to the energy of the whole. The feeling of camaraderie among the poets who collaborated on "From Branch to Branch," their creativity, and the obvious fun they derived from linking and shifting, was enough to override the flaws we encountered. And it was this positive energy that ultimately won the day.

Christopher Herold and Patricia J. Machmiller

2018 Judges

Christopher Herold has been writing renku for nearly 30 years. Before the advent of the World Wide Web, he wrote with various poets by way of snail-mail. Email made the process easier and much faster, but the great majority of his collaborative writing experiences take place with groups who meet in person. He feels that face-to-face renku parties are by far the most satisfying. His linked-verse experiences began back in 1991 with the Marin Renku Group, perhaps the first such group outside of Japan. In 1998, when he moved to Washington State he and his wife, Carol O'Dell (also a long-time renku poet) began attending meetings of the local haiku group. Soon after, they helped form The Port Townsend renku club which meets almost every month. The 2018 H.S.A. contest is the fifth he's co-judged, the third time with Patricia Machmiller. In addition to renku, he writes in most other forms of haikai. In 1999, he co-founded *The Heron's Nest* haiku journal, for which he was the managing editor until 2008. He writes lyric poetry as well as haikai and for the past few years has been writing fiction.

Patricia J. Machmiller started writing renku in the early 1980s. She had the opportunity to write with some of the masters: Tadashi Kondo, Chris Kondo, Hiromi Fujii of Kanagawa, Japan, Toshio Asaka of Tokyo, and Shinku Fukuda of Sado Island. On one memorable trip, she had the honor of writing renku with the Milky Way Renku Group. To commemorate that visit the renku, "Lemonade," written by the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, a renku in which she participated, was translated by Mr. Fukuda and hung in the temple on Sado Island.

From Branch to Branch

Roger Abe, Morgan Hill, CA
Mimi Ahern, San Jose, CA
Dyana Basist, Santa Cruz, CA
Phillip Kennedy, Monterey, CA
Amy Ostenso-Kennedy, Monterey, CA
Linda Papanicolaou, Stanford, CA
Carol Steele, Santa Cruz, CA
Alison Woolpert (coordinator), Santa Cruz, CA
Karina Young, Salinas, CA

jo

early spring
a tiny bird hops
from branch to branch Roger Abe

one pale yellow
ranunculus blooms Carol Steele

he shows up
with a pastry
glazed like warm sunshine Alison Woolpert

a three-legged dog romps
in the frothy waves Karina Youg

the camera club
with their lenses trained
at the rising moon Linda Papanicolaou

in the haunted house
she turns the corner Dyana Basist

ha

the weatherwoman
with her long hair and cleavage:
TYPHOON brewing Mimi Ahern

pine needles whisked into
the shape of a heart Amy Ostenso-Kennedy

at the Apple Store
we both reach for
the same dongle Phillip Kennedy

she claimed an affair with
Douglas Fairbank's stunt double ra

I wonder
if the pills in the bottle
are enough ra

dispatching when they searched Wyntoon for Patty Hearst	cs
the strum of a guitar long after dark under a barefoot moon	ky
a jardinière filled with mosquito larvae	lp
do we call ourselves a democracy, a kleptocracy, or a kakistocracy?	aw
more guns are the answer... no, more guns are not the answer	cs
so many blossoms taken down by the hard rain	db
even the kitten turns up her nose	aok
prepping the wash she finds a pocket full of periwinkles	ra
Sora follows Basho on Facebook	pk
a passenger train climbs the mountain into a cloud	ky
the artist's easel on the precipice	lp
everyone wishes they could drive one of the Zambonis	aw
watching Shaun White win his third gold medal	cs

a Denisovan man
might have looked like
the Great Khali ra

tickets for Wagner, he says,
for marital harmony ma

folding the tarp
toward each other
they glance away db

the marriage counselor
suggests trading chores aw

by moonlight
Gandalf utters "Mellon"
("friend" in Elvish) pk

gossamers
on the window screen aok

kyu

with a mighty leap
a silver salmon
clears the ladder lp

sisters name their daughters
after each other ma

the solemn chants
of white-cowled monks
at evensong lp

our neighborhood coyote
slowly saunters down the street cs

I will see you
tomorrow
cherry blossom ra

up...over the playground fence
...soap bubbles ky

2018 Nicholas A. Virgilio Haiku & Senryu Competition for Grades 7 - 12

We were delighted to read meaningful and insightful haiku and senryu from the more than 300 entries we were presented with. Initially, The Nick Virgilio Haiku Association received about 4,000 that its officers reviewed to present its slate of finalists to us.

We read many poems that offered a new twist on familiar images and themes, those ranging from nature and the seasons to ones about teachers, family, homeless people, love, loss, grief, hopes, and fears. From the delightfully humorous to the sombre and tragic, we recognized the depth of feelings, intuition, and thoughts that modern young people experience.

In selecting the winning poems, we were drawn to poems that felt fresh and authentic. We looked for poems that felt interesting to read even on the fourth or fifth read through the list. Poems that did not tell too much, but which left something for the reader to fill in, were ultimately the most satisfying to read and lingered in our minds afterwards. Well-crafted haiku give the sense that only the right words were chosen. Nothing extra and nothing fancy. Congratulations to each of the poets who won an award and to all of the poets who entered. We hope the process of creating these small poems was enriching and is something you will continue to do!

From reading the entries, we also realized that schoolteachers are doing a wonderful job of teaching the brevity and style of haiku/senryu to their students. Most likely this is because educators are learning a great deal about the two forms from online materials offered by the HSA and The Haiku Foundation.

Susan Antolin and Charlotte Digregorio

crack of dawn
one blackbird
lifts the grief

*Nadin Ghileschi, Age 16
Botosani, Romania*

This haiku is mysterious. What has caused the poet's grief? How does a blackbird change grief one way or another? Does it matter that it is early morning? Has the poet been grieving all night? Often, the poems that linger in the mind are ones that invite us to fill in the details and to ponder various possibilities. We can imagine that here the sound (or sudden appearance of?) a blackbird has attracted the poet's attention and, thus lifted his/her grief, at least for a moment. Perhaps the blackbird is a reminder that the natural world goes on, regardless of loss. The sun rises, birds chirp. Grief cannot stop these things from happening. A beautiful, quiet poem.

dad
home
without the tumor

*Ben Miller, Grade 10
Newport Coast, CA*

One of the characteristics of haiku that is most obvious to newcomers is minimalism. There are very few words in these short poems. And yet, some haiku have an even more stark, minimalist feeling than others. In this haiku, the brevity of the poem heightens the impact of the subject matter. We get a sense that all that matters in the world to the poet at this moment is that dad is home, and that the tumor has not come home with him. No additional words are needed. The understatement of this poem achieves greater feeling than had more words been used. The first two lines, with only one word each, cause us to pause and take in each word one at a time. The third line delivers the real point of the poem, and we, as readers, feel relief. Life will resume with all its busyness, noise and vibrancy, but for now, in this moment, we can stop to appreciate what matters most: health, life, family.

power outage
my imagination
comes to life

*James Russell, Grade 7
Atlanta, GA*

This senryu captures the ironic truth that a power outage can

fuel one's imagination. While everything electronic goes dark or quiet, our mind comes alive. Beyond mere irony, however, lies a glimmer of truth. At a time when we spend increasing amounts of time plugged in and tuned out, our imagination may thrive when it has the fertile soil of quiet space. The economy of words in this poem also adds to its effectiveness. Well done!

sewing sky
to sea
the horizon

*Jamie Propst, Grade 7
Atlanta, GA*

In just a few words, this haiku effectively captures a moment we have all observed. While the image is very familiar in both poetry and prose, the poet's style is skillful. The verb "sewing" is a strong one. The poet uses it artfully to paint an image of tranquility and calm, melding the natural elements and creating an illusion that we, as specks in the universe, can reach the horizon. The poet demonstrates an understanding of the power of brevity in haiku. The third line, with the two words standing alone, reinforces a sense of awe and grandeur.

By the great oak tree
I bask in solitude
thoughts, the only noise

*Rebecca Ferguson, Grade 9
Palm Bay, FL*

If you listen closely, you can hear yourself. Many people don't take the time, but this poet does. The poet understands the human need to separate oneself at times, enjoy moments, and drown out life's commotion. This haiku is both eloquent and elegant, melding nature's grandeur and the wonder of being alive as a thinking, feeling soul. In the first line, with the key word "great," the poet demonstrates knowledge of Buddhism with its reverence for nature, and specifically, for the ancient oak that can symbolize wisdom and strength. Wisdom is found all around us and within us. In the second line, "bask" is a refreshing verb to use in conjunction with "solitude." In the last line, the poet builds to the revelation, drawing us into the contemplative realm, into

the poet's heart and mind. The poet has a quiet reverence for the spiritual. The last line's style is notable with the word "thoughts" followed by a comma, creating a pause and emphasis before the revelation.

the barren branch
impales
a full moon

*Grace Ma, Grade 9
Newport Coast, CA*

Here again, the image is a very familiar one in both poetry and prose. How many times do we read of the moon hanging from tree branches or branches slicing the moon? But the key verb "impales" jumps out at the reader, standing alone, and illustrating the image perfectly. The poet effectively captures winter's starkness with the barren branch and its eerie appearance, and the awe and mystery of the full moon. It's a haunting scene that stirs our feelings about the mysteries of earth and beyond. The beauty of moon meeting nature allows us to feel that the former-mysterious as it is- isn't so distant to us after all.

Susan Antolin
Walnut Creek, CA

Charlotte Digregorio
Winnetka, IL

2018 Judges

Susan Antolin

Susan fell in love with modern Japanese poetry while living in Japan in the late 1980's. She is the editor of the biannual print journal *Acorn: A Journal of Contemporary Haiku* and the newsletter editor for the Haiku Poets of Northern California. Her collection of haiku and tanka, *Artichoke Season*, was published in 2009. She was the featured poet in May 2017 on Cornell University's Mann Library Daily Haiku site, where her work can be found in the archives.

Charlotte Digregorio

Charlotte, author of six books, including *Haiku and Senryu: A Simple Guide for All* and *Shadows of Seasons, a haiku collection*, has

won 46 poetry awards, and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her traveling haiga show runs in many locations year 'round. A former HSA officer, and now an Ambassador to The Haiku Foundation, she recently received an official commendation from Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner for her 38 years of literary achievement and work advancing the literary arts.

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at the river's mouth
an empty whiskey bottle

pamela a. babusci