

# frogpond



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CONY NISHIM  
Carrington, Germany  
9 March 1984

# frogpond



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## CORRECTION

The last line in the Mountain/Roth Renga (*Frogpond*, Issue III) should end  
with the words ". . . shall not be."

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old lizard skin —  
    look where the holes are  
that held its eyes . . .

old duck friends —  
    how quickly they remember  
my bread this autumn.

folded before it,  
the kitten's paws: the look  
    of primly folded mittens —

Mansion gates —  
    passing through to lime flowers  
a rogue butterfly

rough hands —  
The woman I just met,  
    I wonder what she does . . .

warm raw milk —  
the smell of summer grasses  
    lingers on the tongue

chilly autumn dawn —  
drowsiness leaves her fingers  
in the bread drawer's warmth.

My brother's death . . .  
how long I sat in autumn leaves  
by the youngest calf.

*Ryosuke Suzuki*

a rose of Sharon  
quiet like a slim shy girl  
by the morning path

seven flowers  
and nine different birds:  
an autumn grove

*Joyce Currier*

a cottonwood tuft  
in the empty space  
of the locust shell

*Christopher G. Suarez*

stars between the buildings  
on a one-way street

*Bruce Kennedy*

that sonofabitch  
on the corner has a knife —  
the rain glistens on it.

*(Honored the Haiku Museum of Tokyo Award)*

*Bob Boldman*

IN FRONT OF THE BUDDHA

quoting the sutras:  
leaves heaped on  
leaves

faces bow  
catching  
the light

legs  
locking  
zen in

in front of the buddha  
ashes of zen  
a flyspeck of dawn

*(for Cor van den Heuvel)*



*Frederick Gasser*

cricket song  
going over my head  
in the barn loft

spring thaw —  
thin in bath water  
my old dog

making deposits  
in the bank  
autumn leaves

SEQUENCE FOR SUMMER'S END

shadows  
of clouds  
on your hands

leaves turn —  
the irony of smiles  
when nothing is funny

saying goodbye —  
crows  
in your voice

full moon and blood  
I celebrate cycles  
alone

spiders move inside —  
your pillow  
is cold

shadows and spaces —  
rain  
in the thorn apple

on the wet street  
the moon moves in and out  
of itself

*Adele Kenny*

in the supermarket  
the old man squeezes melons  
smiling

*Sister Mary Thomas Eulberg*

the Texas-Spaniard  
dances with the flakes  
that melt on her

*Season*

Through the screen door  
one-sided conversation  
white August moon

*Virginia Brady Young*

January:

my favorite bough  
mottled with sun.

Moonlight on my bed:  
Sunlight on my bed.  
The hours.

My neighbor's wash  
blowing in the wind  
with children  
to fill it.

on the glass bell  
the sun  
for a moment  
stays

Picture on the wall:  
I raise a tea cup  
to my lips.

*Elizabeth Searle Lamb*

CONCERT AT LORETTO CHAPEL

the door still closed  
a pigeon motionless  
on the gargoyle's head

one red leaf  
falls from a poinsettia —  
the harpist tuning

with candle and evergreen  
a dancer in flowing robes  
leads the processional

music of many voices  
floats on the hushed air  
like incense

*(continued)*

the miraculous staircase!  
does the unknown Carpenter  
listen unseen?

plucked strings  
and the dancer dancing  
before the white altar

**'Deo gracias!'**  
every voice is jubilant  
with praise

from the altar candles  
Light  
touches the harpist's hair

*from "Blue Unicorn" VI:3 June, 1983*

*Alexis Rotella*



shark

*Lequita Watkins*

a young boy cycles past  
my son's grave —  
the tassled eucalyptus

torn this morning —  
the spider web  
on the tea house roof

*Lenard D. Moore*

wind chimes:  
a robin stops  
to listen

winter river:  
two ducks  
still in the moonlight

all night snow      cedars in starlight



*Nick Virgilio*

octogenarian  
still chopping an old stump:  
early spring

up in the linden  
mingling with the summer wind:  
whispers from the treehouse

alone on the road  
in the wake of the hearse:  
dust on my shoes

distant city lights,  
and here between the fireflies:  
stars in the old pond

leaving the cathedral  
with ashes on her forehead:  
lady of the evening

empty ballroom  
basking in the moonlight:  
fallen mask

giddy without guilt  
I lift my head  
into the wind's cool hands

I find you huddled on the bed  
the paperback  
closing by itself

the baby whimpering  
towels on the clothesline  
sway among the lilacs

snails on terrarium glass  
a wilted lettuce leaf  
luminous

still you say no  
our glasses of wine  
more smudged

a dry-lipped kiss  
the asters thrown out  
with their aphids

bayberry glow  
her breasts give shape  
to the flannel gown

her long distance call:  
the dogwood now  
deep red

love gone  
rain gurgles  
in the downspout

up before dawn  
lights in the chicken house  
flick on

her window dark:  
waves on the river  
from east to west

wood smoke:  
thread misses the eye  
of the needle

storm windows  
slicing the full moon  
a child's cough

breeze  
through the ice-glazed forest  
a slight shattering

gliding river ice  
slices the reflection  
of black willow

*Ross Kremer*

Separated . . .

. . . in her back yard the fallow garden

. . . the cricket in this midnight heat

. . . all these wrinkles in my shirt

. . . outside my kitchen window a browsing deer

. . . how it has grown . . . my son's shadow

. . . still the goose's call through morning mist

*Bob Avstreich*

*(Zen Poems)*

Summer boot-cleaning  
Wax and dust prepare a new  
Memory garden

The stream fills the trough  
Empties into the garden  
Fills again

Honkyoku\*  
That which we fear the greatest  
Contains our strength

*\*Honkyoku is the term for the music of the sui-zen repertoire. It means "original music." All other music is called gaikyoku which means just that — "other music." My personal translation is "inside music" and "outside music" which includes everything else except perhaps Bach's Unaccompanied Cello Sonatas.*

*(Bob Avstreich is a music therapist who plays the shakuhachi.)*

*Geraldine C. Little*

frosted sedge grass —  
the crane on one leg holds  
the silence

*Rosamond Haas*

heat  
mosquito  
in the wine

Bright umbrella tops  
glide along the fieldstone wall —  
the first warm spring rain

## OBSESSED

*(A Tan-Renga\* between Ilse Pracht-Fitzell and Janet Pehr, respectively)*

Night for night by the  
light of a lamp I'm walking  
in Genji's footsteps.

Day for day I'm scrubbing floors,  
sweeping the magic carpet.

*\*The tan-renga (or renga) is a form of Japanese "linked" or "chain poetry" consisting of only two stanzas (the shuku contains 28 stanzas, the kasen 36, the jikkanko 10, the mitsumono 3). According to the traditional Japanese form the first stanza must consist of syllabic pattern 5-7-5, the second, 7-7. The writer of the second must "complete" the thought or idea of the first in a somewhat "obscure" way. The title of the tan-renga is decided by the writer of the second stanza.*



## CIRCUS

*A Kasen composed by Edward Dvoretzky,  
Bernhard Mock and  
Ilse Pracht-Fitzell  
(Under the Direction of Kaoru Kubota)*

The circus rider

Roswitha suffers, alas:

hay-fever, sneezing.

I

Some thirty-three katydids  
are not in good voice today.

E

On a tablecloth

I see the spots from coffee.

I shall drink no more.

E

A real person can smell in  
pockets — what a lucky jerk!

I

A silvery moon

sinks into the morning mist

over gray palm trees.

B

Broomstickless witch ate apples  
and now has a belly ache.

I

I can feel the wind

flowing cool from the valleys;

hold on to your hats

E

One expects the turtledove  
to do the impossible.

E

In a room swept clean

she is sitting and waiting

for him. For hours.

I

The snow is now on my head  
and drives the hot blood away. E

All weather-beaten  
    lonely tombstones are leaning.  
                    Hard to read the words. B

Four very diligent ants:  
two fight; two bask in the sun. I

Moonlight stays on high.  
    Nonetheless one senses it  
                    up in the white clouds. E

Hanging on the line to dry  
are the first sopping wet pants. I

Happy dance noted  
    on scythe blade. We are now in  
                    need of a whetstone. I

I am gargling now like mad  
as if the noise might help some. E

A parrot plucks the  
    petals of a tulip held  
                    firmly in its claws. E

Her alluring spring-time eyes  
will take care of what ails him. I

Look now, a light breeze.  
    The day is starting nicely.  
                    All's well with the world. E

Peaceful house with its rubbish  
is wide open to the thieves. I

How we live: we go  
uninterruptedly back  
and forth in our cage. I

The nicest time is when I  
do what comes naturally. E

The heat of summer  
collects under our roof top  
and makes us perspire. E

A cloud burst. Wine is  
boiling in the bottles. It's  
raining spaghetti. I

A male elephant  
with his trunk all around her  
as a sign of love. E

Out of sheer laziness she  
marries a hen-pecked husband. I

When he is ready  
my dear rogue calls me to join  
him in Shrovetide plays. I

Entire nights wildly wasted  
in the most horrible cold. E

In the wintry skies  
we here down below see a  
big piece of green cheese E

My pile of barren days is  
tall enough for a big fire. I

From afar the sea  
sends me its telling breakers.  
Language is now dead. B

Devil Paganini plays  
a jolly tune for himself. E

Deep feelings are born  
through biting and through talons;  
that is not reasonable. I

And now we are all embraced  
by the warmth of human love. E

Cherries blossoming  
way down there in the meadows  
whence I have just come. B

A wild tinkling of fool's caps  
in the merry month of March. I

*\*Ed. Note: It is understood that, as far as can be determined by its composers, this is the first Kasen published in the United States. CIRCUS was also the first kasen published in Germany (1983). It has appeared several times in Japanese journals, translated by Kaoru Kubota (1980).*

**Hyakuninshu and Karuta**  
*(Card Games for Poetry Lovers)*  
by Richard Tice

Recent enquiries about *Hyakuninshu* (popularly abbreviated *Hyakuninshu*) and *karuta* have indicated to me that the games are unfamiliar to a great many lovers of haiku or Japanese poetry. While some are familiar with the few translations of the aforementioned work, many did not realize that a card game is based on it and numerous haiku card sets based on the original game.

*Hyakuninshu* means *Collection of One Hundred Poets* and refers to a famous anthology of tanka poems. The traditional game based on the tanka retains its popularity because the poems and the rules are taught to children from their early years in schools and families. Game aficionados go to great lengths to complete and maintain memorization of the poems.

The game itself requires two cards for each poem. One card has the entire poem, and, since tanka have a natural break in their thirty-one syllables, the second card contains the first part up to the break. The structural division inherent in tanka allows a poem to be divided without wholly destroying the poems' character.

One set of cards is spread face up on a flat surface, and the players surround it. The other set is then read out loud one card at a time. When the players hear the poem, they search for its match among the spread-out cards and try to be first to take it. The simplicity of the game belies the tensions that build, one kind at the beginning as the players memorize locations and try to outsearch others for elusive cards and another kind toward the end as players try to outdraw each other for ever fewer cards.

I have seen the cards used in different combinations. Sometimes the set of incomplete poems is spread out, and the reader recites the entire poem; sometimes he reads only the second part, and players use their memories to recall the first. Sometimes he reads part, pauses, then reads all. Sometimes the set of complete poems is spread out, and the reader recites the first part only. However it is played, the game is a fine one for groups, and the constant repetition of lines creates a deep and oftentimes startling appreciation for the poems.

*Karuta* is a type of game rather than a single game and means simply "cards." Technically, it includes *Hyakuninshu* as well as all variations, but the term applies most often to haiku card games.

These games usually include the complete haiku on both sets, one set decorative with the haiku calligraphically rendered in one line, and the other set printed in three verses set in easy-to-read type. The decorative set is

spread out, and the reader recites each haiku in part or its entirety.

Since no collection of haiku represents the genre as popularly as *Hyakuninshu* does with tanka, the Japanese market proliferates with *karuta*. Once, one of my high school students brought me *Kana Karuta*, in which each haiku starts with one of the forty-six *hiragana*. That would be similar to a collection in which each haiku starts with a different letter of the alphabet — an acrostic game. Her English teacher had asked her students to translate them into English, and she had come for help.

I brought one game back from Japan with me: *Kamakura Yato Karuta*. This is a beautiful, souvenir set for visitors to Kamakura, Yato, and Enoshima. One set features a different temple or shrine, a haiku about the place, and an illustrative watercolor on each card; the other set features the name of the temple or shrine and the haiku on each card. Most *karuta* are not so expensively produced.

As many haiku poets know, I am compiling and editing an English version of *karuta*. The goal is to represent one hundred haiku poets with one hundred haiku, the poets selecting their favorites from their own poems. The collection is beginning to resemble a who's who of haiku poets, and a great many poems are well-known to haiku lovers. I have accepted poems from about seventy-five poets so far, many of the fine poems by newcomers, and have enjoyed immensely the response and correspondence.

If you have not yet submitted any of your published haiku for consideration, please do so. Send three favorite haiku of yours, place and date published, your address, and a self-addressed stamped envelope to Richard Tice, 799 Larkspur Drive, Sandy, Utah 84070. The project is a unique one and well worth your time.

## BASHO AND THE CONCEPT OF "THE WAY" IN JAPANESE POETRY

By Hiroaki Sato

(as presented to the Haiku Society of America December 10)

Unlike John Donne, let us say, Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) was not a man of religion, but he has the reputation of someone who sought to attain spiritual grace through poetry. In Japan, spiritual grace so sought or the process of working for it is expressed by the word *michi* or its equivalent, *do*, a word adopted from the Chinese word *tao*. Both *michi* and *do* can readily be translated as "the way."

The image of Basho as a secular seeker of the Way is typically seen in the interpretations of one of his more famous 5-7-5-syllable *hokku* (now known as haiku), *Kono michi ya yuku hito nashi ni aki no kure*, "This road: no one taking it as autumn ends." (Here the word *michi* is translated "road.") Written only about two weeks before his death, the poem has provoked commentators to see in it the isolation, or even the despair, of a man who realized the vanity of his efforts at the end of his life. Representative is the comment proffered by Kagami Shiko (1665-1731), one of Basho's students, who said of the *hokku* that Basho had "walked the *michi* all by himself, with no one else taking it and with no prospect of someone following him." It is possible that Shiko had in mind someone like the legendary Chinese recluse Han-shan, who has left a poem that begins: "Cold cliffs, more beautiful the deeper you enter —/yet no one travels this road."

Interpretations since Shiko have emphasized the philosophical implications of Basho's *michi* to a greater or lesser degree. At one time the emphasis reached such a point that even the conservative haiku critic Yamamoto Kenkichi (born 1907) felt compelled to ask a rhetorical question: "Why do people have to connect this *hokku* to *haikai-do* (i.e., the way of *haiki* poetry) in interpreting it?"

Yamamoto's use of the term *haikai-do* is itself revelatory. It points to the Japanese tendency to regard the pursuit of a skill, an art, or practically any field of endeavor as conducive to the attainment of something higher. The term is used to describe a great variety of activities. So, for example, the act of serving and drinking a bowl of tea, if practiced according to a format for a sustained period of time, is called *cha-do*, "the way of tea." Similarly, fencing in Japanese style is known as *ken-do*, "the way of the sword," or *iai-do*, "the way of swording-drawing," and the purposeful act of arranging flowers, as *ka-do*, "the way of the flower." There is even *hocho-do*, "the way of the kitchen knife."

It must be noted that because *do* is the Japanese adoption of Chinese *tao*, the word has several meanings originating in China. In Confucianism, it frequently denotes higher morality, as when Confucius says, “Aspire to attain the Way, rely on virtue, live by benevolence, and be free in the arts.” (*Analects*, 7:7) In Taoism, it signifies nature as a cosmic whole and, as an attitude, represents a mystic pantheism or transcendentalism. In Buddhism, which reached Japan as translated and explicated in Chinese, the word *do* sometimes means the religion itself, sometimes the state of ultimate grace a Buddhist may achieve. All this at times makes the word misleading and ambiguous. The same is true of its native counterpart, *michi*, which is used interchangeably. In its early usage it means profession when it does not mean a long band of land for the passage of people, vehicles, or animals.

To return to Basho, the type of poetry he wrote is known as *haikai* (hence Yamamoto’s *Haikai-do*) — a branch of *renga* or linked poetry that uses daily language rather than poetic diction. A sequential form that in principle requires participation of two or more persons, *renga* from the outset had strong characteristics of a game and was often so regarded. Especially after it was freed from the poetic diction as defined by the court poet, it became an increasingly competitive game with monetary prizes as its chief attraction. In this game someone like Basho, with the title of “master,” either presided over a session as participating judge or judged submissions, and was paid for that effort. It was by no means an easy medium in which to seek the Way.

Basho tried, nonetheless. In his letter to the samurai poet Suganuma Kyokusui (died 1717), dated the 18th of the second month, 1692, he divided *haikai* practitioners into three categories.

“When it comes to the way of poetry (*fuga no michi*), there are generally three grades of people, as I see it. There are those who run around, trying day and night to make points, vying to win, with no attempt to see the Way (*michi*). These may be called confused noisemakers in poetry. But because they help fill the stomachs of the wives and children of the judges and replenish the money-boxes of their landlords, what they do is better than doing evil things.

“Then, there are those who, though wealthy, refrain from engaging in ostentatious pleasures. Looking upon *haikai* writing as better than gossiping about other people, they compose two or three sequences for winning points, day or night, but do not boast when they win or do not become angry even when they lose. Whatever may happen, they at once set out to work out a new sequence and try to come up with clever ideas during the brief space of time that a fifth of an incense stick takes to burn. When it’s finished they delight in the points given instantly, just like boys playing cards. These people nevertheless arrange food and provide adequate wine, thereby helping the poor and fattening judges. In that sense they, too, in some way contribute to the establishment of the Way (*michi*).



“Then, there are fellows who work hard for the goal of true poetry and soothe their hearts by doing so. These do not easily take to criticizing others, and with the thought that poetry writing is another vehicle for entering the True Way (*makoto no michi*), explore the spirit of Fujiwara no Teika, trace the intent of Saigyō, examine the heart of Po Chu-yi, and enter the mind of Tu Fu — all of the remote past. There are so few of these that, the ones in the capital and the ones in the countryside combined, they scarcely fill the ten fingers. You are to be one of those few. It is understandable that you should take great care and work hard at it.”

In this letter to a man who eventually committed suicide after killing a clan administrator for his wrongdoing, the “True Way” in the last paragraph means Buddhism, and the original word for “work hard” at the end is *shugyo*, the process of ascetic training in accordance with Buddhist precepts. Bashō’s mention of the “True Way” was not casual. Through most of his career as a *haikai* poet he chose to consider himself a hermit, went about in the garb of a lay priest and visited a great number of temples to pay his respects. For a while he trained in Zen.

The idea of relating poetry writing to Buddhism is somewhat old. An early example is an attempt by Fujiwara no Kinto (966-1041) to rate poems written in the 5-7-5-7-7-syllable *tanka* form in the manner of *kuhon*, the “nine grades” that are thought to exist in Buddhist Paradise. The *tanka* form by then had become the almost exclusive vehicle for the Japanese poet writing in Japanese. (The Japanese poet also wrote poems in Chinese, following Chinese prosody.) Kinto’s use of a religious term does not, however, appear to have implied anything deep. The situation changed in two centuries. Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114-1204), the first poet to assert the possibility of entering Buddhahood through poetry, evidently sought to explain his reason for being as a poet and as a Buddhist. The first time he connected poetry and Buddhism, he merely said that it would be wrong to assume the eventual attainment of the lofty state of the way of poetry (*uta no michi*) “without being enlightened of the profound Laws of Varanasi and Kapilavastu.” This he did in his preface to the seventh imperial poetry collection *Senzai Waka Shu* (Anthology of Japanese Poetry for a Thousand Generations), which he edited in 1188.

About a decade later, in 1197, when he prepared his poetics-cum-anthology *Korai Futei Sho* (Styles of Poetry Since Ancient Times) for Princess Shikishi (died 1201), Shunzei became more forthright. In it he argued that poetry could be an opportunity to lead oneself to the Way of Buddha (*Hotoke no michi*) because it reveals profound truths. Poetry, he said, may be all “fiction and rhetoric” (*fugen kigyō*), which Buddhism counts among the ten evils. Still, is it not the fundamental tenet of Buddhism that “passions themselves are Bodhi (i.e., salvation)”? Also, does not the *Lotus Sutra* say, “If (a believer) refers to popular classics, maxims for ruling the

world, means of livelihood, and so forth, all will coincide with the True Law”?

Finally, does not the *Sutra of Meditation on the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue* say, “What is sin? What is happiness? Neither has a determinant. It all depends on your mind”?

At the base of Shunzei’s argument was the *Mo-k’o chih-kuan* (in Japanese, *Maka Shikan*), to which he refers at the beginning of the *Styles of Poetry*. A book that spells out the philosophical basis of Zen as expounded by the great Chinese monk Chih-i (538-597), the *Mo-k’o chih-kuan* essentially holds that meditation carried out in the cessation of thought (*chih-kuan*, which is the same as *dhyana* or Zen) is central to the understanding of the Way of Buddha. And it appears that the Japanese interpreters of T’ien-t’ai Buddhism, which Chih-i established, stressed the attainment of the Way through imagery formed in the state of *chih-kuan*. Shunzei’s son, Teika (1162-1241), whom Basho mentions in his letter, put the relation between *chih-kuan* and poetry explicitly when he said in his treatise on poetics *Maigetsu Sho* (Excerpts from Monthly Lessons): “You might manage, though rarely, to make a good poem only if you enter the state of grace by making your mind completely clear.”

Shunzei’s hesitancy arose probably because the spirituality of poetry writing was not so much a conviction as a wish. Elsewhere in the *Styles of Poetry* he says: “Those who immerse their minds in the way of poetry (*kono michi*) all praise the Lord Buddha by employing the words of poetry in a contrary manner, pay respect to Buddha’s territory in the ten directions upon hearing the Law, and try to lead the people of this world, so that after springs of ten thousand generations and autumns of a thousand years they may, on account of the profound meaning of Japanese poetry (*Yamato uta*), understand the inexhaustibility of the Buddhist scriptures, gain the opportunity to go to Paradise after death, and enter the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue’s Sea of Salvation.”

One *tanka* of Shunzei’s that uses the word *michi* is well-known because Teika included it in the *One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets*, a mini-anthology that has been used as a card game over the centuries. It reads:

*Yo no naka yo michi koso nakere*  
*omoi iru yama no oku ni mo shika zo naku naru*

In this world the Way does not exist.  
Even in the depths of mountains I’ve entered with determination,  
a deer is calling

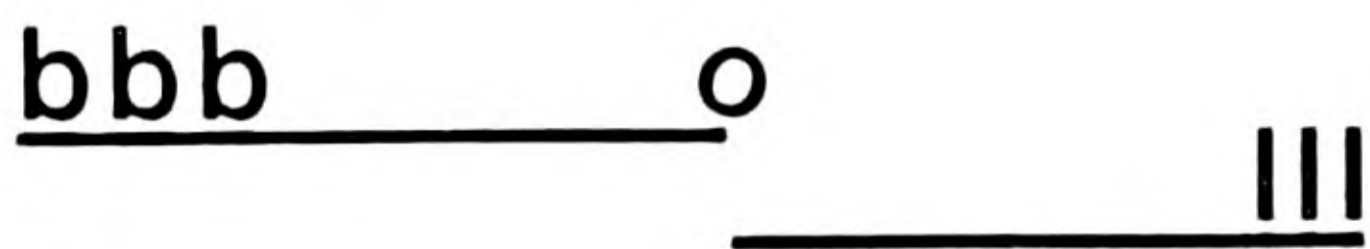
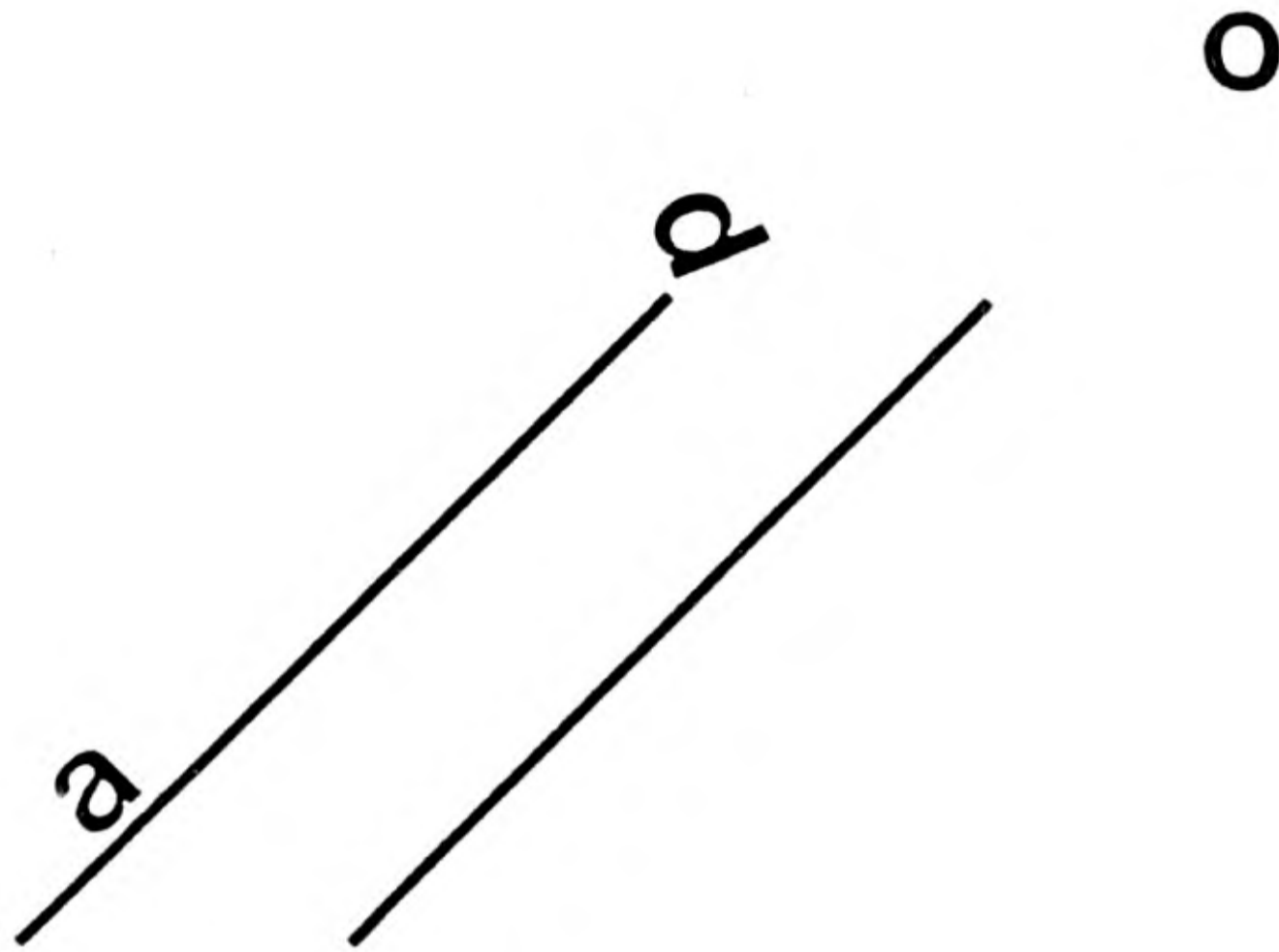
Shunzei and Teika acquired dominating stature in poetics (and in aesthetics) in the centuries that followed, while Buddhism became an ever more pervasive element of life. The result was first the assumption, then the

assertion, that writing poetry was the same as having faith in Buddhism. So Fujiwara no Tamekane (1254-1333) said in his *Tamekane Kyo Waka Sho* (Lord Tamekane's Comments on Japanese Poetry): "Because the way of poetry (*kono michi*), which is seemingly shallow but in fact deep, seemingly easy but in fact difficult, is one with the Buddhist Law, nothing personal should ever be allowed in exploring what is right and what is wrong."

Shinkei (1406-1475), who as a Buddhist attained the rank of "acting bishop," pushed the argument as far as it could go. His most famous treatise on *renga*, *Sasame-goto* (Idle Whispers), is interlaced with moralistic pronouncements and reads more like a sermon than a commentary on poetics. It is sufficient to quote two sentences: "From the outset the way of Japanese poetry (*ka-do*, the sinified pronunciation of *uta no michi*) has been the *dharani* of our nation. If you were to argue that poetry is all rhetoric (*kigyō*), your pursuit would prove all illusory even if you read sutras and commentaries on them and trained in Zen." *Dharani*, in Japan, means the practice of reciting certain passages from Buddhist writings in Sanskrit, without translation, which is said to endow the reciter with a range of virtues. "Rhetoric," or *kigyō*, is regarded as one of the ten evils in Buddhism, as noted earlier. Shinkei, then, equated poetry with Buddhism in absolute terms, and did not even allow the suggestion, originally made by Po Chu-yi, that literature may be fiction.

The effort to see spirituality in poetry may have peaked with Shinkei, a *renga* poet and therefore Bashō's predecessor. It was this tradition that affected Bashō as he tried to elevate *haikai* poetry to something more than a game.

Hiroaki Sato



## HAIKU SAMPLER

On September 24, 1983 at our HSA meeting I brought up the subject of the Sampler to receive feedback. I personally feel that the HSA Sampler was the weakest section of the journal and in many cases felt it was a token gesture to keep our members happy. In my opinion, it did nothing to promote the art of writing good haiku. It was decided that we would begin a Haiku Workshop in place of the Sampler. Each quarter a different haiku poet(s) will give her/his opinions on anonymous submissions (similar to the procedure followed in the Haiku Clinic in *Brussels Sprout*). I would most appreciate any comments you have on the Workshop, how you think it could be improved. Also, if you care to share your views on any other aspects of the magazine, feel free.

Ruth Yarrow, a very busy woman, was kind enough to offer her time in breaking ground. Ruth would like everyone to know that the comments offered in the Haiku Workshop are merely *her* opinions. This is important to remember. You have the right to disagree. Ruth also requested that she not be the only voice heard, therefore I am also stating my views.

Bill Higginson and Penny Harter will be sharing their expertise with you in the next workshop. Please submit your work directly to me. You need not include your name nor a self-addressed stamped envelope. (*Rotella*)

## HAIKU WORKSHOP

*deep in the valley the moon on fallen grasses*

Mysterious feeling in this one, from the dim light, the hidden place. The valley forms a concave curve. The fallen grasses trace convex ones, complimenting the valley, and almost completing a new sphere that resonates with the moon (which I see as full). I wondered initially if it should be moonlight instead of moon, but I like the sphere in the middle — the middle of the poem and of the design. (*Yarrow*)

When I read the words “deep in the valley” my mind goes on to sing “valley so low . . . .” This is not just a nature sketch; it does go deeper than a painted picture. However, I see moonlight on the fallen grasses. But if I reread the haiku and take the moon literally, I see the moon itself over the fallen grasses reflecting its light over the valley. It is up to the poet to decide now what he wants to do with this haiku. (*Rotella*)

*icicles at my neighbor's window lengthening*

Slow penetrating cold is expressed here — the observer sitting so long and still as to observe this, the unsettling lack of activity at the neighbor's, making one suspect an absence or death, and the icicles themselves. The space is effective in lengthening the word “lengthening.” (*Yarrow*)

This is a very effective haiku that can be interpreted on a number of levels. The feeling that is most apparent to me is the distance growing between the neighbors but this is merely surface. There is a distance in the person developing, i.e., a desire to be alone, the need to recede from the world for a while. (*Rotella*)

*silence of deer      sound of a waterfall somewhere*

A suspended moment in which what is seen — the deer — is not heard, and what is heard — the waterfall — is not seen. At first I was a bit jolted at the apparent unconnectedness of the two, but now see that this augments the tension that suspended the poet and now the reader for a moment. (*Yarrow*)

I did not care for this haiku until I read it for the fifth time. At first it seemed like the writer was not being specific enough with his words but then I entered the scene, experienced the silence and the waterfall sound. Still when I go back and read the words objectively my rational mind says, “Couldn't the poet have been more original?” but then I'm pulled back into the silence and for me, this is a winter moment. I see white all around. (*Rotella*)

*staring      all the starlit cedars glazed with snow*

The “staring” and the “starlit” are close in sound. I'm a little too aware of this, making the action (the staring) of the poet a bit more self-conscious than I would like. (*Yarrow*)

By using the word “staring” the reader injects too much of himself into the poem which detracts so much from the beautiful second part, “all the starlit cedars glazed with snow.” (*Rotella*)

*A Japanese swallow  
probing up and down a pine stump . . .  
clouds scud overhead.*

I have trouble seeing the aerial insectivorous swallow, probing — but this is a species I don't know. Maybe that's the point — the unusual situation of the

swallow moving vertically, laboriously, while the clouds fly. But the emotion doesn't come through. (*Yarrow*)

Ruth hit the nail on the head when she says, "The emotion doesn't come through." Nothing can be created unless it's charged with emotional depth. You have to love what you're writing about. Caring about your subject and your reaction to it is the power needed in writing good haiku. It doesn't matter how accurately you point an arrow — the bow is what gives the power. (*Rotella*)

*summer moonlight      her brown eyes dissect my heart*

The contrast between summer and its overwhelming green and her brown eyes is arresting, but I find the metaphor of dissecting the poet's heart too self-conscious, and too metaphorical for haiku. (*Yarrow*)

This is an overworked theme. Eyes have dissected too many hearts in poetry. It's time they do something else. (*Rotella*)

*looking for my wallet      smell of honeysuckle*

The mundane irritations, the whiff of the sublime, all in one line, one moment, captures an essence of life. I look for reverberations between the two images, but find only some comparisons that seem a bit trite — monetary vs. experiential riches; gold vs. the orange gold of the flower. Perhaps this is a problem that would not exist if I weren't trying too hard. (*Yarrow*)

This simply does not work for me. And I'm not going to try to force it. There is no energy backing up this line. (*Rotella*)

*Lotus blossoms  
border a quicksand bog  
sunlight pierces the mist*

The blossoms project up through the bog, the sun down through the mist. I like this contrast, but find this more of a picture than a poem with much emotional content. However, I'm not well versed in the lore of the lotus so may be missing something critical. (*Yarrow*)

Lotuses are close to my heart but this nature sketch does not penetrate the surface. In this case, I don't think the poet is trying to reveal the workings of the inner planets, or chakras. (*Rotella*)

*Red clay water jug —  
the potter's fingermarks  
left behind*

I feel the mysterious link with the unknown fingerprint the poet is trying to capture here. Unfortunately “behind” has too many other connotations that I think aren’t intended here — or are they? Somehow that last line sticks out too much (no bawdy pun intended). (*Yarrow*)

Interesting. I think the first line stands out too much. Three adjectives to describe one little jug? Does the color really matter? Is “water” really necessary? A jug is a jug. It can hold anything. Water, wine or grape soda. Is “clay” necessary? If you mention “potter” would not the reader assume he was working with clay? The third line is absolutely not needed. If you mention “fingermarks” we know they’ve been left behind. However, the haiku as rewritten

*jug / the potter's / fingermarks*

is not strong enough. Is this jug an ancient one, from the days of the Greeks? I want to know more about the work of art holding these fingerprints. (*Rotella*)

*Three pigeons huddle  
on a pine branch, bobbing and  
retreating their heads.*

Isn’t a pine branch, especially one grown-in, a difficult place for a large bird, let alone three, to huddle? Secondly, this observation is not a moment of heightened awareness. The action is ongoing. The use of two gerunds must be weighed carefully when attempting to write haiku. In this case, the use of “bobbing” and “retreating” further slows down the action. A third point: a haiku is more than just three lines written in 5-7-5. This is, alas, not a haiku: merely three lines about an ordinary observation. (*Rotella*)

*Sparrows sit on the ledge  
that gets the sunlight  
first this cold morning.*



A good writer is in touch with his “inner editor.” Here’s a rewritten version of the same moment:

First cold morning:  
sparrows  
on the sunlit ledge. (*Rotella*)

*A lamp is turned on —  
waking from a dream,  
a neighbor drinks tea.*

This “poem” lacks depth. It appears as though the writer, in order not to get into his *own* Self, his *own* storehouse of emotion, feels safer peering into a neighbor’s life. But even as he does, he merely skims the surface. How does he know the neighbor was dreaming? It’s merely conjecture. I’d like to know, first of all, why the writer was awake looking into his neighbor’s window. I want to know what’s going on *inside the writer* and how it relates to the activities of his neighbor. (*Rotella*)

*Breeze in the garden  
distant thunderous echoes  
mother bird, her child.*

The second and third lines sound archaic. We needn’t burden our haiku with precious words, extra baggage. Chip away at the block of stone until an elephant appears. But if you don’t know an elephant is waiting to be born, you might give birth to a cross between an elephant and a sparrow. There’s no focus in this “poem.” (*Rotella*)

*Rod Willmot’s haiku was given the Haiku Museum of Tokyo award in Issue III.*

Away from eyes  
the stairwell holds  
us in its arms

I would have preferred to see "us" on the second line after "holds" but I realize this is a debatable point. This psychological haiku (or senryu) uses metaphor beautifully. By personifying the stairwell, by giving it arms, we pass beyond judgments, limited viewpoints and jealousies. The stairwell has an almost Cosmic Mother aspect to it in the sense that the two lovers are being protected from so many pairs of "eyes." We are moved away from the personal into the Universal . . . into the view of the All-Seeing Eye depicted in Masonry. The "stairwell" itself typifies the soaring emotions of new lovers yet the word "holds" gives this moment a serious grounded tone. (*Rotella*)

## HAIKU NEWS

### AN INTRODUCTION TO HAIKU

There are still some first-edition copies available of *AN INTRODUCTION TO HAIKU* by Harold Henderson. Please send a check for \$26 to Alexis Rotella, P.O. Box 72, Mt. Lakes, N.J. 07046. Not only will you be acquiring a collector's item, you will also help the HSA.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

To ensure that we have the funds to continue to publish *FROGPOND*, please renew your memberships as soon as possible. Send dues for 1984 directly to Ross Kremer, P.O. Box 609, Ringoes, N.J. 08551.

### MOON VIEWING CEREMONY

The Manitoga Nature Center in Putnam, NY invited members of the HSA to attend a moon-viewing ceremony the end of October. Bob Avstreich gave a shakuhachi performance while several members read season haiku. The hunter moon was luminous.

### NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD

Virginia Brady Young will be president in 1984. Sharon Ann Nakazato will stay on as Vice-President. Ross Kremer has taken on two immense responsibilities, that of treasurer and secretary. Alexis Rotella will continue as editor until the end of 1984.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was my great pleasure to have served the Haiku Society of America. I feel confident about leaving the HSA in the capable hands of Virginia Brady Young.

It was our intention to mail out with this journal a supplementary membership list. However, Herman Ward recently had a heart attack. He is recuperating nicely and will be up and around in no time.

It was Ross Kremer's suggestion that the award-winning haiku for each issue be discussed in the Workshop section. Because the Workshop is now at the typesetter, I'm including my comments on Bruce Kennedy's senryu here:

That sonofabitch  
on the corner has a knife —  
the rain glistens on it.

There are those who might object to the article before "rain." I believe use of "the" strengthens this piece, that in fact introduces an ironic twist, almost as if the rain, a symbol of purity, cleanliness, makes it okay for the man on the corner to have a knife in the first place. As a city haiku, or senryu, we can all relate to the conflicts of urban life. But instead of Bruce chewing our ear off in a corner at one of Hiroaki's parties about the breakdown of our society, the crime rate and the injustices, he tells us what he thinks in 18 syllables. And we listen, not just to the words, the emotion, the message, but to the silence afterwards, which would be a sacrilege to invade.

## NEW CICADA

For information on *New CICADA*, a haiku poetry magazine, write to Editor and Publisher, Tadao Okazaki, 40-11 Kubo, Hobara, Fukushima 960-06, Japan. The consulting editors of this new magazine are Eric Amann and Lilli Tanzer.

## HAIKU REVIEW '84

Randy and Shirley Brooks have announced that *Haiku Review '84* is in production. Please take the time to report to Randy and Shirley any relevant information about your haiku publications. They state: "Our goal is to synthesize information about such haiku publications in order to help libraries and interested individuals purchase them. We also seek to encourage serious haiku scholarship as well as to expand the haiku reading public." Publication date is scheduled for February 1984 and may be ordered for \$5 (postpaid) from High/Coo Press, Route #1, Battle Ground, Indiana 47920.

## MERIT BOOK AWARDS '84

A reminder to send books published in 1983 directly to Frank Robinson, Townview Terrace, F42, Knoxville, TN 37915.

## COMMENTS SECTION

Please send any provocative comments on any aspect of haiku . . . hopefully the book reviews, articles and work presented in *Frogpond* will provide a forum for you to make your opinions known. The comments section may take form as supplemental xerox sheets to keep costs down. Send comments directly to the editor.

## COVER ILLUSTRATION

I wish to thank my brother for designing Issue IV's cover, "*Silent Tadpoles*".

Almost thirty-five,  
my brother still playing  
with tadpoles.

Alexis Rotella

## REVIEWS

by Rod Willmot

Marco Fraticelli, *Instants*. Guernica Editions, Box 633, Station N.D.G., Montreal, P.Q., H4A 3R1, Canada. Can. \$6.95.

Marco Fraticelli, *Night Coach*. Illustrations by Marlene L'Abbe. Guernica. Can. \$6.95.

Marco Fraticelli, *Deja Vu*. For Apple II computer. Guernica. Can. \$5.95. Specify English or French version.

Alexis Rotella, *Clouds in my Teacup*. Wind Chimes, Box 601, Glen Burnie, MD 21601. \$3.00.

Alexis Rotella, *Tuning the Lily*. High/Coo Press, Route 1, Battle Ground, IN 47902. \$2.00.

Hal Roth, *The Way the Wind*. Wind Chimes, Box 601, Glen Burnie, MD 21061. \$1.25.

Hal Roth, *Behind the Fireflies*. Wind Chimes. \$3.00.

Successful poet-editors are a special breed; their energetic versatility can make them a significant force in any literary community. Each of the three presented here is making a dual contribution to the haiku scene: perhaps originally through editorial work, but now more and more through his or her poetry. Each is exploring fertile new territory in haiku.

*Instants* is an early collection by Marco Fraticelli, editor of *Alchemist*. Only a third of it is haiku, but that third is definitely the most successful.

wet blouse  
on the bushel of apples  
by your bedroom door

The incongruous location of the bushel basket — incongruously appropriate — is at first disturbing, then realistic, then rather earthy. The breast-like apples evoke a modern Eve.

*Night Coach* is a collection of about 60 haiku, stylishly illustrated by Marlene L'Abbe. As in the first work, the intense personalism of Fraticelli's outlook shows up in his writing as qualities of vulnerability and sensualism, as well as in a tendency to lean away from the structured image.

Your warm breath  
On my neck —  
Winter moon in the tree

Soft woolen sweater  
Your wet mouth kissing my eyes —  
Spring rain on the snow

Allowing himself to be physically and emotionally vulnerable, the poet admits sensations that might not otherwise have happened. His sensualism leads him to attend to exactly how things feel — warm, soft, wet — instead of reducing them to their status as objects. However, even allowing for the adjectives and the occasional influence of 5-7-5, the second poem might well be considered too long. If line 2 is divided halfway, it combines with either lines 1 or 3 to make two separate haiku. Which is more satisfying — the poem as it stands, or one of its daughters?

There are two different approaches toward writing a haiku, one “logical,” the other “circumstantial.” Many haiku exhibit the logical structure of

comparison, and are usually bipartite. In a smaller number of haiku, usually tripartite, things are put together circumstantially: each happened to coincide with the poet's moment of awareness. It may be because of his personalism that Fraticelli often follows the second approach; yet there is nothing to prevent the two from being combined, and this seems to be what he attempts to do in the poem above. A less problematic example is the following:

At the poetry reading —  
The loose strap on your white dress  
And falling rain

Although "falling" echoes "loose," and both stand out against the tense energies of the poetry reading, these connections belong more to the realm of appropriate circumstance than to that of true comparison.

*Deja Vu* should be of interest to anyone owning or having access to an Apple II: published on floppy disk rather than in stapled chapbook, these are haiku for computer screen. Though the poems are not new, their kinematic renditions are. For example, the computer version of "At the poetry reading" comes on as a blanket of words from which isolated parts drop out at random. The haiku is discovered as it gradually emerges over a rain-like scattering of the word "loose." Development through time, apparent movement, subtle interactions between words and graphic design: these are potentials that bring us a giant step forward from concrete poetry. Fraticelli's first exploration of the new medium is sensitive and exciting.

Especially in her early poems, Alexis Rotella is less likely to fabricate an image with an aggressively searching perception than she is to acknowledge and celebrate what is freely given. In *Clouds in my Teacup*, what is given is frequently the universe caught napping. Every such moment seems to be a nexus of contradictory forces or ideas, as in "At the pool hall / spouting zen / the young stud." Or in this poem:

Lunch-time breeze:  
computer print-out sheets  
sail gently through the park

If some of the poems allowed by this approach come and go a little too easily, others convey a welcome sense of humour, a sort of gaiety tinged with irony: "Shiva / all those hands / all those pigeons." But the really significant aspect of this collection is its position midway between the conventional orientation toward external objects and the recent, more challenging orientation toward human experience. Some of the "new" poems deal with relationships, while others are portraits, and still others focus upon the poet herself. One at least accomplishes all three:

In the mirror  
Mother's sad expression  
on my face

Published only a year after the previous work, *Tuning the Lily* confirms both the strength and the direction of Rotella's development. The poems are now more disciplined, deeper in content. The progression of haiku is like a flower-bud unfolding, from pristine absolute to petalled vulnerability. Compare these, from near the beginning and at the very end:

swirling  
from the lotus  
mist and a dragonfly

left to the wind  
all the lilies  
and all his lies

Like the rose, the lotus is a universal symbol of wholeness; we needn't know any Buddhism to feel, with the first poem, as though we were observing Creation: out of the One comes the Many (or Chaos, followed by Light). But by the last poem it is as though the whole of history had passed, thoroughly humanizing the universe; and among the human multitudes, another individual has discovered the option of transcendence: letting go. At extremes of the seemingly cosmic and the obviously personal, both poems owe their success to accuracy of observation; so does this one, from near the middle:

after the hail  
transparent specks  
on the daffodils

In a way, this is the key to all of the poems discussed in this article: our wounds become windows.

Hal Roth's *The Way the Wind* is a small collection of love-poems, many of them almost intricate in their internal reflections:

her eyes still closed  
white curtains  
in morning sun

In sleep the beloved's eyelids are a gentle veil, almost transparent; the white curtains suggest their softness and — let me use this word with all three poets — vulnerability. Unseen, her eyes are like the curtained sun, shining from out of memory. Yet the real focus of the poem is not on the beloved but on the poet's experience beside her. Looking up, he sees the curtains, and they become eyelids to contain him in a kind of dream. These are poems of exceptional delicacy, exceptionally imbued with sense of one who loves.

Roth's *Beyond the Fireflies* is remarkable both for its quality and for its form, a variant of the haibun. Written on a visit to the Civil War battlefield of Antietam, Maryland, the haiku are interspersed with bits of historical prose: a

snapshot narrative of the bloodiest battle in that war, together with quotations from the writings of those who fought it. Set out on facing pages — prose on the left, poetry on the right — the work develops as a kind of translation, a parallel experience of past and present. On page 24 we read: “Finally, at 1:00 P.M., ‘Burnside Bridge’ was assaulted in force and won.” And on page 25, this haiku:

waterlights dancing  
on the bridge stones  
on the swallow nest

As always, the juxtaposition is subtle and yet immediately effective. In the waterlights’ distant resemblance to musket-fire and the flash of bayonets, a scene of war and a scene of peace come strangely together, at once cancelling and intensifying their opposition. Several such poems can be read either in the present or in the past, rendering profoundly different readings that nonetheless intertwine. The poem below follows a description of the long night before the carnage:

dew glistens  
between a robin’s notes  
the silence

Read in the past, this would come only moments before the eruption of the battle, which began at dawn. You are lying in a cornfield, prepared to kill and knowing you might soon die; yet you see and hear a beauty of exquisite purity. Read in the present, these moments of silence accord penetrations of time: the peace of transcendence, yes, but also a badly needed repossession of the past, with mourning.

Roth’s achievement is in several ways to bring us home, to the continent and our history. He reminds us that an obsession with the immediate is ultimately impoverishing, since it pretends that our private and collective memories have no right to function. He reminds us too that it is sometimes the most trivial humanness that most surely makes us feel at home.

fresh plowed earth  
lying in the shade of a wall  
three girls in jeans

Opposite passages that evoke the massacre on that same field, the girls may well suggest the dead who once lay heaped in their place. But I can’t help seeing them laughing and talking with such animation that they are, ever so briefly, an affront to the dead, and subsequently an affirmation of life itself. As in all the collections discussed here, they affirm that the race lives on, with energy to spare.



## REVIEW

by William J. Higginson

Hal Roth, *Behind the Fire-flies*.

Few of the two hundred or so books and pamphlets of “haiku” in English that sit on my shelves have been looked into more than once; few were worth the attention of that first look. Among these few which merit a second look or more, perhaps a dozen or so genuinely bear repeated readings. Certainly, many collections have a poem or two that stand out. But few, very few, of the books of English-language haiku published so far have drawn me back to reread them entire, to think of them as true books, pieces of art constructed whole, from the first word to the last.

*Behind the Fireflies*, here only for two or three weeks, has already become one of the few. And I expect it will remain one of the haiku books I prefer for as long as I continue to observe the haiku scene.

Like all really fine books, *Behind the Fireflies* uses old ways to achieve something new. (1) It relates strongly to a particular place, the Civil War battle ground at Sharpsburg, Maryland. (2) It presents the images of the present reality of that place, specifically a period from morning through evening of a particular day in the summer of 1981, captured in fourteen of the cleanest haiku I’ve read this year. (3) It evokes just as cleanly the events, some of the events, of “the bloodiest day of the Civil War,” in short prose passages by the author and direct quotations from accounts by eye-witnesses to and participants in what Northern historians call “The Battle of Antietam,” after the tributary of the Potomac, which runs next to the battlefield. (4) It does all this in an interlocked sequence of statements, quotations, and haiku which owes its form in part to the haibun, but ultimately to the renga — in the same way that Bashō’s most mature travel diary, *Oku no hosomichi* (“Narrow Roads of the Interior”), owes its structure to the renga.

The following sequence illustrates this renga-like movement. (Asterisks indicate page breaks.)

waves of summer heat  
cows huddle  
beneath a sycamore

\*

The Union attacks focused upon the high ground surrounding a small white structure on the Sharpsburg ridge, the Church of The Brethren.

“Under the dark shade of a towering oak near the Dunker Church lay the

lifeless form of a drummer boy . . . flaxen hair and eyes of blue and form of delicate mold . . . His lips were compressed, his eyes half open, a bright smile played upon his countenance.”

Private J. D. Hicks, USA

\*

around and around  
the little white church  
a boy chases his sister

\*

As the battle on the Union right dwindled in the exhaustion of both sides, fresh brigades crossed the creek and engaged Lee’s center where a sunken country lane provided natural fortifications for the defenders.

Again, the advancing lines with colors unfurled, with polished bayonets flashing in the sunlight; again, the rattle of muskets, the acrid, billowing smoke; again, the violence of artillery shaking the green, rolling hills.

\*

through hazy stillness  
a brass cannon points  
at two lovers

These five stanzas, if I may call them that, demonstrate some of the standard linking techniques of renga. The cows huddling beneath a sycamore present an image akin to “The Brethren” in their church, an image more literally echoed in the same page’s “dark shade of a towering oak.” Obviously, the church carries over into the following haiku, where we also find a happy boy — playing. His action echoes the word supplied by Private Hicks.

The “around and around” of the middle haiku in this section leads immediately to the suggestion of “the exhaustion of both sides” in the following prose; the “billowing smoke” of musketry and cannon fire find their natural parallel and contrast at once in the “hazy stillness” of the summer afternoon.

All of the techniques cited in the last two paragraphs come directly from the *renso* (“association of ideas”), *hibiki* (“echo”), *nioi* (“fragrance”), *kotobazuke* (“word-connection”), and so on of renga composition, particularly the techniques of the Basho school of *haikai no renga*.

But in one significant way *Behind the Fireflies* does not move from stanza to stanza the way a renga does. One of the basic requirements of renga is that themes and scenes must shift from one pair of stanzas to the next, so that the

ultimate effect is that of a zig-zag journey over many different landscapes. Hal Roth has chosen to stay within the confines of but two realities, that of the Battle of Sharpsburg, as Southern historians call it, and that of the present park where the battle was fought. One could, in fact, read through all of the even-numbered pages of the book and gather a fairly full, if brief, picture of that 17th of September, 1862, when a field of corn and soldiers was cut down by cannon fire, and a country lane was paved with bodies dressed in blue and butternut. And one could read all the odd-numbered pages, finding an idyllic sequence of haiku on a summer day in the park, almost any park.

Read straight through, however, *Behind the Fireflies* zigzags only so far as the alternating teeth of rapidly closing zipper, the teeth, if you will, of life and death. For the feeling person, reading this book leads directly to a deepening sense of the strangeness of war, and perhaps its futility, as earlier caught in Basho's

*natsugusa ya*  
*tsuwamonodomo ga*  
*yume no ato*

summer grass —  
those mighty warriors'  
dream-tracks

This is a *book*, not a collection. And one of the best and most important books of haiku literature I have read in the twenty-two years I have been studying the genre.

#### AFTERWORD

This review was written some months ago. More than one recent re-reading of *Behind the Fireflies* has not changed my thoughts on the subject.

20 September 1983

*(Ed. Note: This review was presented to the Haiku Society of America annual meeting held September 24. It is believed that Rod Willmot's review and this one by William J. Higginson are complementary.)*

MOON PUDDLES, by Ann Newell. Bread & Butter Press, 2582 South Clayton, Denver, CO 80210, 1983, unpagged. \$4.50 (postage \$1.25 for one, \$.75 additional).

*by Elizabeth Searle Lamb*

This small book of Ann Newell's haiku and sumi-e drawings is a delight. Designed by Gary Ray, Newell's artist husband, and finely printed and handsewn by Bread & Butter Press, every element works to present an artistic unity.

There are eighteen haiku here, each with its own haiga. And these drawings in their shades of gray and black seem an integral part of the poems. Three of the drawings are alone on pages opposite the haiku. For the rest, the illustrations accompany the haiku on the same page. There is never more than one haiku to a page and since the pages are 7 by 6½ inches, considerable white space enfolds the lines of the sensitive sumi-e drawings and the words.

The haiku themselves vary in form. Most are three lines and these are the most successful, although several of the one-liners are effective. The single two-line poem gives the title to this collection.

The opening haiku, in one line, presents immediately something of the Zen flavor which is never far absent:

pitcher of clay      bulging emptiness

Unfortunately, however, an occasional image is coupled with no more than a descriptive phrase, as in:

ancient ladies chattering      birds on a wire

The longer poems have a chance to clue the reader to a more meaningful haiku moment:

frost this morning —  
and ghost things  
come out of our mouths

and the echo-filled:

many years now      in  
winter my father died —  
still      the wind cries

The usual attempt at a haiku book with many oriental images and illustrations so directly out of the oriental tradition is a fiasco of pseudo-orientalism. Newell, on the other hand, has drawn her images out of her own experiences which have included eastern travel and personal relationships.

The image has become her own when she writes:

spooning up a moon puddle  
lotus fragrance comes

A “Forward” (sic) by the Korean poet Kim Yang-shik with whom Newell developed a warm bond of communication during a visit to Seoul attests to the “exchange . . . between East and West” evident in *Moon Puddles*. This is a book with its own integrity which brings in word and brush stroke a quiet serenity.

## Before and After the Splash

by LeRoy Gorman

**One Hundred Frogs: From Renga to Haiku to English** by Hiroaki Sato, John Weatherhill, Inc., NY (1983), 242 pages, paper, \$14.95.

The reader who has already come to respect Sato’s translations will not be disappointed. As in his translations, Sato’s approach is straight-forward, yet scholarly. Counter though to his translations, which sometimes seem stoically flat and lacking in the flair other translators impose, *One Hundred Frogs* possesses pizzaz.

Of the three parts, respectively — “From Renga to Haiku,” “Translating into English,” and “Composing in English” — the first is the longest and most scholarly and the third is of worth when the editorial bias for selection of haiku is realized.

In Part One, linking procedures are examined through a play-by-play commentary on successive links in Japanese renga. Sato outlines the on-and-off adherence to rules by various writers. In so doing, he aptly terms the history of renga, “schizophrenic.” He also gives fair consideration to all extremes (palindrome and acrostic in some orthodox renga, for example) and outlines clearly Basho’s concept of shofu (with numerous examples). Chapter Three, “Basho and Poetry Writing as a Group Activity,” while scholarly, is entertaining through anecdotes on Basho’s sometimes fumbling behavior at meetings. Like a gossip columnist’s account of a celebrity gathering, the chapter serves to lighten what might otherwise prove tedious reading. Senryu (with early examples) is mentioned as well as Basho’s haibun and rules for composition. Part One ends with the chapter, “Some Aspects of the Question, What is Haiku?” Here the author focuses on the idea that haiku has not always been a product of Zen; rather, the Zen connection is an interpretation mostly fostered in North America.

In Part Two, Sato introduces the reader to his method of translation — a spartan one — with which the reader may readily agree after comparison is made to Earl Miner's embellishments. Of note is the discourse on lineation. Takayanagi Shigenobu, for example, is cited for his use of up to fifteen lines in one haiku. Chapter Seven, "One Hundred Frogs," is a tribute to Basho's revolutionary frog-splash haiku. The potpourri of translations and take-offs are, in some cases, serious, while many are light. For a more serious study, the reader may wish to turn back a few pages to Chapter Four to find a substantial selection of "hokku and haiku mainly on the frog."

Part Three, "Composing in English" contains a chapter on renga and one on haiku. The renga chapter contains well-chosen examples of renga by major haiku poets in the United States. Both group and solo renga (such as Cor van den Heuvel's memorable "*Rickshaw*") are present. The haiku chapter contains a sampling of work from writers in the United States as well. The sampling, however, is somewhat dated already through the exclusion of such writers as Boldman and Rotella. Furthermore, American haiku poets (Jewell and Spiess, to name two) who have been writing for some time are not represented.

Apart from the shortcomings of the final chapter, *One Hundred Frogs* makes engaging reading and proves Sato — a convincing voice of authority.



