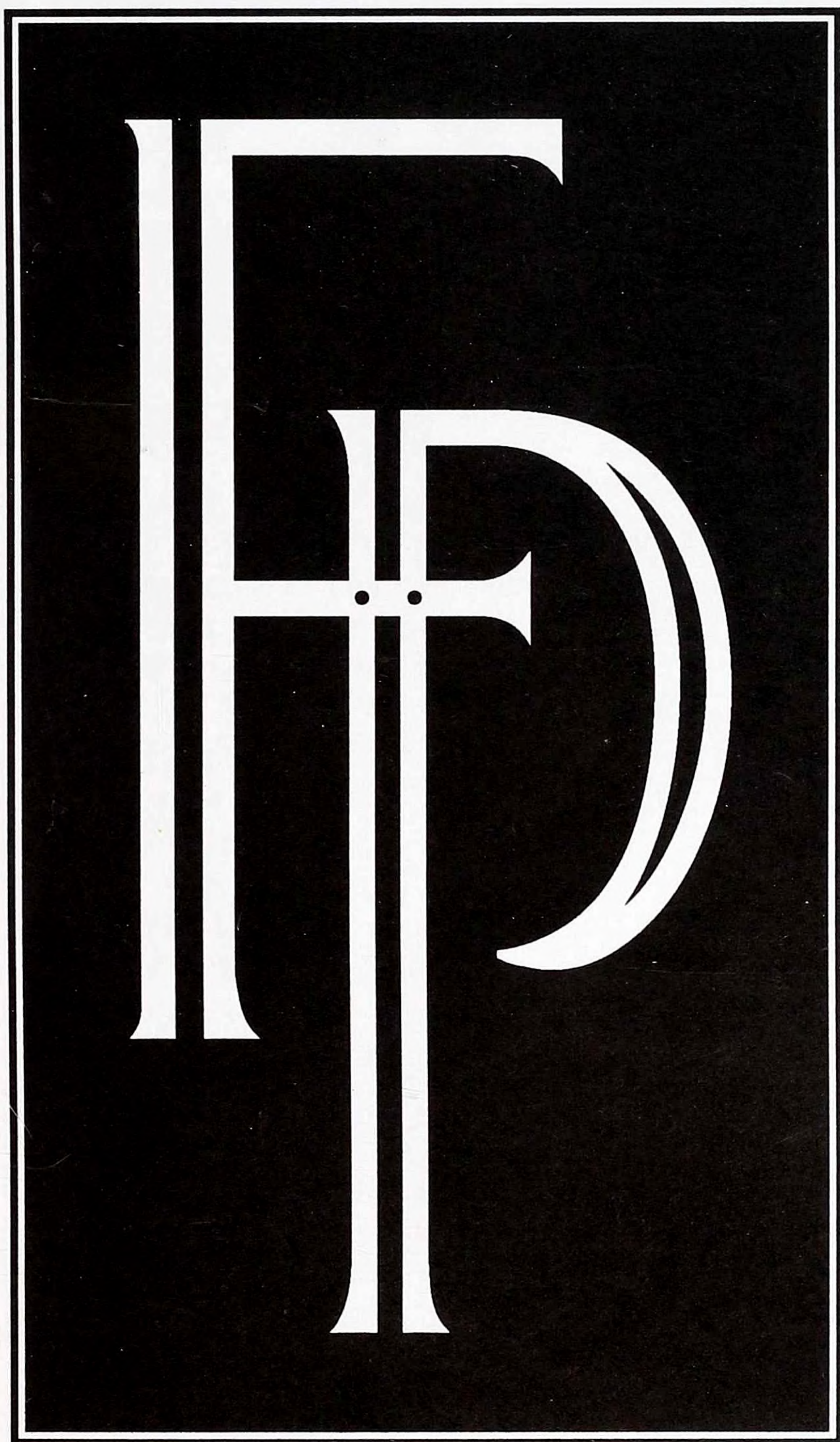


FROGPOND XXI: 1





President's Message

The Haiku Society of America will celebrate its 30th anniversary this year. There is much to celebrate. When the founding members gathered in New York on October 23, 1968, their goal was to create an organization that would help "promote the writing and appreciation of haiku in English." This year, thirty years later, we can look back with satisfaction to all that has been accomplished toward that goal by HSA and the other groups around the country working together.

To mark this 30th anniversary, we would like to honor the charter members of HSA who, under the leadership of founders Harold G. Henderson and Leroy Kanterman, established HSA and laid the groundwork for the growth of the haiku movement in America.

As a living memorial to the energy and vision of the founding members, a flowering cherry tree will be planted in their honor this spring on the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C. The tree will join the other cherry trees that bloom so gloriously in the area, bringing pleasure to all who visit. HSA members visiting the Washington area are encouraged to visit the site, enjoy the beauty of the tree in bloom, and be reminded of the contributions of the founding members. In addition, anniversary statements from each of the founding members will be kept in the American Haiku Archives.

We hope that HSA members around the country will find creative and enjoyable ways to mark the anniversary. Happy 30th anniversary, HSA!

Warm regards,
Kristen Deming

Haiku

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

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

Museum of Haiku Literature Award
\$50 for the best haiku or senryu
appearing in the previous issue of FROGPOND
as voted by the HSA Executive Committee

January thaw
the narrow path
fading away

Mark Alan Osterhaus



spring snowswirl—
the cautious approach
of a stray dog

Robert L. Brimm

their
orange
kick-

ball—
& the last
heap

of
dirty
snow

John Martone

5

let's dye it
along with the eggs—
spring snow

Jeanne Emrich

Snowflurries

—on the clothesline white sheets blow
into wrinkles

Carol Purington

sky—
this robin's
egg

Jamie Parsley

Easter morning
the new-born turtles
race to the sea

Tony Virgilio

geese climb
through morning fog—
I linger

Tom Painting

spires of light
through the tall Douglas firs
a dogwood in bloom

Jean Jorgenson

6
twilight
rain-dark buds
becoming scent

Peggy Willis Lyles

Next to the waterfall
snowdrops with bent necks
are trembling.

Milenko D. Ljuticki

morning mist—
alighting
from the prison bus

William Lerz

dense morning fog
on the wooden bridge
sound of your sandals

Donnie Nichols

7

Spring sale
a sidewalk rack of coats
sleeves all waving

Bruce Detrick

putting off mowing
one more day—a walk
through wild violets

Dianne Borsenik

at last Spring
in the meadow—
her green eyes

Mark Arvid White

spring morning—
before the sway of the trees
the sound of the wind

Tom Genovese

juncos and crows in
the community garden—
a touch of wildness

Kam Holifield

sunflower seeds
below the birdfeeder
sprouting

Rita Z. Mazur

8

spring hot spell—
watering my plants
with a saucepan

Tom Williams

Memorial Day—
two youths going to the fair
cut through the graveyard

Charles Trumbull

Memorial Day—
overwintered in the sandbox
toy soldiers

Tom Clausen

First light
sweet milk breath
of the sleeping baby

Joyce Austin Gilbert

9

holding my brother
for the first time
I become wet

Shirley Marty

early buds—
absently fingering
the baby's toes

H. F. Noyes

how sick is our child?
my wife and I plant
spring bulbs

Mike Dillon

a gift of jonquils—
on her arm a yellowing
thumb-sized bruise

Addie LaCoe

hail!
rushing outside
to fill my hat

Michael L. Evans

hobo
on a northbound train—
countryside in spring

A. E. DeMello

10

orange blossom season
the sudden storm
of fragrance

Margarita Engle

finding a leak
in the flowered umbrella—
Spring rain

Neca Stoller

warm rain
the spring moon returns
to the rusty can

Yu Chang

stepping stones
to the garden tea house. . .
pockets of morning rain

Randy Brooks

|| ||

mountain trail—
a gray pine in the fog
perhaps another

D. Claire Gallagher

Caught on a branch,
sways with the new leaves:
dead snapped limb

Dave Russo

nodding toward
the ascent trail
St. Johnswort

Bruce Ross

looping past
the pullman window—
swallows

Stephen Addiss

in my mother's yard
her mother's yellow rose

Patricia A. Laster

relapse. . .
more and more raindrops
clinging

Carol Conti-Entin

12

graveyard visit
i talk to myself

ai li

stillness. . .
just the sound
of the NY Times

Pamela A. Babusci

The Cyber Pond

A. C. Missias

13

In most people's minds, the only connection between literature and computers is the use of word processors in place of typewriters. However, in this age of ever-expanding information technology, computers can offer much more, linking us to a broad array of resources for reading, writing, and discussion of literary topics. This can be particularly valuable in the case of lesser-known genres such as haiku: one strength of the Internet is that individuals from widely-dispersed geographical areas can easily meet in cyberspace as they could rarely do in reality, to exchange their ideas, projects and even their libraries. How many of us know more than a handful of people in our home towns who write and discuss haiku, or even know what it is? Yet with a click of a computer mouse it is easy to find several dozen haiku enthusiasts on-line, with whom to establish friendships, write renku, and develop a better understanding of this art which we are all struggling to master.

So what are these trumpeted Internet resources? How do you find the scattered students of haiku in cyberspace? And what should you expect from such a gathering once you get there? Answering these and related questions is the purpose of "The CyberPond."

In this inaugural column, I hope to give you a brief primer on the organization of the Internet, and broadly describe the haiku-related resources available there. In subsequent installments, I will focus on one or more specific sites, groups, and events, so that even those of you who choose not to brave the technological wilds will be kept abreast of notable developments in this powerful alternative medium.

So, to begin: what do we mean when we use the ubiquitous term "Internet?" Cyberspace can be divided into three primary domains: Usenet, the WorldWideWeb, and email. Usenet is a collection of newsgroups, forums for discussion on various specific topics, ranging from breast cancer to backgammon, existing in a bulletin-board format. A contributor "posts" a comment on a relevant topic, to which another might append a reply, leading to long "threads" of conversation. There can be huge amounts of useful content on such a group, but the particular nature of discussion at any given time can be a matter of chance. For this reason, many newsgroups keep archives of their back-posts at some site, which allows you to search previous discussions for answers and information you might want, without waiting for a personal reply to your own post.

|| 4

At this time, I do not know of any Usenet groups devoted exclusively to haiku, although one group, rec.arts.poems, encompasses all types of poetry, and does have some contributors who post haiku. This site is a good place to read poetry, but its size can be daunting.

The second major branch of the Internet is the WorldWideWeb. This branch is also content-oriented, but makes more use of layout and design, offering, for example, translated haiku combined with illustrative photos of the place they describe, and

background koto music. Such separate sites, taken together, comprise in essence a huge library, where you can go directly to a particular "book" (web page), or search any of a number of indices to find materials/sites on a particular topic. The differences between the Web and a normal library are significant: 1) the actual location of the content is distributed in computers all over the globe, rather than localized in one building; 2) information can be linked to other information, so you can jump from one site to another related one without referring back to an index or having to locate them separately (wandering from link to link is called "web-surfing"); and 3) anyone with Internet access can produce a web-page, which democratizes the activity, but also increases the percentage of junk or "noise" one encounters.

The Web offers many resources: some sites are simply collections of haiku, by the masters and/or by individuals (see, for example, Mark Alan Osterhaus's Haiku Home Page at <http://ww.execpc.com/~ohaus/haiku.html>); other sites operate much like paper journals (such as John Hudak's chaba haiku journal at <http://pobox.com/~chaba>); also found are the on-line extensions of organizations and publications such as HSA, whose web page is used to supplement its offline endeavors (<http://www.octet.com/~hsa/>); and sites with informative materials (such as Dhugal Lindsay's Haiku Universe, (<http://www.ori.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~dhugal/haikuhome.html>)). Additionally, there are a few sites which feature interactive writing, such as renku, and a few others belonging to commercial booksellers.

The third piece of the Internet puzzle is email. In many ways this is just an electronic version of real, or "snail-" mail. However, it is possible to join a specialized "mailing list" which can turn your in-box into a

convenient local bulletin board. These lists act as central clearing house addresses to which all posts are sent, then redistributed to the list's members. This can be a lot more convenient than making regular visits to a newsgroup to keep up. However, it can also be more intrusive, and a flurry of posts can overcrowd your mailbox and challenge your ability to keep up.

The preeminent haiku mailing list is the Shiki Internet Haiku Salon, run by a group located in Matsuyama, Japan, where Shiki lived and wrote. The list is open to anyone interested in writing and learning about haiku, and members range from novices to well-established writers to scholars. This mix makes for interesting dynamics: newcomers ("newbies") are constantly arriving, and often have similar questions and difficulties; more experienced haikai vary between posting work quietly and diving in to guide beginners' efforts (often quite gently). Given the great volume, it can be difficult to sort out the good stuff from the background din. However, there is much good haiku here, as well as discussions which can enhance one's appreciation of the form. Also, the Salon sponsors bi-weekly kukai competition, and keeps an archive of past results and poems on its website, where you can sample the haiku and discussions at your leisure. (To join, send an email to "shiki-request@cc.matsuyama-u.ac.jp" with the text "subscribe.")

|| 6

So, that about completes our Internet overview—I hope that I've succeeded in whetting your appetite somewhat. Starting from this general understanding, I'll delve more deeply into particular aspects of each of the forums I've described. If there are particular things you'd like to see covered, let me know (email me at missias@mail.med.upenn.edu or snailmail me care of Frogpond, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester VA 22604). For now, that's the news from the CyberPond!



Mother's Day
in my small son's hand
the neighbor's prize rose

H. E. Dalton

badminton
with each chirp from the frong
a backyard response

Francis W. Alexander

17

sunday sails
dancing on the river
sudden cabbage-whites

Ross Clark

like a butterfly
flies in its cage
defending his goal

Keizo Harazaki

wishing pond—
the glint of quarters
on the carp's fin

Neca Stoller

through tree shadows
the tiny fish loses
its own

Jeff Witkin

in the stream
the shopping cart
gathers light

Robert Epstein

water lily
heavy with summer
silence

Ross Figgins

low-water bridge
a raccoon
moon fishing

Michael L. Evans

at the mouth of the sea
a river would return
to her spring

Nikola Nilic

change of tides:
people edging back
the sea moving in

Tracy Kowalchuk

ocean air—
Jesus rusting
at the nails

Mike Allen

19

waitress serving crabs
one false nail
missing

Nina A. Wicker

the smell of heat—
curtains
moving in and out

Mike Allen

air conditioning
the girl's toes
straight up

Michael Fessler

dying butterflies
litter the road's edge
the asphalt bubbles

Larry Kimmel

this second
before the thunder
all the lilies silver

Paul D. Miller

screen door between angry words

Tom Painting

20

silver moonlight
flowing down
the dry streambed

David Gross

midnight rain—
turning the light out
to listen

Ellen Compton

much needed rain
my teenager jokes
that she is pregnant

LeRoy Gorman

crystal water goblet
singing in the cupboard
deep summer thunder

Mary Lou Bittle-DeLapa

21

drying puddle the brief summer

Michelle Lohnes

scattered showers
a worm makes it halfway
across the sidewalk

Robert Gibson

rain washes away
sidewalk chalk
masterpieces

Daniel Morales

gravediggers resting
examining the blue sky
from six feet under

Tom Williams

the graveyard
at night—
I stand close to dad

Bailey Edwards

all wrapped
up
in itself:
f
t r b
h u a
e i t
t

Emily Romano

22

starry night—
biting into a melon
full of seeds

Yu Chang

abandoned farmhouse—
inside lit
by the setting sun

Susan Howard

empty summerhouse
thud of a vine leaf
hitting the floorboards

Caroline Gourlay

end of summer—
the climbing rose goes
where it wills

Robert Gilliland

23

black spots
are growing
on the pears

K. P. Butterworth

Chair webbing
stained with leaves:
Summer is gone.

David T. Quintavalle

heron stepping
through the reedy marsh—
the billboard's shadow

Michael Dylan Welch

almost fall
a fine mist settles
the robin's song

Anthony J. Pupello

cattails
bending in the wind—
hitchhiking

Jason Sanford Brown

in the middle
of the well-worn path
trefoil

Makiko

the moth
is fluttering by the lamp
a dream comes

Doris H. Thurston

the night
before induced labor
moon behind the clouds

Michael Ketchek

The Conscious Eye

Dee Evetts

25

One of the trends noticeable in North American haiku and senryu in recent years has been the publication of work that makes a comment on social, political, or environmental issues. Opinion has been sharply divided over this development. Its more passionate advocates claim such poems represent the only truly relevant or serious work out there, dismissing everything else as "tra-la haiku". Meanwhile its opponents have gone so far as to declare that the delivering of any kind of message is a corruption of the genre. They concede that senryu has a satirical tradition, but see the intent there as being to entertain, not to educate.

As I see it there is nothing inherently inappropriate about oppression or exploitation, for example, as themes appearing in our work. What counts as far as I am concerned is whether the poet is trying to tell me *what to think or how to feel*, rather than directing my attention to something I may have overlooked.

The fallacy perpetrated by the grittier-than-thou school is the notion that poems about battered children or vanishing rain-forests are somehow more realistic or more important than poems about circus clowns

or walking the dog. At the same time, the "tra-la" jibe is not without justification. There is still too much work being published that merely idealizes our life, selecting from it whatever is pretty or consoling. I wish we could find less in the journals about misty woods and tremulous butterflies, and more about dirty bathwater and broken promises. The fact is our world contains much that is worth celebrating, as well as much that is deplorable, and there is no blame in choosing to focus on one or other of these aspects. But the poet whose work embraces both can surely be described as the realist among us.

The fundamental question to be asked, whether as writer or as reader, is this: is the piece self-consciously didactic, or does it make its point with finesse—without posturing or hectoring? If a poem gives off the stink of Zen, or the stink of anything else (be it feminism, socialism, or altruism) then it has failed twice—as a poem, and as an effective message.

By way of example, there is Karen Sohne's gently feminist protest:

the men on both sides
have taken
my armrests

26

Who could take offence at this mild yet deadly accurate observation? It must make us smile in recognition--and it might just make me, a large man, think twice in future before invading a smaller woman's space. It may be reading too much into it, to say that it addresses the entire history of male arrogance and appropriation. Yet it seems to me that in a very subtle way, it does so. Leaving that aside, the thing to notice is how effectively the poet employs the stiletto of irony, rather than the bludgeon of rebuke.

Along with irony, humor is undeniably one of the most potent strategies whereby art can make a point without getting preachy about it. This forbearance can be seen at work in Marco Fraticelli's

as she fills my tank
we chat
about endangered species

All who drive or ride, without exception, are culpable of damage to the environment, though we are seldom willing to admit or confront this. Fraticelli lulls or tricks us into doing so. What works so well here is the way he points the finger first at himself—then, by implication, the rest of us.

27

In some areas of human experience humor may be difficult or impossible. David Cobb has observed the tragic connection between religion and war with his

call to prayer:
the guard aligns his gun
with Mecca

Without a single word of judgement or condemnation, the poet hits home by means of a simple yet devastating picture.

In similar vein, but taking more of a risk, Annie Bachini makes a bold juxtaposition of images in

a smiling soldier
caught at war—flashes his knife
for the camera

This evokes the kind of news capsule we have seen all too often, and exposes the fatal human tendency to find glamor in the idea of battle.

It could be said that these four poets merely witnessed something singular, and reported this without necessarily much thought about technique. To this I would reply: consider at least the pitfalls they have—whether intuitively or deliberately—managed to avoid.

The title “The Conscious Eye” is intended to encompass both an awareness of problems in the world that need to be addressed, and the clarity—even the dispassion—required to express such concerns effectively. Readers are invited to submit haiku and senryu for consideration, and equally to suggest possibilities found among the work of others.

The poems above exemplify the kind of work that will be presented and discussed in future issues of *Frogpond*. Poems that seek to raise our consciousness, yes. But those that do so with adroitness, and a light touch.



(Submissions and recommendations for this column can be sent to: Dee Evetts, 102 Forsyth Street #18, New York, NY 10002. Please state whether previously published, giving details. Work may also be selected from general submissions to Frogpond, and other sources.)

“the men on both sides” from A Small Umbrella (Spring Street Haiku Group, 1995)

“as she fills my tank” from Haiku Canada Newsletter, Fall 1990

“call to prayer:” from A Leap in the Light (Equinox, 1991)

“a smiling soldier” from Blithe Spirit Vol. V No. 1 Feb. 1994.

foggy dawn—
a woodpecker's scream
pierces the silence

Linda Jeannette Ward

cloudy morning
the mark of her lip
on the glass

Douglas Sherman

29

afternoon sun
the trail down
the logged hill

paul m.

the old truck's windshield—
multiple rainbows
in the spiderwebs

Elizabeth Howard

Autumn moon
eases off
the edge of the world

Mykal Lofgren

in the shoes
I put back on—
late evening cold

Gary Hotham

waiting
for shooting stars. . .
a cricket

Jianqing Zheng

half moon—
I pick a ginkgo leaf
off the rake

Fred Gasser

30

rustle of leaves—
autumn gossip
on the patio

eric l. houck, jr.

wail of sirens—
the hound
finds the right pitch

Marie Louise Munro

autumn breeze—
the skin changes color
on the snake's back
Adam Rauch

desert wind—
the new face
on the miner's statue
Gloria H. Procsal

31

the wind
hurries through
the curiosa
Nikhil Nath

listening with the fawn
the fall of a twig
startle us
Pariksith Singh

weathered branch
shedding the last leaf—
thrush sounds
Charles B. Rodning

filling the gutters
of the Futures Exchange
crisp leaves

Susan Stanford

only a view of
the sky alone—even so
it's that of autumn

Brent Partridge

gas station
filling and filling
yellow moon

Dan Spurgeon

32

no love
in the sea or stars—
your hand's warmth

William M. Ramsey

clocks turned back
our Sunday walk
overtaken by dusk

Dee Evetts

autumn sunset—
a red geranium deepens
in the cold

Robert L. Brimm

new scarecrow—
I peer over the corn
on tiptoe now

Ross Figgins

33

cold mountain—
evening air creeps from
beneath its shadow

Jan Bostok

Halloween night
children smashing
snowmen

Alison Paul

little monster
too scared
to trick-or-treat

Meghan Gavin

in from the line
our whitened clothes
full of fresh wind

Emily Maxwell

November wind—
a flower
far from its stem

Carrie Etter

In my pocket
a gold gingko-leaf
withers.

Peggy Garrison

dead bird—
it's chest matches
the sky

Carolyn Rohrig

cold morning—
mouse tracks
across a pan's old lard

Burnell Lippy

On a cold Saturday
after S.A.T.s—
whoppers with onions

Barry George

autumn rain—
the weathered tire swing
overflows

A. C. Missias

35

on every fold
of my umbrella
. . .dust

Catherine Mair

Changing the sound
of the passing cars—
the autumn rain

Tom Tico

phone ringing
in a dark house
solitary walk

paul m.

down the glass
retracing the path
next raindrop

Alan Really

rainy day . . .
in the shopping mall
a small boy crying

Marc Thompson

small apartment
Thanksgiving Day
Dad is the turkey

Lawton Fabacher

36

shadow of my spoon
on the carrot soup
autumn evening

Michael Ketchek

—grey skies—
the woodpecker's hollow
knock

Tom Smith

Rengay: A Status Report

Michael Dylan Welch

37

More than five years have passed since Garry Gay invented the linked, thematic, collaborative verse form known as rengay. And it has been some four or five years since articles about rengay composition first introduced the form. In addition, Haiku North America conferences as well as regional and national haiku meetings have included rangay workshops and discussions about the form. Now, six years later, a few observations on rengay's progress may be in order.

First, rengay seem to be written by a steady and perhaps increasing number of people. While the most enthusiastic supporters of the form continue to be California poets (for example, in 1998 the Haiku Poets of Northern California is sponsoring its fourth annual rengay contest), interest is broadening. In such journals as *Blithe Spirit* and *Still* (U.K.), *Albatross* (Romania), *Spin* (Australia), *RAW NerVZ* (Canada), *Northwest Literary Forum* (U.S.), and elsewhere, including the Shiki online discussion list and elsewhere on the Internet), rengay make occasional and sometimes regular appearances. Perhaps some poets have merely tried rengay just once or twice and then abandoned it, but even so, rengay continues to enjoy a period of growth and expansion.

One part of this exploration is experimentation. A pleasant surprise has been the creative arrangements of rengay verses. Some rengay are printed all flush left; some have the second and fifth verses (the two-line verses) indented from the left margin. These two presentation schemes are fairly common. Other rengay, however, have had the first three verses stair-stepped to the right, with the second three verses following the same arrangement (for example, see "Light in Darkness" by George Ralph and Merrill Ann Gonzales, *Frogpond* XIX:3, December 1996, p. 34). Still others have had creative arrangements unique to the rengay (see several rengay by Connie Meester and Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff).

Remember, the pattern for a two-person rengay is A-3, B-2, A-3, B-3, A-2, B-3, with letters indicating the poets and numbers indicating the number of lines in each verse. For three people, the pattern is A-3, B-2, C-3, A-2, B-3, C-2. The three-person form is not often used—it's ripe for further exploration. So too is the solo rengay, first tried by Cherie Hunter Day, where the poet adopts two voices to keep the poems from being simply a sequence. Another variation is a semi-solo adaptation, tried by Fay Aoyagi, where the poet writes a solo rengay starting with someone else's haiku (see Fay's "Loss" in *Frogpond* XIX:3, p. 33). The starting verse is thus honoured, and serves as a catalyst for the rengay, often also setting the theme.

Perhaps one of rengay's most notable happenings is the 1997 publication of *beyond within* (Sundog Press), an anthology of rengay by eight poets, all women, edited, published, and illustrated by Cherie Hunter Day. This book presents an informative overview of rengay's history, including a bibliography of articles on the subject, as well as 32 high-quality

rengay by the contributors in various combinations (mostly by Ebba Story and Cherie Hunter Day). Anyone interested in rengay should read this excellent book. Its examples amply demonstrate many of rengay's possibilities and pleasures. You can order *beyond within* from Sundog Press, P.O. Box 91128, Portland, OR 97291, for \$11.45 postpaid in North America, or \$12.95 postpaid elsewhere.

In reading many rengay (all the ones I see in print, via e-mail, and those submitted to *Woodnotes* and *Tundra*), I have noticed that thematic development is not always present. In addition to having the six-verse collaborative structure, the most important characteristic of rengay is its *thematic* nature. I would suggest that rengay requires this, and Garry Gay concurs. Unthematic rengay seem to be merely amputated renku—or something else. In renku, the point is to *avoid* thematic development—to taste all of life, as it were. Rengay does not seek to preserve that facet of renku. It does preserve the collaborative process, and does use the technique of linking verses together, but does not employ such radical shifting from verse to verse. If rengay is to retain its original intent, it seems that greater emphasis should be placed (by some writers) on thematic development, whether the theme be a concept (sounds, flow), or something more specific (stones, roots, shelters), narrative (telling a story or parts of it), descriptive (describing various details of a person, place, or thing), or occasional (describing or commemorating an event). Many published rengay I've seen are clearly thematic, even if subtly so, but a few are not. Either the theme was too subtle, or the rengay attempts in question missed the form's thematic necessity.

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Speaking of theme, in some rengay I've seen the theme directly identified in the title. This may be

helpful if the theme is esoteric or subtle. But, in some cases, I've found such titles to be overdone—giving the game away. I would encourage more careful titling. For example, if one's theme is shapes, a title such as "A Wedge of Geese" would be more evocative and memorable than something as bland as "Shapes." Good titling trusts readers to figure out the theme on their own, and doesn't deny them the pleasure of discovering the theme, which I think can be one of rengay's rewards.

One other weakness I've noticed is an occasional cramming of three-line verses into two lines when a two-line verse is required. I've seen some two-line verses in rengay that seemed too long, obviously lineated into two lines when three lines would have been more natural for the verse in question. As a consequence, I would encourage greater emphasis on crafting the two-line verses *as* two-liners. Likewise, three-line verses shouldn't be stretched two-liners. These are all detractors from rengay refinement.

As the rengay form continues to develop over another five years—and I trust it will—I imagine and hope that more people will try their pens at this rewarding form, and that rengay will regularly reach the pages of more and more poetry journals. I would also like to see more humour in rengay—using senryu verses as well as just haiku. Creativity within the form—regarding subjects, themes, and visual presentation—seems limited only by poetic imagination. I look forward to seeing more of rengay's development and maturation. Thanks once again to Garry Gay for his enjoyable and practical poetic gift!



winter's here
the UPS man
wears pants

Will Bland

silent woods. . .
snow gently colors
the fawn

Patricia Okolski

4 ||

new snow
bright black
crow

Brett Bodemer

silence—
snow on the Chinese rug
turning to slush

Lee Gurga

winter sunlight—
my pale shadow
on the sidewalk

Dorothy McLaughlin

we walk away
through our breath clouds
the dog still barking

Ronan

winter playground—
the boy's face lost
behind his shouts

A. C. Missias

a mid-winter sun—
on patches of blackened ice
shadow of a cat

Susan Terris

42

warm winter day
a spider out from the eaves
starts spinning

Ruth Holter

Long winter evening
waiting for the tea kettle
to whistle

Peggy Heinrich

winter solstice
the green shape of sunset
behind closed eyelids

D. Claire Gallagher

even after Christmas
still wearing
the ratty slippers

Kenneth C. Leibman

43

January sales—
bumping into
a once close friend

Susan Stanford

winter afternoon
blaming the onions again
for the burst of tears

Jerry Ball

lighting the woodstove
he kneels absorbed
in last year's newspaper

Dee Evetts

a train from afar:
snow on the mounded coal
in a gondola

Robert Spiess

word of his death. . .
the long walk
from the mailbox

Rich Krivcher

Visiting the graves
seeing the place
reserved for me

Leroy Kanterman

44

grandmother
unraveling a sweater
to its beginning

Rubin Weinstein

after her death
finding my childhood
collected in boxes

Dianne Borsenik

(for Ruby Nichols 1913-1996)

Cricket corpse
lies in the coat closet—
dead of winter

Barbara Patrizzi

sweeping up
everything but my
shadow

Jason Sanford Brown

45

sun on the kitchen table:
the last jar
of plum preserves

Michael Dylan Welch

february snow
the lingering glow
of twilight

Robert Gibson

long winter night
adding more cloves
to the *vin brûlé*

Carla Sari

hunger moon
our neighbor's cat
comes calling

Edith Mize Lewis

sleeting—
on a line of icicles
one clothes pin

Nina A. Wicker

trying to undo
a child's knotted lace—
bitter cold

Burnell Lippy

46

across the snowy field
the black lines of the railway
stretching stretching

Sosuke Kanda

winter darkness. . .
there, just for a moment
scent of the ocean

Franko Busic

senryu

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

2) A foreign adaptation of 1.

walking together
step by step
and a half

Nancy S. Young

hiking hand in hand—
both of us kicking
the same stone

Charles Scanzello

her muscled calves above—
suddenly the stairs
less steep

Mykal Board

faces
in the audience
fade with the lights

Carolyn Rohrig

on the bedroom floor
parts of her
worn out tonight

Robert Henry Poulin

groping
her implants—
his virtual reality

Kay F. Anderson

In the beauty cream
the last indentation
of her fingertip

Tom Tico

49

the dark room
tells

by the breathing

Robert Henry Poulin

knowing my secrets
the man
on the moon

Alison Paul

her first haiku—
about making love. . .
silence in the classroom

Edward J. Rielly

broken and resealed
your envelope
I open it again

Barbara Henning

what is whose. . .
at separation we both eye
the backscratcher

Yvonne Hardenbrook

visiting the shrink—
the maze of corridors
leading to her office

Makiko

50

therapist's office
the child refuses
to pretend

Margaret Peacock

A mirror—
reflecting. . .

Fortney Hunter

dressed for downtown
eyes only for herself
in shop windows

Jack Barry

deaf mother's child
throwing a tantrum
silently

H. E. Dalton

51

butterflies
pinned to velvet—
this small room

Marie Louise Munro

Brooding on life:
the sun on the table,
inching along.

Carl Mayfield

Forty years later
still looking for my father
at Coney Island

Richard Rosenberg

embarrassed to walk through
too swiftly—
senior citizens' home

Margaret Peacock

Picking up the guitar—
his eyes go elsewhere

Carl Mayfield

in the hospital:
untangling the tubes
attached to a friend

Jeffrey Rabkin

52

DOA
startling the nurses
his pager

Patricia Okolski

letting his tears
flow into the clay. . .shaping
her funeral urn

Emily Romano

NO LOITERING
the place where
smokers gather

LeRoy Gorman

at the urinal
I remember
my plants

John Stevenson

53

feeling it
the compass needle
trembling

William M. Ramsey

columns with
astrological carvings—
Yerkes Observatory

Joe Kirschner

at the Taj Majal
a Cleveland couple
discussing their grandchildren

William Woodruff

White against the blue,
a crane scars over the Met—
building the new wing
Richard Rosenberg

revising poems,
a third cup of tea
from the same bag
John Stevenson

in front of
the burned-out restaurant
REAL PIT BARBECUE
Kenneth C. Leibman

54

Board meeting
wasps caught
between the window
David Elliott

on the way
to the dentist
roadwork
Lorraine Ward

advent
at macy's
no waiting

Andrew Todaro

in a Santa Fe
shoe store window
checking my aura

Art Stein

55

gale force winds—
the Welsh flag and the English
wrapped round each other

Caroline Gourlay

Two coeds kissing:
the bar's dart-tosser's mouth
a bull's-eye.

S. R. Spanyer

delivering flowers
he manhandles
the receipt

Tom Clausen

one-hour massage—
waiting for it to end,
her seeing-eye dog

Peggy Heinrich

she pats it—
the pine box
of her dog's cremains

Kay F. Anderson

black cat
at the end of my shadow
extends it

Nikhil Nath

56

on the sundial
a catbird
confounds time

Linda Jeannette Ward

Spoilt photo
my own long shadow

Ken Jones

NOTICE
made blank
by time
Ken Jones

after the loggers
the forest
stumped
Evelyn H. Hermann

57

wild rose
the blush
on the drunkard's cheek
James Chessing

in the red dust of Iraklion
even my sneakers
leave Minoan designs
Judson Evans

dreaming of princes
domestic quarrel
awakens the girl
Matthew Egan

linked

forms

only the groundhog

visiting day
the old nun licks gnarled fingers
to find the sign-out sheet

with sideway glances
they eye me as I wait:
my daughter's schoolmates

through the double doors—
her old swagger
only on Saturdays now

white dogwood blossoms
seem to float—her first spring
away from home

rising from newly-planted
flower beds—a sister
waves and smiles

breaking old habits—
the white-clad nuns
walk the grounds in pairs

the tour:
white wrought-iron benches
“where the penguins sit”

her haunted eyes
as I turn to leave—
enclosed courtyard blooms

fresh tunnels—
only the groundhog
comes and goes

—Cathy Drinkwater Better

a bridge across

another autumn—
that old cannon still pointed
at the iron bridge

rk

traffic rumbles
a nest in the girder

jt

fallen logs
crisscross the muddy path. . .
you hold out your hand

mdw

a stone missing
midstream

rk

wind above the whirlpool—
a long strand of gossamer
between two webs

jt

from horizon to horizon
the Milky Way

mdw

—*Rich Krivcher*
John Thompson
Michael Dylan Welch

serenade

harvesting pears
from my backyard
I feel wealthy

glowing gold
the sun hands in the branches

61

turning from its bowl
the cat licks its paws and yawns—
cool evening breeze

the potter's wheel
turns slowly under old leaves—
shadows changing shapes

a game of catch
extends into moonlight

back and forth
a slow exchange
between crickets

—John Thompson
Garry Gay

jazz suite

Spring cleaning—
tracery of dust on Duke
Ellington bookmark

A Trane refrain—
a meadowlark circles
the campus courtyard

steamy evening. . .
jazz shadows plastering
all the cafe walls

August heat—
a jazz record warps
on the dashboard

jazz quartet
jams in the courtyard—
hazy stars

alone with the moon
concentric circle of dust
on old jazz records

ladybug
on the lamp shade—
last bars of jazz

late winter—
a vibraphone opens the set
inside the arena

—*Lenard D. Moore*

the cottage porch

steady rain
kids of all ages
play at the lake shore JAJ

on the cottage porch
shuffling the damp cards DM

caught
on the old thorn bush
her new nylons JAJ

a volley of arrows
aimed at the straw target DM

end of October
despite the chill, harvesters
work by moonlight JAJ

from tent to tent
the Scout leaders' lanterns DM

under fading leaves
the garden's last carrots
wait to be pulled DM

Alzheimer's . . . again
he tells her, "I love you, mom." JAJ

day after the dance,
the girl's claddagh ring turned—
no longer just friends DM

neighbourhood cats
squabble over territory JAJ

the crescent moon
cradles its dark side—
frosted windowpane DM

time to mate
doves coo into the dawn JAJ

white-coiffed widow
alone at Mass—
their “Golden” wedding DM

“For Auld Lang Syne”
crackles over the shortwave JAJ

at this height
the feeling of standing still
plane in white clouds JAJ

home again—
our son takes both suitcases DM

afternoon tea
the “chink” of bone china. . .
silver spoon JAJ

the new front yard—
footprints planted in mud DM

spinning in the wind:
tulip petals
dust JAJ

the screen door now up—
mantel clock softly ticks DM

the log

A hot summer day—sitting on my terrace with my gardener—planning a garden with no flowers—imagining exotic grasses, bushes, plants to frame the small plot of ground. As we talk, I perceive his melancholy. My cheerful enthusiasm feels intrusive.

He tells me he is clearing his shed, he is leaving for the south. He looks appreciatively at my sculptures. Later he brings me an enormous walnut log. I cannot possibly lift it. Nevertheless, I accept it—a poignant leavetaking.

After years of ignoring the log in my studio, I notice it. I decide to try. With help, it is placed on my work table. I labor many hours with hammer and chisel. It takes shape—a tall human figure, one arm upraised. After polishing, it is enhanced by the lovely walnut grain. It becomes my *affirmation*.

Eventually, too large for my small home, it is sadly sold. Now I can buy two trees to shade the hot sunny terrace, where I sat with my gardener, years ago.

spreading shade,
a maple and a linden—
the song of sparrows

Mrs. Moray

My seventh grade English teacher, Mrs. Moray, loved to enlighten us with all sorts of creative projects. Once, in October, she had us write poems about falling leaves. Suzy Weisdecker, the smart, mousy girl in the front row who peered through horn-rimmed glasses and for whom I had a pathetic crush, outdid the rest of the class, as usual. Her poem, a page of perfectly rhyming couplets—"brown" with "down," "fall" with "all," "trees" with "breeze," and so on—was circled by gold and red maple leaves that Suzy had ingeniously stapled to the page.

My own poem that day was a gory ballad about a man being chased through misty woods by a hooded killer. In the dramatic final verse, the killer catches the man and stabs him to death, blood staining the autumn leaves. After Mrs. Moray read out loud and effusively praised Suzy's leaf-framed masterpiece, I was certain that my turn for accolade was next. After all, in those days I already considered myself to be a writer. But Mrs. Moray didn't share *my* work with the class. She handed it back to me with a "D-" scrawled over my tortured poet's soul in red-as-her-lipstick magic marker. As I took the paper from her fingers that held it at arm's length, as if it were a dead rat, her husky whisper, mixed in that awful cloud of sweet-stinking perfume, stung my ears. "I see *you* have a warped little mind!"

Mrs. Moray's next poetic project that year was haiku. She told us to go out "into Nature" one weekend and write "haiku poems."

"Make sure that your poem is three lines long. The first line contains five syllables. The second line contains seven syllables. And the third line, class,

contains five syllables, just like the first line did. Five, seven, five." She wrote these important numbers on the board. "Any questions?"

I had a whole lot of questions, but knew better than to ask them. With all that syllable-counting and Nature-mentioning, who could possibly find time and space to squeeze in a real poem about real stuff, perhaps a macabre scene of death and violence, since that year I was deep into my E. A. Poe phase?

Not surprisingly, it was Suzy, poetess with a staplegun, who wrote the best haiku of the class. Indeed, to hear Mrs. Moray talk about it, it was the best haiku ever written, at home or abroad. It made reference to roses and was written in graceful, prim cursive with a flourish at the end of each line. Around the margins, as the *coup de grâce*, she had stapled a heart of crimson petals.

Mrs. Moray, sadly, had put the cart way before the horse when she taught that the main thing to know about haiku is its number of syllables. There are two problems with this approach. First is the fact that haiku *spirit* is the essence of the thing, not this or that number of sounds.

The second problem has to do with language. Japanese words tend to have many more syllables than English ones. Take for example this Cup-of-Tea poem:

uma no he ni
fuki tobasaruru
hotaru kana

The literal translation of the three phrases follows: (1) by horses's fart (2) blown (3) firefly! Notice that the middle phrase, so very long in Japanese, requires only one syllable of guttural English to say the same thing; *fuki tobasaruru* becomes, simply, "blown."

Suppose, now, that we take Mrs. Moray's advice and attempt to translate this haiku using seventeen syllables. We end up with a poetic atrocity, such as:

by the horse's fart
blown far away, far away—
the little firefly

Too much fluff, don't you think? A far better rule than syllable-counting is to insist only that the poem be readable in half a breath. Take a deep breath, breathe out half of it, then recite your haiku. If you're not gasping for air at the end, it's probably OK.

In addition to the half-a-breath readability rule, I would argue for only one other structural requirement for a haiku to be a haiku: it must end in some kind of revelation. A punch line. An image that makes you say, "Ahhh!" Here's my best shot at translating the above Cup-of-Tea poem:

blown away
by the horse's fart
firefly

—David G. Lanoue

(This haibun is an excerpted chapter from *Haiku Guy*, a novel with a "how to write haiku" theme. The translated haiku by Issa first appeared in the author's *Issa: Cup-of-Tea Poems, Selected Haiku of Kayashi Issa* (Asian Humanities Press, 1991.)

On boarding the *Edwin Fox*

In Picton, New Zealand, close to the ferry terminal, floats the old and partly decayed hull of the *Edwin Fox*. Built in India in 1853 of teak and saul timbers, she is claimed to be the oldest wooden ship still afloat. I visit her in 1997 on a sunny day with a light nor'wester coming down Queen Charlotte Sound.

her journeys ended—
even now the old hull
lists to the breeze

69

The *Edwin Fox* carried troops in the Crimean War, convicts to Australia, and immigrants to New Zealand; the last surviving ship to do any of these things. My forebears came to New Zealand in ships like her. As I go on board, a sense of the past is strong.

these ancient timbers—
so many unseen handprints
even mine

I climb down as far as I can go. Nothing of the present day world can be seen—just her timbers, the sky, and

her iron spikes—the blows in their shapes

Upon leaving, I linger at her mooring.

in slack water
beside the old hull—
a drifting jellyfish

—Cyril Childs

“Crows” in Japan

Because it's so tempting to simplify, translators almost always use the word “crow” for Japanese ravens, a type we don't see in the U.S. or Europe. They're almost the same size as a crow, just a little smaller and skinnier—but their beaks are larger and more arched. Their call is, “Ahh! Aah!” most times. The sound the following haiku is about is a variation on their laugh (and they don't often laugh). Though it's usually like that of a crow, between a purr and a chuckle—this was more fully voiced and with an upward tendency.

is it that they think
spring is coming early
—ravens' funny sounds

70 I don't know how they make it through the winters where the accumulated snowfall is considerably more than a meter, like in the mountains where I lived. Most migrate out of deep snow areas, but not all. Japanese ravens aren't often alone, this was about two pair of them. . . In an early February chinook, for three days the temperature went above seventy degrees Fahrenheit. This was the only time I heard this sound—perhaps related to mating, though maybe just extreme joy.

The Japanese hate ravens. Ravens there are much more considered birds of ill omen, harbingers of death, than in the Western world. This perspective gives a different understanding of Bashô's famous “crow” haiku.

—Brent Partridge

Haibun

[This 'non-immediate' haibun results from an account I chanced upon decades ago. Although I do not recall the source, the wording as such, or the name of the Enlightened One, the events remain with me.]

It is told: After years of travel
On foot, holding discourse with many,
A Sage had need to live for a time
As a solitary once again:

7 ||

Faring along the bank of a stream
He saw a low hill that had a cave;
But upon entering, the Sage found
It tenanted by a king cobra:

As the cobra appeared well at ease
With the Sage's presence, he too dwelt
In the cave, sharing with the cobra
The milk received on mendicant walks:

After a term, at dawn on the day
When he would leave, the Realized One
Sat in lotus at the cave's entrance,
Viewing a sunrise of rare splendor:

the cobra drew near
and coiled beside the Sage—
light filling the cave

—Robert Spiess

essays

PERSONIFICATION

One doesn't find many instances of personification in English-language haiku, but already there have been a number of gems. In some poems the personification is subtle and hardly noticed; in others it is full-blown and cannot be missed. The following span the spectrum of those two extremes.

1

In a muddy rut
dark water harbors visions
of the Milky Way

73

O Southard

Hinduism tells me that I am not the individual with whom I so readily identify. I am not this thin and aging persona known to myself and others as Tom Tico. I am Brahman; I am the all-pervading spirit of the universe. I am Satchidananda; I am existence, knowledge, and bliss absolute. And a day will come—or a night—when I will awaken to my true self, when I will transcend the muddy rut of my life and fully experience my cosmic identity.

2

The rusty wind-chimes
wait quietly for the music
of a summer breeze. . .

Tom Tico

The rusty wind-chimes have weathered so much, and still they hang at the end of the slender chain:

receptive, compliant, faithful. It seems as if the wind will never come; even a breeze would allow the chimes to fulfill their purpose. But, alas, there is only the still and oppressive heat of summer. So, the wind-chimes wait, quietly, stoically, bearing their lot. . .

3

spring night
this newborn moon
swaddled in haze

George Ralph

The association that immediately comes to mind is that of the Christchild being wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Therefore the poem implies that the Christ consciousness is not just limited to Jesus but is a force latent in all of nature. The fact that the moon is new, and also the year, presages a great spiritual development that has only just begun.

4

No warmth, no color—
the moon favors my garden
with nothing but light.

Marjory Bates Pratt

Drawn to her garden by the beauty of the full moon, the poet is engulfed by its light. Not only is there no warmth and no color, there is also no sound and no movement, everything is perfectly still, including the poet, who stands transfixed in an ecstasy of light. Never before has she felt such wisdom and serenity, such an elevation of spirit. Surely the goddess has bestowed her grace, and the poet's heart is full of gratitude.

darkening path
 the white morning glories
 lead the way

Wilma M. Erwin

Death is near, and the poet moves towards it with faith and fearlessness. She thinks of how William Blake died singing; and how the soul of St. Francis was accompanied by the skylarks. She hopes that she too will have a beautiful death. She is convinced it will not be an end of consciousness but an expansion—
 a further flowering of her being.

75

Slowly the sun leads
 the old man and crooked cane
 down the mountain road.

Joanne Borgesen

That "God is Light" is an ancient idea common to many religions, therefore it isn't surprising that the sun is often perceived as a symbol for the Most High. Seen in this light the poem indicates that the old man with the crooked cane is following a path that the Great Spirit wishes him to tread. And despite his infirmity, the old man valiantly and steadfastly adheres to the way.

—Tom Tico

-
1. In a muddy rut *Marsh-grasses*, O Southard. Platteville WI: American Haiku Press, 1967.
 2. The rusty wind-chimes *Haiku West* 1:2, 1968.
 3. spring night *frogpond* XIX:1, 1996.
 4. No warmth, no color— *American Haiku* III:1, 1965.
 5. darkening path *frogpond* XV:2, 1992.
 6. Slowly the sun leads *American Haiku* VI:1, 1968.

A SOUR NOTE

In Tokyo last April, at the Haiku Society of America's Joint Haiku Conference, Stephen Henry Gill, "an active member of the British Haiku Society" (*Frogpond XX:Supplement 1997*) who teaches in Kyoto, made some ill-conceived remarks during his talk "Haiku as Poetry and Sound." Gill asserts that the nature of the English language, and the aesthetic rule that poetry exhibit a musical quality, at times justify haiku comprising more than seventeen syllables and three lines. From a posture of embattled underdog, Gill mystifyingly attacks haiku substantially shorter than the classical length, especially those of twelve or fewer syllables, as *ipso facto* unmusical. He specifically targets Americans and Canadians for writing "formulaic," "three-line, ten-syllable 'get it?' type recipes," and pleads, "The sound of haiku is important. Allow us in Britain and Ireland to set some store by this." (*ibid.* pp. 24, 27)

Gill's wholesale claim that shorter haiku lack auditory value is prejudiced, in the sense I was taught in elementary school, that prejudice stems from ignorance. He makes his case by singling out Gary Hotham's

76

letting
the dog out—
the stars out

Gill seems unaware that the parallel structure of the last two lines, surrounding a long pause and juxtaposed with a short first line, create a pleasing rhythm, and that the poet employs assonance effectively. Admittedly, Hotham's tone is unpretentious, and I greatly prefer it to that of Gill's first model of excellence:

By the brown waterfall
October bracken:
sound of a billion bees

Adele David, UK

Here the alliteration (a billion b's, get it?) lacks subtlety, and the poem's general effect is of clutter, gratuitous busyness of the sort that led Voltaire to say of opera, "Anything too stupid to be spoken is sung."

Even the shortest successful haiku in English of which I know, Cor van den Heuvel's solitary two-syllable word surrounded by a large blank space, "tundra," provides auditory pleasure, because it emits so full a sound, reminiscent of how the Irishman Samuel Beckett toys with "spool" in his play "Krapp's Last Tape."

Rather than rely exclusively on Gill's illustrations, I offer two contributions from *The Red Moon Anthology* 1996 (Jim Kacian, editor, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA 1997) to showcase the musicality of short haiku:

lavender
bending one
 beeweight

James Ferris, USA

lull in the storm
 the birch tree
 straightens

Robert Kusch, USA

Although these haiku eschew rhyme and a regular meter they deploy all the other ingredients of poetic music, yet perhaps too unobtrusively for certain tastes.

—Paul Watsky

Great Haiku with *Sabi*

To Alan Watts, *sabi* was close to that state of detachment in which we see things as happening by themselves in a kind of miraculous spontaneity.¹ It's a state of acceptance, in which aloneness evolves into a sense of all-oneness. Our wholeness is restored when we "let go" and, as Chuang-tzu expressed it, "let everything be allowed to do as it naturally does." Zen teaches "Do not on any account interfere with the natural course of life." When her son died, Tombô (Lorraine Ellis Harr) found something reassuring and even in a measure healing in the sheer fact that the world went right on turning. And she wrote this, in *Dragonfly*—a genuine haiku moment, not a metaphor:

A hot summer wind—
 shadows of the windmill blades
flow over the grass²

How well the following haiku illustrates William Higginson's description of *sabi* as "beauty with a sense of loneliness in time."³ An extraordinary sense of stillness is achieved in this eternal moment:

78

Dusk over the lake;
 a turtle's head emerges
 then silently sinks⁴

Charles B. Dickson wrote a number of death poems before his passing. I find this one, that seems to shut out all life and light, a farewell most redolent of *sabi*. (Yet rain ends, a key opens a car, and his spirit lives on.)

rain-swept parking lot
headlights of a locked car
grow dim⁵

I highly prize this haiku with a haunting *sabi-aware* element. Because Adele Kenny lets nature speak for itself, the connection is made in an unforgettable way between death and the ongoing stream of life. A classic.

midsummer morning—
the dead tree's shadow
stretches upstream⁶

There are haiku of *sabi* that can engulf us in a limitless sense of quietness and aloneness, haiku that we feel from the bottoms of our hearts. Charles D. Nethaway, Jr., share with us the most vulnerable and defenseless haiku moment I can remember:

how many times
did I tell him to be quiet—
child in coffin⁷

Watts spoke of *sabi* poetry as having a quality of "quiet, thrilling loneliness," and of deep moments "swallowing all sound." James Minor's haiku classic captures the solitude of that "locked out" feeling of late night hours.

such is night
no door
no key⁸

—H. F. Noyes

1. *The Way of Zen*, p. 186.

2. July 1973.

3. *The Haiku Handbook*.

4. *Haiku World*, William J Higginson, Ed., p. 137.

5. *Modern Haiku*, Summer 1991.

6. *Haiku World*, p. 105. 7. *Wind Chimes* No. 12, 1984, "for Daniel Nethaway, 1975-1983.

8. *Wind Chimes* No. 22, 1987.

books

&

reviews

Traces of dreams:
*Landscape, cultural memory,
and the poetry of Bashô*

by Haruo Shinane. Stanford University Press, Stanford CA, 1998. 382 pp. hard bound ISBN 0-8047-3098-9, \$55, perfect paperbound ISBN 0-8047-3099-7 \$19.95.

Imagine that, in the middle of the twenty-fourth century, there is a renaissance of the haiku form. This renaissance is centered primarily in Africa, and most of the new poetry and criticism is written in Hottentot. There is much discussion of whether a Khoisan click carries the same quantity of information as an English (!) syllable. The Bantu scholar Rehobly argues, in a four volume set of translations from the Post-modern English of classical American haiku, that one cannot properly understand haiku unless one is imbued with the spirit of Christianity. As this is for all practical purposes the only source of English-language haiku, there is no choice but to believe her. This is enhanced by a romantic feeling for the aesthetics of that time and culture, heightened by the isolationist practices employed by the country since the past world war.

Given these circumstances, a reasonable question might be: what of English-language haiku is it possible that these new enthusiasts might glean from their study? H. F. Noyes wrote recently (*Piedmont Literary Review* XX:2) "I don't think we hear the frog's splash. . .the way Bashô did." With all these obstacles and more between us and the original, the amazing thing is that we hear the sound of the water at all.

A thing recovered can never be the same as a thing experienced first-hand, but even to approach an understanding can deepen one's appreciation of any

art. This is where a book such as *Traces of dreams* can become the vital link between awareness of an issue, and understanding it. Professor Shirane has done non-Japanese speakers a great service in this well-conceived and -written book. It is at once scholarly and accessible, and succeeds in identifying and explicating key elements of Bashô's culture, such as the intricate levels of language which the poet was to manipulate to his own purposes with such genius, and the role of the haikai master in the Tokugawa period. Without a knowledge of these things, it is impossible to clearly gauge Bashô's importance as a poet, and any opinion we may have must be the result of second-hand information at best.

But this book is more than a cultural history: I found Shirane's explication of renga the best I have ever encountered. His long chapter on "The Art of Juxtaposition," with its important discussion of the various types of links which Bashô championed and which we have inherited, is valuable information for any poet interested in linked forms today. And his informative discussion of the cultural value system which Bashô revamped in his personal poetics is quite suggestive for contemporary English-language poets, as we strive to define and clarify what it is in this elusive form that we can retain from the original, and what we must create anew.

Even his commentary on the famous frog poem, which he does in passing in considering the myth which has grown up around the poet, is fresh and interesting. It is never easy discussing cultural icons, but Shirane manages to bring clarity to the matter, and elicits, even to modern ears, more from the pond than a leap and a burble. Highly recommended.

Reviewed by Jim Kacian

The Light Comes Slowly

Short poems from Kyoto

by Edith Shiffert (Sumi Illustrations by Kohka Saito).
Katsura Press, P.O. Box 275, Lake Oswego OR 97034. 100
pp. perfect bound paper. \$14.95.

The Light Comes Slowly is a comfortable and comforting collection of delicate, insightful poems. This beautifully-produced book presents the gentle wisdom, humor and patience of Edith Shiffert. The world of this 82-year-old American poet, who has lived her last 30 years in Japan, comes readily to the reader as one moves from page to page.

Ms. Shiffert's poems are composed in the traditional haiku-like format. She writes with a fairly regular count of five syllables in the first and third lines and seven syllables in the middle line. The perspective and content of the poems vary sufficiently from the usual nature and image-dependent themes of modern English-language haiku to be accurately labeled "short poems," though the "haiku spirit" surely suffuses the collection.

The Light Comes Slowly is divided into calendar months with 16 poems in each of the 12 chapters. The first poem for each month is accompanied by a full-page sumi illustration. The ink brush cover and inside illustrations add to the feeling of quiet playfulness and visually unify the volume. The book moves gradually through the year, with poems in each section referring to the expected seasonal phenomena. In addition, on the same page, the poet may recount her private feelings or philosophical observations of what she has learned and gleaned from her time on this planet, especially from her years of living and studying in Japan. Ms. Shiffert's

book is a fine conjoining of Japanese aesthetics with American language and perspectives—a ripe and thoughtful synthesis of both cultures expressed in poetry.

The reader is constantly aware of Ms. Shiffert's presence throughout the volume. Her state of mind and emotional responses are as vivid and natural as her descriptions of nature. In fact, her poetic approach expands the definition of "nature" to include her inner reflections, her private joys and pain, her deeper ponderings. The appealing images of cats often appear in the poems.

Cats are cats, but they may also reflect the spirit of the poet—by the way she identifies with the patient observation of the stalker seeking truth, the savoring of sunlight, the effortless way a cat lays claim to its cat-nature by simply being alive and being a cat. The human spirit, in meditation and in poetry, also comes to this claiming of itself. *The Light Comes Slowly* is a peaceful recognition of the depths and mysteries of being alive. Ms. Shiffert's poetry encourages the reader to feel at ease with the imponderable. She invites us to come home to the here and now.

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In the far north, lakes

shone with light for entire nights.

The trumpeting swans.

Assurance of bliss—

broken body, broken trees

filled with blossoming

Readers will enjoy walking with Ms. Shiffert through her 12 months of poems as well as meandering with her along the paths of her inner journeys and quiet joys. *The Light Comes Slowly* deserves a place on the library shelves of discerning readers and students of poetry and Japanese culture. It is a gift of the spirit.

Reviewed by Ebba Story

Tamarack & Clearcut

haiku by Marianne Bluger, photography by Rudi Haas, 1997; paper, 96 pp., color photos, ISBN 0-88629-293-X. Carleton University Press, 1400 CTTC, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa, ON Canada K1S 5B6. \$27.95 (price includes 7% GST).

Who among us doesn't dream of having a slick coffee-table edition of our haiku? For Marianne Bluger of Ottawa, an internationally known poet with twenty years of experience in haiku, it has become a reality with this slick 11" X 8.5" book.

Among Marianne's haiku that are neatly arranged on smooth semi-gloss pages with ample white space between each poem, are full color photographs by the distinguished photographer Rudi Haas. Haas' work has earned numerous commendations, including the prestigious Art Directors Gold Medal Award.

The book's unusual title, "Tamarack & Clearcut," appropriately symbolizes the positive and negative aspects of nature and humankind as illustrated in the four segments of this collection, each section subtly reflecting a season: Leafsmoke, Winter Dusk, Loam, and Early Evening Pieces. It is also appropriate that, as in life, these haiku lead us in a renga-like exploration along straight, ascending and descending paths which add a pleasing balance to this collection. On these paths, we share Marianne's world in and around Ottawa (the poet's birthplace and Canada's capital city) as well as surrounding pastoral areas.

Most of Marianne's haiku shine brightly with clear images and gentle flowing lines. Two examples:

a scorched smell –
burnt fields in the rain
the boulders steam

with the tip of her cane
touching fresh snow
New Year's morning

Such haiku (there are plenty in this collection) successfully arouse the senses and emotions, and delicate images, like the following, delight the mind's eye:

cloudy afternoon	thin light
a white chrysanthemum	only the shadows
just one	of snowflakes

While she is very much aware of the darker aspects of reality, she usually counters this with a vision of hope:

mad shadows	evening falls
—a moth at the porchlight—	through his drowned grove
I grip a cold key	a beaver glides

While the author shows deep compassion in most of her work, it's unfortunate that a few haiku come across as lacking sensitivity, which I have no doubt is unintentional. For example, "bald from chemo/my friend Diana/a laughing Buddha" Also, had "dress clinging/sandals in hand – I walked/through the warm rain home" been presented in the present tense, it would be far more effective. Other times, the poet seems to try too hard, as in "all night/the spring rain/soaking my dreams."

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For the most part though, Marianne Bluger's haiku are tremendously satisfying and rich in content. Rudi Haas' splendid close-up and scenic photographs, rather than relating directly to the poet's work, frequently show us instead other haiku (in pictures). Together, both artists create a special kind of euphony in "Tamarack & Clearcut" that surely will be appreciated for years to come.

—Reviewed by Elizabeth St Jacques

Anniversary Haiku

by Edward J. Reilly . Brooks Books, Decatur IL 1997. 28 pp. saddle-stapled paper. \$5, available from Brooks Books, 4634 Hale Drive, Decatur IL 62526.

This handsome little volume of 25 haiku records chronologically some touching moments shared by the author and his wife throughout their marriage, from their wedding:

loaf of bread
and red wine on the altar—
the new touch of your hand

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to their silver wedding anniversary:

my golden ring—
after twenty-five years
the inscription still legible

The author is clearly enchanted with his memories and captures them concisely, sharing them much like others might share a family photo album. The book contains a very personal collection and yet there is a strong element of universality. Husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, will recognize moments from their own lives.

newborn boy
wailing at the world
window fan on high

I enjoyed the memories which Mr. Reilly's book evoked in me, and believe other will as well.

Reviewed by Maureen Collins

Books Received

The Book of the Zen Grove translated Shibayama Zenkei Roshi (Zen Sangha Press Jacksonville FL 1997) ISBN 0-9651499-3-5, 144 pages, 5.375" x 8.5", perfect-bound, \$16.90, available from Dai Bosatsu Zendo Monastery Book Store, HCR #1 Box 171, Livingston Manor NY 12758. A collection of practical phrases for zen living, from simple advice ("Know for sure.") to poetic rhapsody ("A single flower blooms and it's spring under heaven.").

Gorman, LeRoy, editor *in celebration of winter* (proof press, 67 rue Court, Aylmer (Québec) J9H 4M1 Canada, 1997) ISBN 1-895778-30-1, unpaginated, 4.25" x 5.5", saddle-stapled, \$3 from the publisher. 52 haiku celebrating the season, and completing the haiku alphabet covering all four seasons begun by the editor in 1992, and incorporating the work of nearly 200 contemporary poets.

Heitmeyer, Doris *The Way of the Hawk* (self-published 1998) 21 pp., 8.125" x 11", saddle-stapled, \$5 from the author, 315 East 88th Street Apt. F, New York NY 10128-4922. Journal in the form of a haibun: A year in the lives of the celebrated red-tailed hawks of Central Park.

Hosai, Ozaki *Right under the big sky, I don't wear a hat* (translated by Hiroaki Sato, Stone Bridge Press 1993) ISBN 1-880656-05-1, 144 pages, 8.5" x 5.5", paper- & perfect-bound, \$12. Innovative, free-form haiku from an early 20th century Japanese master, movingly rendered into modern English.

Kenny, Adele *At the Edge of the Woods* (Yorkshire House Books with Muse-Pie Press, Passaic NJ

1997) ISBN 0-918453-14-3, unpaginated, 8.125" x 11", perfect-bound, \$13.95 from Yorkshire House Press, R. G. Rader, Publisher, 73 Pennington Avenue, Passaic NJ 07055. Selected Haiku, Senryu, and Sequences 1980-1997. A considerable selection of the poet's lengthy and well-honored career.

Lowitz, Leza *et. al.*, editor & translator *a long rainy season* (Stone Bridge Press 1994) ISBN 1-880656-5-9 , 200 pages, 5.5" x 7.25", paper- & perfect-bound, \$12. Haiku and tanka from fifteen contemporary Japanese women, in English translation. A glimpse into changing women's lives in Japan today.

Mainone, Robert F. *Seven Acres of Sky* with 8 illustrations by Gijsbert van Frankenhuyzen (Wonderland Press, Delton MI 1997) ISBN 1-888693-11-8, 64 pages, 4.25" x 7", perfect-bound, \$10 from Wonderland Press, 7431 Pine Lake Road, Delton MI 49046. Eleventh book from a naturalist and poet from Michigan.

martone, john *birthplace* (1997 by the author) unpaginated, 3" x 5", sewn, dustjacket, available from the author at 1818 Philips Place, Charleston IL 61920. A modest collection of haiku in the author's signature aerated style in an elegant presentation, letter press on quality paper.

Porad, Francine *All the Games* with illustrations by the author (Vandina Press, Mercer Island WA 1997) ISBN 1-887381-10-4, 24 pages, 5.375" x 8.25", perfect-bound, unpriced, available from the author at 6944 SE 33rd, Mercer Island WA 98040. The poet's seventeenth book of haiku and art features a color slip of one of her original paintings on the cover, "haiku, tanka, art" on quality paper.

Price, V. B. *7 Deadly Sins* with illustrations by Rini Price (La Alameda Press 1997) ISBN 1-888809-03-5, 32 pages, 5.5" x 8.5", saddle-stapled, \$8, from La Alameda Press, 9636 Guadalupe Trail NW, Albuquerque NM 87114. Wonderful poems with telling illustrations of the seven deadly sins, in an arresting small edition.

Purington, Carol *The Trees Bleed Sweetness* with illustrations by Walter Cudnohovsky (Winfred Press, Colrain MA 1997) no ISBN, unpaginated, 5.5" x 8.5", perfect-bound, unpriced, available from the publisher at 364 Wilson Hill Road, Colrain MA 01340. A collection of tanka from the perspective of a Native American woman living in western Massachusetts in pre-Columbian times.

Reichhold, Jane and Werner Reichhold *In the Presence* (AHA Books 1998) ISBN 0-946676-22-7, 128 pages, 5.5" x 8.5", perfect-bound, \$10 from AHA Books, P.O. Box 1250, Gualala CA 95445. A book of tanka on the occasion of a New Year's reading and presentation at the Imperial Court of Japan by the authors in January 1998. Elegantly produced.

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Sato, Hiroaki, translator *Bashô's Narrow Road* (Stone Bridge Press 1996) ISBN 1-880656-20-5, 186 pages, 5.5" x 8.5", paper- & perfect-bound, \$15. The noted translator's version of Spring and Autumn passages from the Master's best known travelogue.

Stevenson, John, editor *From a Kind Neighbor* (Haiku Society of America Publications 1997) ISBN 0-9631467-5-0, 96 pages, 5.5" x 8.5", perfect-bound, \$9, available from HSA. The 1997 Haiku Society of America Members' Anthology, featuring the work of 166 poets.

Winson, Robert and Miriam Sagan *Dirty Laundry: 100 Days in a Zen Monastery* (La Alameda Press 1997) ISBN 1-888809-02-7, 193 pages, 6" x 7.5", perfect-bound, \$14. A joint diary between Winson, a zen priest, and Sagan, his poet-wife, chronicling their life, monastic and domestic, during a challenging and difficult period prior to Winson's death.

Bebek, Robert *Oblici Praznine (The Shapes of Emptiness)* (Ceres 1997) ISBN 953-6108-61-5, 136 pages, 6" x 8.75", perfect-bound, no price supplied. Bebek's second full-length book of haiku is lavishly produced, one poem (and English translation from the original Croatian) per page on quality paper. Preface by James W. Hackett. An interesting book which indicates how quickly Eastern European haiku is evolving.

Ness, Pamela Miller *pink light, sleeping* (small poetry press, concord ca) 40 pages, 4.25" x 5.5", saddle-stapled, \$6 from the author at 33 Riverside Drive 4-G, New York NY 10023. An attractive chapbook from the author of *driveway from childhood*, featuring a color cover by the author, and poems drawn from nature, belying her urban life.

INSA

News

❖ HSA 1997 Renku Contest Winner

THE TURKEY'S WATTLE
Laura Young and *Neca Stoller*

a pocket
of cool air suddenly
fireflies

*across the low hill
scattered camps*

a bed of stones
where the river runs wide
one horned lizard

*under the pillow
his first football jersey*

white stripes
of moonlight across the arbor—
tangled vines

*at the Seniors Dance
the tapping cane*

*in the sunset—
gleaning our cotton field
a cold wind*

her wrinkles gather up
a thousand smiles

*jiggling
through the dried corn—
the turkey's wattle*

scraps of colored paper
flutter from the table

hanging
just above her reach—
Christmas ornaments

the hand-sewn moon
slightly yellowed

tucked between
the bare branches—
a withered rose

somewhere in the cabinet
an open box of cereal

drive-in movie:
his fingers graze
her breast

just loud enough
their favorite song

hump by hump
crossing the brick path—
a caterpillar

so dark the tiny hole
in the fisherman's t-shirt

at the slide's top—
her curls wreathed
in plum blossoms

the quiet rub of earth
against the garden spade

❖ Judges' Comments

There were a total of fourteen entries in the Haiku Society of America's 1997 renku competition: two jûnichô (twelve-tone), two nijûin (twenty-tone), and ten kasen (thirty-six-tone) renku. After much deliberation we chose to award the grand prize to "The Turkey's Wattle," a nijûin renku. It is interesting to us that this is the second year in a row that a nijûin renku has received the award. Two kasen renku were quite entertaining, and might have been selected had we not found in them so many digressions from the rules. Despite the difficulties, we did enjoy reading all of the renku submitted.

Judging a renku contest is far different from judging a haiku contest. There exists a wide variety of opinions as to what constitutes a true, well-wrought haiku, and there are elements of Japanese haiku-craft and tradition that do not readily translate into the English language. Most of the parameters peculiar to renku, on the other hand, are perfectly clear and, with concerted effort, can be adhered to regardless of the language employed. These parameters include such basics as avoiding repetition (both of subject matter and of grammatical construction), correctly positioning seasonal and non-seasonal elements (as well as moon and blossom stanzas), establishing sufficient linkage (thus avoiding derailment of readers' momentum), and making substantial shifts (thereby avoiding narrative, which narrows the scope, and thus the impact of the work. Most certainly these traditional requirements are clear, and are not affected by syntactical differences between languages.

For this reason we feel that, in order to nurture the integrity of renku written in the future, we who judge renku contests must lean toward strictness when

entries. Lack of adherence to the parameters mentioned above, and others, were present in all fourteen of the renku we read, thus we found ourselves in a bind. What can be held up as exemplary?

Writing renku is not easy. Considered singly, each rule is fairly easy to comply with, but considered *en masse*, the rules present a formidable obstacle course. As we continue pioneering this form in English, we are sure to become more adept at maneuvering within the basic rules. With perseverance, we'll find ways to navigate more smoothly, transcending the confusion arising from our lack of familiarity with the form, and achieve insights into the more elusive and sublime aspects of the craft. If we do not follow these basic rules, we deprive ourselves of discovering the many marvelous facets of renku that it's taken Japanese poets hundreds of years to develop. Though there is, of course, room for experimentation, and innovation, we feel a responsibility to nurture tradition, the tap root from whence the flowering of all linked-verse forms emanate.

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In order for westerners to write in true renku form, and so derive the numerous rewards of the process, we must focus our attention as fully as we can on the given rules. Even though these rules are quite elaborate, and sometimes seem overwhelming, it is possible to achieve some semblance of mastery. To be sure, this will take us newcomers quite a while, but conscientious delving into the form will reward renku poets with more and more subtle nuances in which to delight. We judges walk a fine line. We feel compelled to be true to traditional form, yet we do not wish to discourage renku enthusiasts or promote an atmosphere of futility. Renku is a marvelous gift. We want it to thrive.

This year's winner, "The Turkey's Wattle," was not without a few glitches, but it is basically strong,

creative and enjoyable. It seems to have been carefully written, and upholds many of the traditions of renku writing. On the downside, throw-back linking occurred from link #8 back to link #6, and slightly less so from link #12 back to both #8 and #6. The throw-back involved a repetitive theme of "old," or "aging," which induced a sense of narrative. But there were some very fine runs which more than compensated this flaw. The first six stanzas are very strong, as are stanzas #9 through #14. We puzzled for a while over how stanza #19 linked to stanza #18, and for both of us this disrupted the momentum of the renku, diminishing the grace and strength of the closing. We found fine humor, however, in the linking between stanzas #14 and #15, and #16 and #17. We also think that the "caterpillar" in stanza #17, metamorphosed into a moth which chewed a tiny hole in the fisherman's t-shirt (stanza #18), was clever writing indeed. We are delighted with the positive way this renku ends: "the quiet rub of earth/ against the garden spade." The writer prepares the ground for yet another year's seeds.

We congratulate the composers of "The Turkey's Wattle" for a most enjoyable journey, and express our thanks to all the other entrants for their efforts, which resulted in some wonderful moments.

—*Jean Jorgenson and Christopher Herold, Judges*

THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

(January - December 1997)

Income

Balance	19,397.98	
Additional Income (Misc.)	21.00	
Membership Dues	12,856.90	
Interest Income	809.53	
Frogpond Samples	425.00	
Contributions	3,783.00	
Contest Fees	1,309.00	
Haiku Path Sales	260.30	
HSA Anthology	345.41	
Museum of Haiku Literature*	200.00	
Total Income		39,408.12

Expenses

<u>HSA General Account</u>		
Contest Awards	1,150.00	
Contest Expenses	78.60	
Honorariums	100.00	
Office Supplies	676.41	
Postage	1,323.64	
Copying/Telephone	2,696.49	
HIA/HSA Conference	1,050.00	
Meeting Room Rentals	100.00	
Bank Account Fees	198.00	
Web Site	125.00	
Miscellaneous	180.00	
<u>Newsletter</u>		
Printing/Copying	2,707.14	
Postage	858.74	
Miscellaneous	76.87	
<u>Frogpond</u>		
Computer Equipment	638.99	
Printing/Copying	8,028.33	
Postage	2,045.72	
Miscellaneous	50.14	
Less Total Expenses		<u>22,084.07</u>

Closing Balance

17,324.05

*On account

Respectfully submitted
Raffael DeGruttola, Treasurer

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THE LAST WORD

Thanks to the many who have helped me pull my first issue of FROGPOND together, especially outgoing (in every sense) editor Ken Leibman, who made me believe there might actually be order to all this; to columnists A. C. Missias, Dee Evetts and Michael Dylan Welch for their willingness, and, more important, their timeliness; to the hundreds of fine poets who have sent me their very best work; and to Maureen, who as usual helps me to realize a balance throughout my juggling act.

Next issue, A. C. Missias takes a close look at one of the comprehensive haiku web sites to be found on-line, Dee Evetts looks at more haiku and senryu which enlarge our consciousness without diminishing our humanity, and Michael Dylan Welch provides a short description of "tan renga" with numerous examples from the Asilomar Haiku Retreat. And, of course, we will feature another two hundred outstanding haiku and senryu. I further invite you to send me your recent haiga: I hope to incorporate more graphics into subsequent issues.

Thanks for getting me off to a fast start.

—Jim Kacian, Editor

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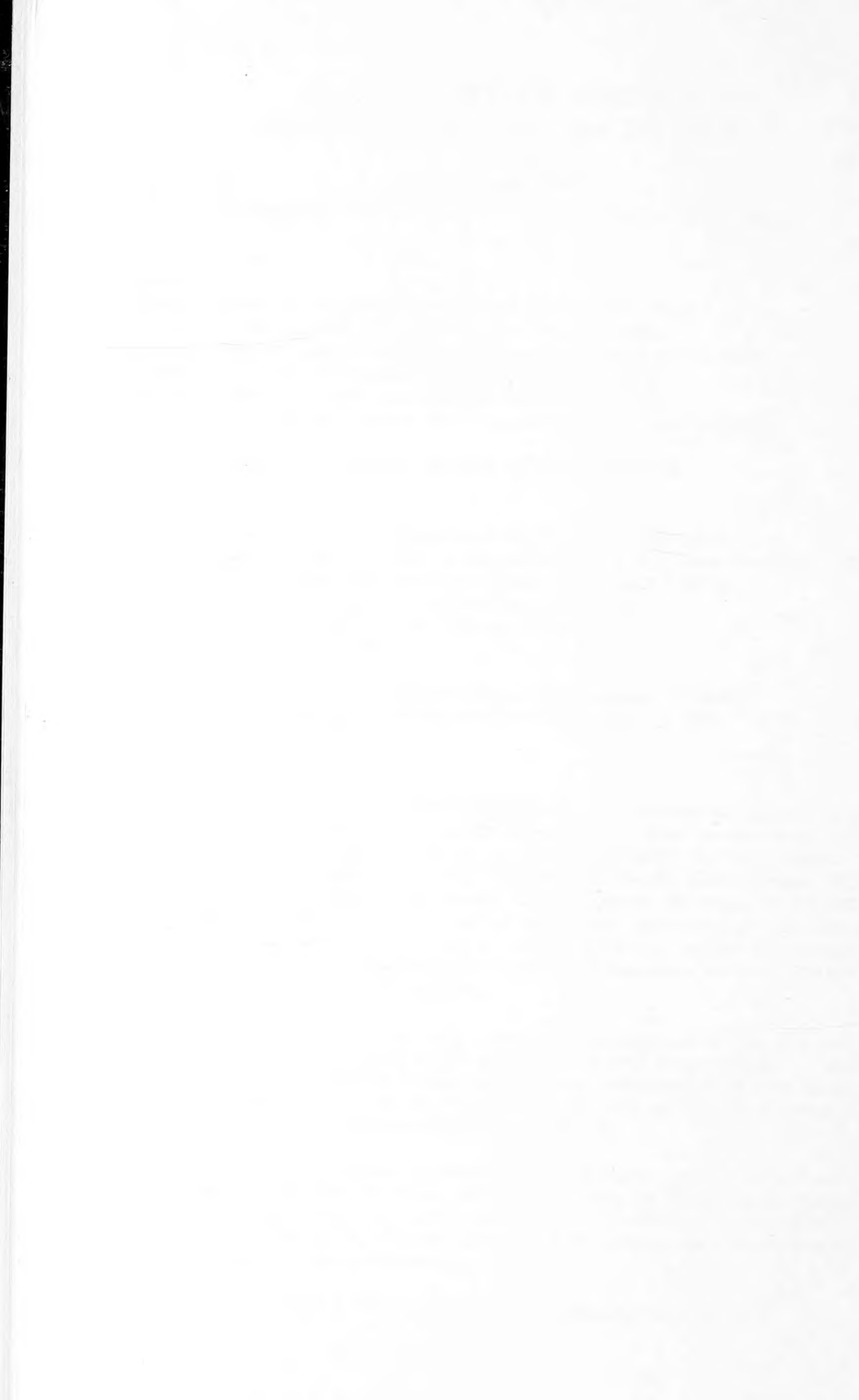


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