

FROGPOND XXIII:2

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HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
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## President's Message

Renowned Japanese poet and critic Ōoka Makoto was the featured speaker at a regional meeting in New York on March 11. An account of the meeting can be found in the Northeast Metro section of the HSA Newsletter. I was present and will simply say that I found him inspiring.

The entire meeting was stimulating in the best sense. A personal favorite moment: the reading of Chiyo-Ni by Brenda Gannam. On March 25 I attended the fourth Mid-Atlantic Region Haiku Workshop in Wilmington. My thanks to Dick Williams for a fine day of sharing with HSA members and members of his haiku classes and to both Dick and his wife, Lynn, gracious host and hostess to me personally and to the entire group at lunch and dinner. I'm looking forward to the Global Haiku Festival of April 14 - 16 in Decatur, entertaining great hopes it will fulfill its potential for enriching our understanding and appreciation of haiku and of each other.

The HSA web site has received a long overdue update, thanks to Newsletter Editor Charles Trumbull. His appetite whetted by the experience, Charlie has proposed some new features, which you may be able to see on the web site by now or in the near future. Check it out. The address is <[www.octet.com/~hsa](http://www.octet.com/~hsa)>.

"The Source," a movie about the "Beat Generation", includes several shots of haiku by New York area poets displayed on the marquees of former porn theaters in Times Square. I saw it recently and recommend it for anyone interested in the Beats and, of course, for the haiku.

A reminder that submissions for the Merit Book Awards (for books published in 1999) are due by May 31.

*John Stevenson*



# 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.



flossing—  
a speck of starlight  
on the bathroom sink  
*Anthony J. Pupello*

waking up to pee—  
through the bathroom window  
the whisper of rain  
*Rengé*

sparrow at dawn—  
how slowly the light changes  
with the song  
*Michael Dylan Welch*

early spring  
a chill  
in the closet  
*John Stevenson*

recycling day—  
sunlint on bottles  
all down the block  
*Emily Romano*



first robin singing  
the quilt on our bed  
seems heavier

*Jack Lent*

long dusty road:  
I wait by the mailbox  
for the cloud

*Alice Frampton*

crow caws three times view of nine mountains

*Jesse Glass*

6  
plum tree near full bloom  
emptiness lingering  
in its ravens' nest

*Brent Partridge*

a songbird calls  
through late April snowfall  
the quiet after

*Arthur Solomon*



spring birds singing—  
the white space left  
by rain

*Caroline Gourlay*

Splitting the silence  
between night and day—  
the crow's caw

*Tom Tico*

Now that winter's gone  
the wind shares the open sky  
with returning geese

*S. T. Finn*

reading a romance . . .  
the tap tap tapping  
of a hungry bird

*Patricia A. Rogers*

*whistling*  
he  
hangs  
the  
birdhouse  
he  
built

*Carolyn Thomas*



a piece of snake slough  
clings to the rolling tumbleweed  
March wind

*Naomi Y. Brown*

spring light  
my neighbour's plant tags  
fluttering

*John Crook*

first picking—  
the scent of scallions  
on dad's breath

*Gloria H. Procsal*

sonic boom  
a yellow butterfly  
drifts among bluebells

*Ferris Gilli*

in the dark garage  
sun beams through the holes  
of a hanging pail

*Alan Pizzarelli*



foggy day—  
the world ends  
just offshore

*Billie Wilson*

mist  
the  
heron  
turns  
into  
it

*Michael Fessler*

9

clouds breaking up—  
pieces of toppled pine  
in the swamp

*Linda Jeannette Ward*

a slight heave  
to the scummy pond—  
woodpecker's undulating flight

*Linda Jeannette Ward*

Easter morning  
the colt's  
wobbly legs

*Flori Ignoffo*



# The Cyber Pond

A. C. Missias

As recently as five years ago, anyone wishing to discuss haiku on line had a single practical choice: the Shiki Internet Haiku Salon's mailing list. At that time, it was a wonderful place to learn about, post, and discuss haiku. But it quickly grew to hundreds of members, with the result that it wasn't long before the sheer volume of mail (as well as its variable quality) was enough to scare away many potential participants. However, it was still another couple of years before alternative forums came into existence, and many of these were private (as small groups of people organized workshop-style mailing lists) or only discreetly publicized. To my knowledge there is still no Usenet group for haiku discussion (unlike the large and active rec.arts.poems); but the process of forming new mailing lists has become so easy in the last year that a flurry of new haiku-related lists have been formed.

Part of the technological change underlying this proliferation of groups is the development of large commercial sites which allow users to easily found and manage a free mailing list (paid for by small ads attached to each message). These sites also allow subscribers to choose between receiving postings from each list individually as they come in, or in "digest" form, summarized once daily; thus you can control the volume of email which is generated by participation. Most lists are also archived so that you can read the postings at leisure from the web. Thus, it is now easy to find and participate in any group which is publically listed with such a site (searchable by topic), at your convenience, and without needing to have encountered



the list founders elsewhere ahead of time. A democratizing element!

Some of the newly-formed haiku groups are still very small and quiet, as only a few friends post their exchanges there. But others have gotten large and active enough to develop recognizable cultures of their own, offering a variety of choices for the haiku enthusiast looking for more interaction and even promoting different visions of what haiku should be. I'd like to use this column to profile two of them which are generating interesting new developments and stimulating discussion.

The first group (or constellation of groups) worthy of note is Haiku Inn, run by David Coomler. This group originally started as a series of intensive one-month classes (Haiku Mind) on "traditional haiku", with graduates of the course joining a separate list (Haiku Way). Eventually, the groups were all folded together in a single list, with posting and discussion occurring simultaneously with ongoing informational posts from the list head/instructor. This group is quite different from the Shiki list: first, in that it has a specific mentor, rather than a group of equal members feeling their way along; and second, in that it promotes a precise philosophy of how haiku should be written, rather than the polyglot that many lists accrue. Both of these facets cause strong reactions in many list visitors. For example, while some of us may have wished that we had a 'sensei' in the Japanese tradition to guide our haiku study, few of us are willing to 'let go' and unquestioningly accept direction which assumes a 'right' and 'wrong' type of approach—we are used to a more democratic give-and-take, and are seldom willing to patiently learn the narrow way that a single teacher advocates. Mr. Coomler is a very insightful instructor, and has markedly improved the work of nearly everyone who passes through his list; he also devotes an amazing amount of time to critiquing a high percentage of the posted work. However he also has an

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autocratic style and can come across as a bit blunt or even abrasive, and he condemns much of what is written today (here and in Japan) as “a mixture of haiku and Western ideas of poetry” not worthy of emulation. As a result, those who tend to resist authority or who have thin skins about their own work sometimes take offense. Such differences become most heated around the list rules for “traditional haiku,” especially concerning form. While Haiku Inn is no haven of seventeen-syllable haiku, Mr. Coomler follows the example of R.H. Blyth in his approach to English punctuation rules, with the result that all posts are expected to begin with a capital letter and end with a period (and students are often encouraged to use a wealth of internal punctuation)—members are encouraged to maintain these habits in their posts to other lists as well. Punctuation tends to be a hot-button issue in any haiku forum; but when the description of rules of this external kind precedes the analysis of content and sentiment, it can rub many posters the wrong way. These kinds of issues can cause list visitors to come to the hasty conclusion that Haiku Inn is too concerned with external aspects of haiku. But those with the patience to stick around, let go of their preconceptions, and follow the rules will find a wealth of insight into lesser-discussed aspects of haiku such as strength of subject, use of seasonality, subjective aspects of haiku such as zen, and explication of many classics. It’s not for everyone, and goes through spurts of noticeable volume (a dozen posts per day) but it can be priceless for those who can make the leap. [To subscribe, write to [Haiku-Inn-subscribe@onelist.com](mailto:Haiku-Inn-subscribe@onelist.com), or sign up through OneList <[www.onelist.com](http://www.onelist.com)>.]

The other major venue which merits discussion is the Haiku Forum, run by Susumu Takiguchi under the auspices of the World Haiku Club (and World Haiku Festival 2000). This is a sort of combination list, with some structured activities: although members receive all email from the list (individually or as a daily digest),



traffic is divided into separate categories (by header), some of which correspond to particular areas of discussion or instruction. For example, there are currently two “seminars” running, one on sijo and one on traditional renku, led by individual instructors but with group participation; dates for release of next essays are posted on the group information site. Additionally there is a “Debating Chamber” for focussed discussion of a particular topic (such as a Basho poem and its translations, or methods of punctuation) on a limited time frame; a “Kansho” section for extended explication of a single classic haiku (some Japanese, some from the English-language tradition); an occasional kukai competition (involving voting by both list members and an invited judge); and a variety of unstructured posting, commentary, haiku-related forms, and informal linked verse. Sounds like a busy place, and it is, with some 20 messages per day (although the digest option helps contain the flow). However, as a public list, its archived posts are available for browsing on the web <<http://www.egroups.com/list/haikuforum>>—one might wish that the interface showed more posts at a time, but the fact that seminars and other instructive content will be maintained there makes this an excellent resource for current and future haijin. [To subscribe, email [haikuforum-subscribe@eGroups.com](mailto:haikuforum-subscribe@eGroups.com) or visit the eGroups site.]

The existence of such different groups means that everybody has the opportunity to find a group with discussion level and traffic flow to fit their needs. However, it also raises the possibility that large groups with little or no interchange will develop distinct approaches to and styles of haiku. Perhaps the print journals will always be a mediating influence on such fragmentation, as on past local workshops; alternatively, however, this trend might be strong enough to generate, for the first time, strong and recognizable “schools” within the English-language haiku community. Stay tuned!



daybreak  
the hermit crab  
changes its shell  
*Cindy Tebo*

dried oyster shell  
colors of the sea  
therein  
*F. Matthew Blaine*

spacing out  
on the watercolor  
a cloud moves  
*Larry Kimmel*

hot afternoon  
after swimming, children rest  
in parents' shadows  
*Elsie O. Kolashinski*

a salamander  
passing the coolness  
hand to hand  
*Cherie Hunter Day*



Behind the wideload  
The traffic comes to a halt—  
The green mountains

*Jack Galmitz*

between the front teeth  
of Theodore Roosevelt  
a raven nesting

*Wes Hyde*

15

inside the church  
on the peeling wall  
a perfect cloud

*Ion Codrescu*

hands unfurl  
the butterfly hesitates  
to leave

*Sheila Windsor*

*sumie* exhibit—  
thunderheads reflected in  
the display case

*Penny Harter*



a bee almost enters  
a beer bottle—  
sudden sound of thunder

*Tom Gomes*

approaching storm  
the neighbor's cough  
wakes us both

*Linda Robeck*

tornado sighted:  
dawdling to the cellar  
where spiders live

*Le Wild*

rising huge  
beyond the cooling tower  
thunderhead

*Ruth Yarrow*

lightning streak—  
in its faint light  
a scorpion and hatchlings

*Brandy Milowsky*



heat wave  
a taste of rain blown in  
by the fan

*Hayat Abuza*

fast moving clouds  
diesel wheels spin  
bright  
trails  
of rain

*Judson Evans*

|| 7

people coming out  
with and without umbrellas  
—a double rainbow

*Rengé*

Down valley  
the hawk disappears from sight . . .  
letting my breath go

*David Elliott*

Rainbow—  
only a fragment  
free of clouds.

*Pud Houstoun*



watering trumpet vine—  
a hummingbird pauses  
on the rainbow's arc

*Veronica Johnston*

steady wind—  
the garden pinwheel a blur  
of colors

*Emily Romano*

firefly—  
its smell on the tip  
of my finger

*Yasuhiko Shigemoto*

anthuriums  
my mainland friend  
sneaks a feel

*Nancy S. Young*

fireflies—  
remembering things  
I've only imagined

*Kenneth Payne*



moths circle  
the stadium lights  
seventh inning stretch

*Tom Painting*

Fireflies in pines—  
the moonlit river  
winding through the humid night

*Rebecca Lilly*

19

wing beats  
in the chimney  
the short night

*Peggy Willis Lyles*

coastal fog  
one red madrona branch  
warms the morning

*Doris H. Thurston*

looking for your grave—  
prairie grass rippling  
all the way down hill

*Marjorie Buettner*



# The Conscious Eye

Dee Evetts

As some readers no doubt remarked, the last issue of *Frogpond* featured no article in this series. In the issue before that, I had recourse only to some magazines as my source material, since I was away from home at the time of writing. Today therefore I thought it would be timely to take a look at my accumulation of submissions for this column. I took the file with me to a local Chinatown bakery, where I browsed through it pleurably over a breakfast of coffee and a croissant.

Back at my desk, I am dusting flakes of pastry from a half dozen pages spread before me. All of these submissions reflect environmental concerns in some way. It is certainly not surprising that so many haiku poets feel deeply about the impact the human race is having on the rest of the natural world. But when they attempt to address these concerns in their work, they find that the basic tenets of haiku craft apply as much as ever. As D.T. Suzuki has reminded us, with wonderful clarity: "A haiku does not express ideas, but puts forward images reflecting intuitions".

Let us see how the following poems measure up against this principle. One of the most successful, to my mind, is Tom Painting's

deeper  
into the backcountry  
a spit of asphalt<sup>1</sup>



Nothing is forced upon the reader here. The picture is clear, objective, non-judgmental. And yet. The gradual disappearance of dirt roads in remote areas is evoked, the word “deeper” working as a matter-of-fact description and at the same time bearing connotations of invasion and violation. And “spit” is an inspired choice. Normally used to describe a tongue of sand or gravel extending into a body of water, applied here to the encroaching asphalt it broadens and deepens this poem immeasurably.

A very different approach is used by Brent Partridge in his

erosion control—  
pieces  
of an old foundation<sup>2</sup>

2 ||

This is enigmatic, which is precisely what makes it work. Apparently a land stabilization project has exposed the remains of earlier building. This poses a dilemma—are the foundations to be removed, or left there as a form of natural ballast? Using a simple image this poem quietly raises the whole complex issue of whether we should attempt to control erosion at all. And the hint of an earlier generation, unexpectedly intervening in our plans, adds another dimension to this piece.

For comparison, here are two somewhat less successful poems, by the same authors. The first is by Partridge, the second by Painting.

date it fell down  
—ancient parkland redwood’s  
memorial plaque<sup>3</sup>

sea turtle nesting  
near the condominium  
oceanfront retreat<sup>4</sup>



The images are clear enough. But the touch of irony in both pieces, while effective, does bring the poet and his opinions into the picture. Some readers may have no problem with this. For myself it renders the work just a shade less pure—in the sense of Suzuki's definition above.

Here is Linda Jeannette Ward, with another poem about the impact of development:

Quail Run  
names the new community  
only children call<sup>5</sup>

Here again there is irony, but it is so gentle and so suffused with sadness or resignation that the reader—this reader at any rate—is disarmed.

K.H. Clifton has sent these two poems about deforestation:

mist slips down the draw  
old coast cedar stumps shepherd  
rows of tiny fir<sup>6</sup>

stumps      broken gate sign  
"amily Supported By  
he Lumber Indus"<sup>7</sup>

Both of these strike me as awkward in their different ways. In the first, the characterization of trees as sheepdogs and sheep would normally be altogether too coy for my taste. Yet somehow, in this context, the author gets away with it.

The second is by definition hard to read, and relies heavily on the reader figuring out the implications. The reward is a revelation of considerable poignance. (My afterthought: even awkwardness may serve as a poetic strategy.)

Finally—shifting again from flora to fauna—Ellen Compton has nominated this poem by Don McLeod:



Mexican carnival  
the caged gorilla  
reaches out to the rain<sup>8</sup>

Knowing what we do about the sensibilities of gorillas, it is difficult not to identify with this creature's situation.

Compton appends this of her own:

lifting her wings  
folding them  
the red hawk caged<sup>9</sup>

This species is more remote from us, but anyone who has wanted to run or stretch, and been prevented from doing so, can feel the bird's discomfort and frustration. The poet's phrasing conveys this vividly, almost as a sensation located behind our own shoulder blades.



1. unpublished
2. unpublished
3. unpublished
4. unpublished
5. *Northwest Literary Forum* No. 25
6. *Modern Haiku* XXV:3
7. *Modern Haiku* XXVI:1
8. *Acorn* No. 2
9. unpublished

*(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.)*



detention again  
this time he blames  
a white butterfly

*Joann Klontz*

school bus headed home—  
the last child and the driver  
riding in silence

*Dorothy McLaughlin*

bone-dry pond  
silent crows hunch down  
in bare willows

*Elizabeth Howard*

24

birdsong in the berry bush  
as I walk by  
the hush

*Melissa Dixon*

a passing train  
the pigeons return  
to the station roof

*Alan Pizzarelli*



unrequited loves  
scar the ancient beech  
rains of autumn

*Ken Hurm*

bedtime story  
the smell of leaves  
in my daughter's hair

*James Paulson*

25

sound of the river  
smoothing these boulders—  
the wind takes it

*Dave Russo*

old autumn dog  
a yellow leaf  
stuck to his back

*Richard von Sturmer*

stepping over  
the rake's shadow—  
autumn dusk

*Ford W. Chambliss*



freeze warning  
a weevil burrows deeper  
into the corn shuck

*Ferris Gilli*

autumn drizzle  
face-down in the birdbath  
a perfect red leaf

*Mary Fran Meer*

gift umbrella—  
rain recalls the memory  
of a dear friend

*Dunja Pezelj*

26

heavy rain—  
the man in front's  
worn down heels

*Annie Bachini*

cemetery wind the cellophane of dead flowers crinkles

*Gary Steinberg*



early frost  
touching the whiteness  
of wild mushrooms

*Gloria H. Procsal*

Frost-etched window—  
heat from radiator vents  
raises hairs from a comb

*Rebecca Lilly*

27

icy twilight—  
opening his small box  
of blue pills

*m. cross*

cold night—  
the touch of your toe  
under the covers

*Michael Dylan Welch*

lunar eclipse  
a boy watches  
one eye shut

*W. F. Owen*



windows edged  
with branching silver rime  
lunar eclipse

*Marjorie Buettner*

cold rain—  
the scent of peaches  
fills the room

*Sue Mill*

under the eaves  
an abandoned hive—  
sound of sleet

*Judson Evans*

28

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

*Gary Steinberg*

winter night  
spark of the house key  
finding the lock

*Rick Tarquinio*



Winter morning—  
the sound of a board  
hitting the pile

*Barry George*

my tracks  
frozen  
in yesterday's thaw

*Joan Vistain*

29

at the feeder  
more birds than room  
the smell of snow

*Mary Lee McClure*

each day less light,  
the smell of printer's ink  
on the morning newspaper

*Richard von Sturmer*

Deepening the red  
of late December roses  
snowflakes, as they melt

*William Scott Galasso*



driving back roads—  
the winter blossoms  
through rain-streaked glass

*Ellen Compton*

winter pilgrimage  
to a hidden waterfall  
—a goshawk descends

*Brent Partridge*

a rat nosing  
across the snowfield  
the afterglow

*Lenard D. Moore*

30

moonlight—  
the squeak of shoes  
in new snow

*Richard St. Clair*

freezing night  
on an island in the river  
geese and one swan, white

*Jesus Masanet*



farm equipment  
lined up for auction—  
winter rain

*Joann Klontz*

freezing rain  
each outdoor Christmas light  
doubly aglow

*Jean Jorgensen*

31

spinster  
this xmas  
toy kids

*Ernest J. Berry*

fallen power line  
a row of icicles  
points to the left

*Lori Laliberte-Carey*

sleeting dark—  
sound of the big engine  
cut off

*Tom Clausen*



New Year's . . .  
in a dirty window  
the sunset

*Tom Clausen*

full peal—  
from a stranger  
the year's first hug

*Ellen Compton*

new millenium  
trimming the wick  
of my writing lamp

*R. A. Stefanac*

32

first light—  
dry snow filling  
the empty rain bucket

*Jack Barry*

new millenium  
my parent's VCR still  
flashing 12 o'clock

*Rich Tarquinio*



millenium morning  
the cat's eyes catching  
early light

*Jerry Kilbride*

snow piling up  
in the playground swings . . .  
crescent moon

*Stanford M. Forrester*

33

new millenium  
the lights on the bridge  
curving into mist

*Martin Lucas*

snow  
accumulating  
traffic

*John Stevenson*

record snowfall  
stubble-faced doctor skiing  
to the clinic

*Lenard D. Moore*



forecasted snow—  
reaching deep  
for a carton of milk

*Gary Houchens*

rabbit tracks in snow—  
she and the hemlock sapling  
bending over

*D. Claire Gallagher*

The old fly weaves like a drunk  
Through a sun-shot blizzard  
Of dancing motes.

*Larry Gaffney*

birthday snow  
stepping into holes  
left by the postman

*Stephen Addiss*

fresh snow  
the last of the milk  
saved for morning tea

*Cindy Zackowitz*



late snow  
the faintest green tinge  
in the honeysuckle

*Michael Ketchek*

winter thaw . . .  
tongue trails  
on the salt block

*Joan Vistain*

35

peeing after sex—  
outside cars slosh  
through melting snow

*Del Doughty*

old snow melts  
the cop's red X runs  
down the alley

*Nina Wicker*

rain all morning  
under the forsythia stems  
a yellow shadow

*Tom Koontz*



# senryū

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

2) A foreign adaptation of 1.



As our lips meet . . .  
me in her eyes,  
she in mine

*William Scott Galasso*

her face  
coming back into focus  
after the kiss

*m. cross*

37

I don't see him  
for days  
cat in love

*ai li*

names carved on a tree—  
where the village ends  
a faint voice

*Ion Codrescu*

after the divorce  
erasing his name  
for the book sale

*Joyce Austin Gilbert*



on my way home  
from the shrink . . .  
lunar eclipse

*John O'Connor*

elevator  
we step back  
to make room  
for her perfume

*Nancy S. Young*

it slithers up  
her inner thigh—  
snake tattoo

*Jeffrey Winke*

38

belly dancer  
laughs

*Larry Hussey*

Daybreak  
She folds her costume  
in a drawer

*Joshua Cohen*



gospel singer—  
her shadow trembles  
on the wall behind her

*Chris Pusateri*

On leaving the church  
a bit of jazz creeps  
into the recessional

*Norma Sadler*

39

creaking pew—  
my tattoos hidden  
by bandaids

*Euginia Shelton*

it's pretty quiet  
all of us on machines—  
night ward

*Ross Figgins*

in candlelight  
pawn to king four  
a distant clock chimes

*Michael Ketchek*



arthritis—  
her long, dark braid  
cut short

*Jean Jorgensen*

the crackling  
of purple onion skins—  
she breaks a confidence

*D. Claire Gallagher*

the *um* in her voice  
before offering me  
the senior discount

*Carolyn Hall*

40

retirement dinner watch  
all his co-workers  
glancing at theirs

*Ken Hurm*

middle of the night  
a light comes on  
in the widow's kitchen

*R. A. Stefanac*



memory loss  
her eyes look around  
for the words

*Maurice Tasnier*

faded photograph—  
crossing a bridge, she looks  
back

*F. Matthew Blaine*

4 ||

home movies  
my life flashing  
before my eyes

*David De Laoreal*

leaning back  
in my dead grandma's chair—  
the crack of its joints

*Philip Hoffman*

late night drive  
the boy's rag doll  
goes to sleep

*Lori Laliberte-Carey*



blue train  
wind through the reed  
saxophone

*James M. Thompson*

a searchlight  
parts the night sky—  
grand opening

*Tom Painting*

Fourth of July  
fireworks sale by  
the Optimists Club

*Carolyn Hall*

pet store  
nose prints  
both sides

*W. F. Owen*

my leaf collection  
scattered at random  
through my books

*Tom Gomes*



painting  
this house that was my mother's—  
the same color

*Leatrice Lifshitz*

interview—  
the sound of my clothes  
as I shift

*Rees Evans*

43

reading my way home  
his book in my pocket  
six directions

*Merrill Ann Gonzales*

on the wrong platform  
a new train  
of thought

*Carla Sari*

phone call  
from a faraway friend—  
the cat starts purring

*Penny Harter*



linked

forms



# Arctic

looking south  
over the tundra . . .  
northern lights

arctic night . . .  
the letter  
smells of home

sparrow-sized  
white ptarmigan . . .  
snowy mountains

arctic azaleas . . .  
April climbing  
Purple Mountain

down, down it goes . . .  
the glacier calf's  
slow thunder



## In Touch

darkened theater . . .  
his warmth seeps  
into my shoulder

flat upon window frost  
the child's hand pressing

new born kittens  
strokes from the mother's licking  
in their fur

morning sun on the fence  
*picket-to-picket*  
a fledgling sparrow's flight

the jolt of the runway  
as our jet touches down

the dry pod opens—  
milkweed silk slips  
between finger and thumb



# The Scent of Cedar

## At Nikko Toshogu Shrine

stone lantern—  
five chambers rising  
in the cedar's shade

broken cedar stump  
its mildewed center open  
to the Earth

mist between the cedars  
and on the far hillside  
a forest of mist

on the cedar slope  
cut pieces of a trunk  
touch each other

stone lanterns  
darken in the dusk—  
the scent of cedar



# Waxing Moon

waxing moon  
the pain in my uterus  
grows stronger

doctor visit  
his hands all over me

a cool draught  
I wipe the ultrasound gel  
from my belly

biopsy  
catching pieces of songs  
from the radio

day 16  
another cyst forming

hysterectomy  
poring over my children's  
baby books



## A Walk in the Park

sweaty businessman—  
in the public fountain  
a boy splashes

sun shower  
a blonde blader rushes by

breezy day  
her wrap skirt  
opens

hide and seek  
squirrels scamper  
in the children's wake

he picks up a flat stone  
skips it across the water

beneath a parasol  
the therapist's  
"it's just a walk in the park"



# Breaking Through

window box  
spring breaks through  
the potting mix

*loud chatter  
on the deck  
last year's squirrel*

warmer weather  
a feather blows in  
the cat-flap

*gentle breeze  
from the outdoor market  
scent of lilacs*

ankle deep  
new lambs grazing  
ground-fog

*at this stream too  
families rush with pails  
annual smelt-run*

living garden  
a pimply kid plants  
his first kiss

*how light  
this momentary touch  
monarch butterfly*

rounding up  
her bundles of fluff  
mother duck

*light rain  
wakened from my dream  
by soft whispering*

Ernest J. Berry  
Elizabeth St Jacques



# Cold Mountain

power outage  
and the oatmeal half-cooked  
cold mountain

*two hikers  
saved by a cellular phone*

startled awake  
winter lightning  
a bump of thunder

in the cellar  
the snap of a mouse trap

*above the outdoor  
concert stage  
full moon*

a whistle from a willow wand  
old man's lips pursed

blue sky  
in the Easter basket  
a pencil-sharpener

*plover's screaming decoy  
away from her dune nest*

just-planted garden  
flower seed packets  
and a turned-up hoe

a fan  
to shoo away mosquitoes

*into the net  
the winning run  
breaks the record*



**their first date  
talking about heartburn**

autumn leaves  
on the slow canal  
the torn letter

*origami display  
with a hanging red moon*

**country fair  
fingers choose to let  
the balloon soar**

thin smoke  
from a neighbor's chimney

*in the milliner's shop  
a pink amaryllis  
beside the mannequin*

**"French perfume  
that rocks the room"**

a March wind  
ransacks the street  
the taste of dust

*impeachment trial forgotten  
sunworshippers with shields*

**a white robe  
and tanned feet  
self-defense class**

through the woods  
jangling keys in case of bears

*summer afternoon  
the bride  
throws her bouquet*

**every-night tryst  
with the colicky infant**



homeless shelter  
the new volunteer  
mulls cider

*scarecrow  
in the abandoned refugee camp*

**skinny moon  
at last warm enough to take off  
the extra quilt**

wicker chairs and table  
on newly laid turf

*tornado  
a healthy child emerges  
from the wake*

**paperback Thoreau all wet  
whitewater rafting**

the price  
of sweet corn on the rise  
drought

*school of mackerel  
off Stellwagen Bank*

**Denali  
chatter on the tourist bus  
stops**

a tinkle  
of cocktail glasses

*coming from the East  
surprised to see  
eucalyptus in bloom*

**as if to name  
the distant land**



## Were We Three Birds

On a day like this I wish I was a bird. A bird doesn't ask why we are all of a sudden gifted by such days, such moments—just accepts it all. As Robert Frost said, the bird itself doesn't even know what kind of bird it is. But all the birds seem to know that a morning like this is worth chattering about.

the tree of heaven  
starts its blossoming  
close to earth

On our morning walk—the two dogs and me—there is such a crispness in the air, such a clarity and salubrity in the sky—as if spring began in May. The sun is partially obscured, fringing swan-white clouds with a jonquil yellow, a color that's sheer blessing against the sky's light blue. Each tree stands out in marked singularity, as if just created as the kingpin of the revolving world, and just enough sun shines through the clouds to give each leaf a clean after-rain shine. Every detail of each tree appears newborn and perfect, as if from some ideal archetype of the Creator. I walk on the tonic air, and the dogs trot along beside me, just above the luminous surface of the road. From the *fons et origo* look of nature all about us, a sense of incipient Creation . . .

Were we three birds  
we would build our nests  
in *this* morning's trees

H. F. Noyes



## Hunter's Bow

A few years ago I saw in a local newspaper a black and white photograph of a flying goose. As it was autumn, it was a commonplace for any staff photographer to take such a picture. At the time, thousands of geese were heading south. But what was uncommon about this photograph was what else it showed, the shaft of an arrow piercing the goose's breast.

Apparently the bird had survived the breach, though it was no longer swift enough to travel with the others. Various local sightings placing it at a pond, in a corn field, over the town square, were reported for weeks until winter arrived and the story was no longer considered newsworthy.

Even now, several seasons later, when the geese are heading south, heading north, I think of that goose and its struggles, how it must have fared, how it was determined not to let even an arrow in its breast stop it from doing what it must do.

wounded goose  
still able to fly—  
my new resolve



essays



## Construction & Distortion of the Image in Haiku — Part 2

We have been exploring the affect transposition of images has on haiku, and how translators of haiku into English have mistaken some classical poems by such transposition. An example by Kyoroku:

*Hito-sao wa  
shinishozoku ya  
doyo-boshi*

57

Translation by Blyth: Summer airing:  
On one of the poles,  
death-clothes

Here, the prelude is light in tone, the finale dark. The sequence of images in the original creates a different mood:

On a post  
mourning clothes—  
summer airing

A poem by Gyodai: *Hana kurete  
tsuki wo idakeri  
haku-botan*

Translation by Blyth: The flowers darken  
but the white peony  
absorbs the moonlight

The sequence of images in the original runs:

The flowers darken,  
the moon is absorbed  
by the white peony



The surprise is the white peony, not the moonlight. The whiteness of the peony is emphasized by the moon, and the peony appears as a bright light in the darkness. The moon and the peony are two round poles united by a beam of light.

In Blyth's version the peony is not truly white in the second line; the *but* detracts from the brightness of the flower. In the third line the moonlight appears, but by that time the memory of the peony is already growing fainter. And our thoughts rebel against returning to the second line, to let the moonlight include the peony in its flow.

Each line in a true haiku opens the door to the next line—the third line opens the door to a surprising revelation, to an insight. The mind does not want to go back.

*Iza kaite*  
*atsusa wasuren*  
*Fuji no yuki*  
 Kisoku

Well, I'll draw  
 the snow of Mount Fuji,  
 to forget the heat!  
 (Blyth)

58

Our thoughts make a great leap from the drawing block to the top of the mountain, only to return abruptly to the heat of the plain. This causes confusion and disappointment.

The sequence of images in the original is:

I shall draw  
 to forget the heat  
 the snow of Fuji

The second line is interesting because it gives a dynamic overtone to the opening words: we understand the effort of will with which the poet has



decided to do something—to draw—to escape the excruciating heat which is making him listless and tired. In the third line comes the leap to the top of Mount Fuji, where the white snow has a strong cooling effect.

A well-known haiku by Buson:

*Ja wo kitte  
wataru tanima no  
wakaba kana*

Translation by Blyth: Young leaves of the valley  
I passed through  
after killing a snake!

59

The original produces quite a different mood:

The snake is killed  
I travel through the ravine's  
young leaves

The dramatic event opens the poem, but the reader is also told that the action belongs to the past, which softens the violence of the emotion. In the second line we are led away from the snake but still in the ravine which retains an uncanny atmosphere. The third line is light and hopeful: *young leaves*.

Sight and sound play important contrasting roles in haiku, e.g. in Basho's *The old pond*, where the jump of the frog evokes a visual image in the reader's mind but is described with an audible image by the poet: *the sound of water*. Another well-known poem by Basho is this one:

*Shizukasa ya  
iwa ni shimiiru  
semi no koe*

Silence  
Cutting into the cliff  
the cry of the cicada



This poem has been included in Donald Keene's *Japanese Literature, An Introduction to Western Readers*, and has been translated as follows:

Such stillness—  
the cries of the cicadas  
sink into the rock

The silence emerges more clearly without the addition of *such*. Already in the second line the silence is broken by *the cries of the cicadas*. The transition is too sharp to nourish the imagination or the emotions—such sharp transitions generally occur between the second and third lines. In the third line the audible image becomes visual—the cries *sink into the rock*—but the point is undermined because the link between the rock and the silence has been broken.

Henderson retains the image sequence of the original:

So still:  
Into rocks it pierces—  
the locust-shrill

*Stillness* would have been more effective than *so still*. The word *it* in the second line points forward and seems unnecessary, but perhaps the order of the words in English requires it. Henderson uses the singular, which seems logical. It is unlikely that several cicadas would break the silence together. However, contrary to Keene, Henderson uses the plural for *iwa* (rock, cliff), which perhaps is too imprecise for this haiku.

These observations do not intend to deride the translations by Blyth, Henderson and others, which generally are most faithful to the original texts. Sometimes changes in the positions of the words are necessary in order to render the original into intelligible English. However, to change the order of the lines is very risky, because it changes the



construction of the image and thereby misses the meaning of the poem and the feeling that the poet wants to evoke. It is surprising that an experienced translator of haiku like R. H. Blyth often did not seem to realize this.

In a few cases Blyth's liberty in transposing the lines can make his version better than the original:

*Natsu-kusa ni  
kikansha no sharin  
kite tomaru  
Seishi*

The wheel of the locomotive  
comes and stops  
by the summer grass  
(Blyth)

6 ||

Literally translated, the original would run:

By the summer grass  
the wheel of the locomotive  
comes and stops

The picture is complete and the meaning revealed already in the second line. All the third line does is to add a little to the imagination.

Recent translations of haiku seem to be more careful in transposing the lines. The translators of the first book of English translations devoted to a woman haiku master, *Chiyo-ni* (Tuttle Publishing, 1998), Patricia Donegan and Yoshie Ishibashi, state in the preface that they have tried to retain the original line order and order of images. When they, in a few cases, choose to abandon this rule, the meaning of the original image is damaged. An example:

*Yugao ya  
mono no kakurete  
utsukushiki*



Moonflowers—  
the beauty  
of hidden things

The second and the third lines have changed places. *Moonflowers* should, of course, be followed by the reference to *hidden things*, as the moonflower blooms in dusk, unfolding its whiteness faintly at first and more so as the night darkens.

Another haiku by Chiyo-ni:

*Hana no ka ni  
ushiro misete ya  
koromogae*

Translated as:

Change of kimono:  
showing only her back  
to the blossom's fragrance

Here, the translators have placed the point of the poem, the revealing explanation—*change of kimono*—in the first line instead of in the third line, while *the blossom's fragrance* should open the poem. The fragrance of the blossom is a subtle reference to the seasonal change of kimono from the winter to summer. The fragrance is present throughout the poem even if Chiyo-ni discretely turns her back to the unnamed flower.

62

As is evident from these several examples, the preservation of the original order in haiku is critical to retaining the poet's intention. Such liberties should be taken at the translator's risk, and rarely to his credit. From these examples, too, we can gather the value of being aware of the order of images in our own original poems, how they open and unfold, one following the other, to create the moment of surprise that we associate with the very best moments of haiku.

*Kai Falkman*



# Sound

*That an old man sat by the old pond does not much matter,  
Nor that a frog jumped in, but only the sound of the water.*

*Furuike ya:* old pond  
*kawazu tobikomu:* frog jumps  
*mizu no oto:* water's sound *Bashō*

63

*Furuike ya:* necessary habitat/environment/medium of  
existence!/indeed  
*kawazu tobikomu:* frog(s) jump/leap/tumble(ing) (in)  
*mizu no oto:* sound of water/water('s) (re)sound(s)/  
splash(es)/plop(s)

*Furuike ya:* in the normal location  
*kawazu tobikomu:* an indistinguishable inhabitant takes a  
common action  
*mizu no oto:* the environment resounds with the  
consequence

*Furuike ya:* look here  
*kawazu tobikomu:* a being makes a leap and disappears  
*mizu no oto:* the sound outlasts the creature's presence

*Furuike ya:* the world  
*kawazu tobikomu:* we do what we do  
*mizu no oto:* and leave behind some passing mark

*Furuike ya:* life  
*kawazu tobikomu:* one writes  
*mizu no oto:* read



books

&

review



## Journey to These States

Codrescu, Ion *A Foreign Guest* (Ex Ponto, 1999). 174 pages, 5'X8", proof-bound. Sumi ink drawings. Contact author at Str. Soveja, Nr. 25, Bl. V2, Sc. B, Ap. 31, 8700 Constanta, Romania.

Bashô's phrase *michi no nikki* ("diary of the road") neatly describes Codrescu's record of his two months' plus visit to the United States, taking a northerly route, via Greyhound, from New York City to San Francisco and returning by a southerly route to New York City. But unlike the satiric journey of his fellow Romanian Andrei Codrescu, documented in the film "Roads Scholar," *A Foreign Guest* presents the lucid, Zenlike openness to experience of a gifted haikai writer and *sumi* artist.\*

The second haiku, resonating with the Chinese dictum, A journey of a thousand *li* begins with one step, expresses the depth of Codrescu's anticipation while another well into the trip reflects his sensitive receptiveness:

booking a Greyhound ticket	long horizon—
thousands of miles of emptiness	a lone prairie dog
come into my mind	watches our bus

This impressive "objectivity" deconstructs the conventions of what we commonly hold to be our home ground:

August evening—	Times Square—
I cross over the river	a beggar rattles his coins
whose name I don't know	in a Burger King cup

But further, that is, beyond the journey, we are privy to a painterly eye and to subtly expressed feeling:



setting sun—  
 garlands of peppers  
 on a wooden fence

midnight—  
 the blue eyes of the Siamese  
 and your silence

And this sensitivity carries over into encounters with the more familiar of the tourist spots: Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, St. Louis' Gateway Arch, the Golden Gate Bridge. But what is lost on us that this Romanian visitor senses in the beggar's Burger King cup or in the endless posters of *LES MISERABLES* in the New York City subway (166)?

Codrescu's painterly eye is apparent in many of the 114 bilingual haiku printed two to a page. The "garlands of peppers" haiku calls for a haiga in its Busonlike treatment. That direction is evidenced in the 10 *sumi-e* placed throughout the collection, one surely depicting Niagara Falls. The cover *sumi-e* is a moody one of an indistinct figure walking, the title's "foreign guest." The artistic component is also evidenced in 2 of the 3 presented haibun.

One of these exquisite haibun, "The Lighthouse," takes place on Cape Cod and alludes to Thoreau's visit to the same spot as it presents the author's thoughts while drawing the landscape. The other, "The Edge of the Pond," set in San Francisco's Golden Gate park, depicts an old woman feeding two black swans. In a reverie Codrescu recounts when as a child he had watched a similar old woman feed birds as he attempted his daily watercolor drawing.

Following the tradition of Bashô, who during his travels met with other haikai poets to create collaborative art, Codrescu offers 3 rengay and 8 collaborative renku (there is also a solo renku), a product of his visits across America. One of the rengay, composed with Rich Youmans, is



especially fine. In "Main Street" Codrescu's humor is balanced by Youman's *sabi*. One of the *renku*, "Another Painting," composed with John Stevenson, remains as lively as when it was judged HSA *Renku* Contest winner in 1996. But perhaps most interesting is the *kasen renku* "A Leaf Rises." This work was "collected" as Codrescu travelled and includes 17 authors, including myself, in addition to Codrescu. The final two links, one by James W. Hackett and the last by Codrescu, exhibit the liveliness and hopefulness characteristic of a *renku*'s conclusion. The old American master Hackett's animated presentation is linked by the Romanian master Codrescu's delicate painterly touch:

flowerfly's ritual:	spring lights near
a thorough wash-up and poop	the Golden Gate Bridge
between each bloom	

Through wonderfully clear images and a compassionate and generous treatment of experience Codrescu has provided us with an exceptional record of his visit to the New World and of his tender heart.

*Bruce Ross*

*\*Some of the English translations of the haiku in this collection have obvious typos (two of which have been corrected for this review) but this should not detract from the overall creative power of the haiku.*



## Haibun in the American Vernacular

Ross, Bruce (editor) *Journey to the Interior: American Versions of Haibun* (Charles E. Tuttle Co., Boston 1998). 224 pages, 5.5' x 8.5", perfect paperbound. ISBN 0-8048-3159-9. \$21.95 in bookstores.

If the editor of an anthology is a bit like a landscape architect (Greek *anthos* (flower) + *logos* (word) = a garden of words), Bruce Ross is closer to the sensibility of our own homegrown Fredrick Law Olmsted than, say, the topiary designer of a Versailles. Ross's sense of breadth and inclusiveness leads to an organic sense of order that also allows for wildness. Some anthologies are pure reference works, botanical gardens of glass flowers rather than scent gardens. This particular anthology of haibun, a type of prose poem that evolved in Japan when the mind pointing discipline of some of the great haiku poets relaxed to take in the more fluid surrounding context of haiku experience, allows us to wander maze-like paths on our own, to discover and rediscover the writers and the relationships between their varied uses of the form. These uses range from exotic travelogues like Tom Lynch's "Climbing Kachina Peaks" to the zen of everyday life in Tom Clausen's "New Sneakers"; from thick description at the heart of American urban and suburban experience in pieces like Patrick Frank's, Adele Kenny's, or Rich Youmans' to the cross-cultural impulse of American writers seeking Buddhist enlightenment in pieces like Penny Harter's "A Weekend at Dai Bosatsu Zendo", Brent Partridge's "Road Through the Stars", or William M. Ramsey's "Gurdjieff, Zen, and Meher Baba".

Even in the original Japanese tradition, haibun takes a variety of directions, from the intimate personal diary that comes to prismatic emotional focus through haiku, as in Issa's *A Year of My Life* to the tonally varied narrative travelogue of Bashô's



seminal *Narrow Road to the Interior*, after which Ross titles his own work. In either case, haibun permits an organic interplay of two distinct modes—a prose passage that acts like a saturated solution of sensory detail and haiku that crystalizes the experience. Rich Youmans in a useful article in *Modern Haiku* has compared the prose of the haibun to a leisurely walk through the streets of a neighborhood; the haiku to an aerial view. That sense of distinct levels or perceptions of the same experience is also beautifully expressed in Jim Kacian’s haibun “Bright All”:

walking in  
the orchard      suddenly  
                         its plan

69

As an Instructor of a poetry workshop that focuses primarily on Japanese based forms, I have longed for an anthology of this kind for many years. The most valuable function this text serves in the classroom is not only to introduce the haibun form in its own right, but also to teach haiku writing by showing students where haiku come from. Many haibun embody the struggle to overcome the sense of meaninglessness in daily life or to transcend frustration, nostalgia, or grief. Consider Adele Kenny’s “Only a Stranger” about a return visit to a ruined family home:

I live with ghosts. I sit for hours with my head in my hands, listening to Scriabin, Bartok, and Liszt—drunk on sorrow, dreaming of home.

equinox:  
cicada shells crumble  
in the ivy

This process illuminates the challenge within haiku writing—to create something both effortless and yet hard won.



Like any good anthology, this one will spark argument and controversy (should pieces that function as impressionistic criticism and use haiku as literary illustrations be considered as haibun? Is it really true that, as Ross claims in his introduction, “English literature does not provide suitable prose and poetry models for exploring heightened states of emotion, such as those embodied in the Japanese literary tradition”?). And, obviously, we will each have pieces that do or do not move us. Yet, Ross builds his anthology on a strong critical and historical foundation that is both illuminating and original. His Introduction delineates an American vernacular tradition of interlinked poetry and prose, a home-grown parallel to the Japanese haibun—from Puritan diaries through Thoreau’s *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* to Kerouac’s *Desolation Angels*. Many of the haibun here—pieces by Tom Lynch, H. F. Noyes, Jim Kacian and others—are perfect examples of Ross’s thesis that the American tradition naturally fuses the values of Thoreau and Basho. Tom Lynch, for example, works close to the taut evocative prose of Basho, and pins down his sharp perceptions with a naturalist’s accuracy, worthy of Thoreau. His playful Zen attentiveness to the fleetingness of experience, the slippage between subjective and objective realities: “Thinking of a shower, and hot supper, and how to write this, I hike through forest I don’t notice. Now, after shower, and supper, and writing this, I think of forest I missed” will remind readers of the missed opportunities that Bashô transforms into unexpected imaginative gifts in his own *Journey to the Interior*. Lynch not only traces his own perceptions but also, more subtly, the way the world flows back in his wake:

glance back  
 juncos return  
 to the cool spring



As both an enthusiastic reader and writer of haibun myself, what I find most fascinating about Ross's *Anthology* besides the obvious differences in style and subject matter of its selections, are the differences in the way the authors conceive of haibun prose. To some it is to be stripped to the level of simple reportage as a foil to the haiku, as we see in haibun by writers such as George Klacsanzky or Tom Lynch. Imagistic shorthand works wonders in Tom Lynch's "Rain Drips from the Trees", where the gritty day by day life of the hitch-hiker/hobo (his version of both Bashô's and Kerouac's pilgrim) with its built in impatience and repetition sets off the intensity of the haiku, as in this nearly missed moment of epiphany:

almost asleep  
a breeze wakes me—  
northern lights

The synesthesia of the haiku, the way it makes the spectral colors touch the slightly damp skin like static electricity can only fully be conveyed in the context of the prose, which grounds us in the clumsy, earthly realities and inconveniences.

On the other hand, in Leatrice Lifshitz's haibun "Far from Home", prose contains multiple voices, becomes elliptical narrative, with an almost cubist sense of interlocking planes of autobiography, history, and myth:

Space. A woman in space. Finally.

travelling west  
all those wide open spaces  
fenced in

Does that mean that space is gone? Used up? Well, if it isn't space, it's coupled with time. Changed into time. The time to cross a bridge. Back and forth.



(Helen—remember. Did we do it once? What did we say? What our lives were? That they were hard? That we were mountains? Yes, that we were mountains.)

Other writers who wish to express the weight of layers of experience, historical and emotional, often choose a denser, more rhythmically measured and cadenced prose, as is found in Hal Roth's "Winter Haibun": "Nearby, a sapling leans toward the first saffron stains of the new day", or G.R. Simser's "Water Spider": "... they wander in a cool trance, tracing sunlit green stones and the silent underwater curl of moss, until they are baited by the rhythmic foray of a mysterious meandering light and shadow formation..." This approach emphasizes the notion that the haibun is a prose poem, the prose constellated out of the same matter as the haiku—planets around a star.

Another variation among these writers concerns the formal disposition of the haiku within the prose, as well as the manner in which the prose itself is broken into units. Cor Van Den Heuvel's "The Circus", for example, is unique in the way its haiku strikingly angle out from the prose like illustrations in a pop out book, from the very first haiku which itself sits at the head of the prose like a billboard:

country road  
a circus-poster tiger  
in the spring rain

Perhaps the most elaborate formal experimentation occurs in William M. Ramsey's "Gurdjieff, Zen, and Meher Baba", where the piece as a whole is broken into titled segments: 1. Desert/ 2. Sea/ 3. Garden/4. Rice, and Ramsey creates a kind of enjambment between the end of his prose passages and his haiku:



Indeed, today I shuddered driving past

A stiff raccoon  
praying for his error  
by the roadside

where the sudden unbidden shifts from daily detail to the sudden intensity of perception seem true to the experience of grief.

Using the anthology in class has had the positive effect of forcing me to rethink and revise many of my initial judgements of pieces and to gain increasing respect for Ross' editorial choices. On first reading Patrick Frank's "Return to Springfield: Urban Haibun", I had been moved primarily by the inherent situation, yet hadn't felt the language earned the pathos. The final haiku, too, had seemed too close to the 60s cliché of a flower breaking through cement. To quote from H.F. Noyes' fine haibun "Pines" (included in the collection) "What we see and what we miss seeing! Now the Dakota Indian teaching is clear 'When there's nothing to see, look.'" When I returned to this haibun (in fact, I chose to read the piece aloud to my class to illustrate that haibun didn't have to focus on stereotypically "poetic" topics or use high flown or purple language), I found myself discovering new subtleties of emotion in the tone in the nuances of voice. I also realized that a good haiku in isolation is different than a good haiku within the prose of haibun. In the context of Frank's visit to the urban basketball court in his "Return to Springfield", the haiku:

the shattered pieces  
of a transistor  
radio

becomes a desperate gesture of making a kind of temporary stay against chaos. The fact that these particular fragments are part of a technology for



broadcasting the official words of the culture — its news, its advertising, its ideology — becomes all the more ironic and poignant.

Ross's anthology offers both my beginning poetry students, as well as the rest of us, poetry doing its daily work on a human scale. Contemporary American poetry in its more rarified forms favored by such academic trend setters as Helen Vendler or Harold Bloom demonstrates primarily the poet's ability to perfect a style, the honing of a unique voice which is more a matter of avoidance and studied reconfiguration of the tropes of selected members of the canon. Although I love many poets in this tradition—I think of some of the brilliant work of poets as varied as Charles Wright, Jorie Graham, Derek Walcott, A.R. Ammons—none of this work serves as haibun and haiku can to offer a spontaneous response to powerful moments in everyday life. Haibun, as represented here, becomes a kind of American vernacular poetry that fulfills a necessary and otherwise unmet need in individual lives—to celebrate, communicate, and memorialize crucial moments of insight and transition by drawing attention less to a finished product than to the creative process itself.



## JAPANESE HAIKU IN AMERICA: TWO REVIEWS

*Inch by Inch: 45 Haiku by Issa*, translated by Nanao Sakaki. La Alameda Press, Albuquerque, 74 pp. paperback, \$12 (distributed to the trade by University of New Mexico Press).

*Garden: A Collection of Haiku*, by Yuko Otomo. The Beehive Press, Bayonne, New Jersey, 34 pp. paperback, \$6 postpaid from Yuko Dalachinsky, 192 Spring Street, New York, NY 10012.

75

These two books provide interesting views of the problems and pleasures of translation, and of reading translations. The one, a nicely designed trade book on good paper, and the other, an almost crudely cut and punched, comb-bound "samisdat" or underground-style publication, are not so different as they at first appear. They are each products of the globalization of culture, each created by a bilingual poet with deep understanding of and respect for the two languages and traditions.

In 1985, John Brandi's Tooth of Time Books, then in Santa Fe, New Mexico, published a small, limited edition pamphlet of Issa's haiku in translations by the world-travelling Japanese poet Nanao Sakaki. Sakaki's own poems range widely through the kinds of poetic and social commitments awakened here in mid-20th century Beat poetry.

Brandi, a significant poet and diarist in the Beat mode who now lives on the outskirts of New Mexico's one "real" city, Albuquerque, has been writing his own haiku for many years, and himself authored two strong collections for La Alameda. So it was natural, when Sakaki again came through the region, for him to get together with Brandi and La Alameda's editor-publisher J. B. Bryan. The three planned a new edition of *Inch by Inch* and had a conversation about Issa that is reproduced at the back of this edition.



In that conversation, we learn that Sakaki first delighted in Issa's poems at 8 or 9, probably a typical Japanese situation, for the best-known poems of Issa are about small animals, particularly insects, which greatly fascinate young Japanese boys. In the middle of World War II, when Sakaki was 20, he reread Issa during what had already become his own wandering life. (He was also reading Bashō, Shakespeare, and Kropotkin at the time.)

Sakaki responds to a question about Santōka: "Sentimental, just sentimental . . . he has no compassion for other animals, other beings.—See?"

Brandi asks, "Does Issa's compassion come from being born in the Buddhist Pure Land sect?"

Sakaki: "I don't think so. . . . It's human nature. All religion, all kinds of organization, or some kind of a guru wants us to think it's something we make. It's not true, everybody has it originated in our blood."

Brandi: "Did Issa's background being a farmer's son affect his poetry?"

Sakaki: "A little, but not everything. We think we are the slave of our experience, but not so, we are more free! . . . We can jump over experience!"

Later in the conversation, Bryan asks, "What's important about Issa's poems for us today? Do the poems have a special appeal?"

Sakaki: "OK, OK, probably in this time we need mostly a kind of happy, lucky feeling. We're completely losing this, everybody's so serious-faced, tight-faced, we really need humor, laughing, smiling, joking, such a feeling. That is something Issa had."

The poems in *Inch by Inch* are presented in a clean, idiomatic English—in Sakaki's own handwriting—along with his Japanese writing of the originals and the romanized text in typography. The poems are well handled; here are three that may not be so well-known as others, with their rōmaji as it appears in the book:

Alone in a shady paddy  
one woman sings  
a rice-planting song

*Yabukageya Tattahitorino Taueuta*



Snail!  
Look—look  
at your own shadow!

*Katatsumuri Miyo Miyo Onogakageboshi*

As if nothing had happened  
—the crow there  
the willow here

*Kerori Kuwantoshite Karasuto Yanagikana*

The poems, the translations, are fine, it seems to me. I do find the presentation of the rōmaji so idiosyncratic, however, that it gets in the way of understanding the original structures *as poems*. By joining what most linguists see as separate words into the spoken phrases of common speech, Sakaki does give us a good impression of the speech rhythms lurking in these poems. But they are formal verse in the originals, and most do conform. The middle verse of these, for example, would normally be romanized as “katatsumuri miyo miyo ono ga kagebōshi”—which clearly reveals the way Issa deliberately plays run-on lines against the 5-7-5 rhythm of the form. On the other hand, the last poem quoted has an extremely irregular rhythm in the original that is well caught in its romanization, so perhaps Sakaki’s apparent purpose—showing the natural speech rhythms in Issa’s poems—is not such a bad idea.

At bottom, we can only be grateful that Brandi’s original limited and fragile edition of *Inch by Inch* has taken on a more substantial form. And for the conversations of poets to help us know the ways such things transcend national boundaries. The last I heard of Sakaki, he was climbing another mountain in some other country, taking his time.

The sixty Japanese haiku contained, two to a page, in Yuko Otomo’s *Garden* are devoid of rōmaji, but are graced with her usually three-line translations. These, too, are in nicely idiomatic English, and capture many of the nuances in the originals. Here are three that I particularly like, with my own romanizations of the Japanese originals:



Cicada's voice—  
I feel like  
doing some push-ups

*semi no koe  
udetatefuse o  
shitaku naru*

The certainty of a pear's weight:  
light rain falls

*tashika naru  
nashi no omosa ya  
kosame furu*

After all  
both country and city  
are in the wind

*den'en mo  
toshi mo tsumari wa  
kaze no naka*

In some translations, like the second above, Otomo notes the flow of natural English by not breaking a line that is broken, and naturally so, in Japanese. Her ear in these matters is excellent.

Some of the translations seem less formal and more emotional than their originals, or at least in a quite different order, such as:

So holy! Sunset  
on a river of refuse  
where you and I walk

*kimi to yuku  
rakuyō seinaru  
gomigawa*

The original goes something more like this: “going with you / the setting sun is holy . . . / a river of refuse”.

If the translator were someone else, I would certainly criticize the overstated English presented for this poem in *Garden*. But since the translator is the original's poet, who happens also to have a very good ear for English, one must pause with such criticism. Most translators who consider themselves sincere have among their goals something like this: The translation should be as near as possible to what the original author would have written, had she written in English. Here it is hard to say that the author/translator didn't know English well enough: I have a two-page letter from her detailing her background in fine English. Even if she might not have appreciated the exclamatory sense of her translation as contrasted with the coolness of the original, her husband—a European-American haiku poet with some knowledge of Japanese—could surely have advised her of the difference in tone.



So, we have to say that, at least in this case, Yuko Otomo has given us a transcription in English of her intent as a poet, whether or not that coincides exactly with her Japanese transcription of the same event. Perhaps she feels slightly differently about it in English. And she certainly has that right, as do other poets of my acquaintance who have written versions of “the same poem” in Japanese and English that differ in significant ways, such as Tadashi Kondo and Keiko Imaoka.

This does not mean that we should not try to be literally true to the words of the originals we translate when we are not the original authors. But it does mean that we should grant bilingual authors the right to reinterpret their experience in the act of translation, to make each version as true to that human experience as their two languages will allow. Readers with some knowledge of both languages deserve the pleasure of savoring those different versions, and no other translator dare carp at the differences.

Both Nanao Sakaki, in gently bringing the colloquial rhythms of Issa into contemporary English, and Yuko Otomo, in giving us a selection of her own Japanese in her own equally crafted English, have made some choices other translators might have avoided as “radical” or “untrue to the originals”. In both cases, they have given the careful reader an opportunity for deeper insight.



## BOOKS RECEIVED

Lamb, Elizabeth Searle *Across the Windharp: Collected and New Haiku* (La Alameda Press, Albuquerque 1999). Preface by William J. Higginson, Introduction by Miriam Sagan. 120 pp., 6" x 8.5", perfect softbound. ISBN 1-888809-18-3. \$12.00 from the author at 970 Acequia Madre, Santa Fe NM 87501.

Bloch, David Samuel *Moving Stillness* (AHA Press, Gualala CA, 1999). Illustrations by Julie Hagen Bloch. 192 pp., 5.75" x 8.75", hardbound. ISBN 0-944676-84-7. \$22.00 from the author at RD 1, Box 9A, Hurleyville NY 12747.

mckay, anne *coda: renga with authors book II* (Wind Chimes Press, Vienna MD 1999). 59 pp., 7" x 4.25", saddle-stapled softbound. ISBN 0-941190-36-5. \$5.00 from the author at studio b, 1506 victoria drive, vancouver BC V5L-2Y9 Canada.

Kondo, Kris ad Marlene Mountain and Francine Porad *Other Rens* (Vandina Press, 6944 SE 33rd, Mercer Island WA 98040). Illustrations by the authors. 88 pp., 5.5" x 5.5", perfect softbound. ISBN 1-887381-12-0. \$15.95 from the publisher.

Phillips, Michael J. *Neon Dolls* (self published in association with The Conservatory of American Letters, Thomaston ME 1999). 24 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", saddle-stapled softbound. No price given. Query the author at 238 North Smith Road Apt. 25, Bloomington IN 47408.

Holley, Anna *Cold Waves: A Life of Tanka* (Ashi Press, 6162 Lakeshore, Dallax TX 75214, 1999). Translated by Aya Yuhki. 96 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", perfect softbound. ISBN 0-944676-43-X. \$10.00 from the publisher.



Schroeder, Gary *Cricket in the House* (Wayland Press, PO Box 266, Indian Hills CO 80454, 1999). 40 pp., 6" x 9", saddle-stapled softbound. ISBN 0-933573-18-9. \$5.00 from the publisher.

Season *no wind: a collection of death poems* (self-published 1999). Illustrations by the author. 28 pp., 7.25" x 5.25", portfolio format. \$6.50 from the author at 322 Via Don Benito, Cathedral City CA 92234.

Purington, Carol *Family Farm: Haiku for a Place of Moons* (Winfred Press, 364 Wilson Hill Road, Colrain MA 01340). 100 pp., 5.25" x 8.25", perfect softbound. \$12.00 from the publisher.

Ueda, Makoto *Light Verse from the Floating World* (Columbia University Press, New York 1999). 274 pp., 5" x 9", hardbound: ISBN 0-231-11550-4 \$49.50, softbound: ISBN 0-231-11551-2 \$17.50. Available from bookstores.

Gorman, LeRoy *flurries* (Timberline Press, 6281 Red Bud, Fulton MO 65251, 1999). 24 pp., 4.5" x 5.75", perfect softbound. ISBN 0-944048-1503. \$4.00. Available from the publisher.

Gill, Stephen Henry & C. Andrew Gerstle, Editors. *Rediscovering Basho: A 300th Anniversary Celebration* (Global Books, Folkestone, Kent, 1999). 168 pp., 5.5" x 8.75", hard-bound. ISBN 1-901903-15-X. \$24.95. Available from Midpoint Trade Books, 1263 Southwest Boulevard, Kansas City KS 66103.

Anakiev, Dimitar, Editor. *A Piece of the Sky: Haiku from an Air-Raid Shelter* (Studio Dauphin, Tolmin, Slovenia, 1999). Translations by Dimitar Anakiev, Nina Moraca, Marcela Koutska. 80 pp., 4.6" x 6.5", perfect softbound. ISBN 80-7272-016-3. No price given. Available from Prijatelj Press, Brunov drevored 19, Tolmin 5200, Slovenia.



**IHSA**

**INews**



## The Harold G. Henderson Awards for Best Unpublished Haiku 1999

There are many very fine haiku among those submitted for this year's contest, and the problem of selection was difficult. Having made initial selections we narrowed our lists of possible winners after a long discussion. Then we waited to see how we felt after a week's time. Satisfied, we made adjustments and proceeded. The final selections are the result of a similar process. Now, we are pleased to announce judgments on which we both agree. In addition to first, second and third prizes, we have selected five haiku to receive honorable mention. This was, again, the result of a long, and painstaking, process. We thank all the poets for their haiku, and the H.S.A. for the privilege of judging.

**Jerry Ball** *and* **Pamela A. Babusci**, *Judges*



**First Place—\$150**

*Yu Chang*  
*Schenectady NY*

new in town  
the scent  
of unknown flowers

As we join the author, we see a clear image of a stranger in a new town being surrounded by a new world. The strongest impression is that of the flowers which he/she does not recognize. On a human level we have the anticipation and excitement of



exploration of the new world. For the reader, too, there is an adventure waiting . . . that of becoming acquainted with the names of new streets, the post office, the church, the school, the libraries, and even where to find the best diner with the inexpensive but great breakfast. All this, of course, is in the imagination. We wait for the faces of new friends, and they will, in turn, introduce us to the gardens and wildflowers which are native here. We are invited in, to this new world.

**Second Place—\$100**

*Christopher Herold  
Port Townsend WA*

foghorns . . .  
we lower a kayak  
into the sound

This haiku focuses on one sound, but resonates with many sounds. First there are the foghorns. But the foghorns suggest so many other sounds that fill the life of those who live near water: water lapping on the shore, the wind in the trees, power boats passing in the night, over and over again. The atmosphere is slightly mysterious too. We “lower a kayak,” literally, into the water, but figuratively, into the sound surrounded in fog. We wonder why one should want to take such a small boat into such a world of swirling fog. Surely, there must be some reason? In this haiku, the common act becomes uncommon. Again, this haiku invites the reader into the world of the writer.

**Third Place—\$50**

*C. Stuart-Powles  
Tulsa OK*

catalog time  
the garden begins  
without a seed



This poem reminds us of the long, harsh, and cold winter that seems never ending. Spring has not begun, but we are thinking of spring. In our mind we imagine the garden suggested by the newly arrived seed catalog. Truly, gardens begin in thought, and thought often rises from suggestion. The annual arrival of the catalog is the trigger that begins the thoughts that produce the garden. We fathom the kaleidoscope of colors and hues; a myriad of scents and breezes; and the touch of earth and new buds that permeate our mind, spirit and soul.

**Honorable Mention (alphabetical order by author)**

new butterfly . . .  
folded wings lean  
into the wind  
*Ferris Gilli (Orlando FL)*

morning overcast  
a few seeds still dangle  
from the dandelion  
*Christopher Herold (Port Townsend WA)*

break up  
I leave behind  
her butterfly net  
*R.A. Stefanac (Pittsburgh PA)*

walking home barefoot,  
we enter the shadow  
of the hill  
*John Stevenson (Nassau NY)*

autumn evening . . .  
a page of the old book  
separates from the spine  
*Tom Tico (San Francisco CA)*



# Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Contest for Best Unpublished Renku 1999

Grand Prize of \$150 divided between

**Together Again**

Christopher Herold  
*Carol O'Dell*

we cross the threshold  
bundled in coats and mittens  
together again

*a sleigh full of packages  
parked on the snowy driveway*

grandma smiles  
at all the childrens' drawings  
but she won't choose

*x-ray of a perfect bite  
backlit near the dentist's chair*

cosmic mice?  
one edge of the blue cheese  
missing

guests departed—  
and now for Thanksgiving this  
huge stack of dishes

*dressed as a chamber maid  
I bend over the table*

no matter what game  
such passion always becomes  
a deep, dreamless sleep

before the sun has risen  
our baby's cries take her from me

*all over town  
posters and yellow ribbons  
beginning to fade*



*circus tents folded away  
where does the fat lady go?*

*wind bells tinkle  
as the Earth's shadow begins  
to slip onto the moon*

*along the Champs Élysées  
ice cream drips down your cone*

*another hotel  
between crisp white sheets  
the smell of starch*

*museum glass protecting  
young Henry's pint-sized armor*

*how her garden grows!  
snail bait scattered around  
the Scottish bluebells*

*twenty pieces of gold  
I cross the Gypsy's palm*

*Ash Wednesday  
a just-blessed commuter  
cuts into line*

*knocked off by a startled thief  
goldfish flop on the floor*

*a boy scout troop  
skirts the pasture to avoid  
fresh manure*

*Mount Rainier in the distance  
the summit's a dazzle of sun*

*gale warning  
several seagull feathers  
blown against the window*

*drip by drip an icicle  
into the watering can*

*easily softened  
after punishing his son:  
"I love you dad"*



for their first date, perhaps,  
a wee bit much patchouli

*Haight Ashbury  
Free Clinic doctors discuss  
the crabs in her love nest*

shell casings and riddled beer cans  
in the overgrown quarry

*light of the blue moon—  
I notice for the first time  
my son's whiskers*

I dreamed I was a dew drop  
it was a very short dream

leaf pile ablaze  
along with the smoke, Stravinski  
billows upward

*relaxing end to the day  
the silence of the sauna*

off with the cozy!  
into the willow patterned cups  
amber streams of tea

*I turn over the mint bed  
and unearth my rusted spade*

*above shiny coins  
cherry blossoms drift  
in the wishing well*

someone else's home, now ours  
spring cleaning this house of views

## Dandelion Globes

Christopher Herold  
*Carol O'Dell*

dandelion globes  
the whole lawn luminous  
with evening sun

*our hot air balloon  
tugs at its mooring lines*



in through a window  
twice around the room and out  
the neighbor's cat

*loom shuttle silent  
my pause for a sip of wine*

five o'clock whistle—  
a long skein of geese underscores  
the harvest moon

*home at last, wet but safe  
—brilliant flash of lightning*

*new engagement ring  
while she carves the pumpkin  
finger held, just so*

if I move even slightly  
she starts to shudder again

*stretched out on sand  
the ferris wheel rumbles above  
we cover ourselves*

models with no expressions  
sashay between the tables

*unable to eat  
before noon for a few months—  
her guest room now pink*

no one but me in the morgue  
and that fart wasn't mine

*this cold night  
he looks for signs of water  
on a Martian moon*

piece by piece into the bonfire  
a month's worth of junk mail

*completing the survey  
about TV jingles  
they earn their fee*

out on the street again  
we collect aluminum cans



*two hundred cherry trees  
blossom around the mansion  
for her birthday*

*pale butterflies spiral up  
towards the puffy clouds*

*end of Passover  
naughty children play catch  
with a matzoh ball*

*she slowly sits down . . .  
this month's call to her mother*

*your name  
will it be remembered this time?  
new neighbors*

*the glow of polished wood  
and plush Persian carpets*

*the headman pours  
a long stream of mint tea  
into my small cup*

*leaping up the waterfall  
spawning trout*

*already scarred  
a third failure to reverse  
his vasectomy*

*wedding vows spoken  
to join both their families*

*Montagues, Capulets  
the prince is not amused  
by today's bloodshed*

*a rusted key behind a brick  
opens the garden gate*

*moonrise  
in light of it, the dark side  
of apples*

*a crowd watches the dragonfly  
land on the mime's glove*



circle of teepees  
dew shimmers on the lodge poles  
with the morning breeze

more than there are grains of sand  
I've heard it said of the stars

Port Townsend vista  
majestic mountain after  
majestic mountain

inside, and no hearing aids  
still the snow-fed river's roar

around the maypole  
cherry petals  
falling from their hair

up on the edge of the nest  
a fledgling fans its wings

## Judges' Comments

Both of the winning poems are 36-verse (*kasen*) renku written by two people—a difficult form made more difficult by the limited number of voices. That these writers were able to create a poetic landscape that, once launched, propels us along a varied and energetic journey for 36 verses is indeed an achievement. The opening two verses of both poems are excellent: the first verse creates a sense of the here and now—a shared experience that is at once special, yet universal, and, the second, staying in the same time and place, gives a response to the “greeting” from the first.

Both poems maintained traditional renku form for the *kasen* consistently in terms of placement of seasonal references and the flower and moon verses. The development of the two poems was a bit less conventional and different in each. In a traditional *kasen* renku the first six verses open the renku. This sequence represents the warming-up process of a



social gathering: the small talk that avoids controversial or highly emotional issues such as politics, religion, illness, death, aging, etc. The “behavior” of the writers at this stage is more refined—irony, cheekiness, and bizarre references would be considered out of place. “Dandelion Globe” had the more conventional opening of the two poems.

The next twenty-four verses are the main event. These should wander through a complex, shifting, imaginative, sometimes bizarre environment of people, places, and emotional states accruing excitement along the way. Love and laughter, death and intrigue should be woven into the tapestry. We should experience a taste of life in all its complexity, real and imagined. There should be variety in the intensity of the verses as well. Both poems have long sequences of verses that sustain the reader’s interest. It is here that two writers of a renku have the most formidable task—achieving the variations of color in tone, voice, and language that is perhaps easier with a larger number of writers. It is a compliment to the writers of these two poems that they were able to do this fairly well. The inventiveness of the writers of “Together Again” paid off here. The last six verses—the denouement prepare us for a not-so-final wave of the hand. Both poems bring us to a place of uplifted quiet leaving us eager to move on to . . . more of the richness of life!

We were also happy to award an Honorable Mention to “Hidden Falls” (a *kasen* with three voices) by A. C. Missias, Paul MacNeil and Mark Osterhaus. These poets also show a command of the form worthy of mention.

*Kris Kondo  
Patricia Machmiller*



# Index of Contributors

- Abuza, Hayat...17  
Addiss, Stephen...34  
ai li...37  
Anakiev, Dimitar...81  
Anderson, Kay F...46
- Babusci, Pamela A...83  
Bachini, Annie...26  
Ball, Jerry...83  
Barry, Jack...32  
Berry, Ernest J...31, 50  
Blaine, F. Matthew...14, 41  
Bloch, David...80  
Brown, Naomi Y...8  
Buettner, Marjorie...9, 28
- Chambliss, Ford W...25  
Chang, Yu...83  
Clausen, Tom...31, 32  
Codrescu, Ion...15, 37, 65  
Cohen, Joshua...38  
Compton, Ellen...30, 32  
cross, m...27, 37  
Crook, John...8
- Day, Cherie Hunter...14  
DeGruttola, Raffael...51, 95  
De Laoreal, David...41  
Dennis, William...63  
Dixon, Melissa...24  
Doughty, Del...35
- Easter, Chuck...49  
Elliott, David...17  
Evans, Judson...17, 28, 68  
Evans, Rees...43  
Evetts, Dee...20
- Falkman, Kai...57  
Fessler, Michael...9  
Figgins, Ross...39
- Finn, S. T...7  
Forrester, Stanford M...33  
Frampton, Alice...6
- Gaffney, Larry...34  
Galasso, William Scott...29, 30  
Gallagher, D. Claire...34, 40  
Galmitz, Jack...15  
George, Barry...29  
Gerstle, Andrew...81  
Gilbert, Joyce Austin...37  
Gill, Stephen...81  
Gilli, Ferris...8, 26, 85  
Glass, Jesse...6  
Gomes, Tom...16, 42  
Gonzales, Merrill Ann...43  
Gorman, LeRoy...81  
Gourlay, Caroline...7
- Hall, Carolyn...40, 42  
Harter, Penny...15, 43, 47  
Herold, Chris...84, 85, 86 88  
Higginson, William J...75  
Hoffman, Philip...41  
Holley, Anna...80  
Houchens, Gary...34  
Houstoun, Pud...17  
Howard, Elizabeth...24  
Hurm, Ken...25, 40  
Hussey, Larry...38  
Hyde, Wes...15
- Ignoffo, Flori...9  
Issa...75
- Jensen, Jennifer...48  
Johnston, Veronica...18  
Jorgensen, Jean...31, 40
- Ketchek, Michael...35, 39  
Kilbride, Jerry...35



Kimmel, Larry...14, 51  
 Klontz, Joan...24, 31  
 Kolashinski, Elsie O...14  
 Kondo, Kris...80, 91  
 Koontz, Tom...35  
  
 Laliberte-Carey, Lori...31, 41  
 Lamb, Elizabeth Searle...80  
 Lent, Jack...6  
 Lifshitz, Leatrice...43  
 Lilly, Rebecca...19, 27  
 Lucas, Martin...33  
 Lyles, Peggy Willis...19  
  
 Machmiller, Patricia...91  
 MacNeil, Paul...92  
 Mainone, Robert...45  
 Masanet, Jesus...30  
 McClure, Mary Lee...29  
 mckay, anne...80  
 McLaughlin, Dorothy...24  
 McLeod, Don...9, 36  
 Meer, Mary Fran...26  
 Mill, Sue...28  
 Milowsky, Brandy...16  
 Missias, A. C...20, 92  
 Moore, Lenard...30, 33  
 Mountain, Marlene...80  
  
 Noyes, H. F...54  
  
 O'Connor, John...38  
 O'Dell, Carol...86, 88  
 Osterhaus, Mark Alan...92  
 Otomo, Yuko...75  
 Owen, W. F...27, 42  
  
 Painting, Tom...19, 42  
 Partridge, Brent...6, 30  
 Paulson, James...25  
 Payne, Kenneth...18  
 Pezelj, Dunja...26  
 Phillips, Michael J...80  
 Pizzarelli, Alan...8, 24  
 Porad, Francine...80  
 Procsal, Gloria H...8, 27  
 Pupello, Anthony J...5, 49  
 Purington, Carol...51, 81  
 Pusateri, Chris...39  
  
 Rengé...5, 17  
 Robeck, Linda...16  
 Rogers, Patricia A...7  
 Rohrig, Carolyn...48  
 Romano, Emily...5, 18  
 Ross, Bruce...65, 68  
 Russo, Dave...25  
  
 Sadler, Norma...39  
 Sakaki, Nanao...75  
 Sari, Carla...43  
 Schroeder, Gary...81  
 Shelton, Eugenia...39  
 Shigemoto, Yasuhiko...18  
 Solomon, Arthur...6  
 St Jacques, Elizabeth...50  
 St. Clair, Richard...30  
 Stefanac, R A...32, 40, 85  
 Steinberg, Gary...26, 28  
 Stevenson, John...3, 5, 33, 85  
 Story, Ebba...46  
 Stuart-Powles, C...84  
  
 Tarquinio, Rick...28, 32  
 Tasnier, Maurice...41  
 Tebo, Cindy...14  
 Thomas, Carolyn...7, 81  
 Thompson, James M...42  
 Thurston, Doris...19  
 Tico, Tom...7, 85  
  
 Ueda, Makoto...81  
  
 Vistain, Joan...29, 35  
 von Sturmer, Richard...25, 29  
  
 Ward, Linda Jeannette...9  
 Welch, Michael Dylan...5, 27  
 White, Robin...55  
 Wicker, Nina...35  
 Wild, Le...16  
 Wilson, Billie...9  
 Windson, Sheila...15  
 Winke, Jeff...38  
  
 Yarrow, Ruth...16  
 Young, Nancy S...18, 38  
  
 Zackowitz, Cindy...34



# THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA

## ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 1999

### Income

Balance 1/01/00	17,114.38
Membership Dues	19,295.50
Contributions	4,667.00
Contest Fees	1,213.00
Frogpond Samples	700.00
Haiku Path	129.80
Einbond Donations	35.00
Museum of Haiku Literature	200.00
Interest Income	392.01
Fort Mason Refund	50.00
Miscellaneous	31.00
<b>Total Income</b>	

### Expenses

**43,827.69**

HSA General Account	
Postage/Telephone	1,882.84
Copying/Printing	1,096.37
Supplies	592.92
Awards	1,040.26
Website	140.00
HNA Contribution	500.00
Education Committee	773.96
Advance (Secretary)	200.00
Virgilio Mem. Contribution	50.00
Bank Fees	38.50
Travel (E.Bd. Annual Mtg.)	300.00
Miscellaneous	163.06
Newsletter	
Printing	4,864.00
Postage	1,606.64
Miscellaneous	10.00
Frogpond	
Printing	16,259.15
Postage	1,547.26
Frogpond Awards	450.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	

**31,514.96**

Balance (6/30/99)

**12,312.73**

Respectfully submitted  
Raffael DeGruttola, Treasurer



## Museum of Haiku Literature Award

\$50 for the best haiku or senryu  
appearing in the previous issue of FROGPOUND  
as voted by the HSA Executive Committee

snake hunting the boy sheds his shirt

*Makiko*

## Errata from FPXXIII:1

at twilight  
the temple bell  
raking zen furrows  
*anne mckay*

snow falling  
on white chysanthemums  
an evening in silence  
*Pamela A. Babusci*







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

President's Message	3	<i>John Stevenson</i>
Haiku	4	
The Cyber Pond	10	<i>A. C. Missias</i>
Haiku	14	
The Conscious Eye	20	<i>Dee Evetts</i>
Haiku	24	
Senryu	36	
Linked Forms	44	<i>Mainone; Rohrig/Jensen; Easter/Pupello; Berry/St Jacques; Kimmel/de Gruttola/Purington; Noyes; White</i>
	70	
Essays	56	<i>Falkman; Dennis</i>
Books & Reviews	64	<i>Ross; Evans; Higginson</i>
HSA News	82	<i>Ball/Babusci; Kondo/Machmiller</i>
Index	93	