

FROGPOND XXIV:2

FF

President's Message

Greetings again to H.S.A Members and Friends,

2001 is a great year for haiku. There are many celebrations being held with enthusiasm and care, haiku is expanding into the international arena, and H.S.A. itself is growing. I recently attended the regional meeting in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The meeting promoted developmental efforts to promote haiku to the general public, and in my opinion, succeeded.

In Southern California, I've been involved in the use of the H.S.A. educational packets by elementary and secondary school teachers, as well as the Faculty of the School of Education at California State University Long Beach in the teacher education program. The packets have been greeted with enthusiasm by teachers and students alike.

Some of the news is problematic, however. Costs are rising dramatically for all the service functions of the society, especially mailing and printing costs. We will need either to raise dues or to cut back these services: fewer issues of *Frogpond* or the *Frogpond Supplement*, and/or the H. S. A. Newsletter. Or we might try raising more money from other sources. Naturally, none of the officers is happy about this and we are wondering which direction to take. I call to the members to contact your regional representative or any of the officers with your ideas and suggestions. These ideas will be discussed in Boston during an H.S.A. Executive Committee meeting during Haiku North America. Please make your interests known and felt. Remember that "challenge" also means "opportunity".

My attitude remains positive. I look toward the future and continued success of the society.

Jerry Ball

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.

blue sky
I almost miss
the morning glory
kirsty karkow

glacial valley
a father and son fishing
where rivers meet
paul m.

off the hook
the river drips back
into itself

Anthony J. Pupello

at my touch
withdrawing into himself
tortoise

Marian Olson

the loon's dive
. . . and an echo
of its song
Ellen Compton

twilight—
purple martins and mosquitos
one swarm

Kevin Smith

evening lake
brought to stillness . . .
wood thrush flute

Robert Mainone

Gospel tune
telling of times to come
the new moon.

r j rentschler

quiet garden—
the rose's blue shadow
under moonlight

Michael Dylan Welch

6
fireflies . . .
could I still
catch one?

John Stevenson

full moon
returning
to an empty house

Ed Baker

between dreams
moving my head to the foot of the bed—
night lightning

Lauren McCabe

all around
light failing in a field
of fireflies

Robert Mainone

earthquake
ink all over
my sumi-e painting

Dr. Angelee Deodhar

drought—
in the distance
muffled thunder

John Ower

deserted field—
on waves of heat
wild onion scent

Gloria H. Procsal

a butterfly
on the path—
I settle

Peter Williams

sun, shade and snake
share the same rock—
not a breath of wind

Emily Romano

lunchtime
the gardener sleeps
in his wheelbarrow

Tony Beyer

four "zones"
in the botanical garden;
a wasp strays
Gerald George

summer doldrums—
a robin poops
in the dog's water

Le Wild

heat wave . . .
a swallow swoops through
the skateboard park

Jeanne Emrich

halves of a snake
railroad tracks
gleam in the setting sun

Michael Dylan Welch

earthquake memorial
the hundreds of candles
shimmering

Yoko Ogino

A moonlit night;
the firefly reappears
in a different spot.

Stephen Amor

misty lake . . .
beyond sight the faint plop
of a fishing lure

Robert Spiess

summer moon
lunch looks cooler
with the kitchen light off

Eric Rutter

dying light
intricate body parts
of the cricket

Michael Fessler

bringing darkness
to the day
migrating geese

Lloyd Gold

deep in the sink
the great veins of chard;
summer's end

Burnell Lippy

autumn day
opening my hand
to set free a fly

Giselle Maya

autumn sun
thoughts slow down
at the race track

Pariksith Singh

diner pie
the tang of green apple
from the nearby tree

Jeffrey Winke

EXPIRED meter
my windshield reflects
the setting sun

Jeffrey Winke

Autumn twilight—
a blackfly perches on
the dead crow's eye

Edward Zuk

packing up—
the bare tree
in the rain

Jesse Glass

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

Mary Fran Meer

in mother's room
behind the wardrobe
the skeleton of a sparrow

Elehna de Sousa

12

at the junkyard
an old washing machine
filled with rain

Rich Krivcher

long rainy season—
reading the *Kama Sutra*
alone in bed

Pamela A. Babusci

Fall Break—
grading papers
by the window

Lenard D. Moore

all day, rain
a leaf floating
in the porch chair

Anne LB Davidson

13

autumn chill
one waiter
tapping

Sosuke Kanda

tomatoes ripening
on withered vines
All Souls' Day

Karen Klein

a viola playing
a piece for cello—
autumn deeper

Philip Rowland

the morning is cold—
in the shower my wife sings
songs of her home

Jack Galmitz

November dawn
a cricket snug inside
the rolled newspaper

Paul Watsky

early snow
the lacework of leaf veins
and bird tracks

Yvonne Hardenbrook

|| 4

marking dead trees
to cut this winter
a hawk's thin cry

Jack Barry

Papery snow sounds—
through grey wisps of chimney smoke
the twisted pine boughs

Rebecca Lilly

the birch
absolutely still except
where the crow just left

Mykel Board

first snow
a shovelful
of leaves

Marlene J. Egger

15

winter evening
after the train has left,
the snowbound road

Caroline Gourlay

deep
inside the snow
white moon

Karina Young

winter evening
the funeral home facade
well-lit

John Sandbach

he wakes
from a dream of snow falling
to snow falling

Tom Smith

A few steps
into new snow—
losing my name

Robert Kusch

crumpled-up poems—
through the window
the pond's thin layer of ice

Carolyn Rohrig

16

winter afternoon—
a slow shadow fills
the empty bowl

Stanford M. Forrester

deep
inside the mall
scent of snow

Rees Evans

discussing guilt—
heavier and heavier
falling snow

Maureen Gorman

bitter cold
a snowplough's scrape
in the night

Christopher Patchel

mid winter—
her anatomically correct sketch
of the art class model

Kathy Lippard Cobb

icy night
the medevac quiets
a trio of crows

Mark Brooks

deep cold
in the rabbit's tracks
blue shadows

Linda Robeck

The Conscious Eye

Dee Evetts

I am indebted to Tom Painting for suggesting divorce as a theme for this column, and equally to Charles Trumbull for providing an abundance of material culled from his ever-expanding haiku database. Ironically, though all the signs were there, I had no expectation that when I sat down to write this piece I would find myself in the midst of separating from my wife of ten years. The timing of this has added for me an extra significance to many of the poems I have been considering for discussion.

In the process it has been impressed on me just how much strong work there is to be found on this topic. Somewhat ruefully I concluded that this is really not at all surprising. The ending of a significant relationship tends to generate a complex array of feelings, such as anger, disappointment, and grief, typically followed by loneliness or emptiness (not unmixed with intimations of freedom and renewal). These stages are often indelibly linked with particular moments and places and actions.

Profound feelings associated with specific events and images? This sounds like an excellent prescription for haiku composition—and so it proves to be. As a place to start we could hardly do better than to re-examine Alexis Rotella's archetypal

Discussing divorce
he strokes
the lace tablecloth¹

It would surely be unfair to say that this has inspired many imitations. It is more likely that numerous poets have been impelled to record their experience of *that* conversation—the one in which the unthinkable is not only thought, but put into words. Here are two more examples, by Fred Donovan and George Swede, respectively:

discussing divorce—
my onion chopping
quickens²

calmly talking divorce
underfoot the crackle
of fallen leaves³

Both of these are evocative enough, yet remain essentially one-dimensional. By comparison, Rotella's poem feels multi-layered and correspondingly more interesting. (We should note in passing that it may or may not refer to the poet's own relationship.) The word "strokes", while conveying something akin to embarrassment or placation, serves also as a reminder of past tenderness, of intimacy lost. Meanwhile the lace tablecloth is suggestive of family ties—if not an heirloom, then something fine that must soon be reckoned among the possessions to be divided. It is easy to see why this poem has been so often republished and anthologized.

Of course there are always antecedents, whether months or years in advance of the pivotal conversation: small cracks in the edifice of marriage.

Divorce? she echoes
I'm not thinking of it.
Thinking of it⁴

This is Ruth Yarrow, giving us a scrap of dialogue (between the couple, between women friends?—it works either way) that poses the larger question: where does the heretical idea come from? Precisely when does the unthinkable become thinkable?

Among the more painful of circumstances must be the case where one partner has already decided on breaking up while the other still has no inkling of this. Jeff Witkin has expressed this predicament with great poignancy in his

perennials
for my wife of thirty years
... not knowing it's over⁵

This appears as the second poem in a collection that chronicles the poet's experience of divorce from first intimations through to the beginnings of acceptance and healing. The above is closely followed by a poem that confirms the partners' disparate viewpoints:

cold november night—
she adds another
reason for divorce⁶

I admire the finely-judged misdirection provided by the second line. The phrase "she adds another" would so often be the prelude to something nurturing ("log to the fire", "dish to the table"). The reader's expectation being nudged in that direction helps to deepen the chill of the last line.

It is obvious that in these few pages I have been able to do no more than introduce this far-reaching topic, one that touches so many lives. I now envisage a series of articles, aiming to encompass successive stages: the process and aftermath of separation, the pangs of child custody, the role of ex-partners and the forming of new relationships. I hope that some readers will send their own best work relating to any

of these aspects, or alternatively recommend any noteworthy haiku they may have read.

To conclude with a forward glance, this poem by Jane Reichhold would appear to be located in the very thick of a difficult break-up:

Mother's Day
the daughter's call
about her divorce⁷

The suggestion here, as I read it, is that the daughter is so preoccupied with her own drama that she has overlooked the fact that the day is Mother's Day. Our personal crises tend to drive out the attention and consideration we might usually have for those around us. The poet has achieved a fine balance between humor and compassion, and seems to be saying: this too is human.

2 ||



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1. *Frogpond* VI:3
 2. *pocket change* (towpath anthology 2000, Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press 2000)
 3. *Almost Unseen: The Selected Haiku of George Swede* (Decatur, IL: Brooks Books, 2000)
 4. *Wind Chimes* 8
 5. *Beyond Where the Snow Falls*, Tiny Poems Press 1997
 6. *ibid.*
 7. *A Dictionary of Haiku* (Gualala, CA: AHA Books 1992)

(Submissions and recommendations for this column can be sent to Dee Evetts, P.O. Box 955, 128 East Broadway, New York, NY 10002. Please state whether previously published, giving details. Work may also be selected from general submissions to Frogpond, and other sources.)

mid-winter
the man in the passageway
will turn his back

John Stevenson

empty onion skin
at the bottom of the bag;
winter darkness

Burnell Lippy

The chandelier
white light glittering
at the year's end

Erica Facey

22

first morning
a pungency lingers
in the cider press

Ellen Compton

The soap box for drum—
My first trip of the New Year
To the public bath.

Sakuzo Takada

a winter night—
to the farthest street
the change of traffic lights
Jack Galmitz

February thaw—
finding in the front yard
last week's news
Don L. Holroyd

23

recount headlines—
how many snowflakes
on the lawn

Lenard D. Moore

winter rain I finger each seam on the baseball

Gary Steinberg

shortest day
not even pausing at
the cemetery gates
Maurice Tasnier

early spring
the cemetery side gate
open a little

Bruce Ross

February—
renewed interest in
the old birdhouse

Richard Balus

crocus stalks
the river ice
breaking up

paul m.

24

mid-March thaw—
cab drivers gathered
in the sunshine

A. C. Missias

Sinatra on the radio
a cold blue shrimp boat
in the distance

Matt Hart

in the dark
the water ready to go over—
Niagara Falls

Gary Hotham

in the early spring
snows will melt clear away and
I will see your face

Cheryl Dimof

25

tea ceremony . . .
the elongated shadow
of a dwarf daffodil

Pamela A. Babusci

morning drizzle
the origami bird
unfolds slowly

Sue Mill

new coolness—
a goose feather
on the outhouse floor

Cindy Zackowitz

Layers of grey rain,
its constant shifting
on the scree slope

Graham High

March breeze
the scent of snowmelt
over ancient stone

Marjorie Buettner

ancient arrowhead
in newly-turned earth
planting sweetcorn

Billie Wilson

26

ploughed field
a flock of crows rises unheard
in the wind

John Crook

blue sky shines
from the wet road
spring snow

Judson Evans

water in the road—
spring breezes wrinkle
the opalescent moon

Elizabeth Howard

between the waves
of passing traffic
spring peepers

Helen Lang

27

but
through the mist
apricot blossom

Stephen Addiss

steady drizzle
a farm auctioneer begins
the next bid

R. A. Stefanac

spring thunder—
the smile doesn't reach
his eyes

Kathy Lippard Cobb

bright April clouds—
bits of snow left beneath
mountain pine

Bruce Ross

morning dew
how thin the grasses
that hold it up

Michael Ketchek

the gardener's sleeves
rolled to the elbow
spring equinox

Tom Painting

28

many times
dandelions delay
our journey

Michael McClintock

waking to rain
on the roof—I lie there
revising my day

Paul O. Williams

fog:
taking the edge
off the city

Tom Tico

morning drizzle:
coffee and conversation
lukewarm

Alice Frampton

29

steady rain . . .
the man on the ladder
adjusts his cap

Marc Thompson

searching my pocket . . .
only a soiled bill
for the blind man

Charlotte Digregorio

drinking tea
the morning fog
drifts away

Robert Gibson

From the underground
rising on the escalator
into bright sunlight

Tom Tico

blossom time—
a breath of fragrant air
invades the pool hall

H. F. Noyes

sunlight
in a third grade classroom
fractions

Shannon Andrews

home again
clothes the shape
of the suitcase

Makiko

spring cleaning:
dust
on top
of the globe

Jesse Glass

separating fog
from fog
strand of barbed wire
eric l. houck, jr.

reaching to touch
the child's soft hair
soft shadows
Dorothy McLaughlin

31

fog all day
the whiteness
in my ears

Alice Frampton

snowy egret
starting a fresh page
in my birding book
Carolyn Hall

spring cicada . . .
just a little something
he's working on
Thomas Hoyt

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.

New Year's Eve:
a warm hug
from a perfect stranger

Guy Morrison

perfume
a woman said to be going
to Jamaica

Sosuke Kanda

33

unable to sing—
lip-synching
into the New Year

David Gershator

coming and going
through the swinging door
voices

Joyce Sandeen Johnson

His first words
of the year:
“Innocent. I’m innocent.”

Steve Sanfield

January 3rd
the Weight Watchers meeting
doubles in size

Carolyn Hall

in the next fitting room
a woman tells her husband
whether his pants fit

Eric Rutter

conversation dying
my eyes slide
down the v
in her
shirt

Carl Cottrell

34

accusations—
she scrapes the carrot
down to a nubbin

D. Claire Gallagher

a branch
of the neighbor's peach tree
over my fence

Kay F. Anderson

abandoned house—
the fallen branch stretches
the telephone wire

Francis W. Alexander

forest path:
when it becomes a fork
we turn back

Zinovy Vayman

35

leaning on her hoe
she weighs the distance
to the water jug

Timothy I. Mize

something about
that mirage
i can't swallow

Makiko

last out-of-town bus
a shadow in the shadows
turns away

Ross Figgins

family album
looking into
my future

Hailey Neises

photo session—
trying to get the children
to stop posing

Mark Arvid White

at the playground
I find my
skip

Connie Donleycott

36

entrance exams—
parents hanging around
the prep school doorway

Paul Watsky

before surgery
the cardiac patient
checks his watch

Anthony J. Pupello

doctor's office
the sleeping man's finger marks
his place in the book

Elizabeth Howard

day after diagnosis
avoiding my eyes
while shaving

Jerry Kilbride

37

Through the therapist's window
a slanted ray of light

Kristi Beer

after chemo
clearing her closet
of familiar clothes

Pamela Miller Ness

nursing home—
her one-word mantra
colors the room

Carolyn Thomas

cumulus clouds . . .
our mother asks us
if we've met

Peggy Willis Lyles

hospice garden—
he counts moonflower buds
before any bloom

Mark Brooks

still no word
the moon
through another window

Robert Scott

38

after the lullabye
her slow breathing
a lullabye

Robert Scott

and then morning comes
the burning dryness of it
across your belly

Rick Taylor

after the wedding
we visit family graves
cool grass

Lori Laliberte-Carey

family plot
the gravedigger
severs a root

Tom Painting

39

In the far corner
at the bottom of the grave . . .
pair of digger's footprints

Robert Major

veteran's cemetery—
a wide expanse of lawn
beyond the graves

A. C. Missias

graveside prayers
even with my eyes closed
a hawk's shadow

Veronica Johnston

funeral suit—
I prick my finger
on an old boutonniere

Martin Vest

new widower—
he cannot kill
the fly

Gretchen G. Batz

death notices
the newsprint
on my fingers

R. A. Stefanac

40

Armenian memorial
the words I can't read
I touch with my fingers

Michael Ketchek

30th reunion—
raising our glasses
to see

Connie Donleycott

on a table
at a garage sale
frayed philosophy paperbacks

William Woodruff

frugal shopping
at the checkout she prolongs
the conversation

Peter Williams

4 ||

guest bathroom
I take a moment to groom
her potted plant

Yvonne Hardenbrook

on the shelf
the last preserves
she put up

W. F. Owen

train chugging upgrade—
the engineer hunched
in a forward slant

Emily Romano

linked

forms

Old Soldiers Fading Away

flophouse
pinned to a sleeping man's sweater
his Purple Heart

VA hospital
Agent Orange victim's tattoos shrinking
with his arms

whiskey-dampened finger
draws a map of Nam
on the bar

popping corn—
he flashes back to Nam
and small-arms fire

Veterans Day parade
the World War II vet's wheelchair
pushed by his Nam son

amidst roses
the Nam scrapbook
beside his coffin

VFW Post
at a back table
Nam vet plays solitaire

Surprises to the Ear

borrowing something
from the autumn crickets—
fledgling fiddler

in the dark woods
every frog out of key

morning knee bends—
keen to keep in sync
with the Bach gigue

all alone
and deep in meditation
—the door buzzer

far from supernatural
the shaman's loud kerchoo

in the attic
something heavy falls
windy Allhallow's Eve

In the Sink

low tide mudflat
deep in the cordgrass
the soft pops of mussels

from the oyster-shell road
a step into the dunes

digging deeper
the sea foam sighs
into our moat

the first taste of seawater
a laughing gull bobs with me

a deep trough
between these two waves
rolling thunder

the clink of shells in the sink
we talk about our day

Nature of the Game

sand swirls
around the cave mouth—
we tune in the Giants

rock and surf shutting out
a weak signal

though the fog looks solid
a sparkle on the water—
late-inning rally

flow out of sight
behind rust-streaked cliffs—
pelican lineup

going deep—
the fisherman's long cast

afternoon wanes—
messy seaweed balls
where the tide went out

Sunday afternoon

October chill . . .
raking the afternoon
into the bag *Stanford M Forrester*

hot apple cider and a whiff
of woodsmoke *Pamela Miller Ness*

community band
rehearsing
in the college gym *Howard Lee Kilby*

winter parade
a day moon follows too *Eiko Yachimoto*

touching
for the first time
the frost of our breath *Kilby*

5th grade love note
folded 100 times *Forrester*

recess over
her best friend tells her
he called her fat *Ness*

out came a lizard
with his sleepy eyes *Yachimoto*

lost in thought
as cherry blossoms fall
WWII veteran *Forrester*

three rice balls
offered to a jizo *Yachimoto*

cicadas
one brief fling
for all eternity *Kilby*

the sandcastle melts away
with each new wave *Bill Lerz*

Haibun for the Hagas

After lunch Mr. and Mrs. Haga take us to Miharu. We drive through the sunny afternoon, small towns, well managed fields and T-shaped orchards where the branches are allowed to grow only sideways. We drive up to the point when our car becomes a part of a traffic jam so we have to leave our car and walk. Many people walk in the opposite direction and yet many walk with us until we approach an old tree in the fold between hills. It is not easy to get close but I manage to read that this sakura is 1000 years old and belongs to the three most famous trees of Japan. It has a special name—*takizakura*—which means “waterfall cherry tree.” I try to learn about the other two trees but nobody seems to know.

This one is hollow inside. I count 15 thick poles supporting the huge and heavy branches. It looks like 15 young trees were cut and shaped to become crutches for the venerable survivor.

old cherry tree
in its vast shade
patch of daikon

48 It gets even more crowded. We interfere with picture taking. We are expected to move.

Ascending a hillside, I take out binoculars. Blossoms and people's faces merge.

a weeping tree
pink buds become splashes
on white petals

Zinovy Vayman

southeaster

We only come here to fish. It's not really a vacation spot, this Alaskan village of thirty-five people, mostly fishermen and their wives. And I'm hardly old enough to know what vacations are for. As long as I'm busy, my eleven years will gradually turn to twelve somewhere in August, barely noticed by anyone, including me, and the days slide by in a steady procession of new adventures . . . until the big storm.

rising whitecaps—
my line whirrs
to the end of the reel

Dad turns the outboard up a notch and heads the skiff into the chop while I crank and wind. I can guess what he's thinking . . . about cutting the line loose, but I want to know what's down there, so I tighten the drag and keep reeling. The pole bends into the waves. Remembering to keep the tip out of the water, I jab the butt a little lower on my hip and reel with all my strength. Big black clouds come at us from overhead as a sixty-pound ling cod surfaces from below.

small craft warning—
bobbing in and out
of cloud shadows

The ling isn't hooked. Its teeth are sunk into the belly of a pink salmon who's swallowed my bait. Huge light-bulb eyes protrude from their sockets and its stomach's bulged from its trip from the deep. Dad doesn't want that large a fish in this little tin boat, so I hang on. We make a run for the harbor, along with the other boats racing ahead of the storm,

just dragging the ling behind. Well inside the markerbuoy, Dad slows the ten-horse Evinrude to a crawl. I've been watching my fish and it's still hanging in there. I raise my aching arms once more and Dad slides the gaff into those flapping gills. He says it's drowning.

sheltered from the storm
I look in the water . . .
my face wavers

Waiting for the wind to blow itself out, passing boats lay over, tied up to the government dock as deep as three abreast. A festive air of gas and diesel fuel, fish guts, creosote pilings, and crusted salt mingles with the cigarette smoke and tall tales of the fishermen while they mend their lines or nets. Pleasure boaters wander past, heading for land and likely souvenirs. Larger boats, seiners and packers, raft together, filling the bay with wooden dories and bearded men. They all watch us land the fish and Dad helps me stand to show off my catch.

In the night I hear sounds from below and I creep down the attic stairs. The cabin's still in total darkness, but a strong wind and eerie lights are coming in off the water. The overflow of the storm has entered the harbor. Dad's in the kitchen pulling on his boots. If I want to help I have to tag along and not get in the way. Sometimes he forgets to ask.

Our boat's tied to the out-haul line and swinging wildly, tugging the rope too close to shore. It's so tangled we can't yank it in and Dad's afraid the raised motor will smack into the rocks, shearing a pin or worse, busting off the whole propeller. We have to get the pram from the boathouse and row out there. Dad sits in the middle seat and installs the oars. When he's ready, I wade through the water, pushing us off in a swirl of brightly colored sparks, then I crawl in over the stern. The fierce summer

wind is almost warm, but it catches the little craft and makes rowing difficult. With every pull more phosphorescence glows.

Even with this current Dad lets me handle the dinghy. I take the oars and, rowing backwards, leave him at our tangled skiff.

rowing for shore:
in the wind-stirred water
bright phosphorescence

Dad and I stow both boats, safe and sound, in the boathouse. 4 a.m. lanterns blaze in some windows, but we sit in the predawn darkness, sipping coffee, waiting for morning.

51

Later, between bites of pancakes, we hear over the radio, one of the seine boats that frequents the harbor, the *Sea Lassie*, has gone down in the wind somewhere off Caamano Point. For a moment my throat closes.

flat calm—
my orange lifejacket
airing on the line

Alice Frampton

most Somali mothers

have gone off to fight in the war for nationhood;
those who don't share their breasts . . .

simoom—
the zebra herd circles
its young

Jim Kacian

Best Friends

I can't think of my childhood without thinking of Bonnie. She was as much a part of my life as Sunday pot roast after church, family walks in the woods, and lazy summer afternoons listening to Tiger baseball with Grandma and Grandpa on their front porch.

Bonnie and I were best friends during the 1950s. The second oldest of nine, she practically lived at my house in the summertime and even traveled on vacations with my small family. She was the sister I never had, and I loved her white-blond hair, her relaxed, easy manner, and her contagious giggle.

long past bedtime
bursts of laughter
into our pillow

From early morning to just before dark we rode our bikes, swung on the giant strikes in the Catholic school yard until calluses formed on our hands, tightrope-walked the railroad tracks, and mixed magic potions from each other's medicine cabinets. We also loved hamming it up and frequently performed impromptu front porch plays, charging neighborhood kids a small admittance so that afterward the two of us could split a cherry Coke at Laur's Drugstore. On oppressively hot days we sought refuge in my grandmother's cool basement guest room, dressing up in my aunts' old prom gowns and fur wraps, dabbing dots of *Evening in Paris* all over our necks, and daintily pretending to nibble on the hard, musty marzipan candies we found in the bottom drawer of the vanity.

playing "Go Fish"
with French accents,
strapless gowns slipping

The highlight of every summer, though, had to be when the fair came to town, filling the air with merry-go-round music and the cries of carnival barkers. Just about that time the local ketchup factory would begin its processing and, while we rode the Octopus or Ferris wheel, Bonnie and I would gulp down deep breaths of the wonderfully rich tomato aroma. Always before walking the three blocks home, we would pool the last of our pocket change for "just one more try" at winning a large stuffed animal by playing ring toss or choosing a lucky duck. Even once we got back to my house and changed into pajamas, we would continue to talk and giggle far into the night, calliope music and warm candied breezes floating in through the screened windows.

53

sunrise
carny trucks pulling out
light rain and church bells

On the dresser today, over forty years later, next to a picture of my grandmother, is a small black and white photo dated 1958 of Bonnie and me, two skinny, knobby-kneed best friends, arms gaggled around each other's shoulders. I pick it up and study it often. It reminds me of a similar picture we had taken for 25 cents at Kresge's Department Store that year inside a curtained booth. It was on the day we had announced to the neighborhood that we were officially best friends. Rather than framing the picture, we ceremoniously buried it in a white wallet box under Mrs. Philipott's plum tree "for all time." However, that didn't stop us from digging it up every day for the rest of that summer just to make sure no harm had come to it overnight. I'm not sure what we had expected might happen to it (pesky brothers and their cohorts?), but we were relieved and delighted each time we found that our treasure was still there, its precious contents undisturbed.

by summer's end
an arsenal
of plum pits

Although the cardboard box and picture have long since disintegrated, the image of two little girls, trying to preserve something more special than even they understood at the time, has never faded from my memory. It is as clear today as a calliope melody, as sweet as a cherry Coke, and as palpable as the cool, damp earth on a hot summer afternoon.

so many
bread crumbs
leading us home

Diane Tomczak

Spring storm

54 Four days of heavy rain. The radio says 1000mm in the nearby Tararua Range. Hutt river high and the Whanganui in flood. Should peak in two hours. Near its mouth it will meet the incoming tide. Fears the stop-banks in wanganui town will be under pressure, may yield. Yet the sun is out, my washing flaps briskly on my line. A chance to check the letter box, first time for a few days.

in the snail-mail box
two soggy bills
and a snail trail.....

Cyril Childs

haibun

I draw back the shades to reveal the mountain across the valley. The peak just begins to show a trace of redness. The sky to the west still contains stars dotting the fading blackness. I drain the remaining drops from a cup of green tea, and place it carefully on the window ledge.

daybreak
all at once the absence
of stars

Turning from the window I take two steps towards my cushion. With the first step comes excitement and with the second fear and the narrative question: "Why exactly do I do this?" I sit for morning practice. Same time, same place, same practice. Yet somehow, like the sky, it is different every morning. I set the timer for an hour, draw my legs into their best facsimile of a half-lotus and straighten my back. Too straight as usual, over-compensating for poor posture. Pressing the start button I sigh as my eyes shut to the darkness of the room. I know that I'm in for a show this morning.

sunrise
as the bell fades
thought resonates

In the darkness, investigating the facets that make up my self-concept: possessions, job, social status, friends, children and relationships. This body, these emotions, and the thoughts that flit in and out of awareness. All that we take ourselves to be are dependent upon conditions. By their very nature these conditions are ever-changing and so intertwined that they are unfathomable. I walk the razor's edge between contemplation and unrestrained thought as mind is again and again drawn towards the crescendo of this practice.

spring morning
the curve of her back
in a distant bed

What will be? Of all the mind and body phenomena rising into the moment, this thought bullies itself to the forefront. Again and again I relax against it only to find mind suddenly and aggressively attack it. A vicious dog choking itself on the stout chain that fetters it. To confuse me, it changes forms. How-when-why? Swiftly and precisely it becomes why not? Different outfits on the same mannequin. Suddenly, it becomes obvious that there is no answer, except the one that rings of a yielding and patient unfolding. It is miraculous that after such a wise observation the very next thought is inevitably, "What will be?" I look for a way to reconcile my hopes and desires with patient unfolding only to find myself lost, deep in thought again.

early morning
a dog barking
at the wind

The timer beeps. Opening my eyes to the room I find it has brightened. Daybreak has become dawn and is fast becoming day. The neighborhood begins to fill with sounds of people setting into the state of motion that carries them through their days. Car doors slam. Engines turn over. The squeal of tires as someone drives off reveals that even at this early hour people are already late for something.

I bow, pressing my head to the floor. It is not the dirt beneath a giant ficus, but the intention remains the same. I feel my heart loosen as I ring the bell. And as it resonates I untangle my legs and begin the motions that will take me through this day. I too am late.

the chatter of sparrows—
what will be will be, yet still
I hope

Gary Steinberg

A Letter Smuggled Back

... and where am I? Well, here I cannot help but to recall that day in theological school when our Psychological Theology 307 class discussed the fact that a rat's brain (and presumably other 'higher' species' brains) has a small region called the pleasure center, into which it is possible to insert a hair-thin electrode.

When this has been done to a rat, it is taught to press a pedal that allows a momentary flow of electricity through the electrode, thus stimulating the pleasure center.

Although food and water are in front of the rat, they are ignored. The rat continues to press the pedal time after time until it would drop from exhaustion unless intervention terminated stimulation of the pleasure center.

... and where am I? well,
here we're always kept in bliss:
it's heaven! ... or hell

Robert Spiess

Colchester Pond

Colchester Pond has few visitors in November. Cold wind from the south pushes clear green swells not quite cresting into whitecaps. With collar turned up I follow them almost a mile to the north bay. A heron the color of its shadow stands in rocky shallows.

the silence
of waves
the breaking of shore

Elizabeth Hazen

essays

Formal Convention in North American Haiku

The recent publication of *The Haiku Anthology* provides a valuable opportunity to assess the state of English language haiku at the turn of the millennium. Because it includes approximately forty years of haiku, chronologically starting with the work of pioneers such as J. W. Hackett and Jack Kerouac, we are able to see how this type of poetry took shape in English, how conventions have changed, and what the dominant trends have been with regard to form.

The issue of form perhaps most basic in many people's minds is the use of the 5-7-5 pattern or not. Although we still occasionally hear the case for maintaining that pattern in English language haiku, despite the immense differences between the two languages, the case for writing free verse haiku certainly appears to have dominated the field. Consequently what we see in the anthology shows that for most poets represented, the number of lines and the number of syllables per line are open issues.

Of the 863 haiku in the volume, 73 are in the 5-7-5 form, but only two poets of the 89 represented, Clement Hoyt and O. Mabson Southard, use that form exclusively. About half of the haiku by Foster Jewell and J. W. Hackett and a third of Nicholas Virgilio's work are 5-7-5. These haiku tend to be among the oldest in the anthology. The selections from 18 other poets contain one to three haiku in 5-7-5 form. Some poets may have started with a positive attitude toward that form and then abandoned it. Others may simply find themselves occasionally writing a 5-7-5 haiku not because of predetermination but because it feels right for that particular haiku. To be sure, some people continue to write 5-7-5 haiku exclusively, and many school teachers act as 5-7-5

police during their haiku units. There are even journals that only accept haiku in that form. But the North American haiku movement represented by this anthology and the Haiku Society of America clearly does not favor strict adherence to the 5-7-5 form. As a result, *The Haiku Anthology* represents an exciting part of the free verse movement that has been so vital in the history of the twentieth century North American poetry. (I am aware that the issue of whether haiku should be lumped together with poetry, and we should no more separate haiku from poetry than we should say that another form imported into English—the sonnet—should not be regarded as “poetry.” This is not to say that haiku is not a highly distinctive kind of poetry, however.)

As for the question of length, the average number of syllables per haiku in the anthology is about 13.5, as determined by counting the first selection by each of the 89 poets. The longest haiku found by using that method is 19 syllables; the shortest is 6. The shortest in the entire volume, incidentally, is two syllables long (by Marlene Mountain). That poem and one by George Swede contain the fewest number of words—two (the well known one word haiku, “tundra,” having been eliminated by its author). Evidently, the argument that 17 English syllables are usually too many to achieve the same effect of brevity as a conventional Japanese haiku has long been generally accepted.

As everyone who has opened a haiku journal knows, the three-line form has remained the norm for English language poets. However, 58 of the 863 haiku are one-liners, 22 are two-liners, and 11 use four or more lines. Just one poet, Matsuo Allard, is represented exclusively by one-liners, although Marlene Mountain and George Swede often write in that form. Other poets depart occasionally from the three-line norm, but only three poets—Bob Boldman, Marlene Mountain, and Alan Pizzarelli—are represented by several haiku that do so. Here are

some that experiment significantly with word placement:

on this cold
 spring 1
2 night 3 4
 kittens
 wet
 5

Marlene Mountain

 flinging the frisbee
skips off the ground
 curving up hits a tree

 petal

Alan Pizzarelli

As for the placement of the lines in the three-line haiku, the vast majority (67%) are set up flush left, as in the following:

first cool evening
between the cricket chirps
the long silence

Ruth Yarrow

The next most common pattern (16%) uses stepwise indentation of the second and third lines:

Street violinist
 fallen leaves
 in the open case

George Swede

The remaining three-liners use various other patterns—one line indented, two lines equally indented, two lines unequally indented, reverse stepwise indentation with the third line at the left-hand margin, and so on, all of which affect the timing of how the haiku are read. Most of the indentations are the equivalent of two to five letters in width, but

some poets use indentation in more extreme ways:

the priest
 his shadow caught
on a nail

Bob Boldman

A technique that a few poets use, putting spaces with lines, similar to indentation, also affects the way a haiku is read:

beyond the porch
the summer night leaning out
a moment

John Wills

Another formal aspect of haiku that appears to have achieved just as much acceptance as the three-line form is the elimination of capital letters. Only 18 poets use initial capital letters consistently, several of them among the older generation of haiku poets, and apparently a number of other poets started their careers using initial capital letters and then stopped. An even smaller number of poets—just 7—end their haiku with a period, and again they tend to be representatives of the early days of English language haiku, like Hoyt, Jewell, and Hackett.

62 I would now like to examine how the haiku in this anthology are constructed with regard to the use of complete sentences, sentence fragments (incomplete sentences), or a combination of both. The greatest number of haiku in the anthology, approximately 33%, consist of two or more fragments, followed by 24% that consist of a single fragment. 23% combine one fragment and grammatically complete sentence, while 19% consist of complete sentences, usually one, but sometimes up to three. Some examples may help to make clear the characteristics of these four types of haiku construction, beginning with those that are written in sentence form.

It is interesting that so many haiku in this anthology are written in one or more complete sentences because several sets of guidelines have been published over the years maintaining that a haiku should not be in the form of a sentence. Nevertheless, here is a sampling of haiku that would satisfy even the conservative grammarian:

in the mirror
the open door
blows shut behind me

Penny Harter

with a flourish
the waitress leaves behind
rearranged smears

Dee Evetts

The crow flies off...
mountains fall away
beneath him

Larry Gates

I hear her sew
I hear the rain
I turn back a page

LeRoy Gorman

The second type, haiku that consist of just one fragment, takes many forms. Many use inversion, with the verb "to be" (serving as the predicate) understood but not stated:

Emerging hot and rosy
from their skins—
beets!

Anita Virgil

If this haiku were a conventional prose sentence, it would of course read, "Beets are emerging hot and rosy from their skins!"

Here is one that suppresses the verb "to be" (after the word "shore") but without inversion:

the far shore
drifting out of the mist
to meet us

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

"To be" is probably the most common verb understood but not stated in haiku. The next two examples illustrate how other verbs may be omitted:

from the pinecone
one furry spider leg
then another

Carl Patrick

Cabbage moth—
the whole golf course
to itself

Alexis Rotella

After "spider leg," the verb "appears" is probably to be understood, and in Rotella's haiku, the understood verb after "moth" is "has."

The following examples show how the first person pronoun is commonly suppressed:

64_r

coming home
flower
by
flower

Jane Reichhold

As day breaks
the lightness of her breath
on my back

Tom Tico

If it were a prose sentence, the first one would start, "I am coming home . . ."; the second one would say,

"I feel the lightness . . ." Both of these haiku clearly imply the experience of the speaker, but in the next examples the presence of the speaker recedes even further from the reader's awareness:

the shadow in the folded napkin
Cor van den Heuvel

quietly
the fireworks
far away
Gary Hotham

The silence
in moonlight
of stones
Virginia Brady Young

65

While it is true that most haiku of this type, especially one like van den Heuvel's, could begin with the words, "I see" (or, less commonly, "I hear," "I taste," and so on), or perhaps, "I sense," "I notice," or "I am aware of," such words are clearly not implied in the way the suppressed predicates are in the earlier examples. These last three haiku simply seem to be directing our attention to the scene being described, and they are more radically fragmentary. The presence of the adverb "quietly" in Hotham's haiku virtually prevents the reader from being able to turn it into a sentence beginning with "I."

The third type of construction is a fragment combined with a complete sentence, often incorporating internal comparison. Sometimes the fragment is used to establish the scene or context, as in the following two examples:

sidewalk sale—
wind twists a lifetime
guarantee tag
Tom Clausen

candlelight dinner—
his finger slowly circles
the rim of his glass

Lee Gurga

Often the fragment presents an indication of time and/or season, which also tends to set the mood:

Sunset:
one last parachute
floats slowly down

Kay M. Avila

deep winter...
all day long the mountainside
in shadow

John Wills

At other times the fragment helps create a more specific and detailed image:

rows of corn
stretched to the horizon—
sun on the thunderhead

Lee Gurga

66 Finally, the fourth and most common type of haiku is one composed of two (or more) fragments. Again, as with the previous type, often one of the fragments, usually the shortest, is used to establish context (and again, perhaps incorporating internal comparison):

Snow falling
on the empty parking-lot;
Christmas Eve...

Eric Amann

autumn night:
following the flashlight beam
through the rain

Betty Drevniok

perfect summer sky—
one blue crayon
missing from the box

Evelyn Lang

The following example illustrates how sometimes it is difficult to determine where one fragment ends and the next begins:

sudden shower
in the empty park
a swing still swinging

Margaret Chula

The middle line can be seen as forming a unit with either the first or the third. This ambiguity creates an effective tension that adds to the mood of the poem.

Sometimes the two fragments work together to create a more detailed image:

Spring breeze through the window
stains on an apron
left at the counter

Michael Dylan Welch

far back under a ledge
the ancient petroglyph faint
water sound

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

Finally, here is a relatively rare variety—a three fragment haiku:

a poppy...
a field of poppies!
the hill blowing with poppies!

Michael McClintock

The fragments in these last two types of haiku (those composed of a sentence combined with a fragment and those that consist of more than one

fragment) can work in any of the ways that were analyzed above with regard to one-fragment haiku. However, the shorter fragments usually do not function like condensed sentences but rather, as stated earlier, as brief indicators of the scene or context.

One characteristic of haiku that use short fragments deserves special attention. If the length of these brief fragments is analyzed, we find that nearly half the time they are two words long: "candlelight dinner," "Snow falling," "autumn night," and so on. This means that 26% of all haiku in the anthology contain two word fragments. Although I have not done any sort of systematic study, I feel the percentage of haiku fitting this pattern in journals and books has increased over the years to the point where it has become the dominant pattern. In fact, only 17% of the haiku in the second edition of *The Haiku Anthology* (1986) contained two-word fragments. Many first-rate haiku have been constructed in this way, as every edition of the anthology makes abundantly clear, but there is a danger to the North American haiku community of an orthodoxy setting in. Too many haiku in this pattern not only indicates a sameness in the pattern of perception being portrayed but also represents a sameness in rhythmic construction, as if a nearly identical drum beat is being repeated over and over. In addition, as discussed earlier, most haiku these days are written without capitalization or terminal punctuation, so they nearly all look alike. Although I understand the arguments in favor the predominant style with regard to capitalization and punctuation, I do not find them to be so compelling as to eliminate the variety of styles found in other types of poetry.

I hope that the effect on writers of reading *The Haiku Anthology* will be to understand that a great number of valid approaches exist. There should be no one formula for writing haiku. Uniformity can be stifling. This wonderful anthology provides a valuable resource for understanding the many patterns a haiku can take, and hopefully it will inspire writers to try new patterns and forms. Let variety flourish!

David Elliott

The Music of Haiku

Haiku, like all poetry, is not only a written art but a musical one. Haiku poets, like all poets, are songwriters, musicians. It isn't just the meaning of the words that's important, but also their sound. Haiku poets convey emotional experience; and to a considerable extent that emotion is carried by the sound, or should I say the music of the poem. If the musical element becomes less significant in the haiku that are being written, then it could validly be argued that the emotional aspect of haiku is being depleted. The question is: Could this currently be happening in English-language haiku?

69

In the last twenty-five years the length of the English-language haiku has steadily diminished, which is to say, now more than ever before poems have fewer syllables. (This isn't an opinion but a fact that can be verified.) So, speaking in general, poems *literally* have less music. Now, it's not uncommon to see a haiku that's only nine or ten syllables—and sometimes even less. How much music can be created in such a short span? The answer—not much. And consequently the emotional aspect of these shorter haiku tends to decrease.

But if a poet writes a haiku of sixteen, seventeen, or even eighteen syllables, he or she really has the leeway to make music, and therefore, to emotionally enrich whatever experience is being conveyed. This is the advantage of the longer haiku.

Take a haiku of this sort that's exceptionally well-written and what you have is not only a keen intuition but also a beautiful and affective piece of music:

One breaker crashes . . .
As the next draws up, a lull—
and sandpiper-cries
O. Southard

Tom Tico

Haiku Workshop: Rewriting

One evening, walking down a dead end road I had walked many times before, I suddenly saw that the moon was there before me. I wrote this haiku:

dead end—
walking time and time again
to the moon

I thought “dead end” in the first line was a good idea because it was strong. And I liked that the second line was ambiguous; that is, I could be walking time and time again because of a feeling of helplessness or hopefulness.

An editor I consulted thought the haiku had merit, but thought the second line detracted from the “moment.” Revising, I kept the first line as the focal point, and the second because it supplied the action and suggested, moreover, the phases of the moon. So I changed the third line. I thought it was the weak line because it seemed as if I was walking *up* to the moon.

70 dead end—
walking time and time again
to where the moon hangs

I liked the connection between “dead end” and “hanging”, but the editor preferred the original. He thought that walking to the moon was honest and exact, if not logical. So I returned to the moment of apprehension.

dead end—
why am I walking this way
to the moon

Although this was simple and honest and direct, it was probably not the moment of apprehension, but a moment or two later. The editor, remembering that the original began with a walk, suggested:

evening walk—
approaching the moon
at the dead end

I liked the slowness and ordinariness of this first line (no longer the eye-opener that I thought I needed), but I thought the second and third lines were too explicit. And I didn't like the sequence going from the moon to the dead end—and ending there. So I wrote.

evening walk—
coming to the dead end
and the moon

Coming was better than approaching, one less syllable, and I liked the hard sounds of *c* ("coming"), *k* ("walk"), and the *ds*; and then the *ms* in "coming" and "moon". I also liked that the first two lines had the hard sounds and that the third line was soft. And I found it interesting that, "dead end," which had figured so importantly in the poem, was now in the second line.

The ambiguity is also resolved, making this a poem of possibility, and hope.

Leatrice Lifshitz

books

&

review

Haiku of War and Peace

Pavic, Aleksandar *A Scarecrow in the Snow: Haiku*. (Moment Book, Novi Sad, 2000). 34 pp. 4" x 5 1/2" perfect softbound.

In North America, we are lucky to be living in a time of peace. Peace and political stability are the basic facts of our existence, defining our ambitions, world view, and haiku. Our usual subjects, which include forests, animals, song birds, beaches, and suburbia, are intact and available for our contemplation. Nature is there to be enjoyed at our leisure. Of course, there is a certain amount of pain in our haiku, but more often than not it is the result of a personal misfortune—illness, death, divorce—which does not reflect society at large.

The world of Aleksandar Pavic, the Serbian author of *A Scarecrow in the Snow*, is utterly different from the one we take for granted. The recent ethnic conflicts and NATO bombing of his country loom behind his every line. In his haiku, NATO leaflets mingle with wildflowers in a field, a green meadow hides a rocket shell, and the sound of warplanes interrupts a starry night. The result is poetry with a special urgency, in which Pavic assumes the duty of witnessing and recording the destruction:

broken bridge—
on its pier
a gull's shadow

Here a bridge becomes a pier—the usual ways by which we organize the world no longer apply. Even simple actions take on a new meaning:

pulling off her scarf
a little gipsy girl
bursts into song

Written by an American or Canadian poet, this haiku would be nothing more than a charming vignette. In Pavic's hands, the gipsy girl is raised into a symbol, a brave attempt to spread joy during a time of war.

But what makes this book so impressive is the inner journey that the poet travels. As *A Scarecrow in the Snow* progresses, the haiku of war give way to the haiku of peace. At the end of the collection, Pavic looks to nature with its pine trees, swallows, and pheasants to provide hope and renewal. One of the final haiku runs:

winter sunshine—
in the fresh smelling snow
a green pine tree

There is a world of distance between this poem and the air-raid siren that opens the book.

Aleksandar Pavic is a poet with real forcefulness and power, and we are lucky to have this volume of haiku in a dual Serbian and English edition, with a black and white illustration by Bob Ahrens. My only complaint has to do with the book's length. There are only seventeen haiku here, one to a page, but the final ten pages are taken up with an interpretive essay by Dimitar Anakiev and snippets of praise by other haiku poets. The essay is an important attempt to establish Serbian haiku as "an authentic part of western haiku," but the comments are superfluous and should have been omitted. We might have had a few more of these vital poems instead.

Sense and Sensibility: Notes from Issa's Stepson

Gibson, Robert *Children of the Sparrow: HAIKU* (Holly House, 4400 South Holly Street, Seattle WA 98118, 1999). 144 pp., 6" x 9", perfect softbound. Ink drawings. \$15.95. Available from the publisher.

The issue of sensibility in haiku is not often addressed. I once wrote about the difficulty of convincingly capturing the childlike style of Issa in the postmodern world. Robert Gibson's intention is to write in that style. As he notes in the preface, the title of this collection is taken from one of Issa's haiku. It is the well-known one in which Issa warns some young sparrows to get out of the way of a stallion. Here's one of Gibson's haiku a cold-hearted critic might accuse of reflecting the so-called pathetic fallacy:

january storm
the bamboo loves
to thrash about

If you like the tone of this haiku, and I do, you will actually relish the author's identification with the bamboo. You will be equally forgiving of the simile in this haiku that is full of open-eyed wonder:

clear cold water
flows 'round boulders
big as my house

I first became acquainted with Robert Gibson's haiku with its keen expression of the vitality of nature when I accepted the following haiku, included in this collection, for a haiku anthology:

sunrise
thirty pound salmon roll
in babine river

The author's background in anthropology with field work among Indian peoples in the remaining North American wilderness is reflected in this haiku, a part of the sequence "Babine Village," and others in the collection.

His evocation of an almost animated nature easily accompanies Issa's sensibility, reflected in a childlike delight in nature and a pared-down diction in this collection. Notice the allusion to Issa's haiku on the death of his daughter in the first of these poems:

i know
a bird's life isn't easy
but still . . .

look
a brown wren
about this big

Here are an "ah!" moment and one of humor in the same vein:

spring morning
even the garbage cans
are beautiful

midsummer eve
turn up my hearing aid
crickets

Occasionally this overall sprightly tone is subject to a flatness of simple description or statement, sometimes in a bare nature sketch with a new image in each of a haiku's three lines. But at their best these poems winningly capture Issa's delight and the sensibility of childlike wonder and humor.

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The collection is organized according to seasons, with summer and winter offering, to my taste, the best haiku. It concludes with "Babine Village" and three other short sequences, and five tanka. Each section is introduced by interesting, stark-black, abstract ink drawings by Karen Klein.

In sum, this collection is a delight for anyone who wants to share in a childlike connection with nature.

Bruce Ross

The Local Dialect

Compton, Ellen & Jim Kacian & Jeff Witkin, editors. *pocket change: towpath anthology 2000* (Red Moon Press, Winchester VA 2000). 40 pp. 3 1/2" x 5" saddle-stapled. ISBN 1-893959-12-0. \$5.00.

de Gruttola, Raffael & Karen Klein, editors. *voice of the peeper*. (Aether Press, Boston, 1999). 57 pp. 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" perfect bound.

Leonard, John, editor. *Fallen Leaves* (Two Autumns Press, San Francisco, 2000). 24 pp. 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" saddle stapled. \$6.00.

I am always a little ambivalent about reading anthologies of poems. On the one hand, I am sure to discover at least a few poems that I like as I wade through the different voices and styles. On the other hand, I miss the experience of losing myself in a single vision of the world, which is the reward of reading a book written by a single author. In an anthology, I often feel as though I am lurching back and forth between too many poets, too many different ways of seeing. And just as I become comfortable with one, I have to shift to another poet with his or her own demands.

A good anthology will soften the impact of these shifts by providing a common thread—a shared setting, theme, experience, or aesthetic goal—to link the works that it collects. The books reviewed here achieve this focus by collecting the poets of a single region. Of the three, I found *pocket change* by the towpath haiku society the most successful in molding the various haiku into a book. The society, according to the back cover, was founded in 1995 and is named for a canal connecting Washington D.C. with Cumberland, Maryland. This book, the group's first, gathers 35 haiku by some well-known poets and some less familiar ones, with one poem being printed per page. The haiku begin with late winter and cycle through the seasons, ending with early spring. This organization helps to mold the collection into a

unified whole, which displays these very fine haiku to their best advantage. Two of my favourites are:

testing the waters
at the end of the dock
silent moon
A. C. Missias

breaking the silence
of the dock
acorn rain
Kristen Deming

Most of the haiku depict an East Coast landscape with a sudden twist or insightful observation. A few tackle the constants of modern American life, including baseball and divorce, although one senryu is set in Singapore, which interrupts the book's flow.

The anthology *voice of the peeper* collects the work of the Boston Haiku Society Poets. As member Lawrence Rungren writes in his introduction, the book provides a snapshot of "the current state of haiku in Boston." Rather than a "Boston school" of haiku, however, Rungren finds a "diversity of style and viewpoint." The haiku revel in this diversity, portraying a Russian train station, Mount Fuji, an artist's studio, and scenes from Florida and the sea shore along with scenes of Boston and its surroundings. The diversity is also reflected in the contents. Besides the haiku and senryu (from two to nine by each of the eighteen poets), the book includes two haibun by Judson Evans, two linked verses, and a number of *sumi-e* paintings by Kaji Aso that are striking in their use of thick, heavy lines. The volume thus has a sociological interest: the wide range of forms and subjects shows how fluid the make-up of the city has become as it mixes citizens from outside of New England with native Bostonians. But the real attraction of the book lies in its many strong poems:

voice of the peeper
glides
on the spring breeze
Kaji Aso

decorating
the bare white window frame
a ladybug
Paul David Mena

The precise verb "glides" and the surprising

introduction of the ladybug are nicely done. Most of these haiku include something above the ordinary—a precise phrase, twist, or revelation—that makes them even better on a second reading than on a first.

Fallen Leaves grew out of a reading in San Francisco on August 20, 2000, that was sponsored by the Haiku Poets of Northern California. The book is the eleventh in a series and, like its predecessors, it presents a dozen haiku by each of four poets. I found the haiku to be rather uneven. Some of them sounded too wordy to my ears, while others worried about Groucho Marx or fairies in the woods. But there are many engaging haiku here too, including the following:

in the silence
after snow
a wren's faint chirp
Rich Krivcher

pressed roses
remembering his voice
all through the poems
Eugenie Waldteufel

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I enjoyed the implied story of the first haiku and what Bashô called *nioi*, the “fragrance” or subtle linking of images, of the second. The subjects treated in this anthology range from hikes in a park, *tai chi*, divorce, television, Japanese festivals, plumbing, and a funeral, making Californian life appear to be as rushed and eclectic as those of us from outside the state imagine it to be. Flashes of humour also enliven many of the haiku.

Perhaps because it grew out of California, *Fallen Leaves* has a different feel to it than *pocket change* or *voice of the peeper*. In general, its poems are funny, irreverent, and devoted to startling revelations. The Boston and towpath collections tended to focus more on creating a formal beauty or a nuanced insight conveyed through careful attention to language and selection of details. All in all, these regional differences are indications of good health. They not only help focus these anthologies, they also show that distinctive voices are finding their way into our haiku.

Edward Zuk

BOOKS RECEIVED

Modern Haiku Association, Editors *Japanese Haiku 2001* (Gendai Haiku Kyokai, 2001, distributed by YOU-Shorin Press, 915-1 Arakoda Saku-shi, Nagano, 385-0007, Japan). 300 pp., 5.75" x 8.25", perfect soft-bound. ISBN 4-89709-336-8. \$30 + \$5 postage.

This important volume features a sampling of the work of 185 major Japanese haiku poets in English and Japanese. Many of the poets here have never before appeared in English. This is the best introduction to the state of contemporary Japanese haiku for those without Japanese that we have, or are likely to have. Highly recommended.

Ketchek, Michael, Editor *et. al. Oneself* (privately published, 2000). 16 pp., 5.5" x 8", saddle-stapled softbound. \$5 from Tom Painting, 40 Huntington Hills, Rochester NY 14622. *A chapbook in the author's homey style exploring issues which have engaged him throughout his haiku career, and which, not coincidentally, engage all of us at one time or another.*

Duhaime, André, Editor *Haïku et Francophonie Canadienne* (Les Editions David, 1678, rue Sansonnet, Orléans Ontario, K1C 5Y7 Canada, 2000). 108 pp., 5.5" x 8.25", perfect softbound. ISBN 2-922109-40-2. \$10 Canadian from the publishers.

Another offering from M. Duhaime, whose estimable Haïku sans frontières remains one of the most important texts in haiku from the last quarter of the 20th century. This volume, too, provides an important resource to understanding Canadian haiku in our times, but, hélas, only to French readers.

Season whistling (Thinking Post Press, 322 Via Don Benito, Cathedral City CA 92234, 2000). 24 pp., 4.125" x 5.5", saddle-stapled. No price. Enquire with the publisher.

This modest chapbook is imbued with a wistful and zen-like attitude, a longing, one might say, for an idealized world which is realized through the poems. This is certainly not the mainstream of haiku practice in the west, or perhaps anywhere, today, but the author makes a good case for its continuing presence.

Emrich, Jeanne with Michael Dylan Welch *berries and cream* (Press Here, PO Box 4014, Foster City, CA 94404, 2000). Introduction by Stephen Addiss. 12 haiga in full color. 48 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", saddle-stapled. ISBN 1-878798-22-7. \$9. Enquire with the publisher.

Not a book of haiku, but rather an interview (in the tradition of other such interviews by this press) concerning the state of the art of haiga in the west, with one of the leading lights of contemporary western haiga practice. Recommended for anyone interested in the amalgamation of haiku with the other arts.

Maya, Giselle, Editor *Tea Ceremony* (Koyama Press, 84750 Saint Martin de Castillon, France, 2000). 56 pp., 10" x 13", hand saddle-stitched using handmade papers. Illustrated. Price upon request from the publisher.

This is a beautiful book in every sense, an obvious labor of love using handmade papers in an oversized format, with pleasing fonts and nicely judged work, all centered around the experience of the tea ceremony.

Stoelting, Laurie W. *Light on the Mountain: mt. tamalpais, a poet's view* (Field Trips, 2000). Illustrated by Kay F. Anderson, Eric Stoelting, Laurie Stoelting. 62 pp., 4.5" x 6.5", perfect softbound. With photos and artwork by the author. ISBN 0-615-11777-5. \$15 from the author at 303 Holly Street, Mill Valley CA 94941.

Another beautifully produced volume, with a pleasing dust-jacket, attractive papers, an unsheathed binding sewn in signatures, apt illustrations, and fine poems. The ensemble looks and feels like work from a "nature lover," and indeed profits from the book are earmarked for charity which endeavors to preserve the eponymous mountain.

Jepsen, Vivienne, Editor *the whole wide world* (NZ Poetry Society, PO Box 5283, Lambton Quay, Wellington NZ, 2000). 92 pp., 5.5" x 8.25", perfect softbound. ISBN 0-9598009-6-4. \$14.95NZ from the NZ Poetry Society.

This is the anthology of the 2000 New Zealand Poetry Society's International Poetry Competition, two-thirds of which is mainstream poetry. There is, however, enough haiku of sufficiently good quality to merit consideration, however, and it is packaged in the same fine fashion as the previous volumes in this series.

Martone, John *shards* (dogwood & honeysuckle, Huntington IL, 2000) 36 pp., 3" x 4.25", saddle-stitch softbound. No ISBN or price given. Query the author at 325 W Tyler Apt. B, Charleston IL 61920.

John Martone is becoming one of our most prolific, as well as inimicable poets, and this volume, true to his style and standards, engages the reader with his sensibility, attuned as it is to the slightest of contacts, and his unusual sense of linear design.

Corman, Cid *The Wang Way* (tel-let, 325 W Tyler Apt. B, Charleston IL 61920, 2000) 28 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", saddle-stitch softbound. No ISBN or price given. Query the publisher. 23 "transvisions" by the noted minimalist poet with a decided Zen feel and content, based on the writings of Wang (701-761). Not a book of haiku, but of interest to many in the haiku community.

jensen, jen (editor) *Agnieszka's Dowry* (A Small Garlic Press, 5445 N Sheridan 3003, Chicago IL 60640, 2000) 40 pp., 5.5" x 8.5", saddle-stitch softbound. ISBN 1-888431-27-X. \$2 + \$2 S&H. Available from the publisher.

A special haiku issue of this print and online magazine, featuring the work of 9 poets and nothing else—very clean and spare, and very dignified. It is perhaps too much to hope for that this will be a harbinger of interest in and treatment of haiku from mainstream poetry presses in times to come.

Natsuishi, Ban'ya *Romanje pozemlji* ISBN 961-6314-17-3. 112 pp.

Kacian, Jim *Iz Kamna* ISBN 961-6314-18-1. 56 pages.

Kancev, Nikolaj *Dusa Vodnjaka* ISBN 961-6314-19-X. 32 pp.

Codrescu, Ion *Kapljice rose* ISBN 961-6314-20-3. 56 pages.

Doderovic, Zoran *Zastrupljena reka* ISBN 961-6314-21-1. 32 pp.

All 3.5" x 5.875", perfect softbound. \$X from the publisher, Drustvo Apokalipsa, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Though these collections, sold as a set (Zbirka Haiku 2000/2), are entirely in Slovenian, they are noteworthy in that they endeavor to publish haiku by noted poets from different countries, cultures, languages and schools, enabling Slavic poets and students of literature to consider them as comparative texts, and so gain a perspective of haiku as a world literature and activity, not simply a local phenomenon. Highly recommended, though of course only to those who have the requisite languages.

Doughty, Del *the sound of breathing* ISBN 1-893823-06-7. 32 pp. Illustrated.

Kacian, Jim *In Concert* ISBN 1-893823-07-5. 24 pp. Illustrated.

Lyles, Peggy Willis *Thirty-Six Tones* ISBN 1-893823-08-3. 24 pp.

Pusateri, Chris *Magnetic North* ISBN 1-893823-09-1. 24 pp. Illustrated.

All 5.5" x 4.25", saddle-stapled. \$5 from the publisher, Saki Press, 1021 Gregory, Normal IL 61761, 2000.

These winners of the Saki Press Chapbook Competition for 2000 exhibit a variety of voices and styles, as well as approaches to the chapbook format, from narrative to theme-driven to short collection. Chapbooks give poet and reader the opportunity to consider the organization of work beyond the single moment and poem, and so are departures from the concerns of journals and magazines; for this reason among others it is well worth supporting such ventures.

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Jones, Ken & James Norton & Seán O'Connor *Pilgrim Foxes: Haiku & Haiku Prose* (Pilgrim Press, Troed Rhiw Sebon, Cwmrheidol, Aberystwyth, SY23 3NB, Wales, 2001). 82 pp., 5.5" x 8", perfect softbound. ISBN 0-9539901-0-9. \$11US postfree.

An interesting volume of haibun and haiku from three of the more deft practitioners from Wales & Ireland. It is worth the price of the volume simply to compare what haibun is becoming in English in places other than the United States. Recommended.

Friedenkraft, Georges *Prélude a la Vie (Prelude to Life)* (Peccadilles, 37 Avenue des Acadias, 921240 Clamart, France, 1997). 28 pp., 5.5" x 4.125", saddle-stapled softbound. No price given.

More books of haiku are being produced than ever before, and in more languages. And more often, these volumes in other languages are bilingual, appealing as they might to the English-language haiku community. This is useful, since it permits those of us without another language to discover what is vital in haiku to other sensibilities, allowing, of course, for the difficulties of transmitting these properties across cultural lines. In the present volume, a chapbook of very modest proportions, the translator has captured the 5-7-5 format of the French originals nearly exactly, and, to my taste, the flavor of the poems as well, providing an insight into what this well-known poet of France is conceiving the haiku to be in this time, in this place.

HISA

News

2000 Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Competition
for best unpublished renku in 12, 20, or 36-link forms

Grand Prize (\$150): "Castle Tour"

kasen by Ferris Gilli, Peggy Willis Lyles, & Paul MacNeil

Second Place (tie): "Names of Mountains"

nijuin by John Stevenson, Paul MacNeil, & Yu Chang

Second Place (tie): "November Wind"

kasen by John Stevenson & Christopher Herold

Second Place (tie): "Through the Barley"

kasen by Ferris Gilli & Mark Brooks

Honorable Mention: "Sudden Shower"

kasen by Carol O'Dell & Christopher Herold

Honorable Mention: "Unfinished Dreams"

kasen by Nancy Kline & Deb Ritter

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CASTLE TOUR

castle tour
garden flagstones
gather the day's heat fg

the scent of crimson lilies
as our trumpets rise pwl

braided loops
match the operetta admiral's
bright buttons pm

a float in the evening bath
a Tinkertoy raft fg

soft moonlight
right on time
for "God bless me" pwl

stopping by the mushroom ring
to adjust the pack straps pm

down a road
near Nagasaki
autumn wind pwl

students gaze silently
at the museum display fg

your amused eyes
as we pledge vows
was my smile so bug? pm

that SIZE MATTERS billboard
always good for a laugh pwl

her farewell note
tops the pile
of junk mail fg

cracked leather hinges
on the outhouse door pm

grouse tracks
overlap in the snow
beneath a crescent moon fg

a fallen branch
tangled with tree shadows pm

at the estate sale
one ancestor's portrait
slashed sixty percent pwl

how carefully the chimp
grooms its companion fg

blossoms hang
beside an unpicked orange
gone back to green pm

bivalves close and open
in the flooded marsh pwl

mended with tape the torn box kite flies again	fg
oxygen masks dangling while the hijacker rants	pwl
for his sip she holds a twisted straw from the hospital tray	pm
their child's birth certificate written with quill and homemade ink	fg
Republicans favor the mustard sauce this Independence Day	pwl
I've forgotten the speech but not my sunburn	pm
all afternoon the monotonous rustle of palmetto fronds	fg
will non-union stevedores cross the picket lines?	pwl
even when whacked the cash machine keeps his credit card	pm
with the first bite a shark pulls free of the net	fg
barely clear of alpine pinnacles the gibbous moon	pwl
a cask of new wine brings toasts to the good years	pm

gossamer drifts past the snoring halfback in the rare book room	pwl
lumps of pyrite cushioned in crushed velvet	fg
we perch just on the edge of a Victorian settee	pm
the little balloonman limps away	pwl
wilted but still sweet this bundle of lilac blooms she left outside	fg
jump's length from the creek a frog with a tail	pm

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Ferris Gilli, Peggy Willis Lyles & Paul MacNeil

Judges: *Kris Kondo, Eiko Yachimoto & Shinku Fukuda*

Judges' Commentaries

I have run into some people who say, "Rules of renku are insular and too complicated to follow." They are mistaken. The rules are guidelines that help you make good renku that have rich variety in subject matter and a different level of emphasis in each verse.

I was thrilled while reading "Castle Tour", the Grand Prize renku for this contest. Each poet is unique in poetical talent and all exercised their potential to the fullest.

My thoughts as I read this renku were as follows:

In the *Omote*, the *Hokku* and *wakiku* are verses on bright outside scenes. The pleasant clarity of the first two leaves a clear impression. It is good that the third verse shifted to an indoor scene.

In the *Ura* (Back), The "museum display" link after a verse on Nagasaki is quick-exquisite. The following three verses are love verses and the slight plot-like development is appropriate. The humor expressed in "Size Matters billboard" followed by "her farewell note" gives birth to the next verse "Cracked leather hinges". This verse is nicely figurative and extremely well positioned. The flow from a "crescent moon/ snow/ grouse" to "tree shadow with fallen branches," and to the "estate sale" quietly introduces a touching tone. With this tone lingering, the love of family suggested in "the chimp" seems rather human. This is a very nice development. In the *Nagori-no-Omote* (Front of the Second Folio), tension from "the torn box kite" and a very realistic hijacker is successfully shifted to another love verse (through "twisted straw"). "The child's birth certificate written with quill and homemade ink" suggests strong drama, exciting the readers' imagination. The unexpected shift to "republicans" is unique to renku. This hot taste of irony is a tone new to this renku. "The forgotten speech" is also effective in its light-comical irony.

Linking "stevedores" to "a man at a cash machine" is traditionally categorized as a "*Mukai*-link", *mukai* meaning facing or mirroring (a similar situation but with a different figure). Linking "keeps his credit card" to "pulls free of

the net" is traditionally categorized "*Hantai-link*", *hantai* meaning opposite. Both techniques are well represented here. The shift from the sea to alpine pinnacles followed by a celebration with a toast is well done.

In the *Nagori-no-Ura* (back of the second folio), the "snoring halfback" verse is natural after a cask of new wine. The place he is snoring is interesting and introduces the world of old literature to this *renku*. It is always important to incorporate a word or two from renowned masterpieces. The verses "a Victorian settee" and "the little limping balloonman" also trigger readers' association to old literature. The last two verses are in the *haikai* spirit. The flower having been given but left deserted and a frog with a tail (and caution) are both comical. Overall, this *renku* depicts various scenes of life, both in terms of time and space. The poets have mentioned the past (ancestors, Victorian era), present (hijacker, non-union stevedores), and future (toast). There is great variety in space as well: castle, Nagasaki, sky, hospital, tracks in the snow, village with palmetto fronds, the sea, the mountain, rare book room, etc. The rich variety itself is remarkable but it is all the more valuable because no verse in this *renku* uses a viewpoint similar to one expressed in a previous verse. The three moon verses in this *renku* portray each different phase of the moon: the full moon, a crescent moon and a gibbous moon. Blossom hanging near an orange is gentle and is a good link after the "companion" verse. However, the blossom verse in the last part is, frankly speaking, rather weak. "If the blossom position is to represent the peak splendor of life, a bundle of lilacs placed somewhere is not appropriate," a Japanese judge with traditional aesthetic sensibility would most certainly say. I, however, considered it a good verse for its excellent flow from the previous and to the last verse with a frog. While reading this *renku*, I was able to picture poets who have mastered *renku* rules and were enjoying the collaboration of creating poetry. It is pleasing to find the quality of *renku* performance improving each year.

All renku lovers, let me tell you how I have read the eleven renku sent to me for this contest. After a first reading, I sent my ratings to my fellow judge Kris Kondo, and we decided on the top five. In the second round I tried hard to capture each of those five renku as serialized mental images charged with music, temperature and texture. This was absolutely necessary for me to create a faithful translation for each renku. I provided Professor Fukuda with the translated texts without adding any footnotes hoping he would not feel me "doing the talking." In the third round I read the top five as Japanese texts.

Something unexpected happened. "November Wind", which overwhelmed me with its Bach-like clarity, was rated by far the best in my first round of reading. In my third round of reading it remained number one but the difference with "Castle Tour" and "Through the Barley" became minimal. This could be because deviations from traditional rules were amplified when "November Wind" was translated into Japanese. And possibly more was lost (or added) in translating "November Wind" than "Castle Tour." It must be noted that one Judge did not read translated texts. She rated "Castle Tour" and all the rest without any "something" lost or added. I was relieved to find that this something did not prevent the three of us from reaching agreement. This is important because this contest is not about translation.

I congratulate the poets who composed the *kasen* "Castle Tour." I admire the *haikai* spirit crystallized in their last verse. I also congratulate the second prize winners, especially the poets of "November Wind" and thank them for letting me breathe the sheer poetry. "Through the Barley", another second prize winner, gave me a pleasant sensation as if of riding on breathtaking surf while I was reading the *kyu* (fast finale part) part. The last 12 verses of "Through the Barley" was such that I remember Basho's famous teaching on how to compose a *kasen*: "Always go forward. Never look back."

My honorable mention goes to "Unfinished Dreams."

Eiko Yachimoto

Congratulations! There are many fine renku this year that could be seriously considered by knowledgeable judges of the genre here in Japan. This is no small feat. Renku poets outside Japan have a serious handicap since there are no veteran skilled trained session leaders with twenty, thirty or more years of experience leading sessions. Indeed I imagine very few renku in this contest were written conducted by a *sabaki*, and still the majority of entries were by two people. It is said that one must know the rules before one can break them. I see this as a great paradox in renku outside Japan. The guidelines are yet sparse. But ah, the passion and persistence!

Having followed this renku contest over the years let me comment first on the progress I have noted. First, overall underpinning structure of season and non-season verses has been grasped clearly by many. The overall sensitive use of season words and seasonal elements and the quality of linking and shifting have vastly improved in general. I see much less sticky linking, that is, saying essentially the same thing as in the previous verse.

What needs improvement is overall variety. Topic checklists can be a valuable tool. There is far less repetition of specific words than in the past. One notable exception is pronouns. I would suggest that pronouns be included in the list of words which cannot be repeated and preferably are avoided in order to gain greater richness and variety.

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Many renku still fail to develop the richness implied in a trio of love verses. The entire range of linking and shifting techniques help here. References to famous love stories, love songs, and not just one's personal experience opens up rich possibilities. And finally, great beginnings and great endings: the guidelines for decorum in renku need more attention in many cases.

I would like to thank fellow judge Eiko Yachimoto for her heroic solo work which enabled Shinku Fukuda to join us as a fellow judge in this international experiment in judging.

Kris Kondo

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THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Treasurer's Report (1st Quarter—January 1-March 31, 2001)

Income

Balance	13,931.78
Membership Dues	7,416.00
Contributions	1,738.00
Museum of Haiku Literature	300.00
From Here Press	75.00
Contest Fees	30.00
<i>Frogpond</i> Samples	371.00
Educational Packets	770.00

Total Income **24,631.78**

Expenses

HSA General Account	62.50
Postage/Tel:	0.00
Copy/Printing	58.68
Supplies	200.00
Awards	75.00
HSA Website	686.99
Education Packets	88.00
Quarterly Meeting Expenses	

Newsletter Account	
Printing	1,965.52
Postage	661.76

Frogpond Account	
Printing	4,460.00
Postage	1,094.28
<i>Frogpond</i> Payments	200.00

Total Expenses **9,555.43**

Balance **\$15,076.35**

Respectfully submitted
Raffael DeGruttola, Treasurer

Star
7/3/07
HSA
WMC

C

Museum of Haiku Literature Award
\$100 for the best unpublished work
appearing in the previous issue of *Frogpond*
as voted by the HSA Executive Committee

*dusk—
up to my ears
in birdsong*

John O'Connor (NZ)
(for JK)



Enough Said

While fairly terse when writing verse,
How vexatious:
As to haiku, I am still too—
Too loquacious!

Julia Jacobs

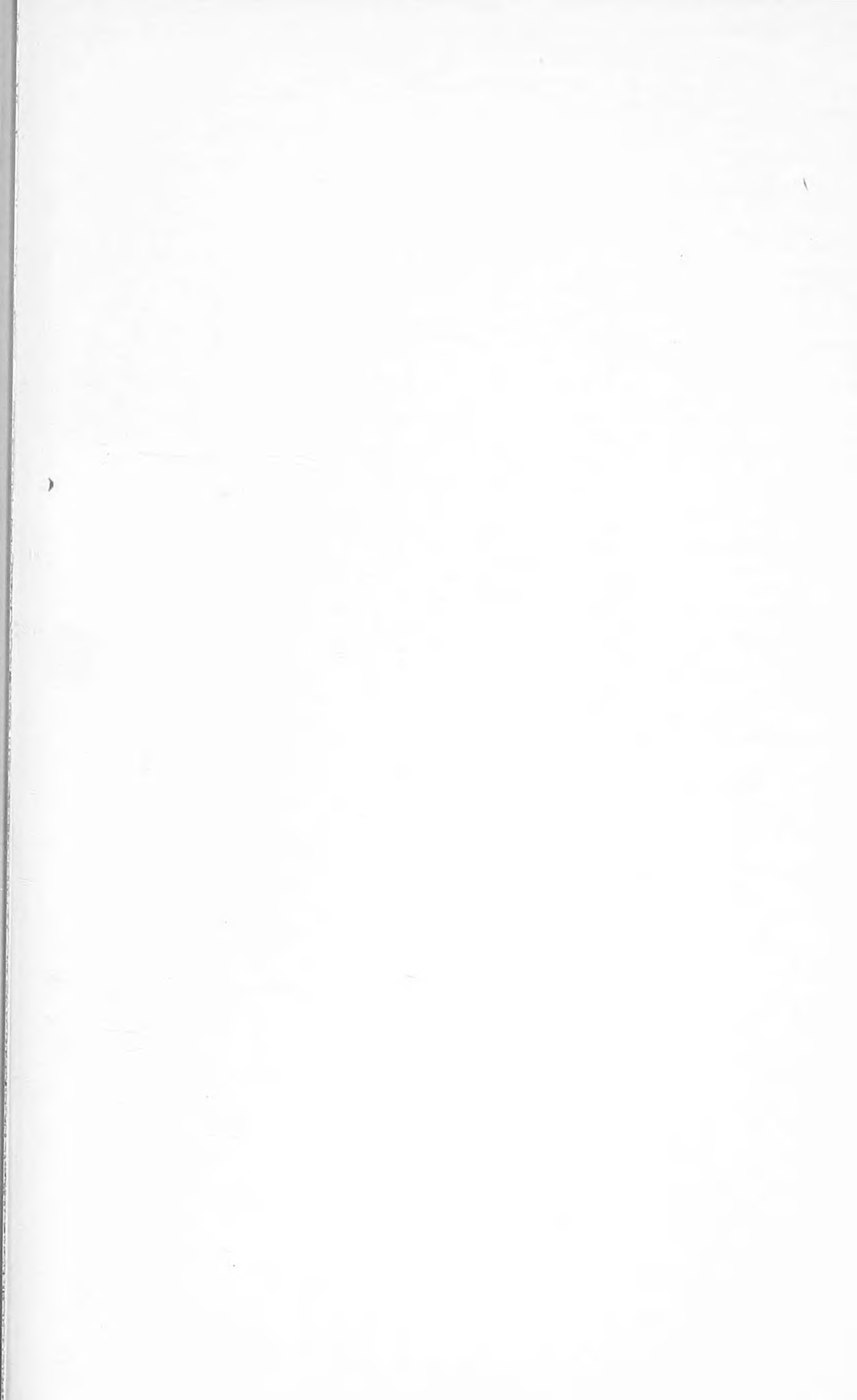


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