





# Frogpond

The Journal of the Haiku  
Society of America

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## EDITOR'S LETTER

Jim Kacian has offered the haiku community seven remarkable years of service as editor of *Frogpond*. He will be hard to follow. Even with two years as his associate editor, I am discovering that there is much to learn about both the aesthetic and technical aspects of producing this journal. Your understanding and encouragement will be much appreciated.

Another publication, *Modern Haiku*, provides a useful precedent for this transition, having encountered an even more significant break point with the passing of longtime editor Bob Spiess in 2002. I will attempt to emulate his successor, Lee Gurga, in at least two ways: providing a gradual transition which preserves a sense of the history of the journal and enlisting a staff to attend to discrete areas of preparation and production.

My hope is that this issue of *Frogpond* will strike readers as recognizably the same publication it has been, but with enough differences to suggest new possibilities. I expect this process to continue, gradually, with future issues.

As a first step toward building a staff, I have asked Jim Kacian to edit the book review section. You will note that he has written all of the reviews on pages 71-76 of this issue. He will write reviews for future issues and will decide, within constraints on available space, what other reviews are used. Book review drafts and copies of books to be reviewed should be directed to Jim at P. O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604.

I would also like to enlist a graphics editor and perhaps a production editor.

This space is normally occupied by a letter from the president of the Society and will be used for that purpose in the future.

*John Stevenson*

*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\$100 for the best unpublished work  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



**From XXVII:3**

Spring rain—  
milk in her left breast  
unexpectedly sweet

*Duro Jaiye*

haiku



Frogpond XXVIII:1

broken branch—  
another tree  
bears the weight

*K. Ramesh.*

winter seclusion  
a pinch of cumin  
a few whole cloves

*Peggy Willis Lyles*

winter night—  
where she cut my hair  
her warmth

*Jim Kacian*

sorting mother's things—  
the small bag  
of wishbones

*Connie Donleycott*

sunlight wavers  
through closed lids  
Sunday service

*Helen Russell*

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moonlit cloud puffs  
the quilted sound of your turn  
toward me

*Ruth Yarrow*

accumulating snow—  
oven mitts  
praying on the counter

*Michael Dylan Welch*

of the old church  
oak, rhododendron,  
and yew

*Hilary Tann*

moving day—  
the passenger train completes  
a horseshoe curve

*Carmen Sterba*

old cat  
your one eye  
holds the moon

*Doreen King*



Frogpond XXVIII:1

tray of hors d'oeuvres  
five more hours  
until the new year

*Charlie Close*

The person who passed . . .  
already he has faded  
back into the fog

*Robert Major*

snow falling . . .  
being the giant  
among chickadees

*Robert Mainone*

the sound of a hat  
being picked up  
from the piano

*Myron Lysenko*

New Year's Day  
a drift of leaves  
against the sliding door

*Steve Thunell*

Haiku Society of America

her pale white arms  
from bare shoulders  
to piano keys

*Michael Ketchek*

hand-knit mittens  
the softness of sunlight  
across a prairie sky

*Karina Klesko*

snowy night  
the kindest nurse  
on duty

*Marcus Larsson*

longer than winter  
the line  
at the bank

*Michele Harvey*

winter sunlight—  
chickadees at the feeder  
I just filled

*Connie Donleycott*



Frogpond XXVIII:1

an echo  
answering my shout  
martins dip and turn

*Ken Hurm*

sunrise  
on the coastal pine  
icicles

*Ernest J. Berry*

Struggling with words;  
patches of old brick  
where the asphalt's worn thin

*Anna Poplawska*

killing the spider again my son

*Jason Sanford Brown*

a single hole  
in my mitten  
vernal equinox

*Karen Klein*

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windblown chaff  
echoes  
in an empty silo

*William Cullen Jr.*

a shower outside inside nothing flows

*Marlene Mountain*

✓  
the unbroken line  
of a passing freight train;  
freshly ploughed field

*A. C. Missias*

✓  
spring morning—  
bike tracks fade  
between puddles

*Fran Masat*

spring evening  
the children's promise  
not to get cold

*Marcus Larsson*

Frogpond XXVIII:1

spring longing  
the man  
in the three-quarter moon  
*Carolyn Hall*

rain-heavy sky  
another contraction  
coming on  
*Agnes Eva Savich*

ice-out  
the river  
a remembered blue  
*Kirsty Karkow*

rainy day—  
she renames  
her stuffed animals  
*Audrey Olberg*

taking a photograph  
of my mother—  
spring blossoms  
*Colin Buchanan*



## Dissection of the Haiku Tradition: Flowers and Plants

*By Fay Aoyagi*

In this series of essays, I will discuss one of the traditional elements of haiku: the kigo. I would like to share the view of a non-traditionalist. My focus will be on how I use a kigo when I write a haiku in English. Though many of the samples I use will be the work of Japanese haiku poets, my main purpose is not to compare Japanese-language haiku with English-language haiku. Also, my intention is not to tell you how you should write a haiku. I believe in diversity and I trust the voice of a haiku poet. I hope that my approach to kigo will help you deepen your haiku experiences. This first article is about flowers and plants. I plan to write future installments about animals and birds, moon and wind, and holidays and observances. Comments are welcome, but I am not planning to seek haiku submissions for my articles.

In American haiku, the linkage between nature and human nature has been emphasized. In most published haiku in the United States, the poet is invisible; one remains only an observer of nature. Many American haiku poets seem to believe that haiku should be a subdued *sumi-e* or a quiet still life. But haiku can be as colorful as van Gogh's paintings or as abstract as the work of Picasso.

The core of my haiku is my emotion as a woman, as a Japanese person, and an immigrant. "Who I am" is the essential ingredient in my haiku. To convey my feelings, I rely on a kigo. Sometimes finding the right kigo is my first step to writing a haiku.

*watakushi no hone to sakura ga mankai ni*  
my bones  
and cherry blossoms  
in full bloom

*Yasuyo Ohnishi <sup>(1)</sup>*



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

The cherry blossom is the national flower of Japan. From ancient times numerous poets have written about them. Saigyō dreamed of dying under the cherry blossoms. Those short-lived, delicate flowers were the symbols of Kamikaze fighters during World War II. In April, people all over Japan gather under the trees in full blossom and have a party.

*bara no sono hikikaesaneba deguchi nashi*  
the rose garden—  
unless you retrace your steps  
there's no exit

*Kiyoko Tsuda* <sup>(2)</sup>

While cherry blossoms symbolize where I came from, roses represent Western culture and where I am now. I think roses demand a lot of care. To have a gorgeous, perfect flower, one has to tend them with water, fertilizers and pesticides. Roses are somewhat the manifestation of my borrowed culture. "Rose" itself is a summer kigo, but I prefer to use it in a winter setting. I can put contradictory feelings or images together in this way.

winter roses—  
I am tired of reading  
between the lines

*Fay Aoyagi* <sup>(3)</sup>

"Hydrangea" is my favorite summer flower kigo. According to my Japanese saijiki, hydrangeas change their colors after they bloom because of a substance called flavone. The most common term for "hydrangea" in Japanese is *ajisai*; but it is also called *nana henge* (seven changes).

*ajisai ya nobore to ieru gotoku kai*  
hydrangeas—  
the stairs seem to tell me  
to climb up

*Tatsuko Hoshino* <sup>(4)</sup>



## Haiku Society of America

In Kamakura, where Tatsuko grew up, there is a temple called Hydrangea Temple, famous for its hydrangeas. There are steep stone steps up to the temple from the street.

I wish I knew more about botany. Some English flower names sound very interesting and evocative; such as Blue Witch, Indian Paintbrush, Johnny Jump-up and Solomon's Seal.

*shiragiku to ware gekkô no soko ni sayu*  
white chrysanthemum  
and me, at the bottom of the moonlight  
coldly glow

*Nobuko Katsura* <sup>(4)</sup>

My association with chrysanthemums is somewhat complicated. It is the flower of the Japanese royal family. A chrysanthemum is embossed on the front cover of Japanese passports. In a way, the chrysanthemum is a husk of the things which I left in my native country. Yet, I feel I am a chrysanthemum wherever I go, whatever I do.

One of my favorite quotes about haiku is by Takajo Mitsuhashi. She said "writing a haiku is an act of stripping scale from my skin. The scale which is stripped from the skin is evidence of my life."

*tsuta karete isshin ganji garame nari*  
ivy having died  
the entire trunk  
inextricably bound

*Takajo Mitsuhashi* <sup>(2)</sup>

In Japan, Takajo is one of the "4Ts" (famous female haiku poets) along with Teijo Nakamura, Takako Hashimoto and Tatsuko Hoshino. They were pioneers in the early twentieth century when the haiku world was dominated by men. If a poet is a mere observer of nature, the gender of the poet may not be very impor-



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

tant. However, if you place yourself at the center of your haiku, who you are and how you see the world will become critical.

*karekusa no hito omou toki kiniro ni*  
withered grass  
when I think of him ...  
burnished gold

*Masajo Suzuki* <sup>(5)</sup>

Masajo Suzuki who lived a very interesting and rather dramatic life showed a different aspect of the withered grass. She saw hope in the withered grass. In the deep winter, we will hear the approaching footsteps of the spring.

Because I am not a nature lover, I see flowers and plants in a different way from a hiker or a gardener. It may be a helpful exercise for you to pick four or five flowers which are meaningful to you and compose a haiku based on why each particular flower appeals to you.

- (1) *Gendai no Haiku* (modern haiku anthology) edited by Shôbin Hirai, Kadokawa Shoten, 1982. Translation by Fay Aoyagi
- (2) *Far Beyond the Field* edited and translated by Makoto Ueda, Columbia University Press, 2003.
- (3) Unpublished
- (4) *Dai Saijiki* (comprehensive saijiki) edited by Shuoshi Mizuhara, Shuson Kato, Kenkichi Yamamoto, Kodansha, 1982. Translation by Fay Aoyagi
- (5) *Love Haiku: Masajo Suzuki's Lifetime of Love*, translated by Emiko Miyashita and Lee Gurga, Brooks Books, 2000.

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I listen  
through the rain  
to her

*Jason Stanford Brown*

spring breeze—  
lying to myself  
again  
*Stanford M. Forrester*

A-bomb blast center  
cherry blossoms in full bloom  
as in a nightmare

*Yasuhiko Shigemoto*

no words left  
for what I have to say  
~two butterflies

*Karma Tenzing Wangchuk*

pickup game  
a stray dog runs  
from team to team

*Hilary Tann*

Frogpond XXVIII:1

sparrow flies back to  
its nest on  
the merry-go-round

*John Sullivan*

hotel pool  
leaves of the potted palm  
press on the tiled wall

*Michael Ketchek*

mud flats—  
my reflection  
in father's bucket

*Dan McCullough*

spring birdsong  
my wife's  
waking-up sounds

*Mark Hollingsworth*

from the foundation  
all the way up to the roof  
morning glories

*Tom Tico*



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temple bells—  
a note of sourness  
in the cherries

*Fran Masat*

dozing  
to the flutter  
of hummingbirds

*Stephen Addiss*

Father's Day—  
sitting alone  
on the mall bench

*Lenard D. Moore*

cemetery heat—  
I polish the brass letters  
of my daughter's name

*Lenard D. Moore*

birdsong  
a breeze ruffles  
the sheet music

*William Cullen Jr.*

Frogpond XXVIII:1

incoming wave  
a crab sidesteps  
the Coke bottle

*Allen McGill*

the rain-line  
crosses the fields  
Gettysburg

*James Fowler*

lightning flash  
a horizon  
for the moment

*Mark Hollingsworth*

relentless heat  
jet skiers  
pound their wakes

*Jeffrey Stillman*

the way we end up  
on the bed . . .  
white curtains lapping our feet

*Peter Yovu*

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last stars fading . . .  
the sow rolls over  
for her young

*Peter Yovu*

all morning  
the demands  
of the blue hydrangea

*Patrick Sweeney*

summer sun  
a cool hand  
touches my shoulder

*Darrell Byrd*

clear water—  
the whiteness  
of my father's feet

*Chad Lee Robinson*

smokers  
join the fireflies  
distant laughter

*Allen McGill*



Frogpond XXVIII:1

guiding his wheelchair  
across the footbridge  
water over stones

*D. Claire Gallagher*

porch swing to myself . . .  
wondering where fireflies go  
at summer's end

*Janelle Barrera*

peeling apples—  
the dry buzz  
of the mud dauber

*Harvey Watson*

about to leave . . .  
harvested rice fields  
green a second time

*Scott Metz*

ocean wind  
swirling the palms  
whitecaps in the pool

*Francine Porad*

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on the hilltop  
round hay bales  
echo the clouds

*Polly W. Swafford*

under mom's bed  
the lost tennis shoe—  
half moon

*Marie Summers*

farmers' market  
callused hands  
count the change

*Stephen Peters*

autumn sunset—  
contrails of cargo planes  
back from Iraq

*Steve Perrin*

faded photograph  
of Grandfather's cornfields—  
the scent of river loam

*Elizabeth Howard*

Frogpond XXVIII:1

choosing teams  
playground lines  
freshly painted

*Charlie Close*

lunar eclipse  
my son  
nearly as tall as I

*Deb Baker*

handing me  
my scarred hiking boots  
the cobbler's stained fingers

*Jack Barry*

crabapple—  
its fragrance  
smashed

*Stanford M. Forrester*

withered chrysanthemum—  
the warmth  
of a teacup

*Johnette Downing*



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full moon

I bend

backward

*joan iverson goswell*

pumpkin patch

this one is big enough

for my son

*Yu Chang*

a sparrow's shadow

darkens the house

October afternoon

*Burnell Lippy*

fall colors

in the lake—

one thought after another

*Tom Clausen*

train home with Einstein

a clock face in brick

transits the sky

*Scott Mason*

Frogpond XXVIII:1

empty lot—  
squirrels move into  
an old couch

*CarrieAnn Thunell*

waiting for you  
the wind  
kicks up a bit

*Carolyn Hall*

taking turns  
to stretch their necks  
a pair of herons

*Yu Chang*

a skim of ice  
above the spillway  
quaking aspen

*Tom Painting*

prairie farmhouse—  
two empty lawn chairs  
facing the blacktop

*Lee Gurga*

senryu



Frogpond XXVIII:1

haiku seminar  
on and on and on about  
how to be sparing

*Andy Hacanis*

paper wads  
my origami  
swans and frogs

*Bob Boni*

satin pointe shoe  
hanging from a dumpster  
a stray jumps for it

*Ariel Lambert*

baseball in the parking lot  
between geometry  
and history

*John Kinory*

weekend golfer—  
breaking 80  
on the way home

*Carlos Colón*

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the house is in darkness;  
you have left a note  
and meat, thawing

*Andrew Detheridge*

62 candles—  
such beautiful memories  
of things I regret

*Billy Wilson*

just oatmeal  
the waitress says  
“enjoy”

*Tom Clausen*

spring is here . . .  
pulling too quickly  
along the perforated line

*Michael Fessler*

mountaintop castle;  
the old man shows me the spot  
for the best photo

*Scott Metz*

Frogpond XXVIII:1

football on TV—  
a day of punts  
between us

*Charles Gillispie*

filing for divorce—  
her wedding dress  
goes home to mother

*Dorothy McLaughlin*

eating breakfast  
each from our own bowl  
the cat and i

*Karma Tenzing Wangchuk*

reaching for a peach  
I find one  
underfoot

*Bob Moyer*

I refuse to believe  
I didn't give myself  
this face

*Constantine Sandis*



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anniversary  
her diamond band  
missing a chip

*Pamela Miller Ness*

tight-fitting jeans  
leaving no room  
for dessert

*Emily Romano*

shrinking  
now my son  
measures me

*Tom Tico*

9/11  
too warm in the sun  
too cool in the shade

*Dietmar Tauchner*

air-conditioning  
spicy smell of mummies  
through glass cases

*Brent Partridge*

Frogpond XXVIII:1

guided fossil hunt  
adolescent girls  
compare nail polish  
*frances angela*

second honeymoon  
a string of rainbow trout  
is all that connects us  
*an'ya*

her perfect bathroom  
a strand of dental floss hangs  
from the wastebasket  
*Mykel Board*

baby clothes  
now the littlest things  
make her cry  
*Michael Blaine*

blood clouds  
in the basin  
my son's first shave  
*Gary Cozine*

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taco shop  
the salsa blends  
with my shirt

*Darrell Byrd*

political speech  
now and then the blue jay's blue  
between maple leaves

*Ferris Gilli*

trespassing  
I visit  
my childhood home

*David Gershator*

new house . . .  
unpacking the faded red cloth  
the page-worn books

*Anne LB Davidson*

auto recall  
I sit & read  
children's magazines

*Liz Fenn*



Frogpond XXVIII:1

no recognition  
of what we've been—  
gourmet ducks

*George Dorsty*

salmonella . . .  
28 feet  
of intestine

*Jim Kacian*

a wreath  
too soon unchristmased  
crowns the trashcan

*H. F. Noyes*

first impression:  
will she live up to  
her tee shirt's wit?

*Dorothy McLaughlin*

his quiet funeral—  
a man who did  
most of the talking

*Barry George*



Rengay

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Haiku/Senryu Sequence

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Frogpond XXVIII:1

## THE MAGICIAN'S HAT

Chinese New Year  
the dragon turns  
into itself

from the magician's hat  
three hares and a tortoise

a mad dash  
to the corner phone booth  
Clark Kent

"Act Now!"  
she orders  
the Buns of Steel video

discovering for herself  
blondes do have more fun

the Little Tramp  
shuffles off  
in digitized color

Carolyn Rohrig (verses 1, 3, 6)

Carolyn Hall (verses 2, 4, 5)



## rites of passage

THE CARNIVAL IS IN TOWN for a week. The sun has gone down and the air is crisp. The scent of hay rolls in with the night breeze. Strobe lights and sirens, spinning wheels and barkers, cotton candy and caramel apples—so like my first county fair thirty-five years ago. After a few go rounds on the kiddie cars and space rockets, my son tells me he wants to try the big rides this year. "Just promise to hold me tight, Mama." And I do hold him tight. By the third time on The Tornado, he tells me I can let go of him. He even throws his arms up in the air the way he's seen the other kids do. With all the strength I can muster, I grab on to anything but him.

ever raise tadpoles  
in your very own puddle?  
he wiggles a tooth

As we wait in line to ride the Rock and Roll, I watch three giddy young girls spill out of the fortune teller's tent. They make their way over but don't get in line. Instead, they take turns standing against the height board, asking the young man in charge if he thinks they're big enough. He answers with Clark Gable eyebrows and dimples. The one without braces flashes her best smile. One is twirling her hair and another is adjusting the spaghetti strap that keeps slipping from her shoulder. Each is wearing the exact same shade of "kiss-me pink" lip gloss . . .

summer curfew  
nothing but moonlight  
in the mayonnaise jar

*Katherine Cudney*

## FREEDOM

AFTER 3 1/2 YEARS IN A crowded Chinese city of smoggy sunrises and gritty winds and dull skies, of the freedom and sublime simplicity of going everywhere on my big black Feng Huang bicycle, back now to my U.S. suburban roots of brilliant blue skies and fluffy clouds and dramatic sunsets, of the necessity of a car and its registration and insurance and inspection and tax, its repairs and its thirst, its invisibly smoking tailpipe.

teaching my wife to drive  
jamming on  
the imaginary brakes

*Andy Hacanis*

## CHARGE

SHE: a city slicker—classy suit, sharp wit, lively eyes and smile. Me: a country boy—blue jeans and flannel shirt, quiet manner, lowered gaze . . .

waltz lesson—  
a static spark  
palm to palm

*Christopher Patchel*



## COCKCROW

OUR TABLE IN the communal dining room is probably the most sociable in the entire nursing home. The regulars consist of four women who keep up a running conversation, mostly on nursing home life and food. Often the staff places an anti-social male at our table to civilize him. Mr. Blumengarten is our latest challenge. He is tall, gaunt, surly, and so disgusted with his life that he is refusing to eat. As he is wheeled to the table, he does not greet anyone.

That nursing home smell:  
the breakfast trays  
and disinfectant.

Every morning before dawn, a rooster starts to crow in one of the surrounding tenements. He continues at intervals all morning. Those with rooms on that side wake up to the sound. It may remind them of early years in the country.

Tenement yard—  
bare fleshy knobs of ailanthus  
not yet in leaf.

Every morning at breakfast, Betty asks Anya, who has a room on the tenement side, "Did you hear the rooster?" We are expecting his imminent demise. Opinions differ as to whether he is being kept for the Santerfa or groomed for the cockfights. Today the rooster interrupts by announcing himself. Then Mr. Blumengarten, scowling at his breakfast, suddenly straightens up, throws his head back, and emits a perfect, lusty cockcrow. We ladies beam our approval and are ready to applaud. For a moment, Mr. Blumengarten is a cock among hens. Then, expressionless, he slumps back in his wheelchair, takes out his

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false teeth, and puts them beside his untouched breakfast. "Feh," says Anya. "You should be ashamed."

after breakfast  
the medications cart:  
"Here comes dessert."

*Doris Heitmeyer*

\*\*\*\*

## FOREVER

MY YOUNGEST is always collecting treasures and putting them in secret places. Today she presented me with a cloth pouch filled with yellow flowers from the verge of the campsite we're renting.

"May we press these?" she asked. I nodded and smiled.

"Let's keep them." I replied, "A reminder of this morning's sun."

my father's hand—  
a scar  
longer than his lifeline

*Karina Klesko*



## HAIBUN FOR GENRIKH SAPGIR

family picture  
parents smile,  
not the baby

WHEN I READ BOOKS to my daughter sometimes I wonder where her spirit was before she was conceived. I imagine the infinity of the Universe and get frightened.

On one of those books the author's incongruous name is printed "GENRIKH SAPGIR". Definitely a Jewish guy, I decide.

The majority of the half million of Moscow Jews have German, Polish or even Russian last names. The author's name is so Hebrew that it cannot be recognized as a Jewish one even by experienced human resources officers who have a task to discriminate against Jews.

Tverskoy Boulevard  
rain puddles  
we sweep by the broom

Twenty five years later he is a star of the First Moscow Festival of Poets.

summer—99  
the evergreen Kremlin dome  
painted dark brown

Genrikh Sapgir walks with a cane and reads his lucid incantations.

"The language pronounces us." he says. And he rhymes:

I wake, I shave, I knot my tie  
I won't notice that I will die

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These particular lines strike me.

A month later we accidentally meet at the new Turgenev Library. I make a compliment to him. He smiles. A week later Radio Liberty announces his sudden death.

autumn deepens  
falling asleep  
into the sense of the void

*Zinovy Vayman*

\*\*\*\*

## GROYNE

ON THE RIVER a small flock of gulls floats by. A few minutes later they set off, fly back a short distance and land on the water again. Before long they float by once more.

By now the coldness of the basalt blocks has crept into my buttocks and the iron pole I am leaning against makes its presence felt more and more painfully in my back. Shifting position only brings short relief.

Evening falls. Grey sky reflected in grey water. The whiteness of some gulls drifts slowly by. The same flock again?

fading light  
when did we become strangers  
father

*Max Verhart*



## CLASS REUNION

AFTER 40 YEARS I wonder who will come. The small Catholic women's college isn't open anymore. There's just the building, now a film institute. I've come three thousand miles to see a bunch of old women. Knowing they're old, but still surprised at how old they all look. We look. I sometimes forget to include myself.

trying on a smile—  
the face in the mirror  
not who I want to see

We swap stories about marriages, divorces, death; show pictures of children, grandchildren, and pets. Some bragging, some honesty, some return to that free exchange of confidences with a chosen few. My best friend: a little heavier, but the same deep voice and hearty laugh, the same vivacious personality, and the same vice.

sharing smokes—  
a brick wall holds  
the heat of the day

*Adelaide B. Shaw*

## BLOOD TRAILS TO HEAVEN

CLOUDS SMUDGE THE PALE SKY, rivers shine in the distance. A speck hangs below the sun.

Hidden in the trees, uncountable blackbirds sing. The bracken is trembling, its fronds chime in the subtle breeze. Dawdling for beetles in the leaf-mould ruins, the mouse falters.

a mile of sky  
is nothing  
hawk scatters earth

*John W. Sexton*



## NEWSPAPER LIFE IN VANCOUVER

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA. July 2004. A good cup of coffee. A place to sit out of the way from the business of everyone else. Don't ask directions—I'm a tourist here myself. I can wait and watch in the sunny air of a street in Gastown—an old part of the city, even though Vancouver is not very old in the first place. And I'm not far from the famous steam clock. The boxes for various newspapers sit on the edge of the sidewalk with their bold headlines close enough to read without much effort. I then notice the words running around one box:

Life Is Short  
Don't Miss A Day  
Subscribe Now  
The Globe & Mail

I think about the power of the newspapers in Vancouver. How long will it last?

life's short in Vancouver—  
a newspaper that was sold  
yesterday

*Gary Hotham*

## HAIBUN : EPHEMERA

ONE WEEK AFTER our son leaves for his training program my husband and I wander an empty house with two dogs constantly underfoot. They sense something missing, are lost too, searching for one who used to play with them. The oppressive humidity makes it worse . . . even the birds are still.

deep autumn    the silence between drops    lengthens

*Angelee Deodhar*



## SUSPENDED

IN MOMENTS OF MY OWN MYTH: a backhand on the way to a semifinal in Cincinnati; a sun-dappled oarstroke off the tip of Nova Scotia; a frost breath lost in the pulse of the Alaskan aurora. Even better: an extended present, my face pressed into the warm dark that is you on this black morning.

winter coast—  
when there is no one  
it's so long

*Jim Kacian*

\*\*\*\*

## THEY ALSO SERVE

SUMMONED AS TRIAL JURORS, we wait in an enormous room, with ten rectangular windows that overlook vertical concrete columns, through black horizontal window blinds, hiding the calm blue day. It is here we sit, hundreds of citizens, silent for an hour with cell-phones disengaged. Most are absorbed in books and magazines. The woman beside me knits a half-finished mauve scarf. The man beside her balances his checkbook. Behind us is a teen using a laptop with headphones and a middle-aged woman applying makeup. Beside her, a man plays with his hands. We will be called, if our turn comes via random selection, by the name assigned to us from the state judicial system. Today I am known only as juror number 445.

sack lunch  
in the park  
a contrail . . .

*Michele Harvey*

## autumn clarity

closed concession stand rhythm of the surf

for all is vanity more leaves at the door

autumn clarity counting floaters in my eyes

the moon appears in haiku after haiku

recurring dream that my car won't brake

starlings leave the leafless trees the silence

*Christopher Patchel*

# Essays

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## ON DEFINING 'HAIKU'

These three definitions of 'haiku' perhaps best represent those found in a random survey of fifteen English dictionaries published between 1989 and 2004:

“An epigrammatic Japanese verse form in seventeen syllables.”<sup>(1)</sup>

“1. A Japanese three-part poem of unusually 17 syllables. 2. An English imitation of this.”<sup>(2)</sup>; and

“A Japanese lyric poem of a fixed, 17-syllable form that often simply points to a thing or pairing of things in nature that has moved the poet. Also called hokku.”<sup>(3)</sup>

Any of these probably suffice for the majority of those who look up the word. However most haiku practitioners currently active around the world, while likely to concede that each has some value, would also claim that such definitions enhance confusion and misunderstanding of modern haiku.

Dissatisfaction with definitions of 'haiku' are not new. In 1970 the Haiku Society of America (HSA) attempted to create a dictionary definition that would not mislead general readers and that would find general acceptance among “haiku-lovers”. This effort, initiated by Harold Henderson, extended over three years and involved several leading figures in American haiku. It is recorded in detail in *A Haiku Path* (AHP).<sup>(4)</sup> and makes fascinating reading.

In 1971 Henderson explained why he saw a need for a new dictionary definition:

“The word 'haiku' has now become so widespread in English that I felt *all* English dictionaries should define it—and *define it correctly*. I therefore wanted (1): to get haiku enthusiasts to agree on some one definition of the word, and (2): to get *all* English dictionaries to define it.” (AHP, p44)



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In hindsight it may seem strange that Henderson wrote only a week or two later (my emphases):

**“. . . a definitive definition of haiku is probably impossible . . . [haiku] must be what the poets make them not verses that follow ‘rules’ set down by some ‘authority’ . . . a strict definition of haiku-in-English is neither possible nor desirable.”** (AHP, p46,47)

In part this echoed the response made by Professor Kametaro Yagi, Japanese haiku luminary, when Henderson had asked him about the definition of ‘haiku’ in Japan:

“There is no definition of haiku in Japanese. Haiku are what the poets make them.” (AHP, p46)

Nevertheless, Henderson’s enthusiasm for finding a widely agreed definition persisted, a committee was formed and, after extensive deliberations and consultations (not without some heated exchanges that must have seriously challenged the views of some involved that a widely agreed definition could be found), recommended this to the HSA in January of 1973:

“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 jion (Japanese symbol-sounds).

2. A foreign adaptation of 1. It is usually written in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables.” (AHP, p82)

This definition was adopted and promoted by the HSA but it received favourable responses from just a few of the dictionaries and encyclopedias to which it was sent. Neither did it receive the unanimous approval of haiku poets and further discussion, debate and recommendations of change have ensued. The version used in recent years in *Frogpond* is a modification of the 1973 recommendation:



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

“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 totaling fewer than seventeen syllables.”

Dropping the reference to 5-7-5 in favour of “fewer than. . .” was significant and reflected the logical adaptation that had evolved in English-language haiku. The change from *jion* to *onji* was largely a side issue as it related to the correct Japanese term for ‘sound-symbol’ – an issue over which some contention remains. <sup>(5)</sup>

Two recent articles in the British journal *Presence* have questioned other aspects of the above definitions. In the first David Cobb presents two notions of the 1973 HSA definition that were questioned by Hemstege in a German-language article in 2003: (i) that haiku are ‘nature’ poems; and (ii) that haiku are ‘moment’ poems.<sup>(6)</sup> Hemstege’s contrary views are plausible and likely to be given some credence. I happen to disagree with his first point (because our views of ‘nature’ differ) but see value in his second.

In the second article I argued that (i) nature should not be differentiated from human nature in the practice of haiku; and (ii) that rhyme should not necessarily prevent a poem being called a haiku.<sup>(7)</sup> (In support of my second point I might well have included a reference to the article by Raymond Roseliep in the very first issue of *Frogpond* in which he advocated the occasional – not mandatory – use of rhyme in haiku, and argued, with persuasive examples, that at times it could be “. . . an amazing rudder for haiku, giving the poem a sure movement and direction.”)

It is past time that haiku poets took a step back and asked ‘How much can we expect of a definition?’ The 1973 HSA recommendation failed to produce a sound dictionary definition or find general acceptance among haiku poets. Why? Certainly not because of a lack of expertise or application among the committee that devised it. It was I suggest largely because



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dictionary definitions of specialist terms often appear unsatisfactory and trivial to practising specialists, even when supposedly clearly definable concepts are involved. Ask a scientist about the dictionary definition of an atom, a physician about the definition of a virus. Most such definitions revert to basic general description and often relate to perceptions that are out of date. They may be perfectly adequate at a certain level but inadequate beyond. It may be adequate for someone who looks to a dictionary to know that a 'haiku' is a poem (as distinct, perhaps, from a pigeon that nests on the high cliffs of Brazil); to others it may be sufficient to know that it's a Japanese poem or, perhaps, a brief form of poem that originated in Japan but is now practised widely around the world. We should not however expect to find any dictionary definition that produces wide satisfaction among haiku enthusiasts.

It is critical that 'haiku' is an ephemeral term—its meaning has evolved and will continue to evolve—and this makes it unlikely, indeed impossible, that any definition will find wide and lasting acceptance. The boundaries of 'haiku' are grey and there is no means for us to clearly separate a haiku poem from any other poem. While there would (I hope!) be complete unanimity that Milton's "Paradise Lost" is not a haiku, there are many poems that understandably fall in the zone of disagreement. Examples include one-word poems, compound-word poems, short concrete poems, four-liners, and brief surreal or metaphysical poems. Some haiku poets prefer to stay away from the grey zones, some delight in testing them, and some even manage to stretch them. Would we want it any other way? I don't think so. Poetry is an art, a living growing evolving thing; we cannot confine it.

Since we cannot define haiku in a definitive sense we can only do it descriptively. Description by its nature is subjective, selective, and incomplete. We might focus on one or more aspects of haiku—its history, development, and typical, often ephemeral, characteristics. Asked to come up with a definition each of us would take a somewhat different angle with different emphases. There can be no correct final descriptive definition. None can be the right one with all others being wrong.



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

All will have value, some more than others. Collectively the outliers will stand out, and we might dismiss them, but there will be strength in the diversity that remains.

A significant recent statement on defining haiku was made by Hiroaki Sato:

"Today it may be possible to describe haiku but not to define it. This is indicated by the haiku dictionary *Gendai Haiku Dai-jiten* (Meiji Shoin, 1980). Its entry on haiku describes the history of the term, but makes no attempt to say what a haiku is. Both in form and content, all you can say is that a haiku, be it composed in Japanese, English, or any other language, is what the person who has written it presents as a haiku."<sup>(5)</sup>

His view essentially echoes those expressed by Yagi and Henderson in 1971 (see above).

### **The new HSA definition of 'haiku'**

Recently I learnt that the HSA had formed a committee to come up with revised definitions of 'haiku' and related terms.<sup>(8)</sup> As I write, the new proposals have just been considered and approved by HSA members who attended the Annual Meeting in New York in September 2004. The approved definition of 'haiku' is:

"A haiku is a short poem that uses imagistic language to convey the essence of an experience of nature or the season intuitively linked to the human condition."

Let me venture some first impressions. It's not clear to me where this definition is aimed—dictionaries or elsewhere, perhaps other poets, perhaps haiku poets themselves. Since the message needs to be matched to the receiver, it is difficult to comment on the level of information it contains. In terms of communication I start to feel bogged down after 'convey' and get stuck on the word 'nature', in part because it can have any of several nuances. My own preference is a holistic concept of



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nature—it's also one that I think best befits the haiku mind—when humans see themselves as a very small interdependent part of a much greater whole, not something apart, or above, and especially not something reigning over, the rest. For me nature is this physical world in which we find ourselves—its systems, its living and inanimate parts, even the universe in which it exists—and we humans just happen to be a small part of it. The seasons are part of my 'nature'. I do not know what the word means in the proposal. If it's not the whole I need to know where it starts and stops. I guess it's possible to intuitively link anything we see to the human condition. But if that's an essential factor in haiku, then I'm missing out on something in, for example, Cor van den Heuvel's 'tundra' and Nicholas Virgilio's 'Lily:/ out of the water . . . /out of itself.' The ongoing pleasure these haiku have given me over many years has come from the sheer wonder of nature their images arouse in me. I'm not aware of any link to "the human condition"—mine or anyone else's.

This new proposal comes from careful consideration by a knowledgeable and respected committee, and is probably as sound a definition as any we have so far. Despite this, I doubt very much that it will find widespread approval or long-lasting eminence—that is the nature of descriptive definition.

We should welcome informed description, discussion, and debate about all aspects of the art of haiku including as many brief descriptive definitions as individuals or committees care to develop. Together in diversity their value will be greater than any one of them, and we will all be the wiser for the consideration we give them. I'm left slightly uneasy however by the HSA's decision to officially adopt one definition. Such recognition may serve to enshrine it above others of equal value and eventually beyond its usefulness.

Finally, it may not be fair of me if I didn't stick my neck out and venture my own brief descriptive definition. Let me preface it by saying that this is currently what I might say to someone who knew nothing about haiku but had a genuine interest in finding out, someone who might otherwise consult a good basic dictionary:



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

A haiku is a short poem that typically uses imagistic language to convey insight, connection, and/or wonder. Originally evolved in Japan, haiku are now written in many languages and countries.

I would take it from here if they wanted to know more.

*Cyril Childs*

- (1) *The Times English Dictionary*, 2000.
- (2) *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1995.
- (3) *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*, 1988.
- (4) *A Haiku Path*, Haiku Society of America, 1994.
- (5) *Frogpond XXII:3*, p 71-73, 1999.
- (6) *Presence* #21, p 23, 2003.
- (7) *Presence* #21, p 34-35, 2004.
- (8) *Newsletter XIX:2*, Haiku Society of America, 2004.

## HAIKU WORTH READING

In an interview on the News Hour, poet laureate Ted Kooser had one piece of advice for aspiring poets: read! Being editor of *Modern Haiku* has made me uncomfortably aware of something: many people try to write haiku without ever having been moved to read a substantial number of them. I don't think this is a problem for haiku as much as it is for those aspiring poets themselves. This naturally raises the question: what kind of haiku are worth reading?

For many people who send their poems to *Modern Haiku*, the answer seems to be "The ones worth reading are the ones I wrote." There is, of course, nothing wrong with thinking your own poems are worthy of publication; I sometimes think that myself, though not always correctly. But for a haiku to be worth reading it must satisfy more than the needs of the poet who wrote it.

Probably the most important thing that makes a haiku worth reading is its ability to touch our hearts. It might speak to our personal experience as this one does to me:

breaking off an icicle  
the taste of metal  
and my childhood

*Sylvia Forges-Ryan*

It might create a mood we would like to share in, as does this one:

spring breeze—  
the pull of her hand  
as we near the pet store

*Michael Dylan Welch*

Or perhaps one we would like to avoid:

his side of it  
her side of it  
winter silence



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

It might allow us to participate in a scene we have never experienced, as Sandra Fuhringer does with this haiku:

plum blossoms falling  
the gardener softly singing  
in my father's tongue

It might point out something important we have experienced ourselves but forgotten:

one seated  
at a table for two  
shadows lengthening

*Joe Kirschner*

Or reveal one of the inexpressible mysteries of life:

one carp  
the color of a woman:  
an evening of snow

*Ryan Underwood*

Of course, the mysteries of existence are not always expressed so solemnly, as Stanford Forrester demonstrates:

summer afternoon ...  
losing the superball  
on the first bounce

So this is the first thing a haiku must do—go beyond the merely personal and offer a gift to the reader, as Charles Trumbull does here:

the swell of her breast  
against the watered silk—  
summer moon

Meaning, then, is essential but not sufficient. A haiku is a poem, so the choice and arrangement of words is also important. The poem must not only have meaning, it must itself



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be an experience for the reader. As poet Robert Lowell wrote, “A poem is an experience, not the record of an experience.” The choice and arrangement of words can enhance the reader’s experience, they can contribute indifferently to the experience, or they can even work against it.

Haiku is a kind of poetry, so the sound of the words is important. The plain style that has dominated American haiku has sometimes led poets to ignore sound in their poems, making them, in the words of critics, “mere dribbles of prose.” For those of us writing haiku, it is important to remember that the judicious use of aural devices in haiku can increase the artistry of the poem and hence its offering to the reader. Overdoing it, of course, can spoil a haiku. Haiku can be overwhelmed by use of powerful sounds and sound associations, so the approach of the haiku poet to this element of craft, as to everything, requires lightness and balance.

Many sound devices, such as rhyme, alliteration, consonance, assonance, and onomatopoeia are available to us as poets. All of these are of some use to the poet. Assonance is usually the least obtrusive and thus most effective in haiku, as in this poem by Gary Hotham:

dark darker  
too many stars  
too far

Here the repeated “ar” and “oo” sounds enhance the meditative effect of the poem on the reader.

When used effectively, assonance reinforces the feeling of the poem without drawing attention to itself, as in Hotham’s poem and in the following, with its repeated soft “i” and “o” sounds:

soft touch of his lips—  
a twisted strand of cobweb  
fills with moonlight

*Linda Jeannette Ward*

In the following haiku “oo” and “ah” sounds help us feel the



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

poet's sense of wonder in an autumn scene:

All Hallow's Eve  
swallows  
loop the moon

*Mary-Alice Herbert*

The effective use of sound is not restricted to conveying pleasant sensations as Peter Yovu artfully demonstrates:

mosquito she too  
insisting insisting she  
is is is is is

Assonance has for centuries been used in lieu of rhyme in the poetry of some Romance languages. Perhaps it will find a similar place in English-language haiku.

While some poets believe that a haiku is a poem for the eye rather than the ear, readers often find that the poet's skillful attention to rhythm or cadence can add noticeably to a poem's artistry, as in this haiku by Robert Gilliland:

transplanting the sage—  
a wheelbarrow full of bees  
from backyard to front

There are two notable things about the rhythm of this poem. The first is the use of accented syllables "sage," "bees," and "front" to end each line. This contributes to the forward movement of the poem—and the wheelbarrow. The second is that the first line, "transplanting the sage," and the third "from backyard to front," have identical metrical patterns. This creates a unity in the poem that is much less obtrusive than if he had used rhyme to attempt the same effect.

When the poet has a feeling for the flow of the words, the result can be enchanting. It is with some sadness that I note that such artistry was more common in the early days of American haiku than it is today. Perhaps it is partly because the magical rhythms of the King James Bible are no longer a part of our



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souls. One has only to compare a passage from a speech by Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King Jr. with one by George W. Bush to get some idea of what we have lost.

While poets sometimes believe that the use of figurative language such as simile or metaphor makes haiku worth reading, this is often not the case. Like the King James Bible, haiku use concrete images to do their work on the deepest parts of our souls, as in this haiku by James W. Hackett:

Deep within the stream  
the huge fish lie motionless  
facing the current

Of course, the images of haiku are not always as “deep” as this. In this haiku by LeRoy Gorman, the images remain concrete but toy with our sense of reality in the hours after midnight:

last slow dance  
winter flies  
couple on the bar

In this haiku, we have an effective use of what Paul O. Williams calls “unresolved metaphor.” (For a complete discussion of unresolved metaphor, see “The Question of Metaphor in Haiku,” in *The Nick of Time: Essays on Haiku Aesthetics* by Paul O. Williams, 2001.) On the surface, the haiku presents a credible and interesting scene. But this slice of life becomes a rich mixture of ambiguities as we dance with the different species of barflies in the poem.

Something that haiku worth reading have to offer in place of figurative language is the pivot line. This is a word or phrase that combines with the line before it and the one following it to offer unexpected shifts of associations to the reader. In this haiku by Kiyoko Tokutomi, the second line acts as a swinging door that carries us back and forth between two worlds:



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Chemotherapy  
in a comfortable chair  
two hours of winter

The two overlapping parts can be read as “chemotherapy in a comfortable chair” as well as “in a comfortable chair two hours of winter.” The chair becomes the center from which we watch the chemicals enter and in which we contemplate both the literal and figurative essence of winter.

Here are two more haiku that use the same device, the first by Jack Barry and the second by Peggy Lyles:

lost kite  
rising in a cloudless sky  
a child's cry

the scent of rain  
as the tree frogs start  
first star

I suggested earlier that to be worth reading, a haiku must be able to speak to us. I think this is true, but not every short poem that can produce a response in the reader is a haiku, which brings us to the question of what makes haiku unique. Most of the things I have said thus far could apply to any kind of poem. But haiku is not any kind of poem, but a specific kind. It is not form that makes haiku unique, nor its brevity, as many poets who have attempted haiku have failed to realize. What makes haiku unique is its seasonal consciousness. So what distinguishes haiku from haiku-like is the presence of the season as a vital part of the poem.

By relating the experience of a single moment in time to the season in which it occurs, the poet can suggest a mood that would otherwise be impossible to create in so short a poem. Through using these seasonal references over hundreds of years, the Japanese have created a rich poetic texture. It is both our privilege and challenge as poets to add to this rich



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tradition. In some, as in this haiku by Billy Collins, the season is explicitly stated:

Mid-winter evening,  
alone at the sushi bar—  
just me and this eel

In others it is only implied, as Randy Brooks does here:

cool evening ...  
mother takes me by the arm  
from grave to grave

The seasonal feeling of some is even more indirect:

not lonely  
but alone, the moonlit  
goldfish

*David G. Lanoue*

I think it is fair to say that any baseball fan can relate to this seasonal haiku by Michael Ketchek:

dog days of summer  
twenty-three games  
out of first

Here are a few more poems to give you some idea of the range of feelings and emotions that seasonal haiku can convey:

blue popsicles  
the children  
compare tongues

*Stanford Forrester*

summer's end  
waves disappearing  
beneath the pier

*Paul Miller*

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autumn equinox ...  
a small rake  
beside the grave

*Michael Fessler*

leaves at their peak—  
everyone says "hey,  
you got your haircut."

*Del Doughty*

Even contemporary subjects can be addressed by haiku in its seasonal way without becoming strident or polemical, as Robert Boldman shows:

noonday heat:  
at the exact center of myself  
the aids patient weeping

Paradoxically, haiku may take place in one season yet manifest the essence of another, as in this poem by Ernest J. Berry:

spring funeral  
the widow's family  
dress for winter

And finally, one of my favorites, by Le Wild:

California poppies—  
the faintest scent  
of Woodstock

It is important to note that the season must be a vital part of the poem. A season word cannot merely be "tacked on" to an image to create a haiku. I would encourage every aspiring haiku poet to memorize and apply the following statement by Japanese scholar Shigehisa Kuriyama concerning the use of seasons in haiku:



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*“In a poem where the seasonal theme fulfills its true evocative function, there must be a reciprocity between the season which expands the scope of the haiku and creates the atmospheric background of associations for the specific scene, and the specific scene which points out a characteristic yet often forgotten aspect of the season and thus enriches our understanding of it.”* (“Haiku,” Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan. Tokyo, Kodansha, 1983, p. 82).

Some of us who attended the Haiku Chicago conference in 1995 had the honor to meet Japanese haiku Master Yatsuka Ishihara. Ishihara told us to “present the truth as if it were fiction.” This idea is of course not restricted to haiku. It is what every great novel does—presents in the costume of a story a truth that may be too difficult to tell directly. This allows the reader to embrace hard truth without engaging in either defensiveness or self-righteousness. It allows the author to explore an issue without stridency, the reader, without self-consciousness. Fiction doesn’t tell us what is true, it reveals what is true. Great haiku have also this characteristic. Here, for example, is a haiku by haiku master Ishihara (translated by Tadashi Kondô and William J. Higginson):

pulling light  
from another world . . .  
the milky way

Great haiku reveal, often through several levels of meaning, the truths we need to live by. Surely this makes them worth reading?

*Lee Gurga*

(Based on a talk presented at the HSA meeting in Evanston, Illinois in September, 2003)



## Re:Readings

Mary Stevens on Linda Jeanette Ward (“shattered egg shells/the goose nudges/each tiny piece”) “Every word in this haiku contributes to depicting the feelings of denial and disbelief in those first frantic moments during which one realizes that something one has been nurturing—something deeply valued and irreplaceable—may be irrevocably and permanently lost.”

Mary Stevens on Cheryl Burghdurf (“your last garden the green tomatoes . . .”) “This haiku's effectiveness comes from the way it evokes a feeling of sorrow and regret in the knowledge that a dying person's potential and uncompleted projects will never come to ‘fruition.’ And although the words alone convey the idea, the ellipsis add a quality of ‘trailing off,’ contributing further to the poem's theme of a productive person's life ended too soon.”

Mary Stevens on Curtis Dunlap (“insomnia—/a receding train whistle/ lengthens the night”) “When there is little else on which the mind can dwell at night, it latches onto whatever ambient noise presents itself. One imagines the train passing all those lucky enough to be sleeping, and the vast stretches of space between the listener, the train, and the train's possible destination. As it moves out of range, the train's horn blasts become longer, lower, fainter, and less frequent. When it is finally out of hearing, there is no longer anything real on which one's attention may rest; one is alone again with one's own distorted thoughts, a kind of Doppler Effect of the psyche. What a comfort it is to know that I am not alone when I hear a train in the middle of a sleepless night!”

Tom Painting on Victor Ortiz (“star gazing/at the shore's edge . . ./beacon flash”) “By nature, I believe we are drawn to the light. We are also engaged in speculation. That's why this poem holds such appeal for me. Against the backdrop of the night sky, the stars beckon. We wish upon them after all. But, the beacon's flash reminds me that the answer is closer at hand. In the affairs of humankind, we need not look beyond the far shore.”



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Tom Clausen on Mark Hollingsworth (“hospital hallway/this far/and no further”) “What a fragile thing our life energy is and so easy to take for granted. Mark's haiku is an evocative reminder that when we are diminished by illness or from an operation we measure our existence in just how far we can make it in a hospital hallway. There is something so simple and telling in this excursion; both the will to go that far and the understanding that at this time the energy to go further does not exist. What a humbling yet life affirming haiku at once! Although my reading was from a patient's perspective this certainly might be read from a visitors point of view and a limit being set on just how far they are allowed to go or about someone being tentative in meeting a loved one down that hallway and not quite ready for that meeting.”

Tom Clausen on Francine Porad (“inserting a piece/ in my jigsaw puzzle/the TV repairman”) “How true it is that any of us at work are bound to find whatever is not related to work to distract us and give us a break from the hold work has on us. The idea that a TV repairman couldn't resist putting a piece in an ongoing puzzle takes non-work temptation to a hilarious high!”

Tom Clausen on Karen Sohne (“halfway through/ my first draft/switching to pencil”) “How confidently we embark on things only to have that sense eroded and, when enough evidence mounts to rethink our own creations, the need to erase and redo enters in. What an apt commentary on our humanity.”

Tom Clausen on Bruce Ross (“the life it lives/low tide or high tide/rock periwinkle”) “That we all face changing circumstances in our lives is well known and a perpetual challenge. That fact gives us instant empathy as we imagine and share in what life must be like for all creatures fated and evolved to live out their lives in the forever fluctuating tide zone. From high and dry to tossed and crashed at, any creature who faces such daily changes deserves regard and respect which is the gentle heart of this haiku.”



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Vanessa Proctor on Curtis Dunlap (“autumn rain/peppers the sand . . ./a missing toe’s phantom itch”) “When I read this I am struck by the quiet sense of sadness and impermanence it conveys, wabi-sabi if you will. This is a sensory haiku. We can hear the raindrops patterning the sand in the ellipsis. Then there is the image of the missing toe. We don’t know how the toe was lost; it doesn’t matter. All that matters is the spirit of the toe is still there with its itch and therein lies a poignant sense of loss.”

Vanessa Proctor on Marlene Mountain (“the moon follows as far as I’m willing to go”) “. . . recounts an experience we can all relate to. Who hasn’t been out driving or walking at night with the moon following behind? Marlene Mountain encapsulates the connection between mankind and nature. Whether we like it or not we are bound together even if we kid ourselves that we have some kind of control.”

Karen Klein on Yasukiko Shigemoto (“the ant/struggling with/my arm hairs”) “This haiku is, at first reading, almost a single image. But then the surprise comes with the double perspective—the ant’s and the human’s—which indicates the enormous discrepancy in size. Our arm hairs, so small and even though possibly thick- insignificant to us, are a huge obstacle to the struggling ant. Through the size discrepancy, the haiku comments on the vast diversity among species and the whole issue of size in our universe. What stands in relation to us as human as arm hairs do to ants?”

Karen Klein on Linda Jeanette Ward (“long silences/ between notes—/twilight snow”) “This haiku communicates through images an emotional sense which is essentially felt but rarely articulated. That, in itself, is a most difficult task and the images here are well chosen. The silence between notes is a space without sound, but it stands between two sounds and has resonance from both. Notes might be that of an instrument, as at a concert, or a bird. Twilight is a time between day and night and shares in the sense of both. The silent space and the snowfall at twilight convey a wordless, soundless, feeling of calm peace.”



## A NOTE ON A HAIKU BY TOM CLAUSEN

Occasionally a haiku will draw me back again and again, get into my head like a tune, and delight me by seeming so utterly fresh, direct, and clear even while it swarms with complex resonance. The particular haiku I refer to is from *Frogpond* XXVII:2 and is by Tom Clausen, a writer who has often effected me in this way:

out of its reflecting pool  
the wind blown  
fountain

Tom's poem offers some interesting analogies to the play on literary tradition and intertextuality that the English language haiku community has come more and more to appreciate within the Japanese tradition thanks to the work of scholars like Haruo Shirane and Koki Kawamoto. For example, while this haiku remains quite original in its perception and style, it clearly evokes Nick Virgilio's famous water lily haiku in the first phrase of line one "out of its . . ." This adds a psychological resonance to the poem that is further intensified by the Ovidian suggestions of the "reflecting pool," a subtle link to the Narcissus myth. Combining these references radically shifts the meaning of Virgilio's poem. Instead of the sense of the water lily's utter oneness with its environment, its unnatural displacement in being drawn out of its absorption in itself, Clausen's poem suggests a sense in which such self-absorption on the part of a human being becomes rather unnatural, narcissistic (a spell to be broken).

An undercurrent of senryu suggests itself: the monk-like fixation of the viewer of the fountain is shockingly brought to reality by the wind that splashes him. Obviously, this is to overstate a strand of association that is muted. In fact, the second line cuts away from such a humorous possibility toward a much starker, more forceful sense. The jet of water can become a metonymy for the consciousness that perceives it. As



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

such, it is seemingly free, buoyant, and inexhaustible, yet contingent, mutable, and liable to disruptive, destructive forces outside itself.

Although the poem does not have a distinct seasonal reference, the disturbing wind suggests late autumn, just before city fountains are turned off for the winter. The natural narcissism of youth is challenged by the recognition of harsher forces, impending limits on imagination.

To stress these elements is a bit like turning the fountain off to examine the pump; it can't help being a bit clumsy, because the poem achieves an airy spontaneity. Nonetheless, the poem's surface shimmers while permitting a fascinating play of imagination from surface to depth and back again.

*Judson Evans*

\* \* \*

## A FAVORITE HAIKU, H. F. Noyes

a fond old couple  
bathing in the shallows—  
the space between them

*George C. Dorsty (1)*

Dorsty's use of the phrase "the space between them" is really a triumph, because all by itself it evokes, with clarity and immediacy, a picture of this old couple. And his phrase "in the shallows" conveys both their hesitancy and their childlike pleasure in dogpaddling in the safety of the shoal waters.

*(1) Hummingbird Vol. XIV No. 4, June 2004*



*BOOK  
REVIEWS*

*Pages 71 - 76    Reviews by Jim Kacian*

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## Frogpond XXVIII:1

Cobb, David *Forefathers* (Leap Press, PO Box 1424, North Falmouth MA 02556, 2004) ISBN 0-9747229-1-X. 5.5" x 8.5", 32 pp., saddlestapled softbound, \$7 + \$1.50 postage.

Kilbride, Jerry *Tracings* (Lily Pond Press, 15 Warwick Road, Northfield MA 01360, 2004) No ISBN, 6" x 9", 40 pp., saddlestitched softbound, letterpress, \$16 ppd.

One could gather that Massachusetts is the hotbed of haibun publication these days from the above titles (and the paucity from pretty much everywhere else). It is a genuine pleasure to have two of our best practitioners release collections of their best recent material in such proximity, as we can get a sense of how the genre is growing in their hands, some of the differences of emphasis and style between a British notion of haibun and our own, and a feeling of weight which the genre commands—just how does it stack up against, short fiction, prose poems or travel vignettes,

Taking the Cobb first: I'm a big fan of this series, and am just as delighted with the second volume as I was with the first (Bill Ramsey's *ascend with care*). Cobb is one of the few serious practitioners of contemporary haibun, by which I mean one steeped sufficiently in both the haiku tradition and in command of a flexible and formidable prose style. His work is a challenge, especially to North American sensibilities, but there's no doubt something's going on here. It is the activity of a questing mind, seeking meaning and sensibility of his experiences, and not always satisfied with what he discovers. He is especially compelling relating his disillusion, and the absurdities of the highs (spiritual enlightenment?) and lows (the abuses of humans toward one another, especially in war) which such experiences have brought his way. He writes well about his own formative times, and there is a sharp edge to his reminiscence—not the usual saccharine thing at all.

How a haiku poet comes to haibun is not at all clear, really, since the impulses are really antithetical, the haikuist's accom-



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modation of the narrative drive. Haiku poets are skeptical of story, its contingencies, its persuasion, its diversion from the essential truth. But of course there is context, and of course context matters, even if it never can be the point. Haibun is a recognition of context—of how the white house doesn't show white surrounded by snow—without giving up utterly on the centrality of the poem itself. Cobb needs to write these things—he's working things out, for himself primarily. But he does it so interestingly, so honestly, that it becomes worth our while to struggle with him, and the shape of that struggle is one of the most interesting linked forms practiced today.

Equally skilled but with a completely different tone is Kilbride's oeuvre. Those who know Jerry will recognize his voice—literally—in his haibun. He is a born raconteur, and the primary stuff of his writing is the treasury of stories he's accumulated over the years, from the agonizingly naked (especially the war stories) to the bildungsroman of young life on the bay, to the realizations of maturity. Jerry is nothing if not colloquial, but this shouldn't lull us into thinking that he is not in control of his art. In fact, Kilbride has a sure sense of the shape of narrative, and each piece can be graphed as surely as the glissades of a Chopin nocturne. We are lured into the tales without even knowing it, and once there, are permitted not only to enjoy the story, but to take the time to linger with the poems. Unlike Cobb's poems, which feel laded, most of Kilbride's feel anecdotal, but they are telling a moment later, when we notice what the poet has noticed, that the reality of personality, or of circumstance, is sometimes the truest divulger of truth.

It is rare enough to discover a collection of haibun in English. To find two such excellent volumes published within a few months of each other is simply great fortune, and I urge you to buy both and enjoy two different and masterful sensibilities plying their craft.

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## Frogpond XXVIII:1

Phillips, Michael Joseph **35 *Boogie Woogie Haiku*** (self-published, 1980) No ISBN. 4" x 5.5", 40 pp., saddlestapled softbound. O.P.

**21 *Erotic Haiku for Samantha*** (Free University Press, Indianapolis 1979) No ISBN. 4" x 5.5", 16 pp., saddlestapled softbound. O.P.

***Adornings*** (World Poetry Center, Bloomington IN 1986) No ISBN. 5.5" x 8.5", 120 pp., perfect softbound. O.P.

***Dreamgirls*** (Cambric Press, Huron OH 1989)

Awodey, Marc ***New York: a haibun journey*** (WPC-Minimal Press, PO Box 114, Warner NH 003278, 2003) ISBN 1-930149-15-8. 5.5" x 8.5", 116 pp., perfect softbound. \$12.95 ppd.

The ongoing conversation of what mainstream (read: non-haiku) poets make of haiku gets no definitive answers here, in part because mainstream poetry is no unified entity, and even having said that, these two poets certainly can not be considered to be anywhere close to its epicenter.

Phillips work is so obsessive (an example, and typical: "Beautiful swing-doll / Sensational go cute-beut [sic-JK], / Hot universal dish!") and explores such a small, albeit arguably important, arena of life that he can't help but repeat himself, and he does, at length. Repetition is often inculcated to produce trance. Does it here? Not in any way which the poet could desire, at least not to this reader.

Awodey's work is more complex, challenging and interesting. A haibun in 4 Acts (so already we're pretty far afield), it's an extended narrative employing longish narrative segues in free verse, interspersed with single or clusters of haiku, relating a pre-9/11 visit to New York City, which nevertheless is replete with foreboding. It is in the confessional mode, and the haiku are clearly seen not as departures from the narrative thrust, or from the general poetic style, but rather continuities and extensions of it. That is to say, they could just as easily have been written in the style of the remainder of the work (the free verse



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which serves as the "prose" for this haibun), had this not been a haibun with its requisite demands. The poet, a National Poetry Slam haiku champion (and what is the discontinuity in our tiny world where such a person will be virtually unknown to most readers), is clearly more interested in how the form can serve him than vice versa. The result is certainly a remove from the way in which haiku works in the "haiku community" and will not meet with much enthusiasm from that quarter. Nevertheless, it is useful from time to time to gain some perspective on how non-haiku poets see the stuff of our poetic lives, and how they might put it to use.

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Mason, Steve (Editor) *Journeys: A Haiku Anthology* (Ram Publications, 13 Witham Road, Isleworth, London TW7 4AJ UK 2004) ISBN 0-95456630-2-6. 4.25: x 6", 60 pp., perfect softbound. \$10 ppd.

Many years ago I played with an idea for an anthology: what if you laid out the poems of the book, but failed to include the names of the poets? Or at least placed them elsewhere in the volume, so that the reader did not meet with the names immediately reading the poems themselves?

I actually created such a volume, but the group for whom I was designing it decided against such a wild scheme. The names of the poets, especially in such short works as haiku, seem almost a part of the poem—indeed, a poem written by, say, Wally Swist, would be a considerably different entity than an identical poem written by, say, Marlene Mountain. The name does matter, if for no other reason than to supply context, which is usually so absent in the practice of haiku. But perhaps this is the point: the lack of context ensures greater attention to the poem, that is, to the essence conveyed. I dropped my plan for a nameless anthology, realizing it was probably still too experimental to gain favor in our ranks as yet.



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Well, after some years a group of British haiku poets based in London has decided to conduct that experiment, and this is their result: an interesting, non-contextual volume which places the poets' names in an index at the end. Did I miss reading the names? Yes and no. The work has some advantages and some disadvantages, as might be expected. I think at the very least, however, that it makes the possibility of trying it again a reality. A couple years back John Brandi and Steve Sanfield completed a volume which they published together, but affixed no names to the individual poems which comprised the text. It was possible, with a close reading, to discern some stylistic differences, but unless one knew either Brandi's or Sanfield's work intimately, one still wouldn't know who had written what. With the present volume being the work of more than a dozen poets, such a possibility isn't even remotely possible. Does it matter? Yes and no . . .

The work itself is pleasing, and besides offering some very fine poems, it also gives a capsule view of what's current in the seat of British haiku today, a welcome look at the parallel English-language haiku which is not quite our own, but which rewards attention and study. Recommended.

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gill, robin d. *Fly-ku!* (Paraverse Press, pmb #399, 260 Crandon Blvd. Suite 32, Key Biscayne FL 33149, 2004) ISBN 0-9742618-4-X. 7.25" x 9.75", 232 pp., perfect softbound.

More obsession from editor gill, whose ruminations on holothurians (*Rise, Ye Sea Slugs!*) carried us far beyond our need to know but never beyond our interest or desire. His topic this time is far more to hand for most of us—diptera, the common fly, and his many, many relations. Filled with the same recondite humor, incunabula and stimulus to meditation as its predecessor, this is strongly recommended for those with a bent for the arcane, entomologists, and insomniacs. Oh, and haiku lovers in general as well.



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Natsuishi, Ban'ya (Editor in Chief) *World Haiku 2005* (Nishida-shoten, 2-34 Kanda Jimbocho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0051 Japan, 2004) ISBN 4-88866-392-0. 6" x 8.25", 138 pp. (twice), perfect softbound. \$16 ppd.

Several years in the making, this volume can be recommended primarily for its breadth of interest. It has a fair sampling of several things—contemporary poems from around the world either originally in or translated into English, essays on topics ranging from the history of haiku in Russia to the uses of surrealism in our favorite genre, and several pages of haiga (alas, in black and white, but given the economics of the production, it's an understandable decision). The entire book is neatly divided by the haiga, and the latter half of the book, read from back to front, reprises the English text of poems and essays—quite a nice design function. It's a pleasing volume as well—nice paper, well and clearly printed, a comfortable size and shape. Most of all, it offers a range of haiku sensibility from international poets who take the genre seriously and who know the history of its practice—a commodity not readily available in many places, especially in English. Nicely done.

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Nometa, Zenbu *Café Haiku* (Caffeine Society, San Francisco CA, 2004) Photographs by Jeffrey Goldsmith. ISBN 0-9753597-0-3. 6.5" x 6.5", 96 pp, perfect softbound. \$9.95 at bookstores

This is a volume designed to take advantage of haiku's emergence as a piece of contemporary cultural ephemera in the past couple decades, and parallel to coffee's similar (or really, greatly heightened) position. And as such it succeeds, largely because of Goldsmith's closely observed photos which illustrate with understanding and fondness the fetishism of coffee culture. The poems are occasionally charming on their own terms ("It's okay. Be sweet. / Open your heart to the world. / Swing your metal flap." opposite a photo of a commercial sugar dispenser as found in coffee shops everywhere), they are not much in literary terms, and I expect not many readers will want it for its merits in this realm.

J.K.



## ALSO NOTED

Neubauer, Patricia *Museum Pieces* (tribe press, Greenfield, MA) 4.5' x 4", no price or ordering instructions. Pinch Book Series No. 3, edited by vincent tripi and printed by Swamp Press in a limited edition of 100.

*A careful selection of eight poems relating to specific works of art or to the experience of visiting a museum. The book itself is a modest work of art, providing the elegant simplicity we have come to expect from Swamp Press and editor vincent tripi.*

Kirschner, Joseph *Indside Out: Haiku and Dreams* (Deep North Press, Evanston, IL 2003) 88 pp., 8" x 5.25", perfect softbound. ISBN 1-929116-10-1. \$20 postpaid in the US from the author at 2157 Ridge Ave. 2D, Evanston, IL 60201.

*Dealing about equally with dreams and haiku, the second half of this book reads like an extended haibun with three layers: haiku, authors' comments on the haiku, and Joe Kirshner's overarching comments. The first half is a brief lecture and, as such, will stimulate thought. But the second half is trance-inducing and many readers will find in it an inspiration to write from their own dream egos. Unique.*

Rozmus, Lidia *My Journey* (Deep North Press, Evanston, IL 2004) 48 accordion-fold pages in a custom slip case, 8.75" x 4.25", ISBN 1-929116-13-6. \$25 postpaid in the US from the author at 1 Echo Ct. #11, Vernon Hills, IL 60061.

*An autobiographical haibun sequence, with black and white photographs and sumi-e on nearly every page. No great events are depicted in this life story but the rest of the world looms large in the background.*

Forrester, Stan *toy submarine* (tribe press, Greenfield, MA) 4.5' x 4", no price or ordering instructions. Pinch Book Series No. 5, edited by vincent tripi and printed by Swamp Press in a limited edition of 200.

*A nicely focused and uniformly effective selection of six poems and a haibun reflecting Forrester's childhood images.*



# HSA NEWS

*Pages 79 - 82 The Herold G. Henderson  
Haiku Awards 2004*

*Pages 83 - 87 The Gerald Brady Memorial  
Senryu Awards 2004*

*Pages 88 - 91 The Merit Book Awards 2004*

# The Harold G. Henderson Haiku Competition 2004

## Comments from the Judges

This year's contest brought a bumper crop of submissions—1124 to be precise—among which we found the entire range of skills, from striving beginner to seasoned professional. The themes, styles, voices, and subject details were as diverse as the numbers would indicate, and boiling these down to a mere five or six was daunting. We decided to take a quasi-literary, quasi-scientific approach to our selections, and although our exact method shall remain a closely guarded secret, we think you will concur that it produced “just right” results. One note worth mentioning: we each wrote our commentary independently of the other, yet you will see common threads in our thinking. We believe this attests to the validity of our process and the unique character of the winning entries.

We wish to thank all of the dedicated haijin for their considerable time and effort in writing and submitting their haiku. We wish that we could reward all in some way for their labors. But then, in true Zen spirit, we must remind ourselves that writing haiku is its own reward.

We also wish to thank the Haiku Society of America for conferring upon us the honor of serving as judges – it was an uplifting and educational experience that has enriched us both.

*William Cullen Jr. & Brenda J. Gannam*



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### *First Place*

*w. f. owen*

Indian summer  
a spent salmon  
washes ashore

Good weather can belie the season of decline and decrease. The struggle of an entire species is focused into the single instance of a fish bucking a seemingly inexhaustible current. Perhaps we stand weary from our own daily trials on that very riverbank and look down at a salmon by our feet, pumping its exhausted body with no discernible forward motion. We say instinct impels the fish and responsibility compels the person. Rest is so easy: just stop trying. But we go on, and the fish goes on, and the seasons continue.

WC

I was drawn to this haiku because of its deep historical and metaphysical resonances. "Indian summer" conjures up the dying, not only of the salmon and the season, but of the numerous Indian nations whose fate we painfully, and perhaps even guiltily, recall. The salmon is a veiled metaphor for that last gasp, that struggle for future survival, which, unsuccessful, leaves us nevertheless with visible traces of its once vibrant and thriving existence.

BJG

### *Second Place*

*Becky Barnhart*

after the funeral  
whiskers still  
in his razor

A man dies and is laid to rest. Back home a family member notices his whiskers still in the razor, perhaps from just earlier in the week. Something of him remains physically, a palpable



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presence in both body and spirit. We expect to see him again in the bathroom standing in front of mirror, perhaps to be greeted by a morning smile from his reflection. Now we have only the reflections of him in our memories and these whiskers he left behind.

WC

Although we have seen this beginning line in several previously published pieces, this haiku takes us down a different, more spiritual, path. The final line cuts as sharply and as swiftly as the razor that is its object. We imagine the life of this man literally cut short, perhaps of a heart attack or stroke as he stood calmly performing his morning ritual. The subtle, yet powerful, contrast of the “ordinariness” of our daily lives and the “unexpectedness” of our eventual deaths makes this haiku memorable.

BJG

### *Third Place*

*Michael Fessler*

the page-finders  
of my father's Daily Missal  
losing their colors

A man goes to church frequently. He references different parts of the church readings by color coded tassels that hang from the old missal. Now after decades of use, they begin to lose their color. If they all have the same color underneath, how will the man find the correct readings during the church service? Do all the readings blend into each other after hearing them hundreds of times? Do they begin to lose their meaning as well as their color?

WC

As the daughter of a deeply devout father, this haiku had a particularly personal appeal to me. And yet, there is more here than sentimentality or even the “moment” of noticing the largely



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imperceptible deterioration wrought by time on both the misal and its owner. Could it be that the fading page-finders point to a youthful faith that was once absolute, unquestioned, unequivocal, its “colors” clear and true—but which, with the approach of old age, has gradually given way to doubt, to questioning, to an ultimate acceptance of moral and ethical shades of gray?

BJG

### **Honorable Mention**

*Marjorie Buettner*

first buds of spring  
I change the washer's setting  
to delicate

### **Honorable Mention**

*George Swede*

Among the gravestones  
with names worn away  
children play hide'n seek

## The Gerald Brady Memorial Senryu Competition 2004

*First Place:*

*John Stevenson*

in the dream  
my dog has a whistle  
only I can hear

William Wallace wrote, "In the world of words, the imagination is one of the forces of nature". The world of imagination and the world of dreams are closely aligned. In this senryu, a dream has permitted the usurping of power, the assumption of human supremacy over nature. A human whistles for a dog, a dog must obey. The imagination of the dream world asks, "What would happen if a human hears a whistle from a dog? More precisely, what would happen if it is the dog's owner who hears the whistle?" The senryu presents the reader with an amusing paradox, and reverses the role of master/servant. Our human dominion over nature is persistent: moon landings, hurricane trackings, ocean explorations: however, a mere closing of the eyes to sleep and the order of the universe is disrupted. This senryu also reminds us of the illusions in Chiyo ni's "butterfly -/what's it dreaming/fanning its wings?". There are further possibilities in the personal interpretations of such a dream, as well as a traditional reference, conscious or not, to the Chinese story from Chuang Tzu, who wondered if he were a man dreaming he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was a man. Imagination and expanded awareness: fine attributes for a prize winning poem.



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*Second Place:*

*Emily Romano*

rodeo cowboy  
hopefully clutching  
a handful of sky

So much is said in a few well chosen words. The first line sets the scene, leads us to imagine a predictably tough cowboy, yet we have room to imagine whether he is young, and new at riding broncos, or a seasoned hand. With the word “hopefully”, we are reminded of how much the outcome will matter. Does the immediate future hold glory and the building of a reputation, or does it hold broken bones, or the end of a career? The image of a "bucking bronco" pitching its rider in an upheaval of motion is etched against the peaceful blue of a bright sky. One hand holds on for dear life, while the other clutches for the only other thing he has at the moment, the sky. Besides the need for balance, is that clutch a last subconscious, and very human, cry to the maker of the universe?

*Third Place:*

*J. Daniel Beaudry*

two-way glass—  
the patient waits inside  
the therapist's reflection

"Two-way glass", an open invitation to the world of reflection, contemplation, cogitation. Here a patient waits while a therapist considers the best strategy. We see the senryu's ability to capture moments exposing all of our vulnerabilities, the frailty of the human condition seeking help with some kind of challenge. The idea of a two-way glass echoes the two way relationship of patient/therapist: confidentiality on the part of the therapist, loyalty on the part of the patient, how we are somehow all connected in this web of survival. A therapist considers a patient in light of self, of an empirical knowledge and personal experience; objectivity must be considered as well, and a therapist's life, also, must change.



*Honorable Mentions*

rush hour  
the blonde in a Porsche peels  
an orange

*Robert Bauer*

Cars are stopped in rush hour traffic; in the midst of this daily frustration a cool chick steams in a dream car. She, with all her wealth and good looks, with her car's power to "peel," is stuck like everyone else. However, she's easy on the eyes, easier still when she takes out an orange and starts to peel it. Slowly. With the unexpected third line, one imagines the cars starting to move again, except those whose drivers are watching her fingers . . .

grinding sausage meat  
she recounts the times  
her husband cheated

*Bill Pauly*

This senryu pulls no punches. She re-counts the betrayals with each turn of the handle, working through her pain in the time-honoured tradition of work, of getting something useful done. "Grinding" is such a strong word right at the start, followed by hard "g", soft "g", and "s" sounds. Though not usually important or even desired in Japanese poems, here the sound is supportive to the central theme, and makes the poem memorable, makes the poem "turn". While R. H. Blyth (*How to Write Senryu*) told us that "senryu are not to be read twice . . .", this one is fun to repeat.

conservatory,  
the carnivorous plants  
behind glass

*Jeanne Harrington*

Here is a satirical compression of society's current need to



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overprotect. We laugh at ourselves, laugh that anyone would think to put these harmless plants behind plexiglas, mock our secret and sometimes silly fears. This senryu would make a good cartoon, the plants embellished with fierce little eyes and teeth.

grocery shopping—  
his python tattoo  
squeezes the Charmin

*Marilyn Appl Walker*

In the fine tradition of bawdy humour, this senryu presents a cameo out of range of the cinematographer's lens. Somehow "high noon" conjures a western movie set, the actors decked out in stetsons, high heeled boots, and chaps. For a moment, the make-believe movie world is shattered by the very real world of human function. These "dead" actors are caught in a live act.

on display:  
her small and firm  
opinion of men

*Frank Walsh*

This senryu is a rib tickler, Adam's rib, that is. A woman sizes up her feelings about the opposite sex. The reader knows such a person, can visualize her face, her pursed mouth. Enough said!

scar on her cheek  
she gets her lipstick  
just right

*Carl Patrick*

This senryu juxtaposes the cruel beauty of a woman's face—scarred, and the delicate posturing of a poised brush painting the lips, perhaps, a glamorous shade of ruby red. How important it is for this woman to compensate for the ugliness in



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one part of her face, with beauty in another. She is proud, confident, a survivor. We are happy that she is able to return to the daily business of make up application after such (whatever) ordeal.

### *Judges Comments:*

Thank you to the Haiku Society of America and to the 569 entrants for submitting such enjoyable work.

To help us with judging we turned to senryu definitions by Hiroaki Sato, Michael Dylan Welch, Jane Reichold, Donald Keene, and Lorraine Ellis Harr. We read (and reread) the entered senryu, narrowing our selections to 40. On a second visit we narrowed again, this time to 10, comparing our notes and discussing the work. It was challenging to make the final selections based on the ideas gathered from our definitions and our own selected readings.

There are many interpretations to a senryu; our comments offer only some of the possibilities. We discovered such a range of work dealing with so many of our human emotions: pride, envy, vanity, fear, tenderness; and themes of illusion, disillusionment, egotism, frailty, incongruity, justice. Fine work containing contradictions, paradoxes, humor, and wit. We would like to thank all the poets for submitting such stimulating work and allowing us to remember our sanity through human foible and imperfection.

*Terry Ann Carter, Claudia Coutu*      *Judges*



## **MERIT BOOK AWARDS for 2004**

**(for books published in 2003)**

### **Introduction**

We had the privilege and challenge of selecting from among thirty-two submissions for Merit Book Awards for books published in 2003. The quality of the books made selections difficult but our reading highly enjoyable. After reading and reflecting individually on the books, we met to discuss the entries and choose those that would receive public commendation. All of the thirty-two books, including those not here mentioned, reflect the sincerity and aesthetic commitment of their authors and editors.

*Kirsty Karkow and Edward J. Rielly, judges*

### **First Place**

*Puddle on the Ink Stone: Haiku and Other Short Poems*, by Carolyn Thomas (36679 Las Begonias, Cathedral City, CA 92234), ISBN 0-9724396-0-9, \$12.50 postpaid.

Carolyn Thomas divides her book traditionally into seasons. She offers excellent haiku and includes a strong section of tanka and other poems. Each page induces thoughtful reflection, and the sumi-e brushwork adds a finishing touch to this most attractive book. Her poetry conveys a clear Zen influence.

### **Second Place**

*Haiku for a Moonless Night, Volume I*, by an'ya (Natal\*Light Press, P.O. Box 1168, Crooked River Ranch, OR 97760), ISBN 0-9727130-0-X, \$15.95 plus \$3.00 postage.

These haiku run the gamut in subject from the mundane to the spiritual while consistently reflecting an acute ability to sense the essence of things. Kuniharu Shimizu's haiga grace many of the pages in this attractive, handmade volume.



## Frogpond XXVIII:1

### **Third Place**

*Chrysanthemum Love*, by Fay Aoyagi (Blue Willow Press, 930 Pine Street, #105, San Francisco, CA 94108), ISBN 0-9745547-0-7, \$10.00 postpaid.

Fay Aoyagi writes to tell her stories, taking the haiku seriously but not herself. The humor and lightness work well with the winsome pen and ink drawings by Keiko Matsumoto. Her approach reflects a cosmopolitan background.

### **Highly Commended**

*Amongst the Graffiti: Collected Haiku and Senryu 1972-2002*, by Janice M. Bostok (Post Pressed, 31 Allara St., Flaxton, Qld 4560, Australia), ISBN 1-876682-46-9, AU\$21.50 plus postage (order online at [www.postpressed.com.au](http://www.postpressed.com.au)).

*At the Tombstone (Kraj Nadgrobnika)*, by Dimitar Anakiev (Red Moon Press, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604-1661), ISBN 1-893959-31-7, \$12.00 plus \$3.00 postage.

*The Smell of Rust*, by Margaret Chula (Katsura Press, P.O. Box 275, Lake Oswego, OR 97034), ISBN 0-9638551-2-3, \$14.95.

### **Award for Best Anthology**

*Reeds: Contemporary Haiga*, Jeanne Emrich, ed. (Lone Egret Press, P.O. Box 390545, Edina, MN 55435), \$12.00 plus \$2.00 postage.

The subtitle “Contemporary Haiga” has a dual reference, to both the fact of recent creation and the nontraditional pictorial approach in many of the haiga. A large number of the haiga are in color, and the book includes a brief history of haiga and a list of suggested readings.

### **Highly Commended**

*A New Resonance 3: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku*, Jim Kacian and Dee Evetts, eds. (Red Moon Press, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604-1661), ISBN 1-893959-39-2, \$16.95 plus \$3.00 postage.

*Contemporary Haibun 4*, Jim Kacian, Bruce Ross, and Ken



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Jones, eds. (Red Moon Press, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604-1661), ISBN 1-893959-34-1, \$14.95 plus \$3.00 postage.

*Pegging the Wind: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2002*, Jim Kacian, et al, eds. (Red Moon Press, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604-1661), ISBN 1-893959-32-5, \$16.95 plus \$3.00 postage.

### **Award for Best Book of Criticism**

*Haiku: A Poet's Guide*, by Lee Gurga (Modern Haiku Press, P.O. Box 68, Lincoln, IL 62656), ISBN 0-9741894-0-5, \$20.00 postpaid.

Lee Gurga's book discusses haiku and related forms such as senryu, renku, haibun, and haiga. It is especially useful to the beginning writer or to the veteran who wishes to try another genre. The book also will be of great value to teachers. The writing is clear, the examples are many, and the bibliography serves as a helpful resource.

### **Award for Best Book of Haibun by an Individual Poet**

*Ascend with Care*, by William M. Ramsey (Leap Press, P.O. Box 1424, North Falmouth, MA 02556), ISBN 0-9747229-0-1, \$7.00 plus \$1.50 postage.

The haibun in this volume, as Rich Youmans has written in the introduction, "chronicle one winter's journey of the spirit." The haibun offer an intellectual challenge to the reader, and the marriage of prose and haiku is more intimate than in most haibun, the prose and haiku often flowing syntactically from one to another. An interview with William Ramsey on the art of haibun concludes the book.

### **Award for Best Book of Linked Verse**

*A Spill of Apples: Tanrenga and Other Linked Verse*, by Carol Purington and Larry Kimmel (Winfred Press, 364 Wilson Hill Road, Colrain, MA 01340) ISBN 0-9743856-6-2, \$10.00 postpaid.

## Frogpond XXVIII:1

As Jane Reichhold says in the preface, “collaboration is a kind of poetry in itself.” Here is a fine collaboration among two poets and an accomplished artist (Merrill Ann Gonzales). This may be the first book of published tanrenga in English. It is special, not least because of the verbal play between two praiseworthy poets.



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