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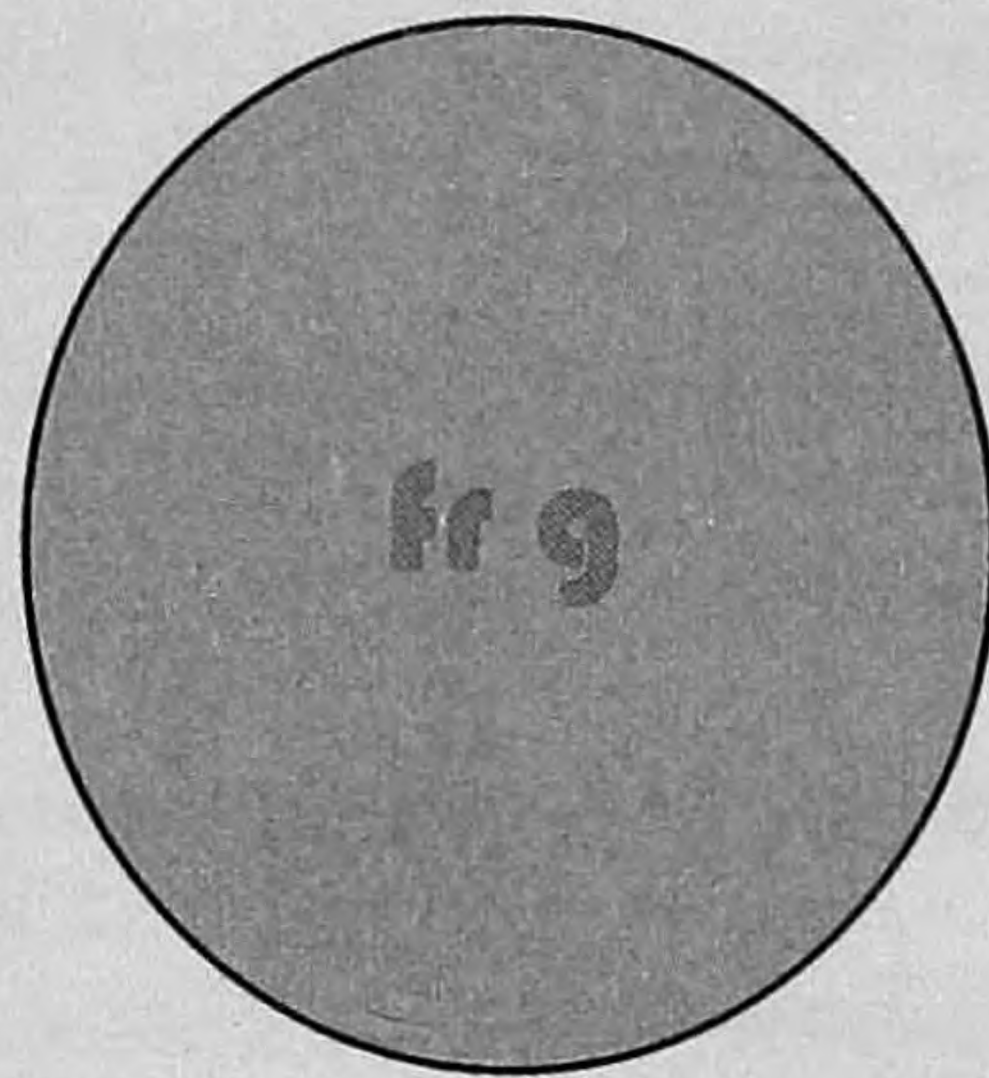
Volume 33:3, 2010





# **frogpond**

**The Journal of the Haiku  
Society of America**



**Volume 33, Number 3  
Fall, 2010**



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## Submissions Policy

1. Submissions from both members and non-members of HSA are welcome
2. All submissions must be original, unpublished work that is not being considered elsewhere and must not appear on the Internet prior to appearing in *Frogpond*.
3. Submission by e-mail is preferred
  - (a) in the body of the e-mail (no attachments)
  - (b) with subject line: Frogpond Submission
  - (c) with place of residence noted in the body of the e-mail
4. A submission by post will receive a reply only if included are either:
  - (a) a self-addressed stamped envelope (with a Canadian stamp)
  - (b) a self-addressed envelope with one International Reply Coupon (IRC) for up to 30 grams; two IRCs for over 30 grams and up to 50 grams
5. Only one submission per issue will be considered

### **The Submission May Include Any or All of the Following:**

1. Up to ten (10) haiku
2. Up to three (3) haibun
3. Up to three (3) rengay or other short sequences
4. One (1) renku or other long sequence
5. One (1) essay
6. One (1) book review

### **Submission Periods:**

1. February 15 to April 15 (Spring/Summer Issue)
2. June 01 to August 01 (Fall Issue)
3. September 15 to November 15 (Winter Issue)

Acceptances will be sent shortly after the end of each period

### **Note to Publishers:**

Books for review may be sent at any time

### **Submission Addresses:**

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Postal: George Swede, Editor, *Frogpond*, Box 279, Station P, Toronto, ON M5S 2S8, Canada

**Web site:** <<http://www.hsa-haiku.org/frogpond/index.html>>

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Literature Award  
\$100**

for the best previously unpublished work appearing in the  
last issue of *Frogpond* as selected by vote of the HSA  
Executive Committee

**From Issue 33:2**

woodsmoke...  
the guilt of living  
on

*Roland Packer*, Ontario





# Haiku & Senryu

year's end  
I give the graveyard  
a passing glance

Tom Painting, New York

alongside the road  
a fox spirit  
has shed its body

Joseph M. Kusmiss, New Hampshire

I chucked the urn too

R.P. Carter, Ontario

untold insights  
and emotions  
this brain in my hands

these tiny muscles  
brightened many days  
with smiles

Mark Teaford, Maryland

star counting  
we walk the spring moon  
up the hill path

\_ Kala, India

snowshoes on the wall  
twenty years now  
going nowhere

Ian Marshall, Pennsylvania

waiting out the migraine a shooting star

woodpecker staccato the long day into dust

Andrea Grillo, New Jersey

espaliered roses...  
she explains to the children  
their father's absence

Jo McInerney, Australia



furled parasol—  
her thinness  
after his betrayal

Linda Jeannette Ward, North Carolina

the persistence  
of his image  
peonies

Merrill Ann Gonzales, Connecticut

folds of night  
mingled with the end of day  
the long walk home

Neal Whitman, California

her fist  
into risen dough  
...exhaling

Barbara Snow, Oregon

frost on the mums  
my parents  
still not speaking

Julie Warther, Ohio

the puzzle sky  
half-completed  
winter wind

Phillip Miller, Pennsylvania

morning fog interrupted  
by barking dogs

Patricia Nolan, Colorado

horizon a wash  
of sea and cloud  
hawk on an aerial

Marshall Hryciuk, Ontario

state fair gypsy  
reading my future  
between the calluses

C. William Hinderliter, Arizona

raccoon tracks...  
the blossom ring  
around a puddle

Michele Harvey, New York



no moon a neuron reroutes a red alert

Mark Harris, New Jersey

sloping dawn  
saguaros caught  
in mid-gesture

John F. Scheers, Arizona

orchid  
something beautiful  
is mine

like Judas i sell my parents' house

Ellen Pratte, Rhode Island

bleak wind  
I'd know her voice  
anywhere

Greg Hopkins, Alabama

tangled fishing line—  
remembering her childhood  
but not her children

Robert B. McNeill, Virginia

slicing a melon  
the seeds clinging to  
what they know

William M. Ramsey, South Carolina

sun rays  
the arc of the palm frond  
before the breeze

Wende DuFlon, Guatemala

vibrating in her breast pocket the estranged husband

Ruth Holzer, Virginia

high clouds  
my mother's voice  
thin and brittle

Bob Lucky, Ethiopia

*stella maris*  
a myriad of lives  
in my mind

Dietmar Tauchner, Austria

one drop  
trembling on the lip  
of the lily

df tweney, California

disputed land  
crows descend  
with their quarrels

Adelaide B. Shaw, New York

on the elevator  
just me  
and a stranger's perfume

Dorothy McLaughlin, New Jersey

the warmth of the sun  
on his hand  
in my hand

Jeanne Martin, Massachusetts



in the spider's  
dreamcatcher—  
only dew

George G. Dorsty, Virginia

mottled sky  
a duckling digs into  
its yellow

Alice Frampton, Washington

lighting butter lamps  
your death anniversary  
what else can I do?

Sonam Chhoki, Bhutan

stillness  
the black and white cat  
made of shadows

granite cliff  
the natural bonsai  
rooted in moss

Margarita Engle, California

parking for lovers—  
crocuses between  
the tire tracks

Tomislav Maretić, Croatia

dawn

(( ( koi ) ) )

William Cullen Jr., New York

snowmelt—  
the drainpipes echo  
birdsong

Ann K. Schwader, Colorado

to tell or not to tell the secret day moon

Chen-ou Liu, Ontario

river shallows...  
white birds catching  
pieces of evening

Patrick Pilarski, Alberta



mint sorbet  
morning softens  
the frost

Greg Piko, Australia

the farther away  
she walks into the distance  
the smaller I get

Brett Nicholas Moore, Missouri

Big Dipper—  
mica in the gold pan  
glitters back

gale-force wind—  
slowly, the Southern Cross  
rights itself

Lorin Ford, Australia

chilly night  
I try to start a dream  
with twigs and leaves

John Stevenson, New York

moonlight  
through the night leaves  
your bed still empty

Beverly Acuff Momoi, California

as I sew  
I lose the thread of  
my life, too

Alice Mae Ward, Massachusetts

clouded over—  
dogwood blossoms  
hold the light

Brent Partridge, California

coloring  
the quiet of dawn  
a lavender mist

Tom Tico, California

a shift in the wind  
sometimes she cries  
for no reason

Audrey Olberg, Maryland



Night swell  
a solitary rowboat  
crosses the moon

Stephen Gould, Colorado

evolution—  
mannequins now too  
have nipples

Arch Haslett, Ontario

deep in sleep  
the sound of a gorge  
rushing through my dream

Susan Marie LaVallee, Hawaii

Outside the binary lecture    green language

Paul Pfeuger, Jr., Taiwan

friday afternoon  
the ferry line stretches  
back to summer

Susan K. Miller, Washington

I let him  
remember it his way—  
spring gust

Carolyn Hall, California

agreeing to separate  
clouds scuttle  
the forever sky

Joan Vistain, Illinois

desert motel  
blowballs let go  
of their seed

an`ya, Oregon

mayfly—  
all the promises  
we made

John Soules, Ontario

beach temple  
I listen to the mantras  
in a conch

Gautam Nadkarni, India



the way  
he still looks at me  
purple sage

old love letters  
a summer breeze stirs  
the dead gypsy moth

no moon, no stars —  
a shell  
without its tortoise

Melissa Spurr, California

cold rain falling  
in my dream the falling  
of... everything

Patricia Machmiller, California

sunrise songs  
birds drinking  
the light

Mankh (Walter E. Harris III), California

against  
the  
night  
touched by your breasts  
and  
a  
silver  
angel

*a distinction between athena and aphrodite rich with mucosa*

Lee Gurga, Illinois

long night  
*the call of the wild*  
in my pajamas

Dan Schwerin, Wisconsin

ground frost  
the crackle  
of northern lights

Katrina Shepherd, Scotland

still morning—  
swimming over pines  
into clouds

middleaged, drifting  
past endless waterlilies—  
I *get* late Monet

Barbara Ungar, New York

clouds sliding over  
the pond's wrinkled skin—  
old lover's fingers

Jim Bainbridge, California

her blue lips  
my red hands  
sunlight through stained glass

Mary Kipps, Virginia

sudden rain  
the stranded monuments  
of emptied streets

David Caruso, New Jersey



wharf bucket fish heads boys eyes

Guy Simser, Ontario

her pale face  
surfaces  
my desire

Victor Pineiro, New York

fading photo  
my future parents  
still in love

Max Verhart, Netherlands

winter fog ...  
the things we can make  
ourselves forget

dry lightning  
sizzling in twilight  
the baby kicks

Angela Terry, Washington

black ice  
on the drive home  
you're lying

Nancy Carol Moody, Oregon

the dog's hot  
breath on my knee  
thunder without rain

David Boyer, Connecticut

this cat  
she wakes for a moment  
to yawn

Carlos Colón, Louisiana

world cup soccer—  
backyard hadedas compete  
with vuvuzelas

Izak Bouwer, Ontario

first light  
I rise  
the way mountains are made

Amy Whitcomb, Virginia

same...  
sex—  
marriage!

just for fun  
people an age I once was  
run up the mountain

LeRoy Gorman, Ontario

so unlike us  
our shadows tall and slender  
October sunset

Diane Mayr, New Hampshire

old barn  
sitting at an angle  
in time

Karen V. DiNobile, New York

long evening  
a different silence  
in each room

Christopher Patchel, Illinois



partly cloudy—  
cappuccino splotches  
above the fold

the sea lettuce  
on my face mask  
a late Matisse

Scott Mason, New York

sunlight enters  
the room

i enter  
you

our shadows  
leave us

Nick Avis, Newfoundland & Labrador

truck tires on gravel  
the small grievance  
lodged between us

not reading the postcard  
addressed to my neighbor  
reading it

Liz Norden, Oregon

crushed snails  
I never knew it  
would be this hard,

Renée Owen, California

sadly,  
my brother's cannabis crop died  
leaving him disjointed

viagra heist  
police still looking  
for the hardened criminals

Carol Raisfeld, New York

Valentine's night  
I gaze at the dying embers  
in the fireplace

Sanjukta, India

into the trunks  
of blackened redwoods  
whispers of fog

John Barlow, England

water strider—  
out on the river  
a coxswain's call

overnight rain  
the whole tree  
in a cupped leaf

Catherine Lee, Maine

most of  
what is  
right

in

a wild  
flower

patch

Scott Metz, Oregon

peeling cucumbers  
all the money I never made

Matthew Cariello, Ohio



autumn wind—  
holes in my lungs  
fluting...

Kristen Deming, Maryland

pink gladioli  
unfurl in sunshine  
I long for you

Janet Ruth Heller, Michigan

the fly among us  
not content to settle  
morning meditation

Christopher Herold, Washington

fog softens  
the mountain's edges...  
a day to myself

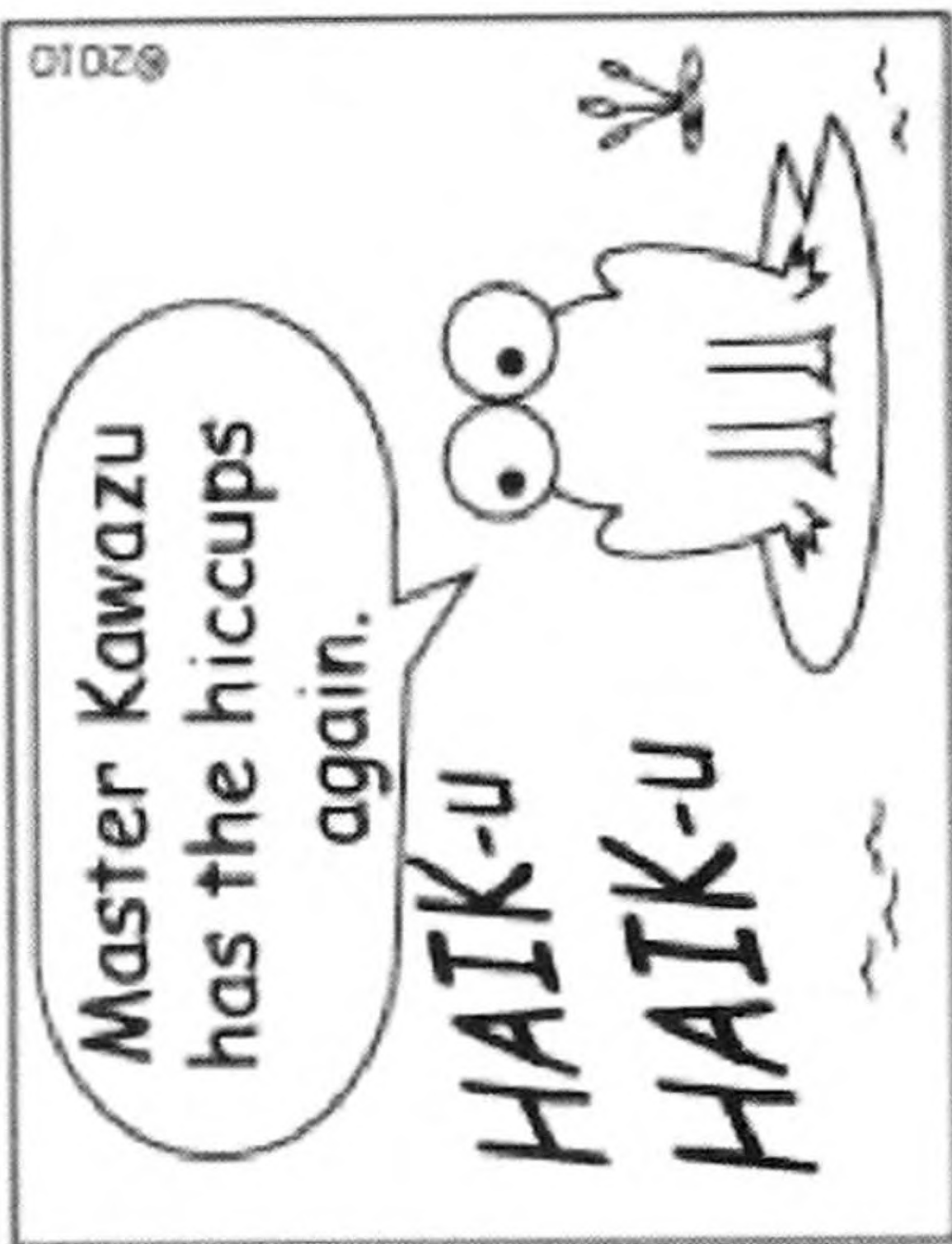
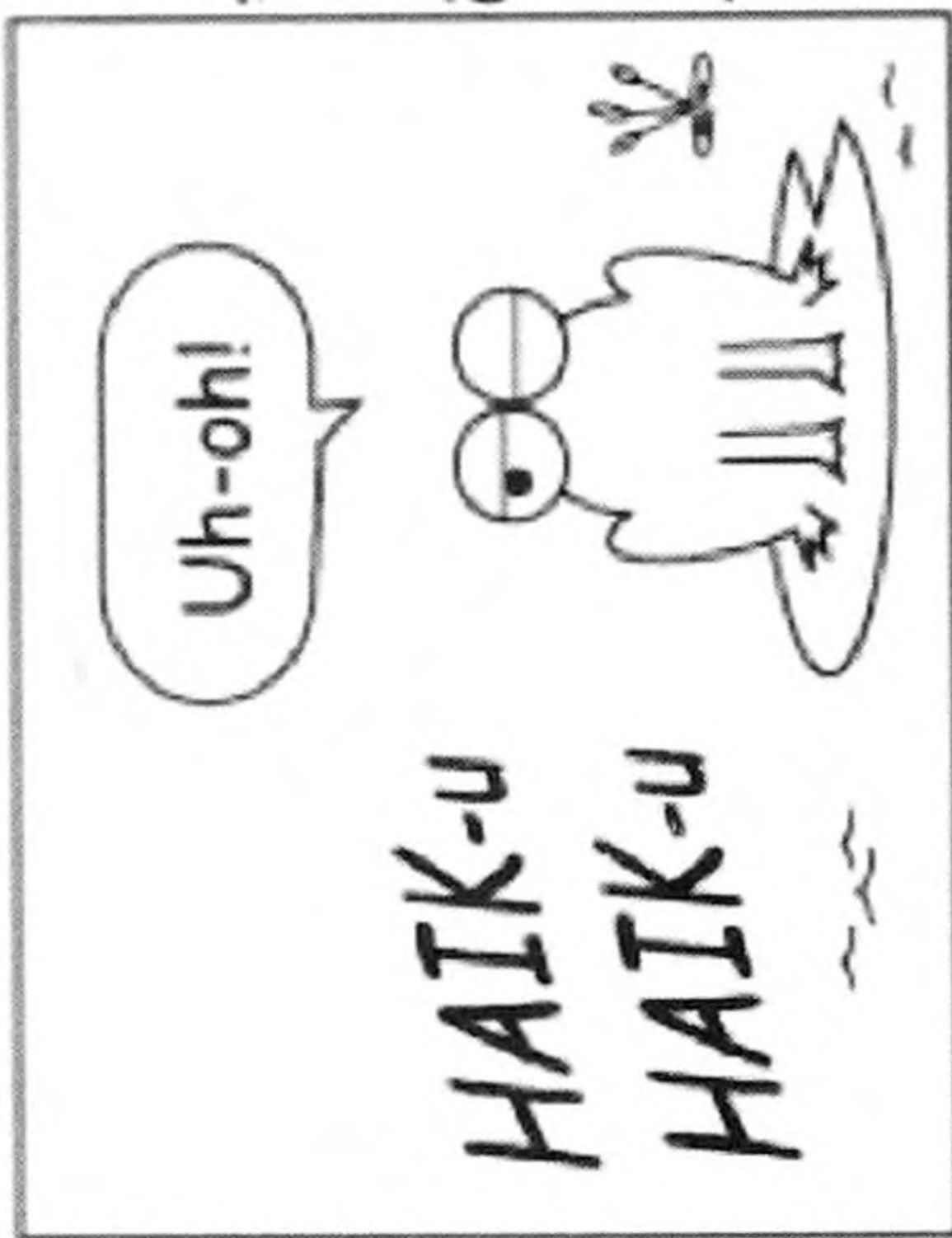
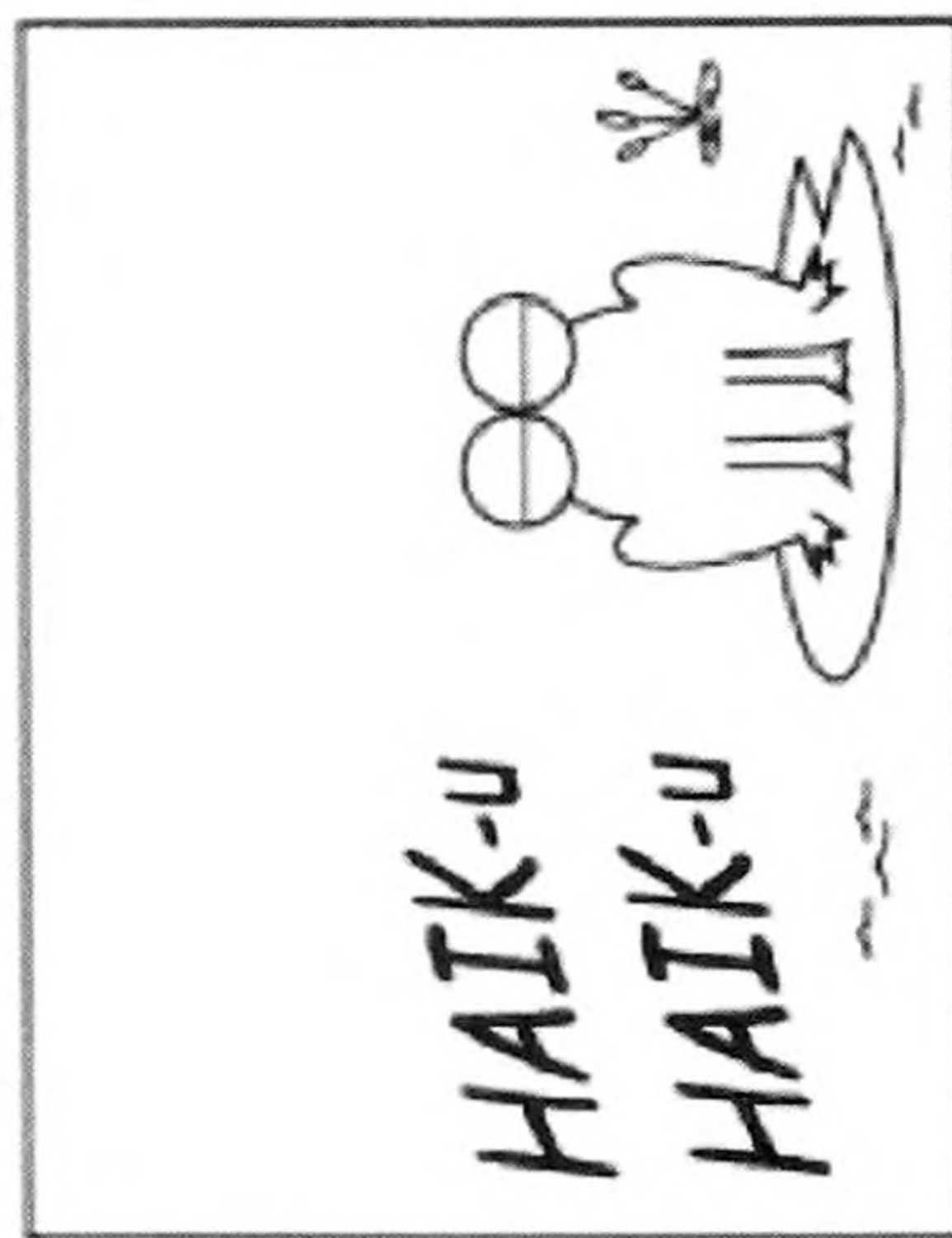
Francine Banwarth, Iowa

tidal lagoon  
my origami goose  
mutates

Ernest J. Berry, New Zealand

# Old Pond

by Jessica Tremblay

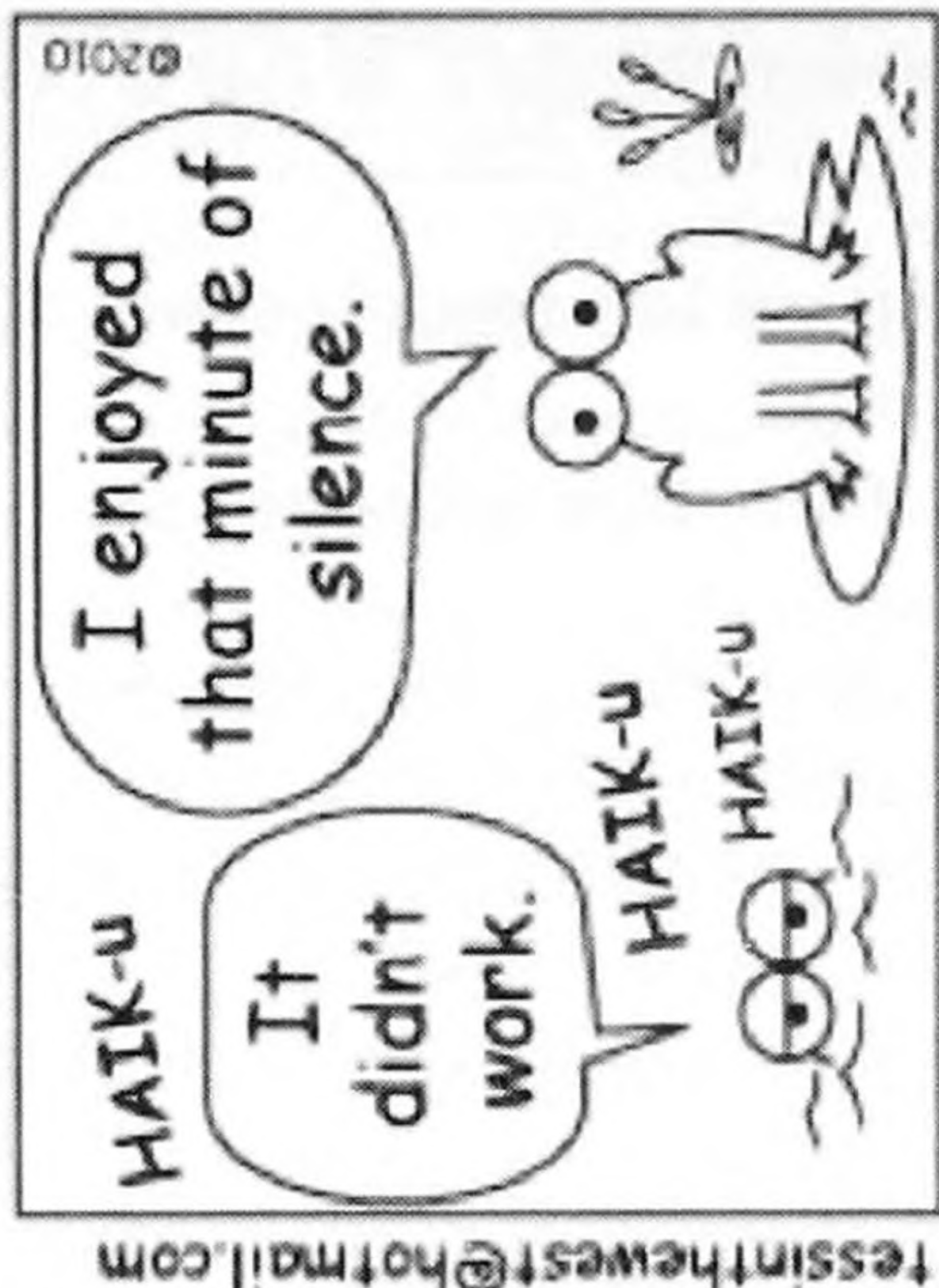
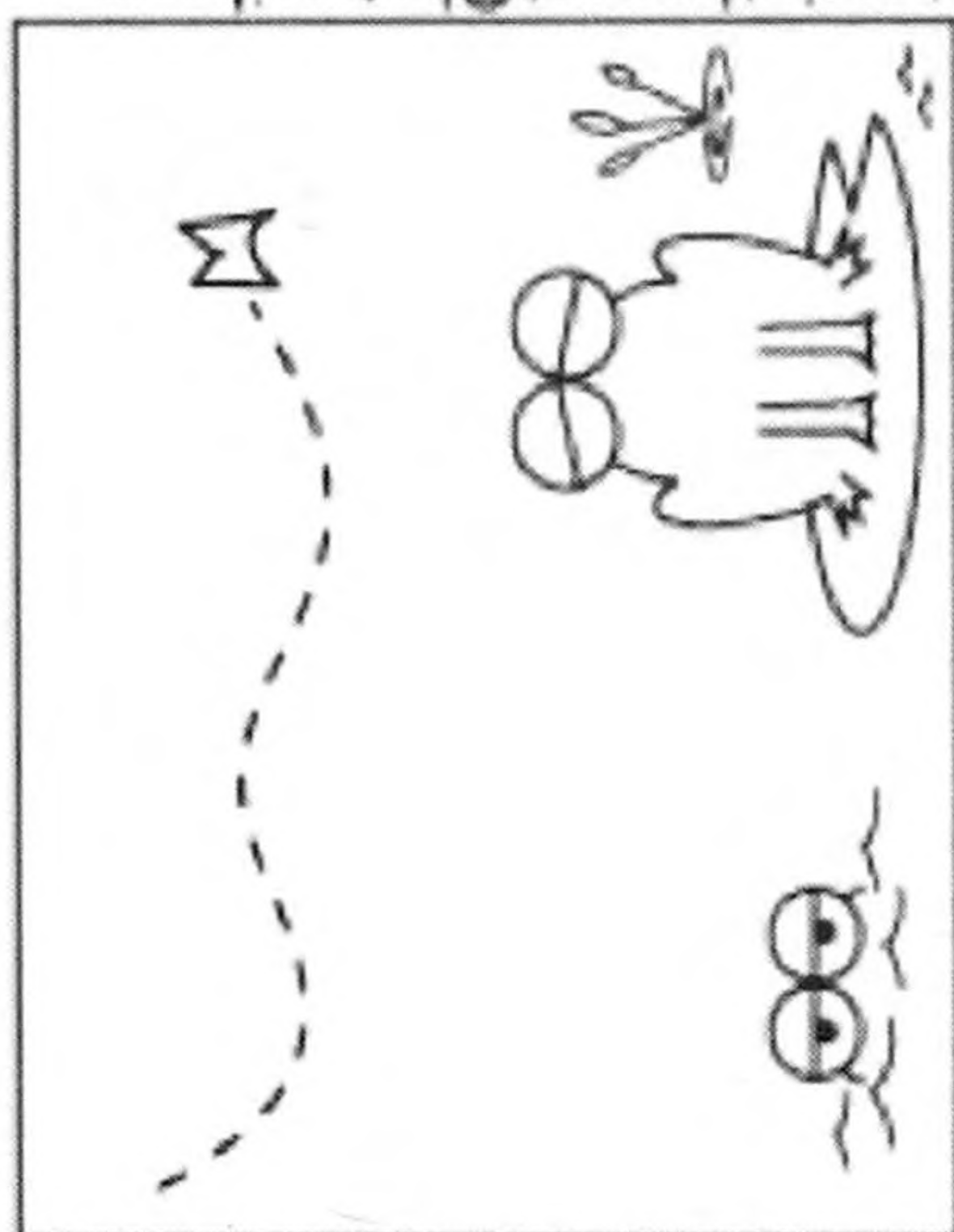
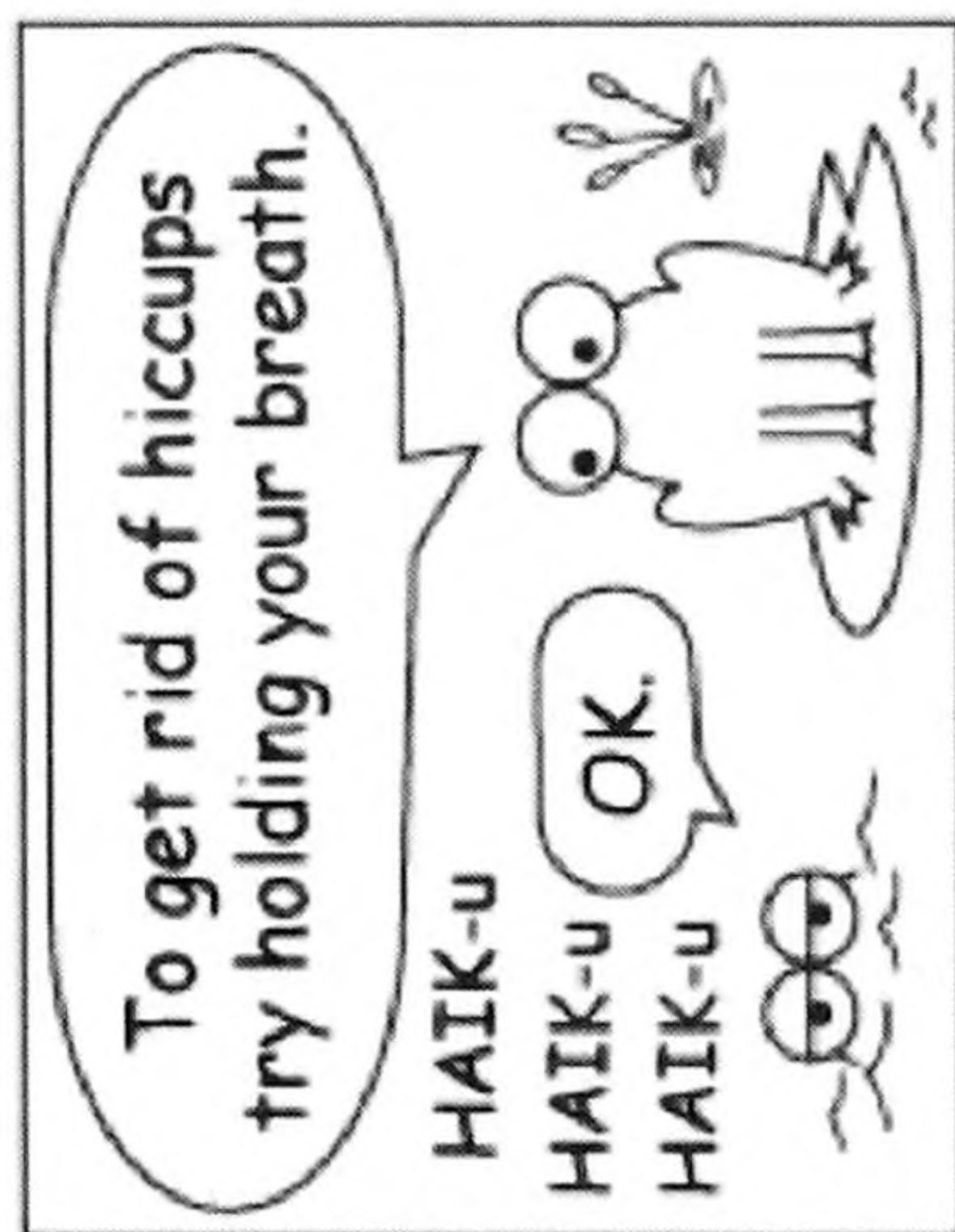


tessinthwest@hotmail.com

<http://oldpond.voila.net>

# Old Pond

by Jessica Tremblay



tessinthwest@hotmail.com

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## Reflections Unedited, summer, 2010

by *A.C. Missias*, Pennsylvania

Editing a haiku journal is not the glamorous occupation that some may envisage. There's the constant weight of obligation, represented concretely by the envelope-heaped In-box (or ever-increasing pile of unread email submissions) that stands between you and a respectable response time. Then, in processing those submissions, there are the hours spent crafting constructive rejections for authors who may not care what you think, might bridle at such a show of "condescension," or who may even take the time to send you an expletive-laden screed by way of thanks—you continue anyway, in hopes of reaching that handful of others who are working at their craft in relative ignorance of the contemporary conception of the genre and/or who are just a few gentle suggestions from blossoming into valued contributors. (I've heard enough stories of individuals who said that a single editor made a complete difference in their embrace of haiku that I could never give up on this time-consuming correspondence, even though the lure of form rejections could be overwhelming.) Then there's the task of ordering the final selection of poems; some larger journals necessarily fall to external ordering, as by author, lest this job become unworkable, but for smaller journals, there can be a huge value added by way of placing poems next to each other in such a way that (a) they recreate for the reader the same sensation that made them noteworthy to the editor, and (b) there's room for additional resonances by the movement from one scene and sensibility to the next, without awkward repetitions, unfortunate readings, or jarring shifts. This is an art that nobody teaches—although work with *renku* might prepare one for a way of thinking about pacing—and yet it can very much affect the overall perception of any given issue, taken as a complete volume, and of each poem when first encountered.



The final edited journals are where the satisfaction lies — quality poems (or other content) on board, ordering decided, layout working, all ready to go out the door. Here, too, there's less glamor than some submitters seem to think: most mailings involve late nights stuffing envelopes in front of the TV, and most journals barely make enough money to break even. But a range of dedicated editors are willing to put up with all of the hassles and costs because they feel that they are doing something valuable, promoting the haiku genre, showcasing good work (according to their vision of what the form currently is or perhaps where it might be headed), advancing scholarship in some way, shaping the contemporary conception of haiku. Different journals have different strengths and visions, but I think that all of them have some subset of these underlying goals.

However, working so constantly like this on the “front lines” of haiku has a range of personal costs that may catch new editors by surprise. For example, after hours per week of sifting submissions and suggesting edits, it becomes hard to partake of haiku “recreationally.” In my case, this disaffection took three main forms: (1) I was no longer able to participate fully in an online “kukai” discussion group that I used to greatly enjoy; I just didn't have more hours in the week to analyze the haiku of other writers, whether offering criticism or kudos, and added email just felt like another burdensome obligation, rather than a source of fun and comradery. (2) My reading of journals fell close to zero. I now have a drawer filled with unread back-issues of *Frogpond* and *Modern Haiku*, two journals that I used to devour within days of tearing them open. And I virtually never look at haiku content, edited or otherwise, online. (3) My own writing, never very high in output, fell to barely tangible. Further, I stopped being able to think constructively about my own work. At one time, long ago, I spent time playing with ways of structuring a poem, whether it was thinking about the number of beats per line, or changing line order to create varied approaches to the content; over time, I felt lucky if I perceived a “haiku moment” among my busy days and was able to get it down on paper, with little chance that I'd be tweaking and



massaging it any further, and the lack of input from other writers means my craft feels a bit stale. Additionally, I rarely remembered to submit to journals on a regular basis, when dealing with my own deadlines, losing another possible source of feedback on my work.

So what has it been like to step aside as *Acorn's* editor? Well, first, I feel I was very lucky that timing and circumstances combined to allow me to hand the journal off into the hands of a writer and editor that I much admire. So from the point of view of leaving a legacy, and of continuing to have an influence over the development of English-language haiku, I feel a reflected pride from the issues that Carolyn Hall has put together. Because our transition was gradual (first editorial, then production, website, etc.), Issue #24 (spring, 2010) was the first issue that came to me without my having seen the poems or final layout in any context, and I had the added benefit of reading it while on a vacation in the woods—I actually got to read the whole journal at one sitting, and it struck me as a wonderful issue, full of gems, and made clear that “my baby” is in good hands. That is truly a good fortune both for me and for fans of the journal.

However, in terms of my own reading and writing, I haven't found myself coming back to the haiku world the way that I imagined (or that I have seen for other editors as their terms expire). This is mainly because I have a toddler at home, who appears capable of absorbing most of the time and energy that her parents have available! Many of my previous hobbies and causes have fallen alarmingly by the wayside, and I now imagine that it will be a few years before there will be space in my head and time in my day to pick any of them back up. (Nobody can really prepare you in advance for the all-absorbing nature of parenthood!) I rarely get to read anything, and when I do, it tends to be the sort of fiction that gives my brain a rest from daily life and leads it on diverting adventures. Additionally, since my own writing of haiku has tended to come from a place of solitude and receptiveness, rather than from going in search of ideas or making writing a discipline, it has been



particularly susceptible to a jump in the busy-ness of my head and the crowding of my days, and thus is not likely to be quick to recover.

And yet, the pull of haiku has not slipped away from me. I have a Twitter account, and gradually, in addition to friends and political wags, I've found myself adding philosophers and poetically minded posters whose awareness meshes well with a haiku way of looking at the world. Taking my daughter to the playground has also given me occasional stretches of stillness in which I have reconnected with the sparrows and trees that have often mediated for me the changing seasons and other parts of the natural world that pull us out of our heads and into awareness of the moment. And I still think of myself as a haijin, however wearied by 5-7-5 Internet doggerel and heaps of eccentric poetry submissions, so I suspect that this genre will continue to represent for me a way of capturing the world around me and my relation to it. But it may be some time before I find myself the eager reader of journals, attender of workshops, and writer of recognizable poems that I once was—I just hope that the time is measured in years and not decades! Meantime, my gratitude goes to those continuing to do the hard work of producing the journals that keep us all connected, and my best wishes to everybody exploring this genre and attempting to master its subtleties and keep a balance in their own daily lives.

ACM grew up in Michigan and has lived in Philadelphia for some 15 years. Originally trained as a neuroscientist, AC founded the journal *Acorn* while still working in a lab (and served as editor for close to 10 years) and is now a journal and book editor for a scientific society. Intermittently involved in politics, systematically visits (and reviews) playgrounds around the metro Philly area, fritters a lot of time online.





# Tan Renga

## A Tan Renga

by

Bob Fritzmeier, Iowa & *Del Todey Turner*, Iowa

a great blue heron  
stares from shore  
my kayak legs cramped

*at the nursing home her first  
self-propelled wheelchair*



## A Tan Renga

by

Yvonne Cabalona, California & *w.f. owen*, California

clouds thinning  
drops trickle down the shape  
of the rain chain

*the gardener wrings out  
his neckerchief*

## Bayou Blues

by

John Thompson, California & *Renée Owen*, California

a gentle breeze  
fallen blossoms skim  
flooded graves

*in a locked shipyard  
halyards creak*

the wintry wind  
whistles through a knothole—  
more layoffs

*hurricane squatters  
the sea takes back  
the seawall*

fine grained sand swirls  
around a beached whale

*gulf spill  
lightning chases night  
from the oily shore*



# Haiku Sequences

*Monarda fistulosa*

by

*John Martone*, Illinois

bee-balm  
no petals now  
just like me

no petals now  
pure green eye  
bee-balm globe

bee-balm's  
green globe all  
ovaries

leaning  
over  
bee-

balm  
you lose

yr  
glasses

fingering  
bee-balm's  
square stem

my eyeglass stems & bee-balms'

bee-balm—  
small as

yr parts  
get—

no  
single

cell  
in  
sight

all those secret planets

above the lake

bee-balm—

we're all  
extra-  
terrestrial  
bee-balm





# Canyon Grande

by

*Robert Mainone*, Michigan

end of the trail  
Coronado's  
seven golden cities

with different eyes  
seeing  
what Coronado saw

a rainbow ends  
on the canyon's  
golden walls

dizzying heights  
a hawk soars out  
over the abyss

stillness  
the thread-like river  
cutting the mountain

an artist  
changing colors  
cloud shadows

Bright Angel Trail  
down through libraries  
of nonfiction

in walls  
of a great cathedral  
origins

ancient ways  
small fields of desert corn  
the Havasupai

golden Shangrila  
by a waterfall  
People of the Blue-green water

## For Bashō

by

*Leszek Chudziński*, Washington

\*\*\*

Like a wild bamboo  
I sleep alongside your travels  
Waiting for the sound of your feet

\*\*\*

I'm that little frog  
That jumped into your poem  
And made a big splash

\*\*\*

I'm a butterfly  
That crossed the ocean  
To play in your garden

\*\*\*

I am your garden  
Where you have dwelled all these years  
Sprouting words each spring

\*\*\*

I'm the raven  
The white page of your poem  
The face of the moon

\*\*\*

I'm a cherry tree  
Stars fall asleep in my hair  
Fireflies and wind



## Goes Deep

by

Ferris Gilli, Georgia and *Ron Moss*, Tasmania

freeze warning  
the chipmunk's hole  
barely visible

*a wind-bell's sound seeping from the stars*

fairy tale retold . . .  
the fire settles in  
on itself

*crows outside we snuggle under blankets*

first warm night  
the distant tones  
of a mallet on metal

*a match strike whitens the chant of rain*

parting clouds  
incense ash fills  
the jar lid

*a flick knife goes deep into the pie apple*

a wren tries once  
to drink sun-heated water  
first cicadas

*sticky ant trails on the fire-ban sign*

continuing drought  
last year's scarecrow  
in a slump



## Pleiades at Dawn: A Yotsumono Renku

by Karen Cesar, Arizona & Kathy Earsman, Australia

we climb to where  
the snow never melts—  
Pleiades at dawn

*meteors scratch the blackboard  
of our summer sky*

time whizzing by ...  
I ask myself, was I ever  
really that young?

*his pulse beneath  
the shadow of the bone*

### Note

The Yotsumono is a renku form proposed by the English poet, John Edmund Carley, who describes it as follows (<Renku Reckoner <http://www.renkureckoner.co.uk/>>):

The Yotsumono is a four verse sequence for two voices. Poets alternate. The verses may be understood as *hokku*, *wakiku*, *daisan* and *ageku*. There are no tonal or topical exclusions. Season and fixed topic choices may be governed by mainstream renku conventions, or largely independent of them. Equally the sequence may rely largely or wholly on *mukigo*, or none. In all cases *uchikoshi no kirai* (reversion to the last-but-one) and *kannonbiraki* (double doors) are avoided. In order to ensure that the work remains non-thematic all discussion of a poem's meaning should be deferred until the piece is completed.





## Sculling Blackbirds for Voice, Piano, And Dance

(A Renku Cross-Adaptation of the play *Haiku* by *Katherine Snodgrass*

Performed at the David Friend Recital Hall in

Boston, June 9, 2010)

*Haiku*, a one act play by Katherine Snodgrass, was produced in workshop under the auspices of The Philadelphia Theatre Company's new play project STAGES at Temple University City Center in Philadelphia, PA on April 26, 27, and 28, 1989. This renku cross-adaptation follows the thirty-six verse kasen format made popular in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Japan by Matsuo Bashō. Traditional links for seasons, moon, blossom, and lover verses have been modified to fit this new approach as have the rules for linking and shifting in formal renku writing.

The original characters of the play are: Nell, the mother of Louise (Lulu) and Billie (Bebe). There is no attempt by the adapters of the play to follow either character development or traditional theatrical effects in developing the renku style and form. The composer, choreographer, the vocalist in their own collaborative interpretation for renku performance develop these effects. Any facsimiles to actual characters, dramatic interpretations, or words in the play are purely coincidental in order to realize the performance aspect of the piece. The haiku in bold letters are the original written by Katherine Snodgrass. The authors of the cross-adaptation are: *Raffael de Gruttola*, *Judson Evans*, and *Karen Klein* (all from Massachusetts). Initials of the cross-adapters have not been included after each verse since the collaboration involved discussion by all three poets on each verse.

This cross-adaptation corresponds to the *Jo Ha Kyu* Japanese aesthetic for renku performance.

### Start of the *Jo* Phase

1.       **November evening**  
          **Blackbirds scull across the moon**  
          **My breath warms my hands**

2.               first cries  
                  a breech baby

3.       his daughters  
          Lulu and Bebe  
          too beautiful to live

4.                   new buds  
                      I find her words
  
5.           bright yellow tulips  
              the doll beside you  
              that winked
  
6.                   glazing over  
                      raw sky of her irises
  
7.           **Cold, chain-metal swings**  
              **Clang in the empty schoolyard**  
              **Silent summer rain**
  
8.                   shadow of the river birch  
                      tracing her letters
  
9.           **Icy branches bend**  
              **And break over stones. I hear**  
              **My dead father... laugh**
  
10.                   the oriole's song  
                      tight weave of memory
  
11.           shattered medicine wheel  
              fumes  
              through the smoke hole
  
12.                   the story about a fox  
                      who carries away a child

Start of the *Ho* Phase

13.           too much baggage  
              so short a trip  
              tent caterpillar
  
14.                   swallow not swallow the pill  
                      stained fingers



15. childhood photos  
undercover  
a dedication
16. the shiny surface of the music  
unwrapping her
17. sister mimics sister—  
the screeching  
of jays
18. a bruise at the wrist  
stranglehold hug
19. tangled brush  
a camouflaged  
nest
20. children's games  
weaving ribbons into their braids
21. trapped  
in the maze  
clew line of words
22. in the depth of the forest  
the single note of a hermit thrush
23. dim shapes  
on the page  
wrong prescription
24. ghost writer  
mosaic of bottled glass
25. **Late autumn evening**  
**Swallows circling overhead**  
**Wood smoke curling**
26. through the prism of the icicle  
extraordinary

27. smearing her makeup  
up  
to her eyes

28. hurricane season  
the storm finds the one loose shutter

29. slapping  
her legs  
the thunder of it

30. **Red sky at dusk  
Over the trees  
one gray cloud**

Final *Kyu* Phase

31. his hand on the see-saw  
a moment of balance

32. dew gathers  
the last chapter  
dawn moon

33. the tidal pool  
flows back to the sea

34. empty cicada shell  
in the sandbox  
under the pine

35. *Frère Jacques Frère Jacques*  
singing together

36. **Walking in his garden —  
Suddenly in the twilight —  
White hydrangea.**



## One Summer

by *Bob Lucky*, Ethiopia

Drenched in sweat, we walk along roads collecting empty coke and beer bottles in crumpled paper grocery bags, not out of any sense of civic duty or community pride but out of sweet-tooth induced hunger, a craving. The pennies add up until there are enough to buy a plastic carton of Cool Whip. And just outside the door of the grocery, where we can catch the air-conditioned draft each time a shopper comes or goes, we share a spoon and empty that tub, standing up.

my brother's headstone  
slipping into the coolness  
of an oak's shade

## Seeing

by *Shelly Chang*, California

The maze of subway corridors spits us on the street. San Francisco fog obscures the sun. We huddle in a doorway, splitting our sandwiches out of the wind. The stench of urine invades our sanctuary, a legacy from the last user of this corner.

Memory assails me. A mass of tangled hair crowned the drooping head of the homeless man. That familiar smell acted as a buffer between commuters and his outstretched cap. No one crossed the empty space.

A seagull distracts us, bearing a bagel the size of its body. More gulls trail it, all hoping for a bite. We remark on the impossibility of sharing. Another gull would surely be a thief. We pass around the tube of chocolate covered cookies, confident in our humanity.

ring around the rosie  
only the blind girl  
asks about my calluses



## Counting Sheep

by *Glenn G. Coats*, Virginia

My door is ajar and I can hear the attic fan. Both windows in my bedroom are open to allow for a draft. It is after midnight and there are no more cars climbing the hill. I roll from one side of the bed to the other, thinking, listening. I can't sleep.

Someone turns the doorknob a floor below me. I hear footsteps on the walk and for a moment I am frozen still like a branch. Then I run to my parents' room and shake my father. "The prowler," I cry, "he's here at our house!" My father grunts, "go back to sleep," and rolls away.

I gather my father's flare gun from the drawer where he hides it. I tiptoe past the laundry room and quietly open the door into the garage. The wooden bat leans between studs and I grab it with my left hand.

Then I press the button to the garage door opener, wait until it rattles a few feet above the ground and dart out beneath it. I wave a Louisville Slugger and an empty flare gun at the invisible intruder—the night.

childhood dreams  
bird song  
then the light



## Wings

by *Dru Philippou*, New Mexico

We meet in the tree house a short walk in the woods. He takes out his knife, whittled out of wood. I show him my doll and the dress I'd sewn, gathered at the waist. We smile at our creations, lie on our backs, and stare at the clouds. "It's a hunting knife," he says. "This is the kind of weapon I'll need if I ever get lost in the jungle."

mother's shadow  
over the jar—  
empty cocoon



## Stories We Tell

by *Harriot West*, Oregon

She's on TV again promoting her memoir—a brother who ran away and left their mother staring at empty hangers in a closet until she began to weep and swallow pills, a father who slid into her bed on nights when he'd been drinking, her guilt or lack of guilt, the way after his death she hated him or didn't hate him.

As she talks on and on, I wonder what I'd write about—the drafty house where I was born, the way I always said yes please, no thanks or perhaps how I felt the first day of school in my thick woolen socks and sturdy brown oxfords.

secret garden  
a few slats missing  
from the picket fence



## Photographs

by *Derek Lawler*, Florida

When I was very little we used to sit around a coal burning fireplace in Hull, England. The sound of hooves clopping along the street pulling coal wagons is a memory of mine.

When I went back there in 1946, at age 12, I used to curl up by the fire and read. We were staying with my Aunt Gladys and Uncle Charlie during a time of severe rationing. The adults would give me some of their candy ration. I was a spoiled American brat. We were allowed a pound of meat per month. At school I would get a small bottle of milk with all the other kids, some of whom had stayed safely in the countryside while Hull was bombed by the Germans. I was “Yankee Boy” and the only kid wearing long pants. All the other boys wore shorts all year long.

no one to ask,  
no writing on the backs  
The fan keeps turning





**One of the Family**  
by *Renée Owen*, California

I kneel, place the tips of my fingers on white ground, touch snow for the first time. Little grey squirrels glide on ice skates on my new hand-me-down dress, a gift from Cousin Diane. So cold here, so far from Florida, yet more like home. My daddy's gigantic family surrounding me with Virginian drawls and heaping platters of affection, smells of MeMaw's cooking, Aunt Ruth's perfume. Miss Mattie, the family's old black maid, brings us tin glasses of sweet iced tea, slices of buttery pound cake; the echoes of our rubber-band guns in the alley, year after year sliding down the polished wood banister.

*lightning bugs*  
*the glint off grandma's*  
*brass spittoon*

Uncle E.C., with his jokes and fat cigars, teaches me to sing while Cousin Diane plays her shiny black piano. *Winchester Cathedral, dum dum de dum dum, you're bringing me down, dum dum de dum dum, you stood and you watched as, dum dum de dum dum, my baby left town.* He shouts, *More!* until we do it again and again, fall on the floor in heaps of laughter. Even Miss Mattie, wrinkled, skinny as a stick, can't hide a chuckle. Working for grandma and grandpa on her days off, one of the family, she smuggles us pecan pie from MeMaw's, kisses when we behave, smacks if we sass. Some summer days, nights, just cousins and me and Miss Mattie, no real grown-ups. Hiding in the closet at dinnertime, the only sound, our whoopee cushion, her swearing softly under her breath, then *Y'all git on out heah, ya heah me. Go on now, git,* she says, *whacking our legs softly with her broom.*

*the stiff cloth*  
*of her starched apron*  
*wilting July heat*

Cousins. We grow too big for banisters, prefer pools and boy-talk. Miss Mattie, too tired for full-time work stays on part-time at PaPa's. No more groaning tables filled with steaming dishes at noontime on Sundays after MeMaw dies. The aunts, they take turns, bring PaPa ham hocks and turnip greens, sweet potato casserole, clean on Mattie's days off, first one or two, then five, six, until one summer, she's gone, and I never get to see her again. Not family after all. When I ask, my daddy says, *Aww honey, she's too old to work, but Uncle E.C., he'll keep paying her wages.*

*three buses*  
*her grave across town*  
*tall white lilies*



**Who Needs A Moon**  
by *Renée Owen*, California

A sleepover! My very first invite from one of the girls in the popular crowd. Ripe reward after being invisible, with my hand-me-down dresses and left-over remnants of a Blue Ridge drawl. Smells of creosote mingle with the last of the bay's red-tide in the sweltering Floridian afternoon, hot even for August, had we noticed. Eyes only for her two friends from school, boys, so cute, running barefoot towards us on the long, sizzling dock, cannonballing into the tepid, salty water to whoops and hollers. One last hurrah before September clamps its weighty chains upon us.

*a black cormorant  
wings spread  
to the waxing sun*

A screen door bangs shut, the clang carrying with her mother's voice to travel across the lawn, a narrow tunnel, words slipping into the vast blue of sea, the sky, the day. Nudges from the boys, I bask in their laughter, then float back to earth, to the sound of my name. The mother calling, beckoning me out of the water, to cross that wide green expanse, as if I could slip so seamlessly back into the other world, of adults, of reason, of rules and responsibilities.

*dusk sky  
fills with dragonflies  
who needs a moon*

*Your mother's on the phone, dear.* Black cradle of plastic, wobbly in my wrinkled fingers, cool against blazing cheek. I clutch my pink towel around bikini-ed breasts, don't bother to hide contempt from my chilly hello. *What? What do you want?* My mother sighs, *Don't take that tone with me, missy. You got to get on home.* A widening puddle of silence beneath my wet feet. *No, Mom, we're swimming. I ...* Her voice slices across the wire. *Hush up, listen to me now. We're driving to Virginia in the morning.* Her icy silence, then, *It's MeMaw.* The funeral's in two days. *Now pack your things. I'm coming for you.* I hold the phone long after the click, squeeze back tears, grab for my bag, shuffle to the front door.

*sun blind  
the scent of roses still  
in her line-dried sheets*





## Reveries at Hosen-in

by *Margaret Chula*, Oregon

Although I've visited this temple countless times in every season, I've never taken a photo of the garden—not even the famous “Ceiling of Blood.” These wood ceiling panels, once the floorboards of Fushimi Castle, now hold outlines of samurai who committed harakiri. Japanese come here to view their bloody profiles. I come to Hosen-in to listen to wind in the bamboo—bamboo that sounds like a snake in one season, a dragonfly in another. To listen to water spilling into a stone urn from a bamboo pole. To enjoy the seasonal delights, like viewing the first snowfall while drinking green tea and warming my hands over coals in the porcelain hibachi.

hibachi embers  
red berries  
dusted with snow

One of the pleasures of rustic temples is a visit to the toilet. *Sabi*, the Japanese aesthetic of rustic simplicity, prevails. The booth is constructed of cedar grown in the nearby forests. Nesting in a basket on the floor is a ream of toilet paper, thin as picnic napkins, weighted down by a river-polished stone. The wooden toilet cover is handmade. How many years of training to create such an artistic toilet seat? Through the half-open window, you can see the mountains and forests of Ohara. A spray of wildflowers, arranged in a narrow vase, graces the wooden shelf built specifically for that purpose

washing my hands  
I bow to the rusty sink  
level with my knees

Returning to the main room, I sit on tatami by the sunny window and jot haiku in my journal. The sun moves deeper into the room as time passes. The wind becomes colder. How quickly summer has gone. I keep expecting it to return any day now.

bamboo leaves drifting  
in the mountain wind  
dragonflies

To keep warm, I walk around the temple and peer into the back room. The old women are counting stacks of 500-yen bills, calling out numbers, tabulating the temple's profits, and taking a portion for their old age. Standing in front of a glass door, I notice a reflection of a woman. She's wearing a blue coat, a maroon scarf, and a beret. It's a while before I recognize myself. Behind the glass, one of the old women looks up at me, her face superimposed upon mine.

faint profiles  
bamboo shadows  
my reflection blurs



## *L'Étrangère*

by *Harriot West*, Oregon

I believed I would stay in Paris forever but no—I'll always be an outlander. It isn't my blonde hair and Nordic frame, or the slight stutter when I roll my "r's" or the scarf that never drapes effortlessly about my shoulders. Rather, it's the way the shopkeeper places my change in the small saucer by the *caisse*, leaving me with my hand outstretched, empty.

*clair de lune*  
speaking a foreign tongue  
until my jaw aches



## **A Riddle**

by *Wende Skidmore DuFlon*, Guatemala

*pink lips*  
*on her brown breast—*  
*mother's milk*

I came from a world of children but now I am in a man's world. I am big. I am powerful. When I come near, people move over. I am impressive. Before my life changed I was orderly and good and respected the law. Now I am wild and impervious to pain or hardship. I often cause harm to myself and others. I used to look like all the others—now I am unique. On the outside I was plain and monochromatic. Now I am vibrantly-decorated with colors and shapes. I have matching birthmarks on either side that have stayed the same except for their color. In my previous life I was a-religious and asexual. But, this too has changed and my religion and sexual persuasion are now tattooed over every inch of my body. Do you know who I am?

*mountain fog*  
*freshly washed buses*  
*play chicken*



## Nature Morte

by *Ruth Holzer*, Virginia

If you're an artist in the Low Countries, you work through your hunger, painting whatever objects are at hand: a ginger jar and onions. The blue-green jar adds a note of muted color to your table. One of the onions, shriveled with age, is falling out of its skin. But how the other shines, its roundness reflecting the light of your eyes. You'll have it for supper.

still life—  
the enduring worth  
of roots and tubers



## Autumn Planting

by *Adelaide B. Shaw*, New York

The dirt, hard-packed and full of rocks. We strain it, add fertilizer, sphagnum moss and vermiculite, in measured amounts, all needed to give nourishment, promote growth and strong roots. Gently, we remove the plants from their containers and place them in the holes. Then, back-fill with the improved dirt. Lastly—water. Water well and hope for survival through the winter.

low sunshine—  
at the base of a sedum  
a pooling rainbow



## Dear Malachi

by *Carmela Salomon*, Australia

*Under a dark moon last night the first rain of autumn. Did you hear the fat drops spreading out across the rooftop? In my garden they were caught in generous zucchini leaves that have overrun the place. I forgot to tell you the last time we met that as a child I loved the feel of raindrops hitting my head. Loudly. I recall you saying that you were fond of this new season rain also. Perhaps you're in it now, tongue out catching drops—the rising smell of dirt? I've been swallowing them down all morning—noticing their movement into the quiet place inside. I must give you that book on fungi identification next time we meet—they'll be growing rich with all this water.*

The empty post box  
Inside  
So much air!



## Heirloom

by *Diana Webb*, England

As midsummer sunlight gilds the hands of the old church clock at half past six, the painters gather, settle on foldaway stools. Backs to the hills, they sit in the scented garden sketching stone. A quiver of shadows runs through the grasses. The Copper Beech leaves rustle deep with the glow of day in the long run up to sunset.

December dusk—  
last glints in the warming pan  
on my mother's wall



## Drawing

by *Lynne Rees*, France

*18" by 16," felt tip pen on coloured paper by Ffion, age 4*

There is a red house with orange windows and a pink door. There is a black cat whose feet have slipped off the bottom of the page. There is a tree sprouting flowers, petals pushing against the paper's edge, a lavender sky with a sun and a crescent moon. And floating above the roof of the house, two stick people, holding hands, unwilling to come down to earth and decide whether the sun is about to set, or if the moon will make way for dawn, or whether the cat is trying to escape or climb into the picture and run towards a door that could be closed, or might be on the point of opening.

all the times  
I have been wrong  
fresh paint



## Stone

by *Max Verhart*, Netherlands

Just a piece of stone. At least, that's what it looks like. But it's a pebble from outer space: a meteorite that got caught in our earth's gravity. If it happened on the night side of this planet, it must have been visible for a moment as a brightly glowing trail in the sky. But it was too big to totally burn up during that fall. And there you are: just a piece of stone, on the face of it.

*falling star  
let me forgive  
my parents*



## Waiting For You

by *Barbara A. Taylor*, Australia

early morning  
a blue-tongued lizard  
on a mission

I rise with the sun. Today, I must attack these toxic weeds, water the parched herbs, prune deadheads of camellias and prepare a vegetable plot. I prefer to write poems. Before breakfast, at the computer, I attempt to clear a column of email messages. Hours later, I find myself still reading, responding, researching, listening to others speak: critiques, congratulations, poetic conventions.... Evening approaches. Weary, hungry, with an untitled blank page, my imagination spins. At my feet, the old dog watches me, whines, as if to say, "But what about our walk? I'm waiting for you."

sea of sticky webs  
spreading guilt  
on unmown lawns



## Long Forgotten

by *Bruce Ross*, Maine

On Granada only old people are doing the spice growing and processing, work of no interest to the young people. I see two old women bent over in a field on the plantation. In the main processing building of old weathered boards, two others are processing spice. A third explains what they are: nutmeg, cumin, cloves, allspice. She shows us a loofah plant and cocoa beans and lets us handle everything. All the while a familiar fragrance reaches out to some long forgotten memory.

spice plantation  
father's old after-shave  
in the bay leaf



## The Book

by *Johnny Baranski*, Washington

I got to thinking about it when, after a recent move, I couldn't find my 50th anniversary edition of Ray Bradbury's chilling novel, *Fahrenheit 451*. How long should one wait to call the police bureau to report a missing book? Is this book too old to warrant an Amber Alert? And if it happens to have offended anyone will the authorities issue an APB instead? Set up road blocks at intersections surrounding the local library and every shopping mall wherein there resides a bookstore? I know that if I were a character in Bradbury's story I wouldn't be calling on the fire department for assistance. In his fictitious world, books are illegal and his firemen, wielding their flame throwers, are all about their demise. Even in our real world I'm afraid there's a lack of reverence for books. More often than not they become victims of a throwaway society. But if a book must die I believe that instead of being relegated to the recycle bin or condemned to a heap of ashes it should receive a proper burial, perhaps in some used bookshop, or on some loving friend's bookshelf, or at least be digitized in Google's virtual library. I still have the paperback copy of Bruce Catton's *A Stillness at Appomattox* my father gave me on my tenth birthday in 1958. While it cost only fifty cents back then its value to me now cannot be overstated.

slowly turning to dust  
the first book I ever read  
right along with me





## Now

by *Linda Jeanette Ward*, North Carolina

A three day nor'easter stalled along our coast bombards us with wind ripped rain, trapping me inside to watch the rising lake lapping at the foundation of our house. I turn back to sorting through a box of books and memorabilia from days we nurtured the illusion of freedom as if it were a tangible thing like grapes smashed by dancing feet fermenting to a fiery wine...

dried to a fluff  
my rain-swollen copy of  
*Be Here Now*

## First Shift

by *Carmela Salomon*, Australia

*We ask them to come up for medications between zero eight and zero ten hundred hours. Joe's usually first to arrive. He has asthma and smokes plus plus. When you work the late shift make sure you prop him up with pillows. He won't breathe otherwise. Mathias comes next. He'll tell you that the devil has forced him to drink water so he needs to be weighed to make sure he hasn't drunk too much. If he puts on more than five kilograms in twenty-four hours call an ambulance. Most of them are Schizophrenics. Sarah is Borderline Personality Disorder. You'll need to know where her bandages are to cover her cuts. Sometimes they try to hide their tablets in their pockets. Don't let them. They can be quite smart when they want to. Shaun will take his medications all right but then vomit them up as soon as he's out of the room. Tell him to sit out here for twenty minutes every morning so you can keep an eye on him. Wash the cups out after they finish with them. We'll reuse them.*

Morning hears traffic sounds moving on  
He had a wife once.



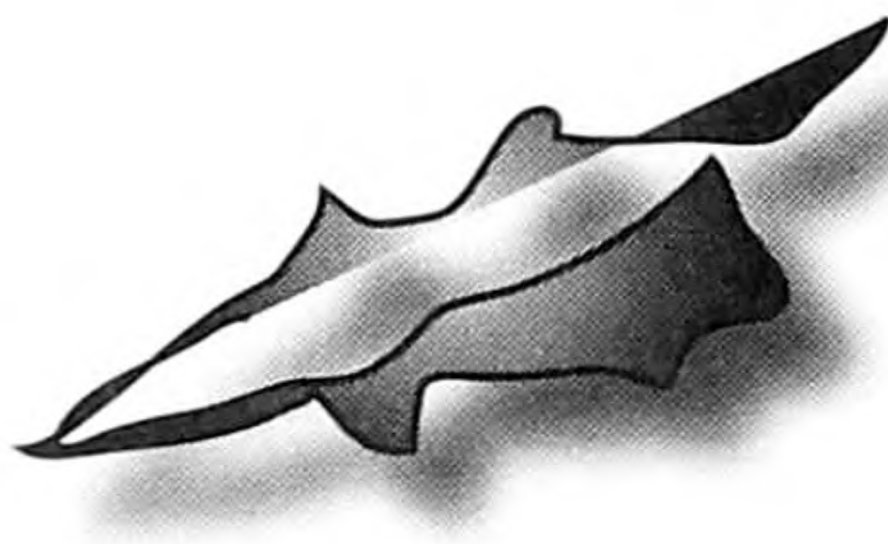
**Motor Neurons**  
by *Glenn G. Coats*, Virginia

Dr. Brown is serious. He does not make small talk or say something funny to put us at ease. The man is all business. It is late in the day; he must want to go home. Mark Brown is the foremost authority in his field which is understanding neuromuscular diseases that cannot be cured. He never gets the chance to say you will feel better in a few weeks and he doesn't believe in giving someone false hopes.

The doctor looks at my wife and tells her the illness is already in every muscle in her body and quickly dashes the slim hopes and questions raised at the four other hospitals. Outside the glass, it is starting to get dark. Dr. Brown says my wife will be in a wheelchair within ten years and I see her wilt like a petal in the cold. He says her variant of Spinal Muscular Atrophy will progress at a slow steady rate like a freight train across a prairie. Mark Brown urges us to take that trip we always wanted to make and we are numb to his words, immune to them, his words cannot shake us.

It is dark now and our children are two hours away. Friends are watching them. They need to finish their homework, go to sleep, tomorrow is a school day. We need to move on, get behind the wheel and look somewhere else for a time.

evening traffic  
all of the prayers  
all at once





## Wherever We Go, There We Are

By *Lynne Rees*, France

*moonlight the shadow of a tree masks the crack in the path*

It is 3am on Florida's Atlantic coast. Already 9am in France. My body says it's time to start the day yet the darkness outside says, "middle of the night, go back to bed."

Recently, there has been too much impatience between us. Kinks and ruts in the road we cannot avoid or fill, that see us blaming each other. Even the smallest roads since we arrived: filling in our immigration forms, a luggage trolley, the small trunk in the rental car.

Things in their right place at the right time. This is what I try to do too often. Like pinning butterflies to boards.

The clock is too loud. It keeps time too stringently and that is what we need to be away from: days marked by so many jobs to be done, what must be completed in the hours between waking and falling asleep.

Then I hear it. A background hum, a soft engine shifting gears. A sound present at the moment I was born: the sea.

*high tide in a dream you write the word "reef"*





## Another Wedding

by *Bob Lucky*, Ethiopia

twirling the string  
on a heart-shaped balloon—  
the wedding march

I nurse a shot of Jameson through the speeches, translated one way or another for whichever group is in the linguistic dark, thinking an Irish whiskey owned by a French conglomerate is the perfect drink for the occasion. The groom's father is nervous and apologizes for having not been a good father, for having spent too much time in the merchant marines and being the "bloke who brought gifts." It's a rambling speech punctuated with silences, after one of which there is mild applause and the groom hugs his father. I try to read the tears in my wife's eyes.



## Arithmetic

by *Roberta Beary*, District of Columbia

you need to improve he says. to do better. set the bar higher.  
his voice is deep and sharp and has a familiar ring. i know that  
voice. i've heard it before. not before as in yesterday. before as  
in my whole life. i think of all those men who tell me what to  
do. saying it's for my own good. to help me. the priest. the  
boyfriend. the boss. the husband. the brother. the co-worker. the  
neighbor. the doctor. *if x were the sum total of all those men  
placed head-to-toe in a straight line, how much would x equal?*

rainy monday  
the *staccato* beep  
of new voicemail

## Birdbath

by *Michele L. Harvey*, New York

She wanted it badly, almost more than she had wanted anything else. After a heated argument, he gave in. It became her proudest possession.

the depression  
in the river rock  
big enough for a bluebird



## What's in a Name?

by *Ray Rasmussen*, Alberta

As one of 36 recipients of an email from a previous lover, I wonder about the others.

TheGardener@... Why not “AGardener”? This clown has a big ego.

Twitter@... Maybe his friends think of him as a “twit”—at least I do.

Wigkat@... Cool kat? He probably wears a hairpiece—I like to imagine a merkin.

CauseIsezso@... Typical guy. Where does she find them?

Armyguy@... Does he do pushups while making love?

TopDog@... How will this work? It was her that liked being on top.

fall drizzle...  
changing my email address to  
fishoneline@...



## Bashō's Icons of the Feminine

by *Jeff Robbins*, Japan  
with assistance from *Sakata Shoko*, Japan

The great 17th century haiku poet Bashō, like Leonardo DaVinci nearly 200 years before, was devoted to portraying women. Bashō wrote many poems and prose passages honoring women's life and consciousness. Each woman in Shakespeare appears as partner to a man, but in Bashō the women stand alone or together with other women as Icons of the Feminine—symbols for something greater than themselves.

Many of Bashō's portraits of women have been ignored by male scholars or their feminine aspects de-emphasized. We are compiling, and hope to publish, a book that male chauvinists may not be able to appreciate: "Praise for the Feminine: Poetry, Prose, and Letters of Matsuo Bashō on Women, Children and Lightness."

Here from the manuscript we present four women in Bashō's haiku—four women living an ordinary life in peaceful 17th century Japan—yet each woman performs a single action with her hand and arm that somehow expresses the essential nature (*hon-i*) of Japanese womanhood at this time

A haiku is a "sketch"—just a few brush strokes and much blank space. We then fill in the picture from imagination based on our studies of nature, human and Japanese society, the Japanese language, and the rest of Bashō's poetry and prose. The commentary below each verse provides the background to the sketch based on the commentaries of Bashō scholar Kon Eizo in his *Bashō Kushu*<sup>1</sup> (Complete Haiku Anthology). From this background my commentary takes one path to filling in the picture. You can travel with me, or find your own path.



Wrapping Rice Cake – Kon’s *Bashō Kushu* #704

		糰	<i>Chimaki yuu</i>
	片	糸	<i>Kata-te ni hasamu</i>
	手	ふ	<i>hitai-gami</i>
	に		
ひ	は		<b>Wrapping rice cake</b>
た	さ		<b>With one hand she tucks</b>
い	む		<b>Hair behind ear</b>
＝			

“Rice cake” can be rice pounded into a paste then molded into shape (*mochi*) or ground into flour then made into dough (*mochiko*). Soybean powder (*kinako*) or beet sugar (*tensai*) is added to sweeten it. The type known as *chimaki*<sup>2</sup> wrapped in bamboo leaves was originally (in China) made for the festival Tango no Sekku on the 5th day of the 5th lunar moon (in 1691 when this verse was written, June 1st)—and so *chimaki* set this verse in the humid heat before the summer rains. (This holiday has become Children’s Day on May 5th when the weather is much more pleasant.)

*Hitai-gami*, “forehead hair,” does not mean bangs. Japanese women, in the *Tale of Genji* as well as often today, do not cut the hair in front but rather part it so it falls freely on either side of the face—as in the Mona Lisa—and if necessary tie it behind the body. The word “ear” (*mimi*) does not appear in the Japanese. *Hasamu* is “to take or put between,” in this case Kon tells us, to put the lock of hair between her ear and the side of her head, known as *mimi-basami* (the “h” of *hasamu* changes to a “b” in a compound word) so I translate “tucks hair behind ear.”

A mother preparing sweets for the children bends over a bucket of *mochi* or dough, forms the stuff into a cake, wraps leaves of bamboo grass around it, and ties with a strip of rush. Some of her long hair moist with sweat has come loose from the band in back and fallen before her face. Her fingers and palms are coated with sticky residue. Without thinking or breaking her



stride, she reaches up with the clean surface on the side of her hand above the thumb to tuck the hair behind her ear—with nothing getting on her hair.

Women in every land and every time where hair is worn long make this delicate and utterly feminine movement with the side of the hand around the ear. Whether you are female or male, with hair long or short, make the movement with your hand and you will recall exactly what Bashō is showing us. The verse strikes a chord of recognition in anyone who reads it with attention.

This is Bashō's Mona Lisa, his most graceful hidden woman. Only Bashō has the delicacy and precision to draw such a moment out from the flow of a woman's everyday life.

### Drunk on blossoms—Kon's *Bashō Kushu* #135

Spring Amusement at Ueno:

		花	<i>Hana ni yoeri</i>
		に	<i>haori kite katana</i>
		よ	<i>sasu onna</i>
		え	
		り	
	羽		
	織		
	きて		
	て		
	刀		
さ			
す			
女			

**Drunk on blossoms**  
**Woman wearing a haori,**  
**Puts in a sword**

*Yoeri* has a drunken wavery sound. Bashō's headnote tells us the blossom-viewing party was at the same place, Ueno Park, which is so famous for these parties today, so we can visualize the scene.

Ordinary women in Edo work hard every day and the annual picnic under the cherry trees at Ueno is one of the very few days of the year when they can have fun. Japanese women



often are slender, especially in the upper body, and the kimono emphasizes that slenderness. This woman is intoxicated by the beauty of cherry blossoms everywhere around her, on the trees, petals in the air and all over the ground, and also by the beverages she has drunk. Having shed her ladylike social inhibitions, she is acting bold and assertive.

She has borrowed a padded *haori* coat from one of the men at the party (women did not wear *haori* in Bashō's time) and put it on, adding some bulk to her chest, shoulders, and arms, making her look manly. There are no samurai at this party (except Bashō who has given up his samurai status) so there are no swords either, but she is using something long and thin to pretend.

The Japanese says she inserts (*sasu*) the "sword" under her obi, the thick brocade sash around her waist. Then she does the ever-popular "Hey, guys, see how long my sword is," sending everyone into hysterics.

Anthropologist Ruth Benedict, writing in 1946, says of Japanese women at parties, "when they are of a ripe age they may throw off taboos, and if they are low-born, be as ribald as any man." Benedict observes that a woman who has never borne a child tends to be reserved while one who has had children "entertains the party, too, with very free sexual dances, jerking her hips back and forth to the accompaniment of ribald songs. These performances inevitably bring roars of laughter."<sup>3</sup>

**Tone so clear – Kon's *Bashō Kushu* #352**

声澄みて

*Koe sumite*

*hokuto ni hibiku*

北斗にひびく

*kinuta kana*

砧かな

**Tone so clear**

**The Big Dipper resounds**

**A fulling block**



There being no cotton or wool, women in Japanese villages made their family's clothing from scratchy hemp or fibres under the bark of *kozo* (paper mulberry) or in arrowroot or wisteria vines. They twisted the fibres into yarn then wove the yarn on simple looms. This fabric was stiff and rough textured so the woman pounded it with a mallet on a *kinuta*, or fulling block, to soften the cloth before sewing. At first the block was stone but then wood became prevalent, and stands were designed to allow two women to pound while chatting (or complaining) to each other. Cotton also, when hand spun, required fulling. From the 18th century, textile mills wove machine-spun yarn into fabric which was soft from the start; however, even into the early years of the 20th century women in Japan did this work.<sup>4</sup>

The sound could be heard in all villages especially in autumn before the fabric was sewn into clothing for the coming winter. As they worked, the women thought about the happiness or misery of their lives, recalled their dead parents, or longed for the return of their husbands from wherever husbands go. From the Noh play *Kinuta*<sup>5</sup> the fulling block became a symbol for the misery of the woman left at home while her husband “has gone to the Capital” — “on business.”

Often we see the moon in Japanese poetry, but the moon is, as Juliet says, “inconstant.” She fears that Romeo's love will “prove likewise variable.” Bashō also wants something stable in the night sky for these tones from Earth. What could be more constant than the Big Dipper? No matter where it is, it always points to the star that never changes, a fit symbol for the constancy and dedication of women. From the tiny mallet striking the cloth on earth, to the vastness of the stars light-years away, to produce a sound so clear it reaches the Big Dipper, the heart of the woman pounding cloth on the block must be exceedingly pure.

### **Maw waves a fan – Kon's *Bashō Kushu* #881**

A rustic home:



飢あふく  
 鼻<sup>かかあ</sup>が馳走や  
 夕涼み

*Meshi aogu*  
*kakaa ga chiso ya*  
*yū suzumi*

**Maw waves a fan**  
**Over the food she cooked—**  
**Cool evening ease**

Feel the miserable sweaty day just now starting to cool down. *Chiso* is literally “a treat” but every Japanese knows this word as part of *go-chiso sama deshita*, the common everyday expression of gratitude to the one who prepared food. *Kakaa* is a rustic word for “old lady,” as Paw might call his wife after forty years together. The verse is in country dialect so the proper “has” is omitted. Kon Eizo, the pre-eminent Bashō scholar of our time, tells us the picture he sees hidden in Bashō’s words:

Maw waves her fan over the food she has just cooked to cool it off. This is an impoverished home. We see the farmer has returned from the fields (taken off his sweaty clothes) and sits on the floor in his loincloth. Watching his beloved wife (*aisai*) bestow her heart (*kokoro tsukai*) on the food, he enjoys the evening cool and waits for dinner.

Kon-sensei reveals that this is a love poem, not the love of young people at the beginning of their search, but the love of an old couple near the end. Rather than grieve over how old and poor and oppressed these two are, Bashō in Kon’s vision focuses on peaceful feelings of wholeness, of love given and appreciated.

In her recent book on Bashō, Jane Reichhold seems not to understand the gratitude in the word *chiso*, and renders this verse as *Boiled rice slop / his old lady fans the treat / with evening coolness*.<sup>6</sup> The crude words (“boiled rice slop”) and contemptuous tone (“his old lady”) destroy the peaceful feelings of wholeness. She claims that *meshi* is a “low class way



of describing eating.”<sup>7</sup> Kittridge Cherry says that *kakaa* is a “nasty” word offensive to women.<sup>8</sup> Not so! Shoko, who is native Japanese and a certified instructor in her language, assures us that *meshi* and *kakaa* are informal words suitable for this rustic scene. She also affirms that “Maw waves a fan” is a love poem.

### Notes

1. Kon, Eizo, *Bashō Kushu* (Collected Haiku of Bashō), Shin-chōsa Tokyo 1982.
2. *Chimaki* (Chinese : *zongzi*) are often translated “rice dumplings” though the shape differs from region to region. See *The Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshu*, Volume 70, p. 379 and *Wikipedia: Zongzi*, accessed in 2009.
3. Benedict, Ruth *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Tuttle 1946, p. 285.
4. Japanese fabric and clothing before cotton was imported are discussed in Perez, Louis G., *Daily Life in Early Modern Japan*, The Greenwood Press 2001, p. 89, 179; and in greater detail in Japanese at <<http://www23.big.or.jp/~lereve/saijiki/131-2.html>>, accessed in 2009.
5. Tyler, Royall, *Japanese Noh Dramas*, Penguin Classics, London 1992.
6. Reichhold, Jane, *Bashō the Complete Haiku*, Kodansha 2008, p. 222.
7. *Ibid*, p.262.
8. Cherry, Kittridge, *Womansword—What Japanese Words Say about Women*, Kodansha International 1987/01, p.71.

Jeff Robbins is American, lives in Japan and has studied the haiku, tanka, prose and letters of Bashō on and off for the past thirty years. Sakata Shoko, co-translator and research assistant, is a Japanese language instructor currently staying at home with her two small daughters. Her insights into her society and language are vital to this examination.



## Bull Kelp

by *Christopher Herold*, Washington

I'd like to share an interesting haiku-related experience that happened recently. It involves two poems, one by Connie Donleycott, the other by me (Christopher Herold). While discussing them, Connie and I felt that others might be interested in our experience as well. In a recent note to me Connie wrote to say:

This addresses an issue I think many of us think about. I've been writing haiku for about ten years and a few times I've written a poem only to see another very similar one in one of the journals. So I'd just hold onto mine because it felt so close to the published one. I had no way of knowing about the other poem but, because the other poet's was published, I felt mine would come across as a copy. Our very similar experiences, and the fact that neither of us knew of each other's poem when writing our own, shows that this can honestly happen.

Here are the poems:

sickle moon  
a boy whips the sea  
with bull kelp

Christopher Herold, Washington

wind in my hair  
a boy tames the sea  
with bull kelp

Connie Donleycott, Washington

When Connie and I learned of each other's haiku neither was published. Had they been, readers might have responded with claims of yet another "deja-ku" sighting. In actuality, we wrote the poems at different times and in different places.

Not long ago, Connie included her poem in a letter to a mutual



friend. Our friend, having heard me read my version of the poem at a meeting of the Port Townsend Haiku Group some time ago, wrote back to Connie to tell her of the similarity. Connie then shared the letter with me and I responded, placing our two poems side by side. As correspondence progressed she wrote: “My poem was jotted down in 2008, and took place at Chito Beach, which is near Seiku and Neah Bay.” (Washington state). “As I remember,” Connie writes,

Ken and I were walking the tideline—lots of driftwood and seaweed, bull kelp, etc. We noticed a couple of women picking up the kelp. Their two kids were doing the same. My curiosity got the best of me and I asked one of the women why they were collecting the kelp. She said it can be dried and used much like leather. Their kids were helping to collect the kelp but the littlest boy was having some fun too, whipping the shore. What a delight to observe his joy!

My own poem was written in July of 2009 at Drumbeg Provincial Park on Gabriola Island, British Columbia. I was attending the annual Pacifi-Kana haiku meeting that takes place there. We were in the midst of a ginko when I noticed a young boy thrashing the water with a long strand of kelp. Immediately it came to me that little boys in general could be exemplified by this one child. Connie also connected to what she witnessed in a general way—our inability to tame ourselves let alone the sea. But she made a more specific and personal association as well—how unruly our hair can be! (This didn’t occur to me, I might add, since my head is shaved).

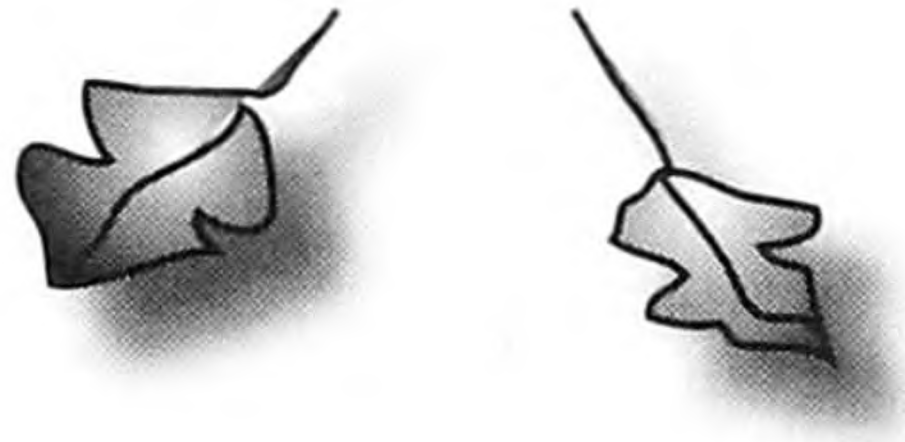
I enjoy the verbs we each used in our poems. Both describe the intensity of the events we witnessed, but I prefer Connie’s verb. It implies the action rather than tells of it directly. Although our poems were inspired by the observation of a singular activity, the images we juxtaposed to that action indicate how differently we responded to the moment. Associations were made between strands of kelp and, respectively, the crescent moon and strands of hair. I enjoy the humor in Connie’s connection—unruly hair and the untamable sea. My poem connects the horned appearance of



a crescent moon with the mischievous nature of little boys.

There are myriad instances of poets tapping into the same sources of inspiration. Resulting poems may be nearly identical or they may vary greatly, depending upon what other imagery finds its way into the work. Certainly some poems are the result of “deja-ku” but I’d guess most are coincidental—simply poets attuning themselves to what’s going on around them. In this case, it was a joy to discover, in an unusual way, an experience shared inadvertently with a friend. Although our mutual experience was separated by more than a year and approximately sixty miles (as the crow flies), it served to reconnect us (and our mutual friend who recognized the poems’ similarity) at a later date. Isn’t it strange how, all of a sudden, time can disappear.

Christopher Herold is co-founder and former managing editor of *The Heron’s Nest*. Once president of the Haiku Poets of Northern California, he co-edited their former journal, *Woodnotes*. He’s been writing haiku for more than forty years. Five collections of his work have been published. *A Path in the Garden* received a Haiku Society of America Merit Book Award and *In the Margins of the Sea* was a winner in the Snapshot Press manuscript contest. His sixth collection, *Inside Out*, is due to be published this year by Red Moon Press. Herold lives with his family in Port Townsend, Washington.





# A Title Is A Title Is A Title, or Is It? — The Unexplored Role in Haibun

by *Ray Rasmussen*, Alberta

Very little has been done in the way of informed critical study of the haibun form, particularly when compared with the number of haiku studies. The likely reason is that only in the past two decades have we had a substantial body of work: journals that publish haibun exclusively, haiku-genre journals that publish haibun regularly, numerous haibun anthologies, and a steady stream of haibun collections from various poets and presses. And because serious practitioners of haiku appear to outnumber their haibun counterparts, it seems natural that fewer writers are interested in producing critical comments at this early stage in the development of English-language haibun.

Within the small body of haibun criticism, the emphasis has been on describing its characteristics. An example is the Haiku Society of America's curt definition that "Haibun is a terse, relatively short prose poem in the haikai style, usually including both lightly humorous and more serious elements. A haibun usually ends with a haiku."<sup>1</sup> Noteworthy in this definition and consistent across all critical voices is a silence about the role of the haibun's title (much less its existence).

Intuitively, a title is important; otherwise, why have one? An examination of a random selection of recently published haibun by 112 different writers<sup>2</sup> revealed that 97% have titles. It may be that the almost universal use of titles is simply an early orthodoxy adopted because writers feel a need to add one to what is, after all, a very short story. Perhaps haibun will at some point follow the practices of tanka and haiku. But given that most writers include titles in their haibun, what strategies do they employ when doing so?

## Types of Titles

Two categories were adopted in classifying the 112 haibun:



*Denotative Titles:* These are words or phrases that provide a direct and obvious context for the prose and haiku. Examples include place names (“The London Bridge”) or descriptions of an experience (“A Walk by the Lake”). Denotative titles may cite certain objects that are important in the piece, they may provide a succinct summary, or they may simply repeat key phrases or words in the prose or haiku<sup>3</sup>

*Connotative Titles:* These contain an allusion—a reference to another writer’s work, to a significant place or time, or to symbols or archetypes.

The two categories resemble the avowed dominant strategies employed by writers in composing the two images that constitute most haiku—namely, that the relationship between them can be direct or indirect. Denotative titles are direct in their relationship to the prose, serving primarily as doorways to the prose and poem. Connotative titles are oblique to some degree and serve as more than an entrance. They represent the same sort of associative imagining as does the relationship between the images in a haiku.

The categories are not necessarily exclusive nor exhaustive. For example, the title of a haibun may be classified differently according to who the reader is. The title “Dover Beach and My Back Yard”<sup>4</sup> would be recondite to a nonreader of English literature, but it would not be abstruse to a group of English literature majors or to an avid reader of British poetry. Readers bring their own personal histories to whatever they read. So, while some readers may assume a title has no connotations, others may read connotations into the title.

Most of the 112 randomly selected haibun of this study employed a denotative title (59%), while about half that number used a connotative title (29%). Some titles were placed in both categories (6%)—while one could read allusions into these titles, it wasn’t clear that readers would. The remainder either used “Untitled” or “Haibun” (3%) or the first few words of the initial prose sentence as the title (3%).



That most writers seem to prefer denotative titles may be a matter of default. Needing a title, they created one to introduce readers to the prose but without the intent of it doing much more than that and perhaps designed to leave them free to develop their own connotations from the prose and haiku. Many of them might have been composed by filling in the blank: “This haibun is about \_\_\_\_\_.”

In contrast, a connotative title raises a flag: “Examine the title carefully. It’s an important part of this piece.” It’s difficult to imagine that writers create titles with connotations without intending to do so. However, readers are likely to infer connotations into a title even when the writer did not intend them.

### **Denotative Titles**

Ingrid Kunschke’s title “The Credenza”<sup>5</sup> provides a straightforward path to the poet’s prose, which is focused on the history of a credenza made by her grandfather and on its accumulated contents—the family memorabilia that her mother collected in it. These excerpts illustrate the main themes:

....

Years before grandpa’s masterpiece found the way to my parental home, it had taken on a place in my imagination. The credenza: I racked my brains over this word. Given his trade, it had to be some kind of furniture.

....

Mum ... stored board games, cameras and photo albums. Heavy albums with black and white photographs, that peeled off at the slightest turn of a page, and small, battered ones from which grandpa, great-great-aunts and a girl with long plaits looked frankly at our new world. Now we had a family altar.

Alternative denotative titles for her piece might have been “Family Shrine” or “Memorabilia.” Sliding on a scale between denotative and connotative might be “Place of Memories” or “Touching the Past.” More toward connotative would be “Transformations,” which would ask the reader to consider what it is that has been transformed or changed, as in from



wood to credenza, from an empty credenza to a safe place for keeping family artifacts, and from writer as child to writer as adult.

The purpose of providing these alternative titles isn't to suggest that they are superior to the original but, instead, to offer examples of both denotative and connotative titles and the complexities associated with classifying them. An additional purpose is to show how a hypothetical author might choose one title from among several options.

### Connotative Titles

David Cobb's "Hole with a View"<sup>6</sup> serves as a connotative title that can be read as an ironic evocation of E.M. Forster's novel, *A Room with a View*. A few excerpts provide a feel for the piece:

....

I can work out more or less where it will be. The 'old half' of the village churchyard, downside of the bank which in gently undulating Essex is styled a 'cliff,' on the church side of the brook, admits no new corpses. Nowadays we of the village, when we are 'called up', reassemble on the top shelf, like a squad at drill.

....

... this is a prime spot. Not because the edge of the cliff has more sunshine, or is nearer the oaks and ash trees where the songbirds gather, or is closer to the bells that ring for weddings. Simply, it has the best view when the whole village, or most of it, comes together on Christmas Eve for carols by candlelight.

With a denotative title such as "Village Graveyard," Cobb's piece would be tightly focused on an aging man's contemplation of death. It's only the title that asks us to consider other readings. Forster's *A Room with a View* describes a romantic relationship between two young people on holiday in Italy during the Victorian era and a room with a spectacular view of Venice. Cobb's haibun is an end-of-life monologue on the narrator's permanent resting place, which has a noteworthy view of



his village at Yuletide. With a simple reference in the title, the fullness of life's journey from first love to the lonely end faced by us all is evoked. Again, Cobb may not have intended these meditative connotations, and only readers familiar with *A Room with a View* might make the association.

### **Run-On Titles**

Just 3% of the writers in our sample used a run-on title that doubles as the first few words of the prose, as is the case with Harriot West's haibun:<sup>7</sup>

Maybe

he's looking at me but I can't be sure. I feign interest in the drummer's solo, slide my index finger down the inside of my lover's arm.

candlelight  
the horn player's  
swollen lips

A run-on title may be intended to eliminate the possibility of the added connotations that an independent title might entail because it's part of the prose. However, as with line breaks in free verse, a run-on title isolates and thus emphasizes a particular word or phrase in the first sentence of the prose. The emphasis might not otherwise have been recognized by readers had it been part of the first sentence (as in "Maybe he's looking at me....") with a denotative title at the top (such as "Nightclub"). In this case, readers can hardly help but ask, "Maybe what?" Maybe the drummer is interested in the protagonist? Or maybe the protagonist is hinting at her attraction to the horn player ("his swollen lips")?

### **Flamboyant Titles**

In our sample, few writers used titles such as Jeffrey Winke's "Keeps Hammering the Dull."<sup>8</sup> Winke's title simply repeats



a string of words in the prose: “The stupid thing keeps hammering the dull, grimy windowpane hell-bent on achieving a deadly concussion before a thwack will splat the life out of it.” Although many writers use words or phrases taken directly from the prose, Winke’s is different because when the reader first encounters it, it doesn’t make sense. Thus, it’s likely designed to evoke more interest than a denotative title, such as “Bar Scenes” or “Messing with the Boys.” It’s not until readers proceed further into the text that they discover that the phrase is taken directly from the prose and that it’s a fly that “keeps hammering the dull, grimy windowpane.” In this case, the title repeated in the text does invite the reader to ask, “Why did he pick this particular phrase?” An inference that could be made is that talk at a “good ol’ boy bar” tends to be dull and it’s at that dullness that Winke’s protagonist hammers with his order of chardonnay:

good-ol’-boy bar—  
I mess with them,  
order a chardonnay

### **Connotative versus Denotative?**

A haiku enhances the prose in a haibun, making the piece something more than a haibun’s near relatives: a prose poem, flash fiction, a journal entry, or a short story. Does a haibun additionally need a title to do this? If not, then one could argue that a denotative title that creates a context for the prose, but that is unlikely to convey allusions in the minds of the readers, would best serve a piece. In short, let the prose and poem carry the work. On the other hand, why not use a connotative title to enhance a haibun? One could argue that writers who use connotative titles are creating greater interest or exercising greater creativity in alluding to a relationship among title, prose, and haiku. However, one could also reasonably argue that a denotative title containing very limited information might serve as the best pathway to the theme of the haibun and thus leave readers freer with their private interpretations—literal, figurative, moral, spiritual.



It's not possible to be certain whether a writer intended a connotation, and writers can never be sure whether readers will infer unintended connotations for their titles. Thus, all titles can likely be arranged on a continuum between denotative (readers are unlikely to infer extra connotations) and connotative (readers can hardly help but ask how an unusual title relates to the prose and poem).

The two categories are best seen as serving to prompt the writer to ask, "What is it that I want to do with the title?" And just as readers ask themselves, "What is the relationship between haiku and prose?" they might also be prompted to ask, "Does the writer have something in mind with his or her choice of title?"

## **Conclusion**

This is but the beginning of an exploration of the types and roles of titles in haibun composition. It is not a call for the increased use of connotative titles nor for the improved use of denotative titles. Instead, the central message is that no matter how titles are constructed, they are an essential part of the working of a haibun.

The essay is meant to raise awareness of the issues associated with creating a title and to provide writers with alternative title strategies gleaned from the existing haibun literature. Although the discussion was initially focused on defining denotative and connotative titles in order to get a fix on the types of titles used by writers, it naturally shifted to a larger issue that writers might consider when composing their titles. Can a connotative title be usefully employed to add meaning to the work? What denotative title will work best to clear the path to prose and poem? When does a title tell too much, reducing the element of surprise in the prose and poem? Would it be useful to use a run-on title in order to emphasize an aspect of the prose? Can a title be created that engages the reader's interest?

The reasons that writers use different types of titles are, at this point, a matter of speculation. It may be that neither writers



nor editors pay much attention to titles—if the prose and haiku work well together, then any reasonable denotative title serves. Or perhaps writers and editors spend considerable time creating and evaluating the efficacy of titles. It remains for a second study to learn from the writers how they think about and compose titles for their haibun.<sup>9</sup>

It may also be that worth exploring the extent to which journal editors influence a writer's choice of a haibun title. As an example, several well-published writers have indicated in private correspondence that some editors have insisted that titles be added when haibun are submitted as untitled pieces. Others report that editors discourage both run-on titles and those that repeat phrases in the prose.

In the end, one hopes that readers of this essay will conclude, along with Gertrude Stein, that a rose is not necessarily a rose.<sup>10</sup> One also hopes that discussions of haibun titles, including their types and uses, will enter the critical dialogue.

### **Acknowledgments**

The author would like to acknowledge the considerable help given by Richard Straw and Jeffrey Woodward in classifying haibun, creating names for the categories, and critiquing the text.

### Notes

1. "Official Definitions of Haiku and Related Terms," Haiku Society of America, September 18, 2004, <[http://www.hsa-haiku.org/archives/HSA\\_Definitions\\_2004.html](http://www.hsa-haiku.org/archives/HSA_Definitions_2004.html)>.

2. The author, Jeffrey Woodward, and Richard Straw independently classified a random sample of 112 haibun by different writers from complete issues of four mainstream haiku-genre and haibun-exclusive journals. There was sufficient agreement between the independent assessments to provide reasonable confidence in the reported statistics. Each of the 112 titles was classified as "untitled," "denotative" (where all three did not construe a connotation), "connotative" (where all



three did infer a connotation), or “uncertain” (where one or more but not all three saw a connotation).

3. Another early orthodoxy often discussed in online haibun forums is that the title should not repeat words or phrases in the prose or poem. However, it’s not the purpose of the present essay to explore the pros and cons of such pronouncements.

4. Ray Rasmussen, “Dover Beach and My Backyard,” in Colin Blundell and Graham High (eds.), *Dover Beach and My Backyard: British Haiku Society Haibun Anthology*, 2007, p. 28.

5. Ingrid Kunschke, “The Credenza,” *Modern Haibun & Tanka Prose*, Issue 2, Winter 2009, pp. 30-31, <<http://www.themetpress.com/modernhaibunandtankaprose/digital/mhttp2.pdf>>, accessed May 29, 2010.

6. David Cobb, “Hole with a View,” *Business in Eden*. Shalford, Essex, England: Equinox Press, 2006, pp. 56-57.

7. Harriot West, “Maybe,” *Modern Haiku*, 39:1.

8. Jeffrey Winke, “Keeps Hammering the Dull,” *Haibun Today*, June 24, 2009, <<http://haibuntoday.blogspot.com/2009/06/jeffrey-winke-keeps-hammering-dull.html>>. Also see Winke’s *I’ll Tell You So: A flash story/haibun collection*, Ellison Bay, WI: Cross + Roads Press, 2010, p. 52.

9. The author would welcome comments by writers about how they think about and select titles for their haibun. Ray Rasmussen can be contacted at: <[ray@raysweb.net](mailto:ray@raysweb.net)>.

10. According to *Wikipedia*, the phrase “A Rose is a rose is a rose” is probably Gertrude Stein’s most famous quote. The original “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose” is the first line of her poem “Sacred Emily,” *Geography and Plays* (The Four Seas Company, 1922, p. 187). The phrase expresses the notion that the name of anything appearing in a work evokes associations and thus a rose is not simply a rose, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose\\_is\\_a\\_rose\\_is\\_a\\_rose\\_is\\_a\\_rose](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_is_a_rose_is_a_rose_is_a_rose)>, accessed, May, 15, 2010.



Ray Rasmussen resides in Edmonton, Canada. His haibun, haiga, haiku, articles and reviews have appeared in the major print and online haiku genre journals. He and Jim Kacian founded and he designed the website for *Contemporary Haibun Online* for which he serves as technical editor. He also currently serves as haibun editor for *Notes from the Gean* and he designed the website and serves as technical editor for *Haibun Today*. His haiku website is <<http://raysweb.net/haiku>>. Recently, Ray dreamed that in a previous life he was a university professor.





## Haiku and the Creation of Object-based Poems: An Interview with Artist Rebecca Lowry

by *Ce Rosenow*, Oregon

Trained as an architect, *Rebecca Lowry* has been pursuing an independent fine art practice since 2003. A native of northern California, Lowry lived nearly a decade in Boston, Massachusetts, where she earned degrees at Boston University and Harvard's Design School. While living in Zurich, Switzerland, she worked at the firm of Herzog & de Meuron, which strongly influenced her engagement in visual art. Many of her projects involve haiku in unique and thought-provoking ways. Some of these projects are addressed in this interview while others can be seen at <http://www.studiolowry.info>

*Ce Rosenow* is the President of The Haiku Society of America. Her articles, poetry, translations and reviews have appeared worldwide.

The following interview took place via email between May and July 2010.

CR: Thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. Most of the questions will focus on your haiku-related projects, but I want to start with a question about your overall approach to your work in order to establish a context for the pieces involving haiku.

In your artist's statement, you describe your works as "object-based poems." You explain that "As a poet writes with words, utilizing their sense, sounds and the structure linking them, I write with objects and texts, employing their various qualities and the relationships between them." The concept of poetry is clearly central to your work; however, many of the formal qualities of poetry are characteristic of other literary forms—essays, novels, plays, etc. These forms also allow ideas to be considered, meanings to be suggested and/or altered, and understandings to be developed. In what ways is poetry, specifically, a constitutive element of your work?

RL: Poetry has a distinctively different quality than these other forms of writing: it is a form that is carefully composed in a way that utilizes every quality of language and written text. It is the most intense form of written expression. Poetry is intended to be read and reread, to be carefully considered



in all of its aspects. The study of a poem rewards with deeper or many layered understanding. I describe my work as a form of object based poetry in the sense that, like a poet considers every aspect of the language he uses—including fine points such as the sounds of the words as they interact with one another; the secondary readings of primary sense through management of format such as line endings, spacing etc.; obsession with word selection and manipulation of grammar, I consider every aspect of how the constituent parts of my pieces come together. It is a very rigorous approach. No decision goes unconsidered and every aspect of the work is intended to reinforce or multiply interpretation. Furthermore, as a very studied form, while poetry often gives something to the reader upon a quick perusal, it truly rewards careful, thoughtful re-reading. My work is built up with a similar intent to that of the poet and, while generous to a viewer looking for a purely aesthetic experience, hopefully provides similar rewards upon more thoughtful consideration.

Much of this way of looking at poetry I would say stems from undergraduate study I did under a professor named Christopher Ricks who is well known for his exquisitely detailed study of poetry. For those interested in close study, I'd recommend his book, *The Force of Poetry*.

I would say that the fact that poetry is a component of the work—in the sense that I will use a poem as a constituent element of a piece, much as I would use wool or graphite—is far less important. While some of the work incorporates poems, much of it does not. Having an actual poem in a piece, while important to that specific piece, is not essential to my practice. That said, it is wonderful to work directly with poetry... it provides for a different kind of dialog within a piece than does working with an otherwise loaded type of medium.

CR:      What is your background in haiku? When did you first start reading haiku? Do you write haiku yourself?

RL:      Honestly, I wouldn't say I have any sort of specific background in haiku—other than familiarity from the general study



of poetry... although I did fall for a guy once who was reciting his own humorous haiku at a poetry reading in a gritty part of London—that lasted about three years!

Overall, I'd say I came to look more closely at haiku as a result of a few of the first pieces I made: I was beginning to explore the relationship between meaning and its formal or physical expression and haiku was an appropriate source of meaning to work with as it is a very short and very rich poetic form. I was drawn to the fact that haiku usually describe—in a highly evocative way—a single moment in time that often has larger ideas or meanings buried within it. The history of the poems, too, is often important, such as using Bashō's frog pond poem for my first barcode piece: the richness of that poem's history (and indeed, Ginsberg's significant translation) is very important as all that is in the poem is then reduced to a formal expression unreadable by a human, who can appreciate everything that is buried in those symbols. Of course to a computer, the writing is highly legible, but to the computer, it is nothing more than a string of letters... the tension there is what makes the piece.

I'd answer your second question in saying that I didn't begin actively reading haiku until I began searching for useful texts for my work—though the search for appropriate poems is always a delightful endeavor. The only haiku I've ever written was the one I recited at the recent haiku society meeting in Pasadena. I was told everyone would recite a poem and so thought I'd give it a try. For my work, it's really more valuable to use haiku from a different time altogether or one that has other associations not my own attached to it. Though I did quite enjoy writing that one, so I may try my hand at others for the pleasure of it.

with a clatter, the sea  
reshuffles  
the stoney beach

CR: You may not, as you say, have a specific background in haiku or write haiku regularly, but your own haiku and your



use of literary haiku in your object-based poems demonstrate careful attention to this poetic form.

In your previous response, you mention *Poem*, your c-print of Allen Ginsberg's translation of Bashō's "old pond" haiku. I'd like to follow up on that, but first I want to ask one more general question about your use of haiku. You incorporate a variety of texts in your pieces, including those by Marcus Aurelius, Li Po, and Walt Whitman. Although some longer texts are used in full (the New Testament and the 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, for example), many of your works include only fragments of other texts. Haiku, however, are consistently included in their entirety. Is that because of the brevity of the form, the fragmentary nature of haiku, the specific content of the individual haiku you use, or some other reason?

RL: I'd say it's mostly due to the brevity of the form—but honestly, it's not something I'd really considered.... Thinking about it now, to take just a part of an already greatly condensed thing could be pretty powerful in the right context. Usually I prefer to use an entire text and only incorporate fragments if the piece itself is intended to represent a fragment of a greater whole: for example if a map is merely representing a fragment of a landmass, I will often use only a fragment of a text as though both run off the edges to some unspecified point....

CR: Let's return to your project from 2003, *Poem*, involving Ginsberg's translation of Bashō's haiku:

Th' old pond—a frog jumps in. Kerplunk!

Given that Bashō's poem is probably the most widely translated haiku in the world, what informed your decision to use Ginsberg's translation?

RL: For this piece I was looking for a poem with tremendous richness in association... the frog pond poem was desirable because it has been translated so many times in so many ways over the years —and using Ginsberg's translation brought in the whole Beat movement and all that is associated with it.... Ginsberg introduced a whole new way of expressing Bashō's



initial experience but also a new way of considering poetry as a whole and, indeed, a new approach to life. So the very dry, mechanical expression of the poem in the piece is conflated with great complexity and associational depth.

CR: In 2003 you also created thirty haiku text messages. What led you to use haiku for these messages? What were your criteria for choosing the haiku?

RL: The text/message piece came about when I was living in Switzerland. It was still early days for text messaging—hardly anybody was communicating this way in the U.S.—but it was a heavily used new technology in Europe. In Switzerland it is referred to as SMS. I had simply noticed that the messages everyone was sending one another were very prosaic: “I’m going to be 5 minutes late” or “meet us at the Frauenbadi.” It seemed to me that it would be delightful for a person to receive something other than that via text message, so I thought to send people haiku poems. It seemed a perfect fit as a haiku is basically a sharing of a very specific experience and the format perfectly suited the brief text allowed by early text messaging phones... it was that simple. The relics of the piece are the framed photos of the messages just before they were sent out, but really, the meat of the piece was the actual sending of the messages....



sent to annegret h.: *I regret*, anonymous (c. 1640-1700)  
Text/Message, 2003, c-print on metallic paper, acrylic mount,  
3" x 5"



My criteria for selecting the haiku were merely to find a specific poem to share with the individual it was being sent to. They were all friends and acquaintances of mine. I made sure that none of the poems required specific knowledge of Japan as that would render them less accessible to the recipients. Really a very simple project—a precursor though to *REGARD*, and the Home Depot business card project, *Poem Depot*.

CR: Since these initial projects, much of your work has involved haiku, including pieces in which haiku are embroidered in Braille on different maps. For instance, in *Winter Has Begun*, from 2008, you used silk to embroider the following haiku onto an American military map of the Middle East:

winter has begun—  
trees alive and dead  
indistinguishable

Mitsuhashi Takajo

Would you elaborate on the use of Braille, the relationship between the haiku and the military map, and the decision to use silk to embroider the haiku?

RL: In my work, the use of Braille is similar to the use of barcodes: it is a way of rendering meaning less accessible or accessible in a different way. Braille was interesting to me for use on a map as dots on a map generally identify specific places—they are a means of communicating. So to use a dot-based writing system on maps seemed to me an interesting confluence. The red silk knots allude to the textile traditions of the Middle East, such as rug-making. This suggests consideration of the map as something hung vertically that represents a horizontal condition (the ground, a rug)... then of course, spots of red can allude to drops of blood as well, casting the poem in a different light. Also, the entire map was crumpled up into a ball (as though it were trash to be tossed) and then was uncrumpled, the resulting texture reading as topographic relief....



CR: You have also embroidered haiku in Braille onto fabric. Would you discuss the differences between the “map haiku” projects and the “fabric haiku” projects? How does each contribute to the trajectory of your work?

RL: The map and fabric pieces are actually quite different. Whereas the maps relate strongly to ideas of place and scale, the fabric pieces focus more on Braille as a writing system that is read by hand. The fabrics hang loosely and so move away from your fingers, preventing you from ever exerting much pressure on them. Paper on a table pushes back, fabric doesn't. Also fabrics are chosen as much by how they feel – and their associations with touch—as how they look. These are all considerations in composing the fabric pieces.

As to your second question, I don't really see my work as having a single trajectory. I'd say my practice functions less like a river—a single stream with a few tangents—and more like a delta—a slow, concurrent progression of many related lines of inquiry. For some lines, I'll complete fewer than one piece per year.... The result of this is that work on one idea often informs or transforms my thinking on another.... As things progress, one can often find connections through different bodies of work.

CR: I'd like to ask some more questions about your use of barcodes. Specifically, I'm interested in the *Shogai* series you created in 2009 which was part of an exhibit that opened in January 2010. The series is comprised of five barcodes inked on paper, and the haiku within each barcode is a different Japanese death haiku.

When Paige Wery interviewed you for *Artillery*, you described one of the intriguing aspects of the barcode/death haiku pieces as the recognition that “There's content in these patterns that we can't get at. We know it's there and we can't see it.” What is the significance of using death haiku, as opposed to other haiku, for the information that is simultaneously present and inaccessible?

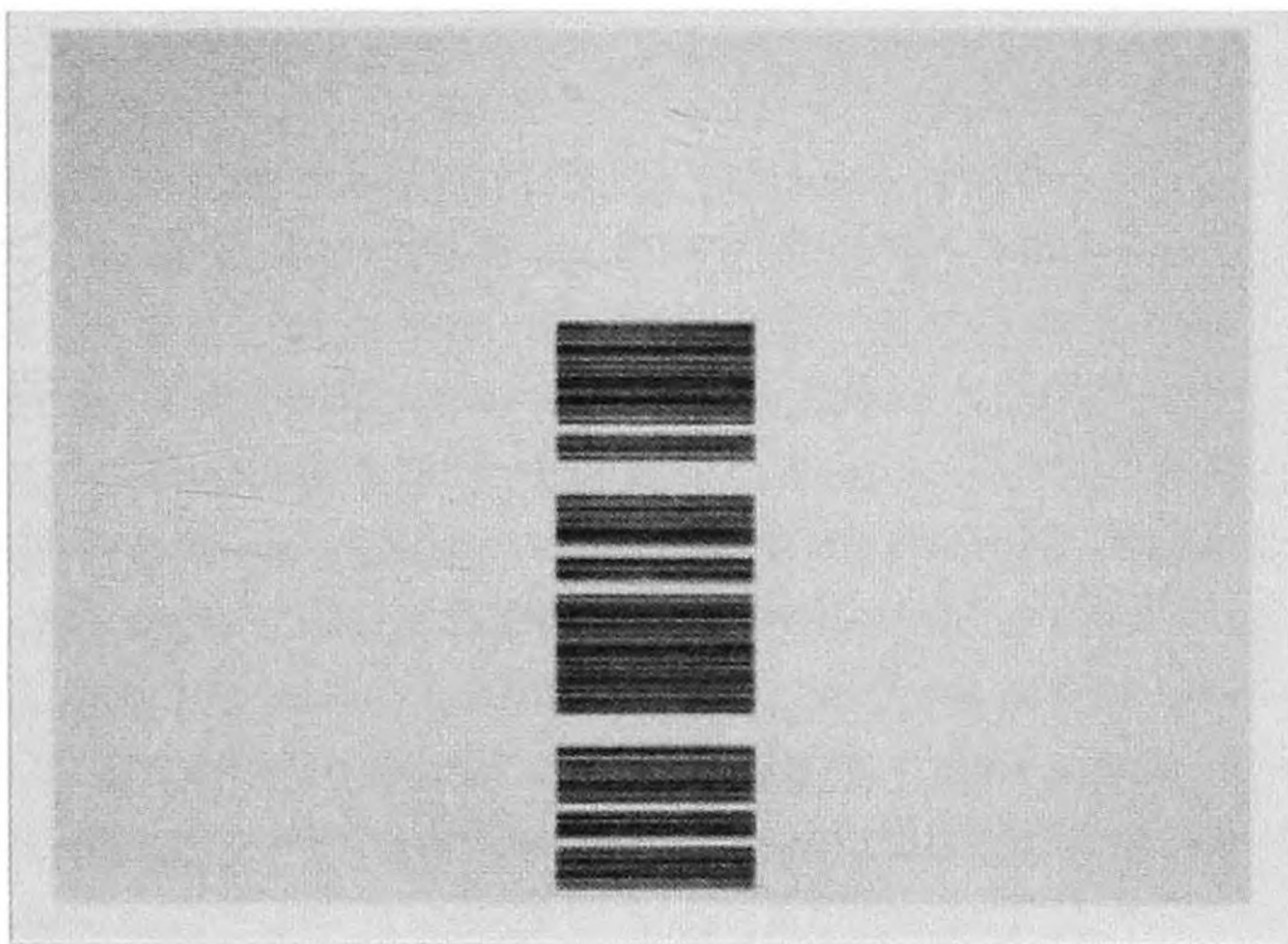
RL: I would say that that tension exists in all of the bar-



code work—indeed, it is a component of much of my work overall. The *Shogai* series is simply an iteration. That said, the fact that these words are produced as the poet is transitioning from being to non-being certainly brings this idea to the fore. Much of what I do explores the idea of that ineffable spark—be it the true substance of what is conveyed to us through text or that indefinable something that makes you more than a body and that, at the end, simply disappears. I suppose you could reduce it to: text is to the body as meaning is to the a soul—in a sense.

CR: To what extent does the design of each piece—placement of the barcode on the paper, ink patterns, etc.—resonate with the actual content of the haiku?

RL: In these pieces there is a direct relationship. So that upon consideration of the poem, the barcode on the field of paper becomes not just a text, but also an image. The bars become a forest edge, or a stand of grass, or a path in the snow. For instance *Mizu* describes water and so the barcode is turned horizontally as though the sun is reflecting on the surface of the water.... This is a bit of a change from my usual practice as I usually veer away from direct representation, but in these pieces, I think it adds substantially to the work.



*Mizu* (from the series *Shogai*), 2009,  
ink on paper, 19" x 22"



CR: The haiku in the barcodes are Japanese haiku, so while it's true that there is "content in these patterns that we can't get at," even if one could access that content, one would need to know Japanese to understand it. What informed your decision to use the original Japanese versions of the haiku instead of translations? How does this additional level of potential obstruction fit into the project?

RL: I really prefer to use texts in as original a form as possible as translation always brings so many additional issues along with it. Of course, for some pieces, that just won't work. For the *Shogai* series, I simply wanted the words to be the true words of the poets. Translations are provided on labels so that viewers can understand the work better, but the translations could be in German or Spanish or Greek—the words on the page remain in their original form. I often rely on labels to give the viewer some idea of what they're looking at. That way they can see the contents of the work in their mind's eye—which is really it's true form.

CR: Languages and translation come up in another of your haiku-related projects, *REGARD*.. You designed eleven municipal signs that, excepting the color and text, are exact replicas of a standard parking sign. Each sign features an individual haiku, and some of the signs are in English, some in Spanish, and some in Russian. The City of West Hollywood funded and installed the signs.

How did you get the idea for this project? What is the significance of the title, and what impact do you hope the signs will have?

RL: This project came about in conjunction with a show put on by Artlab 21 and the LA Art Association. The curator of the show, Bernhard Zuenkeler, requested that each of the four artists participating in the show make work for the gallery and also something that would be out in the city. The show was intended to explore ideas of communication and the city, so I began to think about how the city communicates with its citizens. The most common form of this communication is signage, which generally tells you where things are or what to do or, more commonly, what not to do. I saw this as an opportunity for a different kind of government to citizen



communication....

As to the title, *REGARD.*, it is a play on the standard government sign in that it tells you what to do. Though I imagine this is usually done for legibility, it usually gives the impression that you disobey the command at your own peril.... which of course, is often the case!

I hope that the project will be a source of enjoyment for the people who encounter it—a gift from the city to its people rather than a command. I imagine there will be some rather confused citizens, at first anyway. A bit of confusion can be good, though—it stops people and makes them think, trying to figure out the puzzle. I see these poem signs as a shared thought across time, a shared moment or experience. I hope to stop people in the course of their days and give them something to ponder, to take with them as they carry on. Something to discuss when they get home, or back to the office... or maybe just something shared to keep inside themselves.

CR: How did you select the specific haiku used for the signs?

RL: How these signs are read is very important. On parking signs, there is usually text in a larger and or contrasting font that can be read easily from a distance, giving you the main gist of the message “NO PARKING” or “2 HOUR” and then as you get closer, the fine print fills you in on the details. So I looked for poems that had a similar capacity: poems that, with certain words highlighted, are read one way, and that then could be comprehended in their entirety closer up. So for instance, the poem “When autumn winds blow, not one leaf remains the way it way it was” when reformatted, reads “NOT 1 WAY” from a distance. Some of the poems have initial distance readings that seem like they could pertain to traffic situations such as “BEFORE BEHIND BEFORE” and “TODAY HOUR,” there’s one sign that didn’t get installed but that I quite like: from a distance it reads “DESCANSAN MUER-



TAS” or “FALL DEAD” — that’s a sign you want to pay attention to! The actual poem reads “*Bajo las aguas descansan en la roca las hojas muertas*”\* or loosely translated “Beneath the water, the dead leaves fall to the rocks.” Of course, I was also looking for poems that had travelled through time, tying the present moment to the past, and that did not refer to anything so specifically Japanese that an average American couldn’t relate to it. Most Americans haven’t seen Mt. Fuji or appreciate the significance of cherry blossoms....

CR: Why did you decide to use haiku in these three different languages?

RL: My initial thought had been to make signs in English and Spanish to include LA’s majority population groups—this was before the city of West Hollywood came on board. The project was initially one I was going to execute myself throughout greater Los Angeles. Currently there is only one Spanish sign installed. I would have liked to include more but as it is I consider myself lucky to have gotten as many signs up as there are.... When WEHO adopted the project, they requested that I include some Russian signs as they have a significant immigrant Russian population that they wanted to include. It was quite a challenge as I had to invent a municipal Cyrillic font and finding Russian translations of haiku and understanding them was not an easy task. Fortunately I had a few consultants to help me out.

CR: Did you select the sites or did the city? What were the criteria for choosing the sites?

RL: I selected the sites, then they had to be approved by the city’s transportation department. The schedule for the project was an incredible one as I first met with the city in late October and the project had to be approved, funded, sites approved and the whole thing installed by January and that with two weeks down for the holidays. It was crazy. I chose a first round of sites and they were nearly all rejected—the project

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\**Editors’ Note:* No information was given for this poem, but it is likely a Spanish version of a haiku by Naitō Jōsō, 1662–1704.





When autumn winds blow, not one leaf remains the way it was  
Togyu (1705-1749)

*REGARD.*, 2010, retroreflective film, ink on aluminum, 12" x 18"

nearly died at that point—then I went back and chose a whole new round of sites based on different criteria and fortunately, eleven of those were approved.

In choosing sites, I wanted a wide variety—some in very prominent, busy places and others back in quiet neighborhoods. There's a sign on the sunset strip and another in front of the local high school. All of the signs needed to be located



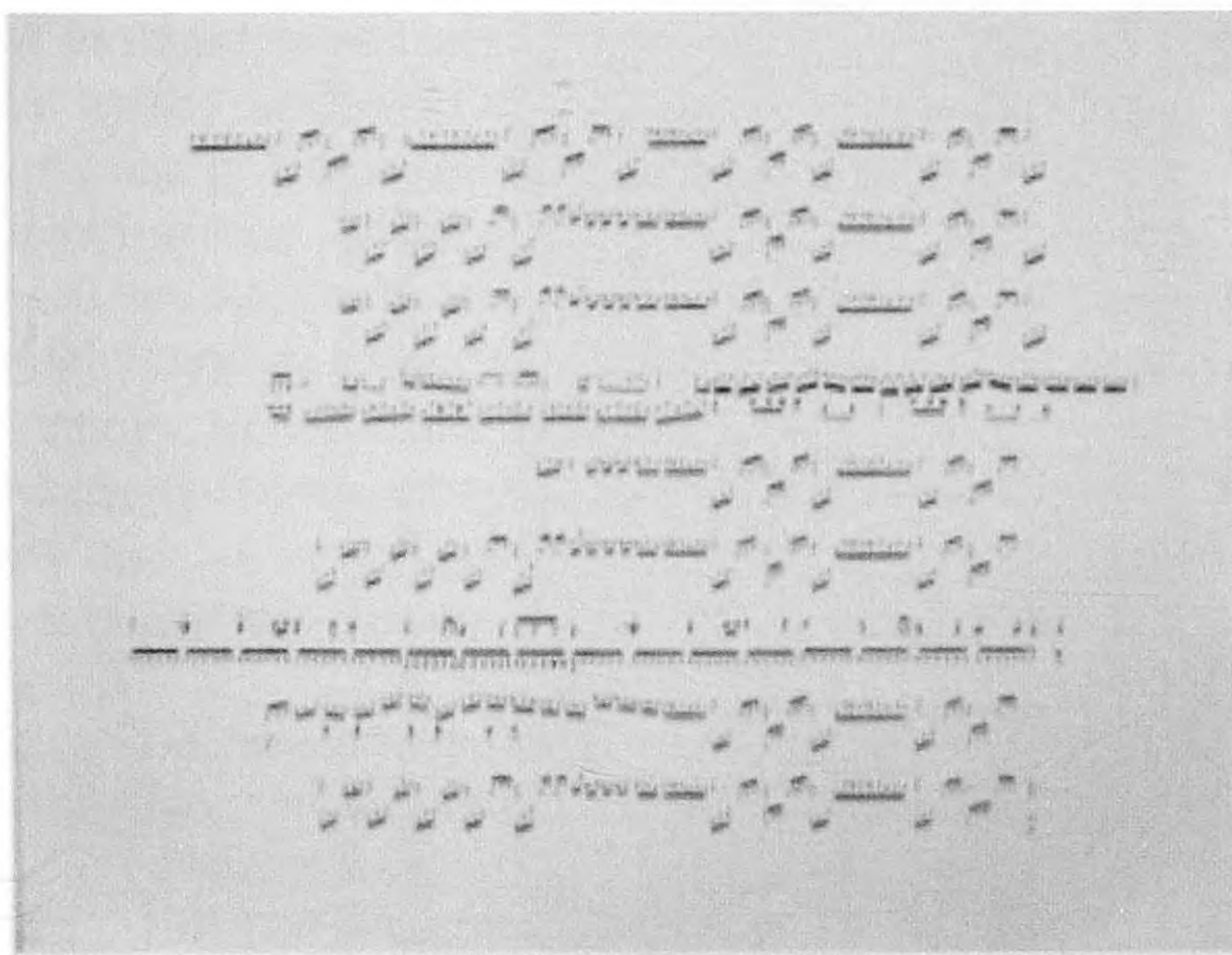
in places where it would be in some way logical to find a parking sign, but I was not allowed to place them in any permit parking zones or other areas where there were official parking signs in force... so that was certainly a challenge. I placed a few on streets where traffic backs up at lights, giving motorists an opportunity to see the signs and giving them something to think about at the light. Many of the signs are in places where pedestrians are just as likely to encounter them as drivers. One is in front of a local newsstand....

CR: I'd like to return to the topic of translation. You've mentioned that you "prefer to use texts in as original a form as possible as translation always brings so many additional issues along with it," but you were speaking specifically about linguistic translation and choosing to use haiku in the original Japanese. The larger issues raised by translation, especially given a definition of "to translate" as "to change," actually seem important to your work. Many of your projects involve translation on several levels including not only changing the language of a text, but also changing the medium used to convey information. Some pieces create a target text that is more accessible to people than the original source text because of the change in language. Other pieces make the original information completely inaccessible. Both instances draw attention to the acts of conveying and comprehending information. Would you elaborate on the ways in which the concept of translation does or does not figure in your philosophy and goals as an artist?

RL: Yes, that's it exactly. My work is definitely about translation in the sense you describe. I think what I was getting at before is that every translatory step has significance in the final reading and I am reluctant to incorporate a step into a piece that does not have reference specifically to what I am trying to achieve with that piece. For instance, for *Poem* of 2003, I specifically used Ginsberg's translation as it adds a very particular layer of depth to the piece—it's as much a relevant change from the original as my use of the barcode. Once I engage another person's translation of a poem simply for legibility, it muddies those waters. Sometimes linguistic translation is necessary for the piece to make sense to the audience of the work, and specifically relevant translations



don't exist, so while the translation plays a role, it is a minor one—as with the *REGARD.* project. In these cases I simply do my best to be as accurate to the poem and as respectful to both the poet and translator as possible. Right now I'm producing a new body of work that uses music as its content instead of poetry and the issues are startlingly similar—to what extent must I adhere to the conventions of musical notation for the work to be comprehensible and to what degree can or should I move away from the original score, perhaps losing some of the original intent but gaining in some other aspect? There's no clear answer, but plenty of opportunity for exploration. The tension between desire to know, to see, and the satisfaction but finality of knowing/seeing is the seam I mine.

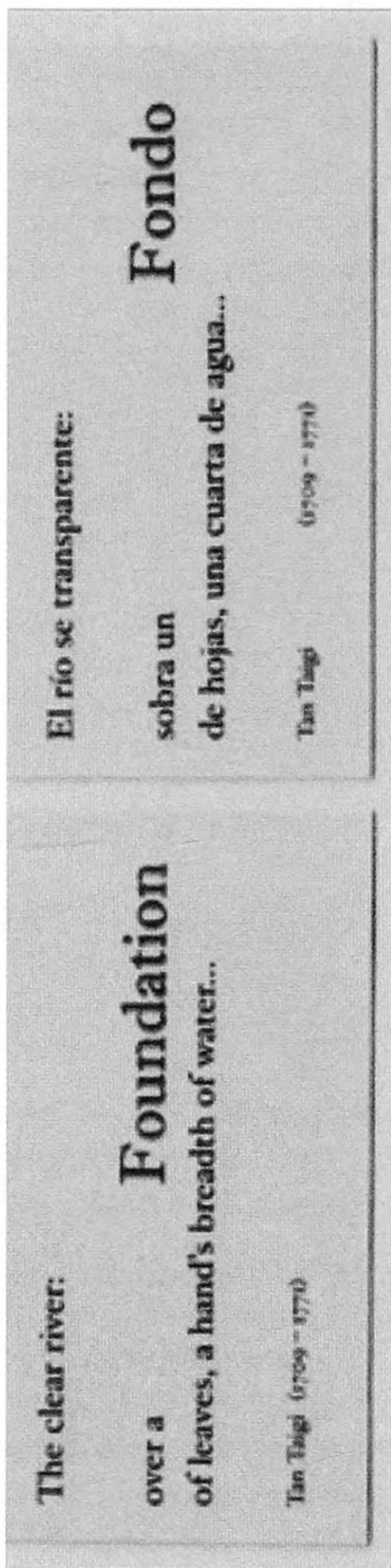


*Bagatelle no. 25 in A minor*, 2010, ink on paper, 30" x 40"

CR: Let's conclude with a few questions about current and future haiku-related projects. *Poem Depot* involves the distribution of haiku business cards at a Home Depot store where you leave the cards on vehicles in the parking lot. How did you get the idea for *Poem Depot*? How many different cards are there at present? Is the distribution random or is there significance to the relationship between the card, the haiku, and the vehicle? Do you have plans to expand this project?



RL: *Poem Depot* is the next in the series of works that began with the text messages I was sending in Switzerland and of which REGARD. is a part as well. I think I'll call it the *Conveyance* series. These works all involve conveying meaning through an unusual delivery method and thereby calling into question the mode of communication and seeing the content



*Poem Depot*, 2010 ongoing, ink on plastic coated paper, 2" x 3.5"  
*Foundation/Fondo* Tan Taigi (1709-1771), translation Vincent Haya



in a new light. *Poem Depot* is really a gift to the people who frequent my local Home Depot. It's not a project that has any greater goals than to intrigue and, hopefully, delight a population of people who usually have little or no exposure to conceptual art. The idea came about as I was recently renovating a house and so spending huge amounts of time at the Cypress Park Home Depot. I noticed that many small contractors and other businesses would advertise their services by leaving business cards on cars in the parking lot. What a great opportunity!

There are four different cards. Each has a haiku written on it in English on one side and Spanish on the other. The distribution is completely random—just whichever vehicles I can slip cards onto without being noticed by security. I do especially like to target work trucks and run down cars that are often used by day laborers. I'm quite gratified to say I have never found one of my cards lying in the parking lot. No one is discarding them, which tells me I must be affecting people in some way. I don't currently have plans to expand this project, though it will be ongoing for quite some time. If I were to go to another Home Depot and observe people using the same advertising strategy, I'd probably sprinkle some cards around there too.... It really only makes sense if there's already such communication already established at a given location....

CR: Do you have any other current projects involving haiku or ideas for future haiku-related projects?

RL: I'm not focusing on any specifically haiku-related projects at the moment, but there will undoubtedly be more in the future. I'd like to continue with the *Conveyance* series, but I'll have to wait til the next idea for that comes to me. I may expand *Shogai* to six pieces. My series tend to proceed quite sporadically as I get interested in other work and then come back to them. I periodically make little barcode drawings and may include some new ones for an upcoming show. I have talked with Michael Dylan Welch about collaborating on a project—hopefully that will happen at some point. I do truly enjoy working with haiku poetry and expect it will be a part of my practice for many years to come.



# Reviewed

## Two Reviews

by *Matthew M. Cariello*, Ohio

**Burns, A.** (ed.). *Montage: The Book*. Winchester, VA: The Haiku Foundation, 2010, unpag., softbound, 9 x 7. ISBN 978-0-9826952-0-4, 50 USD, < <http://www.thehaikufoundation.org/publications/montage-the-book/>>.

When I finally sat down to do this review, I did what any writer would. I went on the Internet. After email, a little googling and stops at haikuguy.com for some inspiration from Issa and The Haiku Foundation to check on the blogs, I landed at Amazon.com., where, in an attempt to take the pulse of the haiku book market, I searched under the terms “books” and “haiku.” First entry on this particular day was B.E. Snyder’s *Haiku Baby*, a board book, filled with innocuous 5-7-5 haiku like this: “in tickly-toe grass / a buttercup offers up / yellow noses kisses.” The second result was for “Andrew Vachss Amazon Page [sic],” which made for a few moments of consternation until I saw that one of his crime novels was called *Haiku*. Mystery solved. The next book in the list was *Haiku Knits: 25 serenely beautiful patterns inspired by Japanese design*. Then came an actual book of poems, *The Sound of Water: haiku by Bashō, Issa, Buson and other poets* (Sam Hamill, editor and translator). Also on the first page were two books by Jane Reichhold (*Writing and Enjoying Haiku: A Hands-on Guide*, and *Bashō: The Complete Haiku*), the 25th anniversary edition of William J. Higginson’s *The Haiku Handbook*, the crossover *Haiku Mind: 108 Poems to Cultivate Awareness and Open Your Heart*, by Patricia Donegan, and two anthologies: *The Essential Haiku: Versions of Bashō, Buson, & Issa* by Robert Haas, and *The Classic Tradition of Haiku: An Anthology*, by Faubian Bowers. Rounding out the list were two popku items, *Haiku for Jews: for You, a Little Wisdom* by William Bader and *Zombie Haiku: Good Poetry for Your...Brains*, by Robert Mecum.

All in all, I took this list as a good sign of haiku’s relevance.



Half of the titles were serious haiku publications, although as you get to later pages on the list, the mix begins to favor the humor section rather than the literature section. Titles such as *Gay Haiku*, *Episcopal Haiku*, *Redneck Haiku*, *Vampire Haiku*, *Werewolf Haiku*, *Hipster Haiku* and *Haiku for Coffee Lovers*, are filled with reams of banal, adorable and clever poems written in the hackneyed seventeen syllable format. For example, here's David M. Bader's "The Odyssey" from his book *Haiku U: From Aristotle to Zola, 100 Great Books in 17 Syllables*: "Aegean forecast—/ storms, chance of one-eyed giants, / delays expected." Delays indeed. Popku writing like this is unoriginal, profitable (I guess) and ubiquitous. But mixed in with these titles were haiku standards, including several versions of Bashō's *Narrow Road*, Robert Aitkin's *A Zen Wave*, and White Pines Press's *The Unswept Path*, and crossover titles such as *Take a Deep Breath: The Haiku Way to Inner Peace* and *Zen Art for Meditation*, which has a section on haiku. (I don't claim to know anything about these last two titles, but the fact that haiku has made its way into self-help is, I suppose, something to note, if not exactly applaud.)

All of which brings me to *Montage: The Book*, which, sadly, wasn't even listed at Amazon (although a search with the keywords "montage allan burns" did turn up the cast recording of the 1955 movie musical *It's Always Fair Weather*, starring Gene Kelly and Cyd Charisse. Go figure). *Montage* is subtitled "the book" to differentiate it from Montage, the website, which was part of the large and active Haiku Foundation website (there has been no montaging since December 2009). The premise of Montage (book or website) is to present weekly "Comparative Haiku." Each week is called a gallery; each gallery has a theme, and almost all of the themes are linked in some way to the week in which they appear. Some are obvious: Gallery 26 (June 19-25) celebrates summer, Gallery 32 (July 31-August 6) commemorates the dropping of the atomic bombs, and Gallery 52 (December 18-25) marks the coming of winter. Others are more obscure: there are Galleries on "Content," "Buddha Nature," "Transience," and "California Dreamin'" that are unrelated to the seasons in which they appear, or perhaps related to all seasons and therefore always



appropriate.

What “comparative” means depends on the premise of the week’s theme. Gallery One, for instance, is called “Foundations,” and includes seven haiku each from Bashō, Nick Virgilio, and Elizabeth Searle Lamb, a solid foundation if there ever was one, although the comparisons are a bit ambiguous. The author index reads like a *Who’s Who* of 20th century English language haiku, with Bashō, Buson and Issa thrown in, probably to demonstrate the direct connection between the three major voices of Japanese haiku and, well, everyone else. About halfway through the book, I started thinking about what poems I would have put in the galleries, or how I would have changed things up a bit by having more poets per gallery but fewer poems. I began to feel as if I were listening to a party CD made by a friend whose taste in music I didn’t always agree with. And then it hit me: the whole thing is a remix, a pastiche—a montage! In much the same way that our lives are montages of images, ideas and impulses, the book is a collection of transient connections between voices. This premise was made for—or at least sustained by—the Internet age, in which fast cuts and web surfing come to resemble thinking. Or maybe thinking comes to resemble web surfing.

Let me be clear: there’s not a bad poem in the book. However, the organizing premise of comparison (and the ways in which it implies, by simple juxtaposition, that connections exist between authors), the constraint of the themes, the weekly presentations—all these take on a curiously static quality after a while. It doesn’t help that the short essays accompanying each gallery are uneven and idiosyncratic. If it were my party CD—I mean, if it had been my job to edit the galleries, I would have dropped the essays and put in more poets, probably with fewer poems per poet. Maybe I’d even put in some non-haiku poems, just to round out the comparisons.

As a popularization of literary haiku—as a way of taking it out of the hands of vampires, zombies, cowboys and coffee drinkers—*Montage: The Book* serves a valuable purpose, as does *Haiku Mind*, the better anthologies, and (maybe, haven’t



read it) *Take a Deep Breath*. Or it would serve that purpose if it were listed at Amazon (hopefully it will be by the time this review is published). The premise of *Montage* has tremendous potential, but it does beg a very important question: How should haiku be represented to audiences larger than the readerships of our best haiku magazines and web sites? That's a question to be addressed by not by individual reviewers and editors, but by the haiku community as a whole.



**Wright, C.** *Sestets: Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010, 96 pp. perfect softbound, 5.4 x 8. ISBN 978-0374532147, 14 USD.

Good writers know how to work with constraints. In English language haiku, the constraints are clear: seven or eight iambs, strong images, plain words, and an underlying metaphoric resonance between the parts of the poem. History, language and culture have come together to create this particular form, which shows haiku writers where to begin and end the poem, and allows them to work economically with great precision. The “rules” of haiku are an enabling constraint in that they narrow down the rhetorical options of the poem, and thereby permit focus on subject matter.

In *Sestets*, Charles Wright has found a constraint that enables him to explore fundamental issues of human life and death, one small step at a time. His sestets are long-breathed, rangy things, sometimes running up to eight beats per line. The lines start and stop, and start again. His subject matter is loss and yearning and fulfillment and loss again. The images are sharp and haiku-like, but are definitely not haiku:

Double Salt (2)

Virgo halfway across the heavens when  
the sun goes down.  
Late August, cicadas in media res, eighth  
Moon, and no one the wiser.







**Horne, K.** *in the mist*. Niagara Falls, ON: The Haunted Press, 2010, 195 pp., perfect bound, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN 978-1-895528-20-6, No Price.

by *Fay Aoyagi*, California

This is a beautiful book with one haiku per page, presented both in Japanese and English. *Sumi-e* by 10 artists are scattered throughout. Though I cannot tell in which language the haiku were originally written, both versions are refined.

the motherland  
now for visits only  
in the mist

ふるさとは  
旅の地となり  
霞み进行り

As an immigrant, I share the sentiment in this title haiku. For expatriates, the image of “motherland” is twofold. It is the place where we grew up and the place we gave up. Sometimes it appears a perfect castle in a fairy tale. At other times, it blurs like a mirage. Japan, the motherland of Kimiko and me, has ancient temples and tiny rice fields. In some villages, old trees sway in the wind unchanged for thousands of years. But in big modern cities, tall buildings block out the sky and mesh-like traffic networks run through them. McDonald’s and Starbucks abound. Convenience stores stay open 24 hours a day. Their employees greet customers in a robot-like voice. Childhood memories can be kept in a box with a tight lid. When it is forced to open, a strange misty cloud will vaporize.

snow country  
the national flag  
on the thick pole

雪のくに  
太きポールに  
国旗揚げ

A visitor from Japan once said to me, “I was surprised to see so many national flags here in the United States.” It may be true, too, in Canada, where Kimiko lives. My grandfather used to hoist a flag at the gate every Sunday and national holiday. I am not sure my parents still have a flag at home.



I decided to become a naturalized citizen after September 11, 2001. When I saw so many Stars and Stripes flying at a hotel near my home, tears welled up in my eyes. I felt “my country” had been bombed.

The train may run through the white land for days in Canada. Japan is a narrow island. A mountain range separates the climates. In one of his famous novels, *Snow Country*, Yasunari Kawabata wrote, “The train came out of the long tunnel into the snow country.”<sup>1</sup>

metal sound  
the wartime thunder  
in the distance

金属音  
戦争時代の  
遠雷す

Kimiko was born in 1933. When WWII ended, she would have been twelve years old. She was too young to understand the madness of that era. She may have experienced air raids. Perhaps, she could have been in a group of young school children who were evacuated to the countryside. Most fathers of those children were drafted and their mothers stayed in the city to defend their neighborhoods. Older students were assigned to factories manufacturing military supplies.

A short definition of haiku on the back cover includes, “The core of Haiku is the words of an object or event which will give the readers an opportunity to share the experience or feeling.” Human beings tend to forget painful experiences. To move on, one has to let go of many things. Though it is not easy to write about a huge event such as a war in haiku, we should not limit ourselves. Distant thunder may bring back a childhood experience. The sound of metal may evoke the feeling we had not felt for a while. Haiku can open the inner door of a poet or a reader.

allowed  
into the spring chapel  
one fly

礼拝堂  
蠅一匹の  
許されて



Though I attended a university founded by Jesuits in Tokyo, I do not know much about Christianity. Yet I like sitting in the cathedral near me to enjoy its tranquility. Light through the stained glass has the calmness which is precious in our hectic life. A sound of the pipe organ soothes like a masseur's hands. I was born a Buddhist, but I do not practice the religion. Still, I like watching the face of a Buddhist statue. Amitabha, with its half-closed eyes, helps me forget a mistake. Fierce Guardian, with its wide-open mouth, gives me the strength to fight.

Fly is a summer kigo like cockroach, spider and ant. I studied Issa's famous haiku about a fly, "don't swat the fly! / praying hands / praying feet"<sup>2</sup>, at elementary school in Japan. I may not want to beg for mercy like the fly, but I would like to extend my hands when another is at the edge of the abyss.

Is the fly in the chapel the poet herself? Or is she an unwanted intruder in the chapel? In the Japanese version of this haiku, there is no word for "spring." Leaving "spring" out makes a perfect 5-7-7 in Japanese. From the English version of this haiku, I see an old woman with a rosary. I see a small church around Easter time. The Japanese version, without "spring," reminds me of the Christian church in Nagasaki which was at the epicenter of the atomic bomb dropped on August 9, 1945.

magnolias fall  
women's world  
close to the ground

木蓮散る  
女の世界  
地に近く

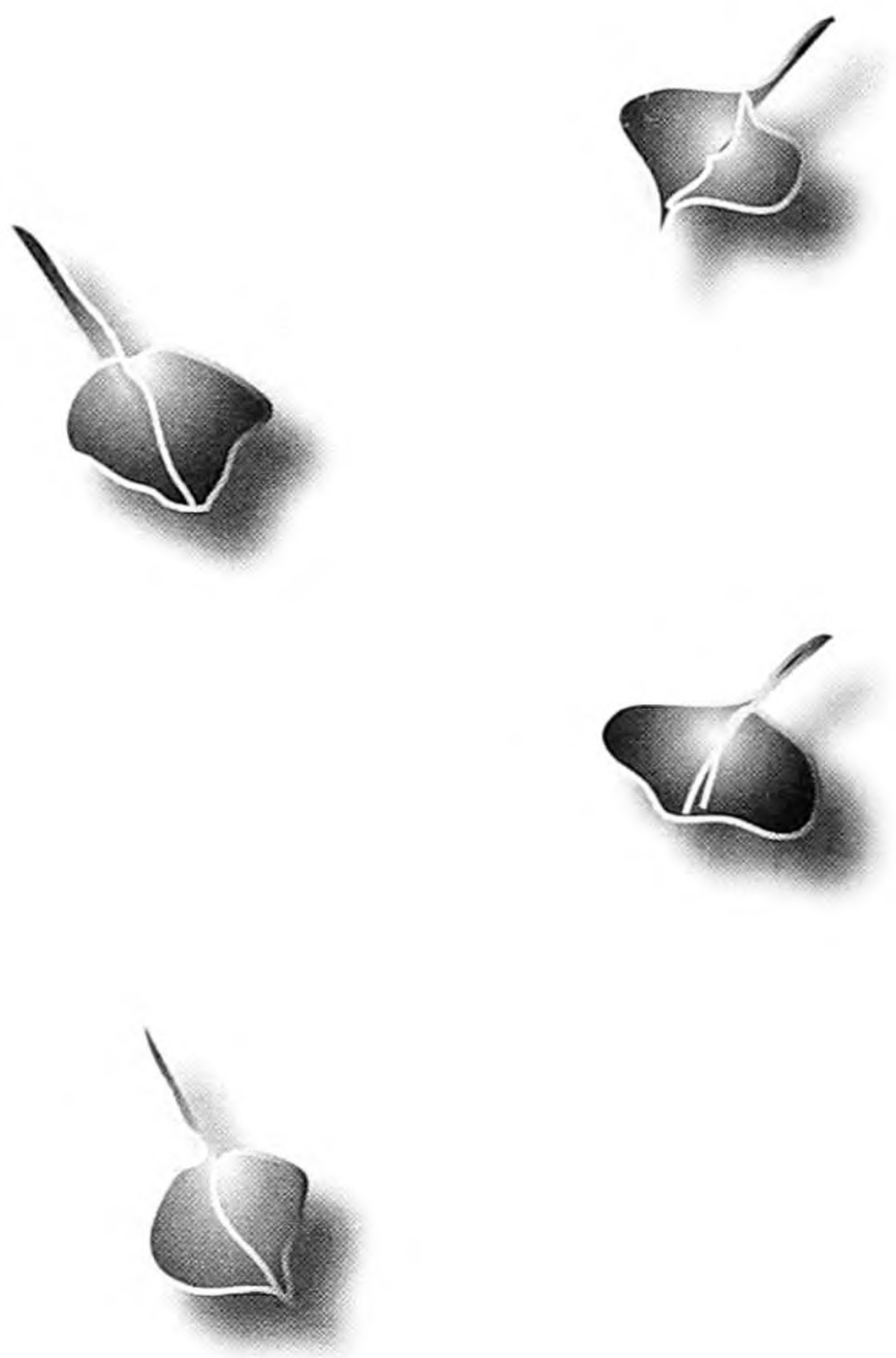
This is my favorite haiku in the book. A Japanese proverb says, "Women do not have a home in the Three Worlds of reincarnation." Kimiko says the women's world is "close to the ground" where magnolias fall. As a wife, she may breathe the warmth of her husband and flourish in the society which was once foreign to her. As a mother, she may give her strength to her daughter and together they may glow. Life is circular. Petals fallen on the ground make the soil. In the following season, with the right celestial latitude, the tree will be laden with the blossoms again.



## Notes

1. Kawabata, Y. *Snow Country*. (Translation by E.G. Seidensticker). New York: Vintage Books, 1996
2. Translated from Japanese by David Lanoue, <<http://haikuguy.com/issa/>>.

Fay Aoyagi: is a dojin of “Ten’I” (“Providence”) led by Dr. Akito Arima and “Aki” (“Autumn”) led by Mr. Masami Sanuka. She is a member of Haijin Kyokai (Haiku Poets Association) in Japan, Haiku Society of America and Haiku Poets of Northern California. She translates Japanese haiku daily in her blog, <<http://fayaoyagi.wordpress.com>>.





**Montreuil, M. & Radmore, C. C.** *An Armour All Shine*. Carleton, Place, ON: Bondi Studios, 2010, 51 pp., perfect softbound, 8.5 by 5.5. ISBN: 978-0-9812385-7-9. No price listed, <bondistudios@yahoo.com> or <mikemontreuil@sympatico.ca>.

by *Adelaide B. Shaw*, New York

This is a collection of tan renga by two Canadian poets. Each part of a poem is printed in a different typeface with no indication as to who the author is for either part. We can only guess who wrote what. This makes for a true collaboration in which neither poet can upstage the other. There are 96 tan renga, with two on a page.

There is no preface in this collection. On the last page, the authors explain only that “tan renga is a collaborative form between two poets,” and refer the reader to the Web for information and to Bruce’s Ross’s book, *How to Haiku*.

A tan renga is a short renga, a three-line verse followed by a capping two-line verse. As in renga, there is a link, either to subject, emotion or tone or in some other creative way. Also, in this reviewer’s experience in reading and writing tan renga, the first verse, as in a renga, is usually a hokku or haiku that includes a kigo or, at least, a reference to nature and that should be able to stand alone.

The tan renga in this collection differ from the norm insofar as the first verses are often senryu rather than haiku or hokku:

upset with hubby  
her voice a six  
on the richter scale

*the wine glass  
shatters*

Many of the poems have this comic tone and references to popular products: Rubik’s Cube, Hamburger Helper, Armor



All, the last being a cleaning product for cars, the product for which this collection is named.

*he dusts  
his own fingerprints  
from the porsche carrera*

an armor all shine  
and slippery seat

The reader needs to have an acquaintance with pop music and, in the following tan renga, know that “yoko” was John Lennon’s wife and that “the king” is Elvis Presley.

*once he met yoko  
she inspired  
every song*

now he plays rock ’n roll  
with the king

Knowledge of American football and films also helps.

forty hail marys  
the one I caught  
is you

*all those confessions  
for nothing*

new pencil  
on top of the fridge  
the lion king on guard

*doing double duty  
as poetry muse*

For those who don’t see the connection: in football a last desperate pass is called a hail mary pass and the “lion king” is a musical play as well as an animated film.



Sprinkled among these comic tan renga are a few serious ones, such as this:

under white clouds  
crows intermingle  
with falling snow

*their harsh caws  
somewhat muffled*

On the final page, the authors ask the question: “Why tan renga?” and answer it: “For the unpredictable and sometimes farfetched poems and for friendly dialogue on long fall and winter days.”

Unpredictable and farfetched these poems certainly are. I would venture that these authors know each other well and knew what to expect with this collaboration, a blending of two poets with a wicked and sharp sense of humor.

Adelaide B. Shaw lives in Millbrook, NY with her husband. She has three children and six grandchildren. Her haiku, tanka, haibun, and photo haiga have been published in several journals. Her award winning collection of haiku, *An Unknown Road* is available at <[ww.modernenglish-tankapress.com](http://www.modernenglish-tankapress.com)>. Examples of her poetry may be seen at <[www.adelaide-whitepetals.blogspot.com](http://www.adelaide-whitepetals.blogspot.com)>. In addition to haiku, Adelaide writes short fiction and has had several pieces published.





## Two Reviews

by *Michael W. Thomas*, England

**Anakiev, D.** *Rustic*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2010. 76 pp., perfect softbound, 4.25 x 6.5. ISBN 978-1-893959-16-3, 12 USD, <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>.

Belgrade-born Dimitar Anakiev, highly lauded as poet and film-maker, feels the bite of history at his heels in this collection. On each page is a single haiku and, spatially adrift but still deeply connected, a key word from it. The words themselves offer a commentary-poem throughout the collection: for example, rebel, roots, Buddha, mouth, dream. Anakiev's key preoccupation, the end of Yugoslavia and the desperate years that followed, informs many of the pieces. Sometimes, the focus is close and intense: the entryway to the speaker's home; a Slovenian gulag; a Kosovo peony. At other times, Anakiev pulls back, camera-wise, to catch in a symbol what the region has become: *Mitteleuropa: / in the grey cloud / a shadow of death*. The pieces are particularly strong when Anakiev parallels the ravages of the land with those of the human mind: *Made of stone / are these memories: a house / built of human skulls*. That lurks within living skulls exercises him no less: *In the Balkans / at the calling out of "rustic" / swastikas sprout*.

Like all attentive poets, however, Anakiev understands that moments of quiet, of tenderness, can be every bit as powerful as meditations on, or attempts to replicate in words, the terrors of war.

A child inside me  
is swinging through the mist  
over deep water

conjures an image at once surreal and oddly literal. Indeed, this haiku could stand as a definition of how the adult Anakiev seeks to make sense of where he has come from and how (and why) "Mitteleuropa" has sundered around him. A similar effect is achieved by the beguiling optical illusion in *Bratislava: / my*



*four fingers stretched / over the Danube.* This offers, if only for a moment, a child's consolation, success in reducing and controlling the world. Hope lurks in pieces such as this—and, despite the subject matter, throughout this well-crafted, often surprising collection.

**Tauchner, D.** *as far as I can.* Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2010. No pagination, perfect softbound, 4.25 x 6.5. ISBN 978-1-893959-93-4, 12 USD, <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>.

Another title from the well-established and notable Red Moon Press. Like Anakiev, Austrian-born Dietmar Tauchner has gained recognition in many parts of the haiku world. His “Author’s Note” describes him as, among other things, “[a] passionate traveller and trekker”—pursuits aptly reflected in a collection which charts journeys of body and mind. Sometimes, the journeys are undertaken on impulse: *spring longing / i follow animal tracks / as far as i can*; others are a result of happy surrender: *country road / i cycle into / cricket sounds*.

Yet other journeys, however, are darker and create no easeful mood. Impulse is gone: the speakers have planned for them. One section, “lurid light,” offers a steady-eyed gaze upon Mauthausen, the largest concentration camp in World War II Austria. With much thought, Tauchner probes those points of optimum pain: for example, how ordinary life co-exists with atrocity, apparently in ignorance: *summer air / a farmer dungs his field / beside the camp* and *Mauthausen / on the banks of the Danube / two lovers*. As W. H. Auden observes in “Musée Des Beaux Arts,” suffering takes place “While someone else is eating or opening a window”—but still the juxtaposition shocks us, as Tauchner is most aware.

The pauses on a journey similarly fascinate Tauchner. Some of the most affecting pieces in the collection preserve an instant, making it memorable as the best haiku should. A skillfully-worked convergence of time, place and sound informs *harvest moon / out of the kitchen / mother's cough*. In contrast to this



scene of the known, the comforting, *abandoned station / the secret schedule / of insects* recalls and compresses Frost's "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening." Here, the speaker is clearly unnerved by this no-place, by the intimations of a shadowy world that abuts his own. Such changes of moods impress themselves on the reader throughout *as far as I can*, enforcing its success, making its pictures vivid.

Michael W. Thomas is a poet, novelist and dramatist. He has published several poetry collections, the latest being *Port Winston Mulberry* (Littlejohn and Bray, 2010). He is poet-in-residence at the annual Robert Frost Poetry Festival, Key West, FL. Website: <[www.michaelwthomas.co.uk](http://www.michaelwthomas.co.uk)>.





## Memories, Dreams, and Reflections

by *Bruce Ross*, Maine

**Franke, R.** *Schwerelos Gleiten/Slipping through Water, Kurzprosa und Kurzlyrik/Short Prose and Short Poems*. Schweinfurt, Germany: Wiesenburg Verlag, 2010, 120 pp., hardbound, 9 ¼ X 7 ¾. ISBN 978-3-942063-40-1, 17.50 E, 19.95 USD.

This handsomely designed book consists of four sections of haibun, each section followed by free-standing haiku that resonate with the theme of the preceding section, each section preceded by moody expressionist paintings (plus the cover painting) by Reinhard Stangl, most reflecting issues of memories, dreams, and aging. The translations from German in this bi-lingual collection by Celia Brown and David Cobb are clear and crisp.

The title of this review is C. G. Jung's (1865-1961) 1995 journal of his internal personal history. This collection has much in common with that work as it does with Akira Kurosawa's (1910-1998) film *Dreams* (1990), a presentation of seven dreams from different periods of his life on Japanese myth, childhood, war, art, nuclear disaster, and ecological pastoralism; Ingmar Bergman's (1918-2007) film *Wild Strawberries* (1957), a portrait of an elderly physician ruminating through dreams and memories on childhood, death, old age, and his elderly mother; and Agnes Varda's (1928- ) film *The Beaches Of Agnes* (2008), an autobiographical revisiting of places associated emotionally in her past, recreating some, on her 80th birthday.

Franke is knowingly writing haibun but calls her pieces "short tales" (19). The tales are grouped according to issues of memory, aging, dreams, and death: The Old Trails, Long Shadows, Sea and Dreams, and Autumn Stories. They are often built around Scandinavian and German myth, fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and fantasy.

A section from "Slipping through Water" presents her style and approach:



Father was a good swimmer, I felt safe riding on his back. The Lunischeich, a natural spot for bathing out in the green, lacked clear water. Sometimes, when I took my hands off Father's neck and splashed about, I found myself touching water weeds. Still, no hidden danger in the deeps could do me any harm. But later, when I was in dreamland and I tried to reach into the pond all by myself, creepers grabbed me.

closing my eyes  
I swim in the lake of youth  
up to the pool's edge (76)

This straightforward flow of sensibility nicely elides from past, to dream or daydream, to present, to past, revealing the natural path of the psyche over time.

The compactness of allusion can be dense. In "Blankenburg," a fantasy on Walpurgis night when witches are said to fly on broomsticks and have orgies with the Devil, the narrator is visiting the ruins on Blankenburg mountain where legends place such orgies. The first haiku carries enormous allusive weight:

under the linden tree  
a young couple  
tandaradei (24)

The tandaradei is the tilia tree referred to in pre-Christian Germanic mythology. Tandaradei is also a refrain in a lyric poem by Ford Madox Ford in which lovers meet under a linden tree. The concluding haiku hints at the supernatural and privately natural events associated with the mountain:

a pale moon  
glides through dark clouds  
Walpurgis night (25)

The imagery of flight, what occurs in dreams and transpersonal experience, is linked to fairy tales ("The Galoshes of Fortune" alludes to such states in the title and opening poem through the Anderson tale in which those wearing the galoshes



can will themselves anywhere in the world) and fantasy (“My Island” alludes to the Lagerlof character who rides on wild geese in the opening and closing haiku).

“The Sea in Their Blood” is a poetic rumination over her seafaring genealogical history and the issue of passing time, fate, and death. It begins with Yeats’ epitaph (“Cast a cold eye / On life, on death”) and concludes with a correlative to Yeats and her relatives past and present:

a trawler passes  
before the setting sun  
caught in its nets (83)

A simple but quite impressive haibun, “Parting,” has a Buddhist-like acceptance of death and concludes with Shiki’s “two autumns” haiku which resonates with that poet’s lingering sickness and foreshadows his coming death. Franke’s opening haiku has the clarity and depth of classic haiku with a hint at Christian resurrection:

sandpipers  
still in summer plumage  
migrate south (99)

In the Sea and Dreams section, “Sitio” offers a transpersonal experience. The title derives from Carlos Castaneda’s *The Teachings of Don Juan* and refers to “a place where you just feel happy and full of energy: the key to a person’s sense of well-being” (Franke’s Glossary, 119). In a kind of visual meditation, the narrator relaxes more and more, visualizes an island off Majorca, walks toward an old watchtower, smells thyme, focuses on the fragrance, hears the waves, experiences a deepening silence, and senses her sitio. Evoking Bashō’s advice on the pine, the concluding section of the haibun is a highlight of the volume:



The old pine tree by the sea—how long the search for this spot has been.... Sitting down under the canopy I listen to the waves and breathe in the scent of time.

*Now I myself am this tree.*

Leaning against the trunk I sense the hardness of the bark and feel strength coursing through my body. A slight breeze rustles in the outermost branches. As peace and harmony embrace me I lose all sense of time.

*The images fade until finally, they disappear.*  
I open my eyes.

swallowflight  
in the after glow  
effortless (72-73)

With its many superb poetic narratives of the psyche and with its many nicely crafted links and haiku, Franke's collection is a fine addition to contemporary world haibun.

Bruce Ross, past president of the Haiku Society of America, is editor of *Haiku Moment, An Anthology of Contemporary North American Haiku* and *Journeys to the Interior, American Versions of Haibun*. He is the author of *How to Haiku, A Writer's Guide to Haiku and Related Forms* and *If Not Higher, Lectures on the Poetics of Spiritual Presence and Absence*.





## Two Reviews

by *Nick Avis*, Newfoundland & Labrador

**Adiss, S.** *cloud calligraphy*. Winchester VA, Red Moon Press, unpaginated, perfect softbound, 4 x 6. ISBN 978-1-893959-92-7, 12 USD <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>.

Stephen Adiss is the author or co-author of many books and museum catalogues on East Asian culture, serves as co-editor of *South by Southeast Haiku Arts Journal*, and has had his poems and paintings published and exhibited frequently. He is currently honorary curator (2009 -2010) of the American Haiku Archives. His poetry and his art, as one would expect, are influenced by Zen.

The painting on the front cover, and the ink and brush artwork and poem that begin each of the six sections in the chapbook are done by Adiss himself and they look very good to me. There are six poems in each section and one to a page. They are contemporary in form: three lines, a few one-liners, eight to 12 syllables, some punctuation—usually the dash, no periods or capital letters except for things such as K-Mart, and a fixed line arrangement: a straight left-hand edge with the middle line two spaces to the left.

Of the 42 poems in this collection, as many as 15 or more use personification and all but a few of these are obvious, weak or trivial; many are trite and some are clichés. The following are only a few examples: *humming softly / the bumblebee / goes out for lunch; an exultation / of crickets— / tap-dance class; warm gusts / tickle / the riverbank willow*. A more careful selection might have worked, but there are far too many of these kinds of poems. Yet the following haiku, in which personification is only one possible reading, is exceptional:

tenement windows  
eyes  
full of rain



East and West, images of faces at windows have proven to be a rich source of some of the best urban haiku ever written. Adiss's haiku is one of them and stands alongside this haiku by Saito Sanki (1900-1962): *On the window pane / in front of an ailing face / snowflakes have stuck*<sup>1</sup> ; or this one by Wally Swist: *sad faces stare / out of the diner's greasy window— / a pay phone rings*.<sup>2</sup> If you read the poem as three lines with a short pause after each one or as one line then two, you have a traditional urban haiku, and the tension in the poem is found in the juxtaposition of the eyes and the windows, both of which are full of rain. If you read the three lines continuously, which unpunctuated haiku always permit, you have the metonymy: "tenement windows' eyes," which creates a second level of tension between reality and perception, between the traditional haiku of plain fact and the poet's imagination. This is a perfect example of when personification works: when it is subtle, creatively used and is only one level of interpretation. The same is true of all Western poetic devices in haiku. The image can also be seen as surreal and I love it.

There are poems that fail to communicate: *lifting her skirt / the little girl / runs into K-Mart; no sign of dawn but dark is darker*; or communicate so little: *going down to breakfast / the youngest cat / leads the way*. The obviously Zen poems are obviously Zen poems: *I flap my arms / and sparrows / fly; morning mirror— / the stranger becomes / me*. And in some of the humorous poems Adiss is trying much too hard to be clever: *the fisherman / nets / a fisherman; age 66 / stand on my head / and I'm 99*.

In most of Adiss's poems it is his sense of humour that makes the poem:

lined up  
for a family picture—  
icicles



Valentine's Day  
the red-haired postman  
two hours late

Adiss understands how fragile and tenuous separation is, and his ballet poem is exquisitely beautiful, elegant and refined. It is a marvelous erotic love poem:

she touches  
old sweaters and the suitcase  
before I leave<sup>3</sup>

the ballet  
of her arms  
against the pillow

The following is an outstanding concrete senryu in which Adiss's technical ability proves seamless and his experimentation with form is brought to perfection:

U-shaped table  
O-shaped bodies  
I-shaped words

The shape of the poem coincides with the fixed pattern Adiss chose for the poems in this collection and it defines the shape of the table, a concrete poetry technique I call "the intentional accident." There are only three vowels and four different words in this very short poem and to sustain the repetition of one word three times so effectively in 11 syllables is not easy. The tone, sound, rhythm and cadence of the poem are perfect.

The capital letters are not mechanical reproductions of old ideas. They are alive with visual, sound and semantic content. The poem is an acrostic that can be read both ways: UOI or IOU. The fact that IOU emerges backwards says something about the way things are and suggests that the real motives of the participants are hidden or disguised only to be revealed



if necessary. The table can be many things but the fundamental relationship at the table is expressed with only three letters, which is minimalism at its very best. Everybody knows what the table is for. All of us have sat at one.

I would describe Adiss's work as free-spirited and experimental with little or no concern for the so-called rules of haiku, and in which the Zen influence is present but rarely obvious. Overall, though, I was disappointed because so many of the poems are weak, for whatever reason. I am familiar with some of Adiss's writings on Eastern culture and his artwork, both of which are excellent, so my expectations were high. There are, however, some gems in here and some very fine writing, and it was fun to read. But when you push the limits as Adiss does, something I would like to see more of in haiku, not every experiment is going to work.

### Notes

1. *Modern Japanese Haiku*, Makoto Ueda trans., University of Toronto Press, 1976, pp. 229 and 237.
2. *UNMARKED STONES*, Wally Swist, Burnt Lake Press, Sherbrooke, PQ, 1988, unpaginated.
3. This poem is done in brush and ink, vertically down the page but I have presented it in the fixed pattern Adiss uses because of the space limitations.



**Sedlar, S.J.** *SUCHNESS 2*. Edited and translated by Saša Važić, illustrations by Dragan Peric. Batajnica, Pilotska 13: SVEN Nis, 2010, 266 pages, perfect softbound, 7x 5 ¼. ISBN 978-86-7746-216-1, price not given.

*Suchness 2* is a well produced book in both Serbian and English, and is Slavko Sedlar's second in a trilogy entitled *Suchness*. It contains three introductions and 258 poems numbered con-



secutively from 254 to 512, which would appear to be the order they were written in. The three introductions are written by Milijan Despotović, Ranko Pavlović and David Lanoue. Throughout the book there are some fine illustrations by Dragan Peric that are well suited to the poetry.

The outside of the book is very plain and matter of fact, perhaps in keeping with the title of the trilogy, with only the names of the book, the author and the publisher on the front cover. In the book itself there is no information about the series, the translator, and the authors of the introductions or the artist.

I do not speak Serbian, so I have to rely on the translator and take the poems and the two translated introductions as they are in English. Since I have very little knowledge of the cultural heritage of the poet, I will likely miss any such allusions or references and their significance.

Sedlar uses capital letters to begin each line. All are three line poems and “do not stray to a large degree” from the 5/7/5 syllable structure.<sup>1</sup> Saša Važić’s translations do not follow this pattern and most of them are slightly shorter than 17 syllables, many are longer and some have as many as twenty. In the majority of his poems Sedlar does not use punctuation and around a third of them could be considered senryu. Most of his poems are descriptive and most include the human element. The vast majority of his images are visual, some employ sound and occasionally touch, and there are none, as far as I can tell, that involve taste or smell.

Sedlar was one of the first in the former Yugoslavia to write haiku some 30 years ago and *Suchness* was his first book.<sup>2</sup> He was born in 1932 in Jezersko, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he “adopted” haiku and Zen in 1980. His work has been published in a number of literary journals, nationally and internationally, and he has been the recipient of many awards and recognitions.



The introductions are sincere and well intentioned but they do tend to lecture to and alienate the reader. They are far too repetitive and create very high expectations. Sedlar is called a haiku master and is obviously considered something close to a Zen master as well. They tell us that Sedlar sees haiku as an expression of Zen and he focuses exclusively on suchness, the thing as it is, as if it alone is the essence of haiku and its imagery. Notwithstanding this, what Henderson said of Bashō's haiku applies equally well to Sedlar's: "The vast majority of [his] haiku are not obviously religious, whatever the Zen content may be."<sup>3</sup> More importantly, Zen is only one of many influences on the history and development of haiku, including Bashō's, and when taken too literally the Zen perspective is a narrow one.

The most perplexing aspect of the introductions is the extent to which so many of Sedlar's poems contradict what the introductions say about them. If it were simply the usual disconnect between art and art theory this would not be surprising or that troublesome, but since we are reading poems in translation, serious concerns are raised as to their accuracy. It is the suchness rule of Zen haiku that is at the root of all of the so-called prohibitions in haiku. Yet in many of Sedlar's poems you will find abstraction, ideation and explanatory lines; direct expression of emotions, thoughts and ideas; personification, metaphor and symbolism. There are, for example, some 40 poems in which Sedlar uses personification.

Consider the following poem, cited by David Lanoue as an example of suchness:

The edge of a roof  
strings a live necklace  
made of pigeons

This poem contains not only inanimate personification but also metaphor, while the words "strings," "live" and "made" are redundant, a common problem with adhering to the 17 syllable count. Nevertheless, the poem could be classified as a



modern-contemporary haiku. It is a striking image, quite beautiful, majestic and memorable, but all it is, is an image of an urban scene.

Pavlović says that: “Slavko Sedlar does not write haiku: he records it.” Later, he describes Sedlar’s poetry as “Nothing but an image, a Mandic type watercolor. More exactly, a sketch.” Perhaps Pavlović did not mean his words to be taken literally, but there are too many poems that are “Nothing but an image” and that are merely sketches. The following are only a few examples: *Suddenly apricots / turn yellow / in the breeze; The swallow keeps flying / through the evening sky / behind the apricot trees; City square lights / A child plays / with his shadow; Standing by its mother, / a calf seriously chews / a blade of clover.*

In most of his poems Sedlar writes about the small things and while his insect haiku are reminiscent of Issa, some are delightfully so:

Come on, cross the road,  
cerambycid, I am in no hurry  
any more

All of Sedlar’s better poems expressly invoke the human element:

Two or three  
hearses wait . . .  
Spring rain

The ellipsis, which Sedlar uses, is the perfect punctuation mark. It makes you wait with the hearses and you can see the drops of spring rain in it, both a fusion of form and content. It implies the rain is gentle and because it comes at the end of the second line before the rain appears in the third line, it tells you that the poet felt the rain first before he realized it was raining or he just noticed the rain or it may have just begun. You linger in the second line trying to determine if there are



“two or three hearses” and what it is they are waiting for. This uncertainty and anticipation is at the heart of spring. The dark funereal scene, on the other hand, contrasts sharply with the season and this perfect juxtaposition of opposites is where the depth of the poem lies.

This haiku would likely be seen as an example of suchness. True, the images are objective but the poet has to subjectively choose which ones even if this is a subconscious act. Moreover, spring is an abstract concept and, like a season word, one of its functions is and has always been metaphorical.<sup>4</sup>

A number of Sedlar’s senryu, which Despotović calls “humorous haiku,” are particularly good and some are excellent. My two favourites are the first and last poems in the book:

Back from work, holding a flower,  
and on her back some  
baker’s white fingerprints

Mother’s pain: “Before the war  
he wanted a switchblade,  
and I had a dinar . . .”

They exemplify Sedlar’s skill as a storyteller in that we are given only the basic outline of a scene that begins in the middle of the narrative, a style that Cor van den Heuvel calls “broken-narrative” and attributes to Rod Willmot.<sup>5</sup> In the first poem Važić has even managed to translate sound from the original that unifies the poem and makes it read so well in English, something that is understandably so often lost in translation. The delicacy of the moment, its tenderness, its tentative nature, its innocence and the poet’s remarkable ability to observe the simplest of things that say so much, make this an outstanding poem.

The second poem would be equally outstanding except for the opening phrase “Mother’s pain.” It is one of a number of poems in which Sedlar starts or ends with an explanatory line,



but in this case the poem is so powerful it still works.

Sedlar writes well on the topic of war, perhaps because he has experienced it first hand. I consider the following haiku to be the best in the collection and one of the best war poems I have ever read:

My childhood oak  
blasted by the war: now birds  
make nests beneath the stars

An advantage of the longer haiku is that more detail can be presented and this haiku, like many of Sedlar's poems, is rich in detail. It is a clear objective description of a scene in the present, just as it is. There are, however, no less than five time frames brought together in this moment. There are the childhood memories, the memory of the war and when the tree was blasted, the present scene, the future implied in it and the eternity of the stars. Compare it with this modern haiku by Kato Shuson (1905-1993), who also experienced war first hand:

The winter tree  
I am leaning on has turned  
into a tank's roar.<sup>6</sup>

What I like about Shuson's haiku is the immediacy of the image and its vivid recreation of the experience. Sedlar's haiku is just as effective, immediate and vivid, though subtle and not as dramatic or technically original. In Shuson's haiku the tree has no particular significance to him other than a temporary place of respite. Sedlar's first line gives three very significant details about the tree: "My childhood oak," which suggests many possibilities. The oak tree is huge, strong and sturdy; big enough to climb, hide and play games in; long lived, late to bloom and late to lose its leaves; it gave the boy a deep sense of security, his independence, a place to be alone, to hide if necessary, a sense of excitement and adventure; perhaps he had his first kiss in it or played war games beneath



its branches.

This is a perfect heaven and earth haiku in which the destructive impulses of men are absorbed into the creativity of nature. Yet there is no moralizing judgment, only the infinite gaze of the universe. There is no theory of Zen, haiku or nature, only the words of the poem.

It is difficult for me to give a final assessment of *Suchness 2* not only because I can only read the poems in translation, but also because the theory of the introductions and the poems themselves cannot be reconciled. However, my purely subjective inclination is that Važić's translations can be relied upon. Myself, I intend to obtain the other two volumes although a book of Sedlar's selected poems might be more representative of his best work and more accessible to a wider audience.

#### Notes

1. From a review of *Suchness* by Vladimir Devide: <<http://haikureality.webs.com/bookrev17.htm>>.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *An Introduction to Haiku* by Harold Henderson, NY, Double Day, 1958, p.23.

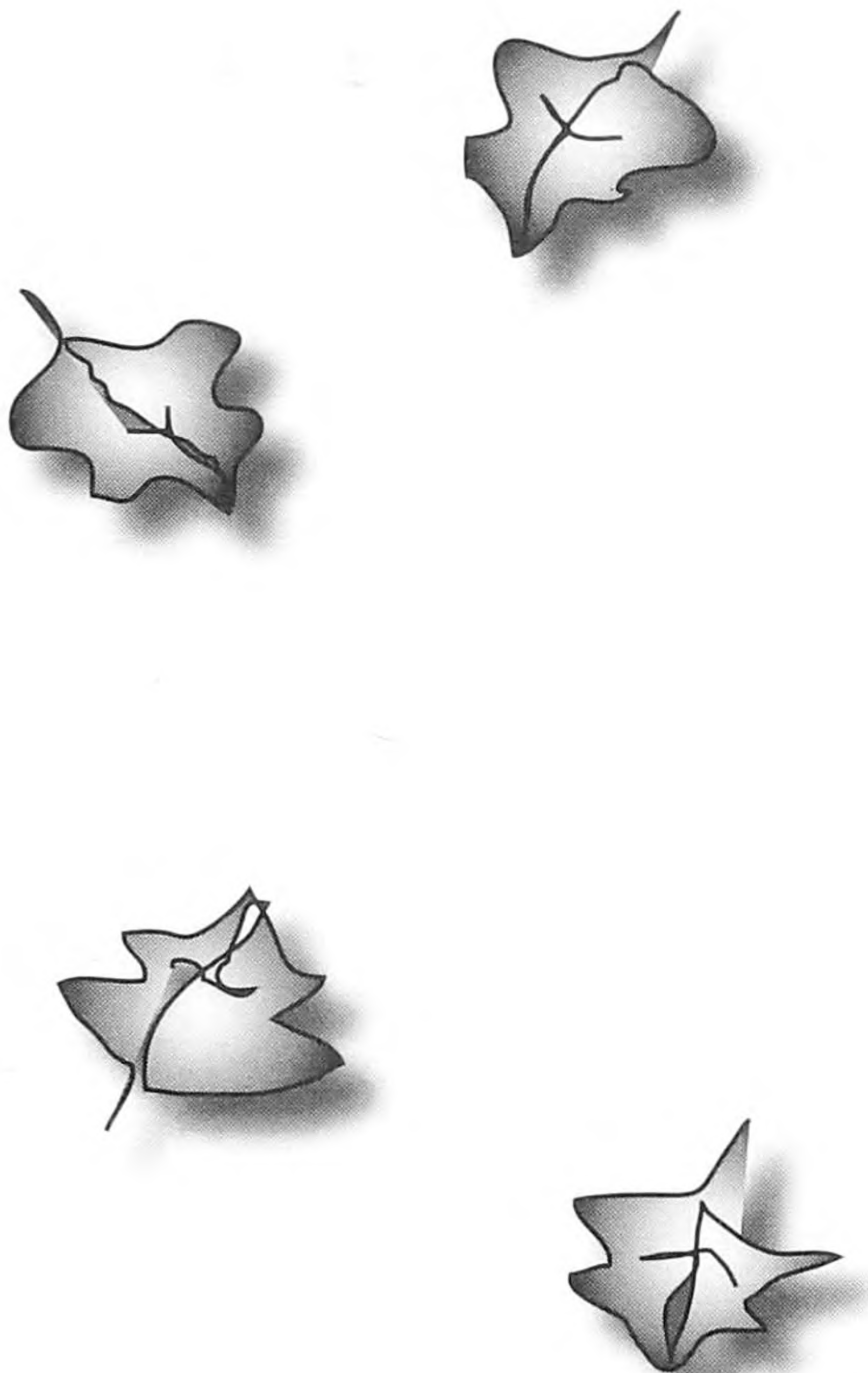
4. *Traces of Dreams*, Haruo Shirane, Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 48 to 49.

5. *The Haiku Anthology*, Cor van den Heuvel ed., W.W. Norton & Company, N.Y., London, 1999, p. xxii.

6. *Modern Japanese Haiku*, Makoto Ueda trans., University of Toronto Press, 1976, pp.217 and 219.



Nick Avis has been publishing haiku and related poetry internationally for over three decades. He was president of Haiku Canada for six years and has written reviews for *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *Inkstone* and the *Newfoundland Quarterly*. He has also published a number of papers on haiku and is currently writing a series of articles entitled “fluences” for the Haiku Foundation.





## Briefly Reviewed

by *George Swede*, Ontario

**Buckingham, H. & Leuck, A.** *Turning Fifty*. Carleton Place, ON: Bondi Studios, 2010, 33 pp. handsewn, 5 x 7. ISBN 978-0-9812385-9-3. No price, <claudiarosemary@yahoo.com>. English poet Helen Buckingham and Canadian Angela Leuck (both born in 1960) have arranged 50 haiku by each in the form of a dialogue about having reached a half century in age. Their haiku are cleverly placed to create an interplay—those by Leuck on the left page and those by Buckingham on the right. The fine examples by each on the back give an accurate sense of what's between the covers: *moon craters— / I enter the terrain / of middle age* (Leuck); *kids on the beach— / not waving / but phoning* (Buckingham).

**Colón, C.** *The Inside Scoop: New and Selected Poems*. Kingston, PA: Naissance chapbooks, 2010, 60 pp., stapled, 5 x 8.5. No ISBN. 10 USD postpaid, <<http://chapbookpublisher.com/shop.html>>. Carlos Colón's 12th chapbook is divided into four sections: "Haiku," "Eyeku," "Structured Poetry," and "Free Verse." Thus, readers are given a showcase of Colón's broad talents. Space limitations prevent the quoting of any of the 12 eyeku (visual haiku), but here is one of the 12 haiku: *pointing / my way home / starfish*.

**de Gruttola, R. & Colón, C.** *Autumn Leaves: A Twelve-Tone Concrete Renku*. Shreveport: Tragg Publications, 2010, 4 pp., stapled, 8.5 x 11. No ISBN, 6 USD postpaid, C. Colón, 185 Lynn Ave., Shreveport, LA 71105-3523. This brief publication continues the innovative collaboration of their earlier *Wall Street Park: A Concrete Renku*, which was reviewed in *Frogpond* 31:3.

**Hryciuk, M.** *words' woods: visual haiku / concrete haiga / poetry*. Toronto: Nietzsche's Brolly, 2010, unpag., stapled, 7 x 8.5. ISBN 978-0-920489-19-2, No price, [imagorediron@](mailto:imagorediron@)



rogers.com or www.imagorediron.ca. Canadian Marshall Hryciuk is known for his experimental approach to haiku. Space considerations prevent the presentation of his more challenging, questing pieces, but here is a mind-bending one-liner:

*o nth eh ori z en air O*

**Kacian, J.** *where i leave off / waar ik ophoud.* 's-Hertogenbosch, Nederland: 't schrijverke, 2010, unpag., perfect softbound, 4 x 5.25. ISBN 978-94-90607-02-9, 12 USD, <www.redmoonpress.com> or 8 EUR, <max@verhart.org>, plus postage. Ingeniously-produced, this mini-chapbook holds, in both English and Dutch, 51 one-liners and nine short haibun, by one of the leading lights of English-language haiku, Jim Kacian. As expected, the work is excellent. Picked at random, here are two of his one-liners: *flurries after our argument the need to tell you* and *bending the light along the hair of her horizon*. However, the booklet's purpose is not only to re-affirm Kacian's fine poetic skills, but also to introduce what he considers are original ideas about the effects of English on one-liners and haibun. Kacian's conjectures, while stimulating, are also disconcerting because, in both cases, they are void of historical context. For instance, there is no mention of English-language haiku poets who have been writing one-liners for decades nor of the periodicals in the 1980s that preferred one-liners. Similarly puzzling is the absence of acknowledgements for his haiku and haibun that have first appeared elsewhere.

**Moldovan, V.** *On a summer day.* București: Verus, 2010, perfect softbound, 151 pp., 4 x 5.5. ISBN 978-973-7754-89-9, No price, <verus@clicknet.ro> or <www.verus.com.ro>. This collection by Romanian Vasile Moldovan appears in both his native language and in English. The 96 poems are arranged in 24 sections to correspond to the length of a full day that starts with "Moonrise" and ends with "Bedtime." Many are mere observations, albeit from a different cultural perspective, but a few do leap off the page, like this one: *Two fireflies / on the wedding night— / the bride's eyes.*



**Scott, T.M. & Machmiller, P.J.** (Translators). *Autumn Loneliness: The Letters of Kiyoshi & Kiyoko Tokutomi* [July–December 1967]. Walnut Creek, CA: Hardscratch Press, 2010, 366 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 978-0-9789979-4-6, 27.50 USD, <[www.hardscratchpress.com](http://www.hardscratchpress.com)>. This book is a labor of love and respect by Tei Matsushita Scott and Patricia J. Machmiller for two pioneers of North American haiku. Those who, like me, have been around long enough actually to have met this charming San Jose couple, will be deeply moved by learning of their relationship before they founded the Yuki Teikei Society in 1975. An apt quote by Robert Haas sums it up as:

A story of healings, of border crossings, cultural cross-breeding—it does it in the form of letters that are an intimate and moving portrait of a marriage, as absorbing and delicate as a Japanese novel or a film by Ozu.

Not surprisingly, this book was judged as the “Best Memoir 2010” by the Bay Area Independent Publishers Association.

**Wikipedia.** *English-Language Haiku Poets: Kack Kerouac, Richard Wright, Gary Snyder, George Swede, Gary Gach, Gerald Vizenor, Kenneth Rexroth, Jim Kacian.* Memphis, TN:Books LLC, 2010, 234 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 978-1-155-82541-0, 18.95 USD. The persons running Wikipedia have put out a collection of biographies featuring 51 poets with a connection to haiku. Sometimes the connection is merely a dalliance, as with Kerouac and Vizenor, or a long-term relationship, as with yours truly and Jim Kacian. Most of the top names in haiku are included, but with some surprising exceptions. The book can be read online at <[http://bookslc.net/?q=Category:English-language\\_haiku\\_poets](http://bookslc.net/?q=Category:English-language_haiku_poets)>.





## Re: Readings

**Robert Epstein**, California, on **Jeff Stillman**: *crabgrass spreading the busybody I've become*. Except for those who ensconce themselves in self-hate, recognizing, let alone admitting, one's faults is terribly difficult. Yet, here is poet Stillman acknowledging an all-too-human foible and doing it in a one-line haiku, no less! I am marveling at his integrity as well as his concision. For the suburban homeowner, crabgrass rivals dandelions as the most-hated incursion into the perfectly manicured lawn. It is insidious and so is the busybody, who thinks he/she can meddle in others' affairs without raising an eyebrow. Not so! Most people detest the busybody, but Jeff has endeared himself to me, at least. Such is the nature of self-confession; it is the first step toward redemption; a one-line poem is the second.

**Robert Epstein**, California, on **George Dorsty**: *winter winds / my right eye / cries alone*. I had to grab hold of the railing while reading George's poem, such was the gust of sorrow that hit me. I feel the depth of the poet's loss of his beloved. Winter winds cut straight through our noblest efforts to carry on in the face of loss. My father died eight years ago and my eighty-four year old mother told me, with a mixture of resignation and anguish, that each day gets WORSE, not better. I knew she wasn't meaning to be melodramatic, just truthful. He was everything to her; not one eye but both were plucked out by my dad's death. She has been brailleing her way through a desolate life these past eight years. In the depths of sorrow, all one can do is cry—sometimes with one eye only.

**Joan Vistain**, Illinois, on this journal's growth and the haibun section: How heartening to see *Frogpond* carving a positive path in the shaky publishing world of today. Instead of thinning and disappearing like so many journals have, *Frogpond* is actually plumping up! I love the doubled haibun section—so few words, saying so much, so well!



## Corrections to Issue 33:2

p. 30: On June 27, 2010, this email appeared in the *Frogpond* inbox:

George:

I did not write nor did I submit the haiku (my wife calls it a 'meanku') attributed to me on page 30 of the recent issue of *Frogpond*. Wow, you really misspelled the author's name this time. (Although, I doubt that he/she will see it in exactly this light.) Please clear my good name and save my marriage.

Robert B. McNeill, Virginia

Robert's marriage is now officially "saved." The last haiku on this page should have been attributed to **Doug Kutney**, New Jersey:

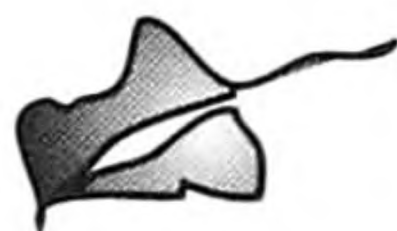
old crackle  
of a favorite record  
lines in her face

*Editors' Note: It's fascinating how interpretations can differ. We see this haiku as an expression of the love and understanding that can develop in a long-term relationship.*

p. 34: The haiku by **Bill Kenney** should read:

high beams deeper [not deepen] into autumn

*Editors' Note: Actually, we think, dare we say it, that our mistake deepens the poem.*





# The HSA Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Competition 2010

Judged by

*Jerry Ball, California & Merrill Ann Gonzales, Connecticut*

The difficulty facing us was the divergence of goals between rules and the poetic validity of these renku. When we followed all the rules strictly we became dissatisfied with each renku submitted...and we therefore focused our discussion upon poetic principles. For the renku discipline we decided on the following:

1. The hokku (starting verse) should be strong and engage the imagination.
2. The renku should be structured by pairs; each pair of stanzas should constitute a complete poem.
3. Each verse should be strong, unique and fresh; cliché or common thoughts do not work.

On that basis we both found a great deal of joy reading many of the renku submitted, but we both had delighted in one in particular...with one reservation that proved to be a regional awareness. Upon closer reading even that reservation was overcome.

Another thing we both enjoyed when reading the renku were verses that engaged the senses. Did the verses have that tactile and sensory range that is so delightful in good poetry? Did the images and the experiences of each verse feel real to us? Since we are not writing Japanese renku we felt it was essential that the verses be such that we ourselves could experience them. But most of all we found the most enjoyment in listening to the music of the renku...of the words...and the music between the poets. What kind of repartee developed in the renku between the poets? Was it alive? Was it moving? Was it engaging?

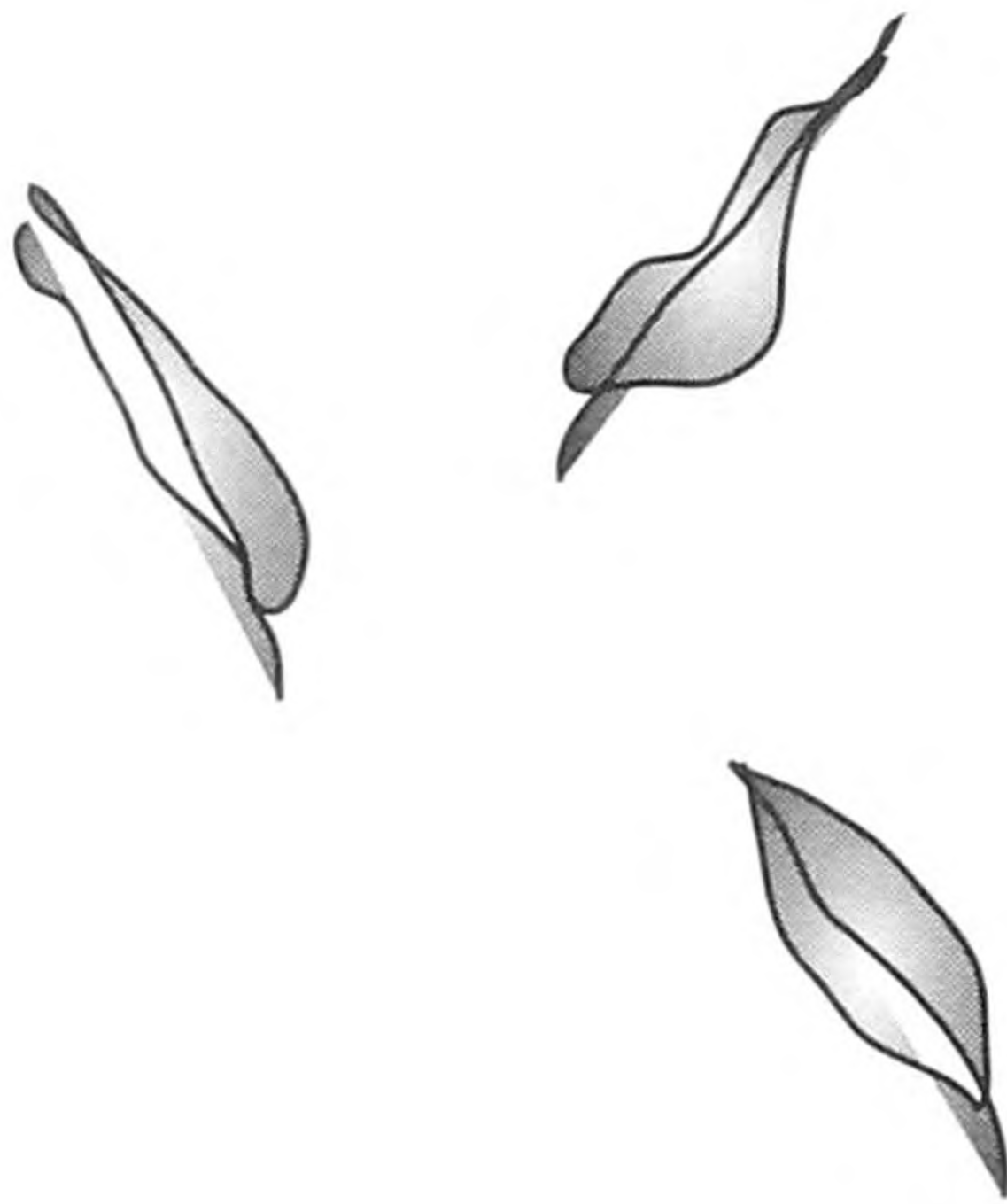
After reading and rereading and after telephone conversations,



we have decided that “Tide Swell” should be given the Grand Prize; “Steamy Windows” should be given First Honorable Mention; and “Ever Reviving” should be given Second Honorable Mention.

Jerry Ball is a founder of Haiku North America and the Southern California Haiku Study Group and has been President of the Haiku Society of America for two terms. He has published five books of haiku, the most recent being *Pieces of Eight* (2005).

Merrill Ann Gonzales has provided art for literary journals for three decades together with poetry and haiku. On February 2, 2005 she created *snowbird press*. She won (with John Stevenson) a 2005 Bernard Lionel Einbond Award for Renku (which was published in *Frogpond* 24:2, 2006) and earned an Honorable Mention in the Harold G. Henderson Haiku Contest for 2006 (published in *Frogpond* 30:1, 2007).





## Grand Prize

*Ron Moss*, Tasmania, *Ferris Gilli*, Georgia,  
*Matthew Paul*, England, *Paul MacNeil*, Florida

## Tide Swell

A Summer Kasen Renku

1. tide swell  
sunburnt arms  
reel in the catch RM
2. cheers when the batter  
touches first base FG
3. in the showroom  
sound effects rumble  
from an outsized TV MP
4. yesterday's belt  
traded for suspenders PM
5. the climbing train  
is closer to the moon  
with every shudder RM
6. a woodpecker's backward lean  
on top of the osier MP
7. foraged by a bag lady  
the Thanksgiving garbage  
dwindles FG
8. thieves meet  
and divide their swag PM
9. carving a new heart  
with another girl's name  
at school recess FG



10. a poster comes unstuck  
from her bedroom wall RM
11. as midnight strikes  
I reach out for her  
once again MP
12. coloratura  
high notes at La Scala PM
13. the mute wolf  
steadily watches  
a gibbous moon FG
14. Christmas lights  
switched on by a nobody MP
15. Einstein said, "It is a miracle  
that curiosity survives  
formal education." PM
16. beyond the pleasure dome  
 $E = mc^2$  RM
17. plum blossoms  
reflect several colors  
of the rainbow PM
18. my April Fool's joke  
backfires on me MP
19. the wild daffodils  
collect evening dew  
on a dead-end road RM
20. a lithe, naked boy  
swinging through the jungle FG



21. she sexts  
to let him know  
she's on her way MP
22. shaking monopoly dice  
the couple counts hotels RM
23. three sticky licks  
stop the honey's  
slow descent PM
24. the imprint of a signet  
in softened wax FG
25. sand grains  
at their angle of repose  
form the ant lion's trap PM
26. glad you're not here,  
says the postcard MP
27. another smarmy smile  
as the party host greets  
the President's aide FG
28. my ticket to space  
on a celestial Virgin RM
29. the moon in the river  
slaps around the arches  
of the old stone bridge MP
30. a veteran empties his shoe  
of dust and broken leaves RM
31. curates  
finish the flagon of wine  
after the benediction PM



32. one strip club's address  
committed to memory FG
33. late night stories  
from the Kindle book  
create a ghostly glow RM
34. wind faintly moaning  
as the dragon kite pulls free FG
35. I brush the blizzard  
of apple blossom  
from my fringe MP
36. starting irrigation  
shows all the new leaks PM

### First Honorable Mention

*Christopher Herold*, Washington & *Carol O'Dell*, Washington

### Steamy Windows

An Autumn Kasen Renku

1. smell of pumpkin pie  
she waves through steamy windows  
as we arrive CO
2. moonlight too  
enters the cat door CH
3. eager to win  
the harvest dance contest  
they practice swing steps CO
4. the violin maker fiddles  
with a faulty tuning peg CH



5. you lose reception  
just as your team passes  
for a touchdown CO
6. ragged cloud shadows  
cross the field of frost CH
7. this note  
on a scrap of birch bark  
signed with an X CH
8. from somewhere in Afghanistan  
he speaks of his eternal love CO
9. the baby's birth cries  
mix with those of the mother  
clutching a photograph CH
10. to celebrate our 50th  
we assemble a collage CO
11. an old Bible spine  
marks a poem in Rilke's  
*Book of Hours* CH
12. a long line of tourists  
winds along the Great Wall CO
13. that July  
the Earth was seen  
from the moon CH
14. seeming taller than before  
he comes home from Boy Scout camp CO
15. at last  
the lawn gets mowed  
edged and raked CH



16. lava from Mauna Loa  
hisses into the ocean CO
17. with fallen petals  
someone formed an arrow  
on the red flagstones CH
18. using a French recipe  
I prepare escargot CO
19. estate gardeners  
spread diatomaceous earth  
around the lettuce CH
20. a white line separates  
girls and boys at recess CO
21. failure to agree  
on yet another version  
of Health Care Reform CH
22. the '67 Corvette  
is her favorite model CO
23. the outrageous price  
of a fleece-lined coat  
at the fashion show CH
24. again we put too many presents  
under the Christmas tree CO
25. he calls her each day  
until she finally says yes  
to meet over coffee CO
26. I promise you to give  
Viagra another try CH



27. in anticipation  
they buy candles, champagne  
and a sex toy CO
28. at sunset the birds fall silent  
and the lake becomes glass CH
29. through a church window  
the full moon shines  
on the altar CO
30. tonight's oblation made  
amidst sparkling dew CH
31. this World Series  
won in extra innings  
on a sac fly CH
32. at last year's derby  
she caught the biggest fish CO
33. Gulliver wakes up  
and finds himself surrounded  
by Lilliputians CH
34. green shoots have begun  
to poke through the melting snow CO
35. a gust of wind  
whirls a few plum blossoms  
into the kitchen CH
36. back and forth he swings  
then jumps from the highest point CO





## Second Honorable Mention

*Origa*, Michigan, *Hana Nestieva*, Israel, *Valeria Simonova-Cecon*, Italy

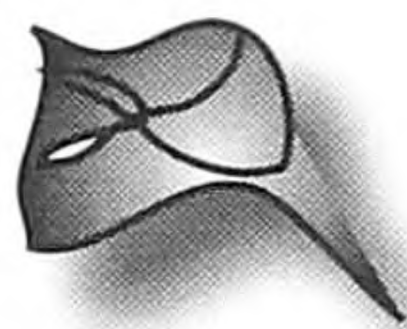
### Ever Reviving

#### A Winter Shisan Renku

1. pale dawn...  
brown briar hips puncture  
the snow crust O
2. cold and heaviness  
of Sunday paper HN
3. absent-mindedly  
preparing for myself  
a junk food lunch VS-C
4. the neighbors' boy  
tunes a guitar HN
5. a titmouse chirps  
somewhere in the mist  
of plum blossoms O
6. Botticelli spring  
all around Toscana VS-C
7. at the Mass  
two teens exchanging  
furtive glances O
8. "Just married" balloons  
on both wheelchairs VS-C
9. dreams of a waterfall  
the psychologist raises  
his eyebrow HN



10. all the hustle and bustle...  
and then you die! O
11. ever reviving  
out of darkness  
the mellow moon HN
12. straw basket too full  
for the last *Malus sylvestris* VS-C





# Nicholas Virgilio Haiku Contest 2010

## Judges' Comments

by

*Janelle Barrera*, Florida & *Francis Masat*, Florida

Presented with 1,575 student haiku, we decided to read all on our own and then compare notes. In our top twenty picks, we each chose two of the same haiku. That was a real start! From there, our next top 20 produced the remaining four winners. While there is no particular order in the list of winners, the first two listed are the first two haiku we chose.

The students wrote about insightful moments related to nature, friends, family, and pets. Human nature took precedence over nature, per se, yet it is always there setting the scene.

These are our top six choices, but there were many more in close contention. Thanks to each of the young authors.

autumn rain  
rinsing the color  
from the leaves

*Lauren Winters*, 18, Grade 12  
Hilliard Davidson High School, Hilliard, OH

That a storm has downed leaves is not unusual. But here, in a refreshing manner, the author notes the more sensitive loss, that of color. More broadly, the haiku illustrates the notion of age diminishing the quality of life and that resonates with all of us.

cold night  
the phone call  
from a disowned sister

*Hanna Amireh*, 17, Grade 12  
School of the Arts, Rochester, NY



We've all waited for a phone call. As cold night sets the tone and scene, the pivotal second line provides an almost proverbial structure: "the phone call from...." That the call is from a disowned sister sheds light on an almost universal vulnerability — on both ends of the phone. What happens next will reveal much about ourselves and how we relate to such events.

on the window sill  
next to the box of ashes  
Jiro's dog collar

*Michelle Hosoda*, 17, Grade 12  
Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, CA

A first impression may be that of a memorial to companionship, but there is more. The ashes are not identified, though "next to" does hint at the link between them and Jiro. Instead, it is the empty circle of the collar that evokes a desire to look beyond the sill and glimpse what that linkage may represent.

rural Peru  
5 lollypops  
for a handmade bracelet

*Caitlin Sullivan*, 18, Grade 12  
Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, CA

"5 lollypops" seems out of place in rural Peru until we rethink the trade proposed. The contrasts of machined candy to rural handicraft and of dissolving sweetness to tangible artifact provide deeper insight into the nature of the scene. By comparing the differing wants of two cultures, the haiku thus provides a resonant view of our global society.

Grandad's funeral  
she wonders  
whether she looks fat

*Alice Liu*, 14, Grade 9  
Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, CA



At most gatherings, there always seems to be someone who, obviously, is wondering about themselves. Maybe the thought is real, or perhaps it's unconscious self-protection from the truths of the gathering, in this case death. We are held until the last word before we are given a clue as to which. Even then, it is our interpretation — but isn't it always?

under the shade  
of sunflowers,  
my mouse decays

*Laura Hansen*, 18, Grade 12  
Capital High School, Boise, ID

So many things can happen in the shade of sunflowers. Here, in a straightforward and void of melancholy manner, it is the slow sureness of decay that illuminates that shade. In a broader and almost celebratory sense, life rises above death.

Janelle Barrera is a former teacher and now tutors foreign language students in Key West. She enjoys writing haiku with school children and has published haiku, haibun and poetry. She and Francis Masat are co editors of the “Key Ku” column in *Solares Hill*, a weekly Sunday magazine, and she was implemental in introducing haiku workshops to the annual Robert Frost Poetry Festival in Key West. “Reading the students’ haiku was a genuine pleasure,” she says.

Francis Masat lives in Key West, FL. With over 1000 poems and haiku in over 100 journals, his recent chapbooks are *Lilacs After Winter* (haibun), MET Press, *A Taste of Key West*, Pudding House Press, and *Threshing*, March Street Press.





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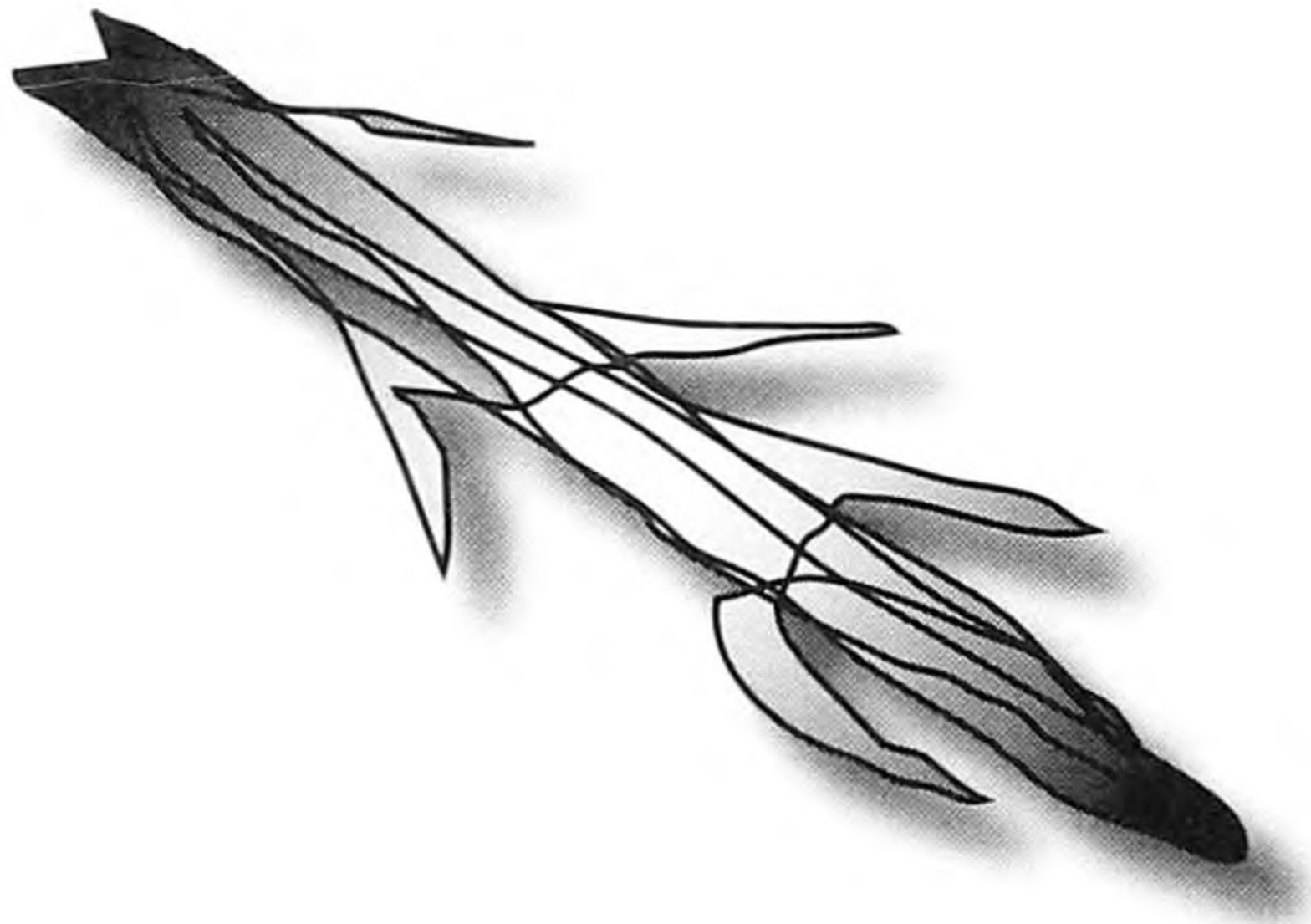


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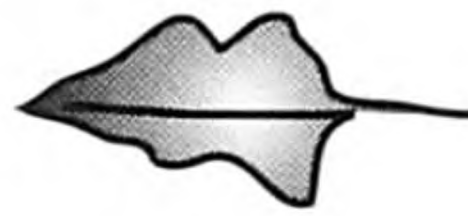
## From the Editors

Since we started as editors with issue 31:2 in 2008, the most frequently cited writer by far has been Bashō (1644-1694). And, in this issue Bashō's dominance continues, with a haiku sequence dedicated to him (see p. 39 ) as well as an article about his perception of women (see pp. 64-70). By the way, we wish contributors would remember to add the long dash over the o at the end of his name.

Roughly tied for distant second are the later classical master, Buson (1716-1783) and the more modern, Shiki (1867-1902). This shows that we continue to pay homage to the Japanese heritage of haiku. Whether that is a good thing or not is a matter of debate.



We have expanded the section, "HSA Officers and Regional Coordinators," from one page to two pages. The increase in space became necessary with the addition of email addresses to the contact information about these important individuals.



The last issue, 32:3, was the largest ever *Frogpond*, at 152 pages, but this one is even bigger, by four pages. It is also the most complex with two cartoons and five photographs. We hope that you will find it enjoyable as well as stimulating.

George Swede, Editor  
Anita Kruminis, Assistant Editor







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