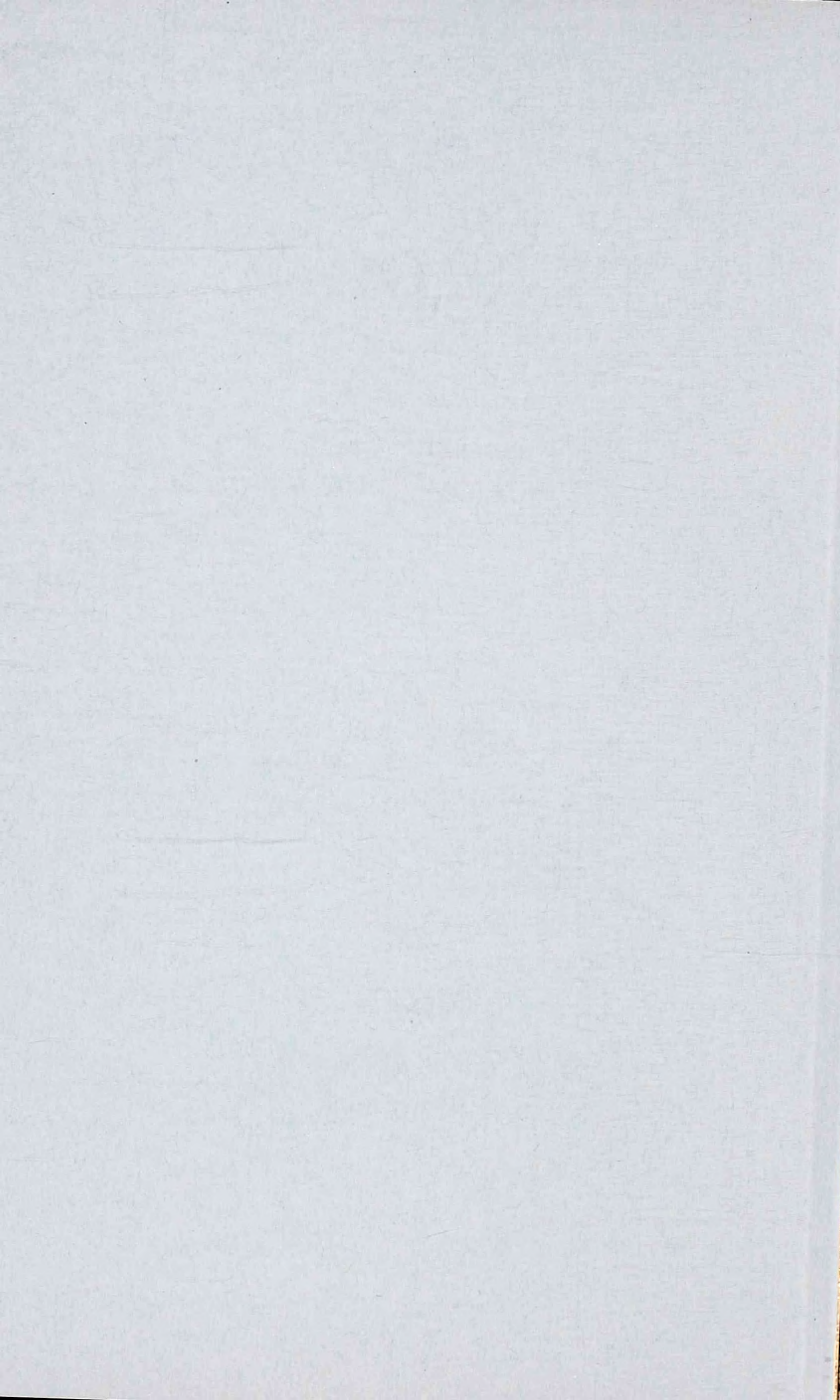


# **Frogpond**

**Volume 35:2 ◊ 2012**



# Frogpond

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



**Volume 35  Number 2  
Spring/Summer 2012**

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Francine Banwarth, Editor

Michele Root-Bernstein, Assistant Editor

## Submissions Policy

(Please follow the submission guidelines carefully.)

1. Submissions from both members and nonmembers of HSA are welcome.
2. All submissions must be original, unpublished work that is not being considered elsewhere and must not be on the Internet (except for Twitter and Facebook) prior to appearing in *Frogpond*.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 + the kind of work sent
  - (c) with place of residence noted in the body of the e-mail
4. A submission by post will receive a reply only if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope with sufficient U.S. postage to reach your destination.
5. Only one submission per issue will be considered.

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

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

### **Submission Periods:**

1. February 15 to April 15 (Spring/Summer Issue)
2. June 1 to August 1 (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: Francine Banwarth, Editor, *Frogpond*, 985 South Grandview, Dubuque, Iowa 52003 (USA)

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\$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for the best previously unpublished work appearing in the  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 35:1**

mating dragonflies—  
my overuse  
of dashes

*Aubrey Cox*  
Muncie, Indiana

# Haiku & Senryu

A field of sunflowers  
all my summers clear  
back to childhood

Sun on the horizon  
a child throws sand  
back into the sea

Sylvia Forges-Ryan, North Haven, Connecticut

i hope i'm right where the ice river ends

a worm escaping at both ends midsummer night

Jim Kacian, Winchester, Virginia

I tell myself  
it's just  
winter

a leaf ago the shallow past

John Stevenson, Nassau, New York

death bed watch  
the fading sound of tires  
on the country road

twilit graveyard . . .  
as the bird songs end  
leaf flutter

George Swede, Toronto, Ontario

rosé wine the pink of my teenage hopes

he helps in the kitchen  
sharp knives glint  
in sunset

Anita Krumins, Toronto, Ontario

produce aisle  
not buying an eggplant  
all my life

Marsh Muirhead, Bemidji, Minnesota



her rough edges smooth to a lover's touch

Johnny Baranski, Vancouver, Washington

daisy chains  
after careful consideration  
he loves me not

Tracy Davidson, Warwickshire, England

springtime:  
all the naked trees  
blushing green

Richard Blake, Bellingham, Washington

new cover letter  
refolding blankets  
full of old dreams

Thomas Chockley, Plainfield, Illinois

home from the clinic  
shadow on your face  
shadow on the film

Mark Miller, Shoalhaven Heads, Australia

in the jury pool room  
reading faces  
reading books

Ben Moeller-Gaa, St. Louis, Missouri

winter sunset  
shadows swallow  
the village pub

Rachel Sutcliffe, West Yorkshire, England

bottle flute  
the two-pitch hum  
of wind

Lee Giesecke, Annandale, Virginia

a string of coots  
on the golf course fairway  
Seniors Tournament

Neal Whitman, Pacific Grove, California

the thickened fur  
of the beggar's dog—  
first flurries

Lew Watts, Santa Fe, New Mexico

deep well  
sipping shadows  
from a gourd

Darrell Lindsey, Nacogdoches, Texas

where the battle  
roared  
a two-star gift shop

Joe Barbara, Metairie, Louisiana

her rant an express train speeds through

Jay Friedenber, New York, New York

mother at the end ends a silence      of who I am

Robert Henry Poulin, Micco, Florida

there's no way to tell  
planting carrot seeds  
a few inches apart

Robert Epstein, El Cerrito, California

nobody says  
you're welcome anymore  
first snowball

Michael Fessler, Kanagawa, Japan

taking down  
the Christmas lights . . .  
her faraway eyes

William Scott Galasso, Issaquah, Washington

darkening sky  
I reach for the person  
you used to be

Cathy Drinkwater Better, Eldersburg, Maryland

morning light  
shadows of prayer flags  
on the curtains

Owen Bullock, Katikati, New Zealand

she explains  
the long and short of it  
winter solstice

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

sky no copyright can be claimed

Ernesto P. Santiago, Solano, Philippines

cowslip nodding  
yes yes yes  
spring wind

Carrie Etter, Bath, England

apricot jam—  
enjoying someone's summer  
for breakfast

Merrill Ann Gonzales, Dayville, Connecticut

Pi  
the mathematics  
between us

Stephen A. Peters, Bellingham, Washington

march light  
mother rearranges  
the furniture

Dietmar Tauchner, Puchberg, Austria

old family tales  
light the faces of children  
mountain campfire

Kate S. Godsey, Pacifica, California

maple leaf's descent . . .  
that high school girl once  
upon a time

Guy Simser, Kanata, Ontario

San Juan evening  
laptops flicker  
in hammocks

Melissa Frederick, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

concert—  
a girl singing  
with her legs

Djurđja Vukelić-Rozić, Ivanić Grad, Croatia

pickled daikon—  
a streak of autumn grass  
in my wife's hair

Bruce H. Feingold, Berkeley, California

Pine resin sputtering  
in the fireplace flames—  
praying for recovery

Rebecca Lilly, Charlottesville, Virginia

the bones of a bird  
where the water receded—  
billowing clouds

Jeffrey Woodward, Detroit, Michigan

knowing it will be  
his last spring  
wisteria tendrils

Anne Elise Burgevin, Pennsylvania Furnace, Pennsylvania

soap bubble  
reflecting the world  
momentarily

Raj K. Bose, Honolulu, Hawaii

summer stillness  
a dust devil  
stirs the corn

Joseph M. Kusmiss, Sanbornton, New Hampshire

raindrops  
one by one  
the children sleep

zendo  
my shadow  
enters me

Gregory Hopkins, Weaver, Alabama

nearly naked  
garments falling  
leaf by leaf

Alma Cole Pesiri, Vineland, New Jersey

explaining bluegrass  
while she bathes me  
snow squall warning

Ignatius Fay, Sudbury, Ontario

lovers on the dune  
lucerne pods burst  
in the heat

Ron C. Moss, Leslie Vale, Tasmania



we give in  
to our urges—  
wolf moon

horse tail clouds  
the smallest cowboy  
leaps on my back

John McManus, Cumbria, England

the smallest saint  
on the altar  
looks restless

Stephen Addiss, Midlothian, Virginia

tide turns—  
rippling edge  
of the sea slug

Ruth Yarrow, Seattle, Washington

her privacy fence—  
every now and again  
daf fo dils

Michael Henry Lee, St. Augustine, Florida

day moon the cuckoo's cuckoo

Helen Buckingham, Bristol, England

before  
we knew better  
crabapple blossoms

Ann K. Schwader, Westminster, Colorado

the tide returns  
expressions of love  
wiped clean

Kevin Goldstein-Jackson, Poole, England

kissing his forehead  
for the last time  
snow on the mountains

Máire Morrissey-Cummins, Wicklow, Ireland

it did not cry  
when leaving me  
a hair in my comb

William M. Ramsey, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

all the tears  
I've held back . . .  
gannets on the sea

Ferris Gilli, Marietta, Georgia

Veterans Day—  
we watch World War Two  
after dinner

Ruth Holzer, Herndon, Virginia

closing night party I discard the dagger I never used

John Kinory, Steeple Aston, England

throng of geese  
on the cemetery lawn  
one shudders

Jim Davis, Jr., Chicago, Illinois

first snow  
our world leans in  
a little closer

Margaret Dornaus, Ozark, Arkansas

dawn  
mother's kiss on my forehead  
remembered

Paula Moore, Jacksonville, Florida

ocean snow—  
an outbound ferry  
dissolves in the dark

unmade bed—  
the sleep  
I left behind

George Dorsty, Yorktown, Virginia

an older man  
looking back at me from  
the mirror again

James Hausman, Fremont, California

spring rain  
a joker taped  
to the spokes

Aubrie Cox, Muncie, Indiana

blue-sky day—  
the way that little girl skipped  
when her mum said *yes*

Lesley Walter, Summer Hill, NSW, Australia

laughter  
from yellow galoshes  
to her pigtails

Amanda Neufeld, Olathe, Kansas

childhood home  
the wave leaves a mark  
in the sand

Scott Glander, Glenview, Illinois

summer heat  
the strands of hair not captured  
by her braid

Michael Ketchek, Rochester, New York

monarch butterfly  
the tune  
I can't get out of my head

Alan S. Bridges, Littleton, Massachusetts

where ancient cedars stood the ache the blue sky mine

short night—  
six of the seven dwarves  
missing from the lawn

Lorin Ford, Melbourne, Australia

the street  
where she died—  
drifts of blowing snow

PMF Johnson, St. Paul, Minnesota

i don't believe you've met . . .  
i lift my child  
to the january moon

David Caruso, Haddonfield, New Jersey

beach cliff eroding  
to have never been loved  
by a father

James Chessing, San Ramon, California

moon landing—  
a single white leaf  
moves a dark pool

Lucien Zell, Prague, Czech Republic

visiting hours over  
the great masterpieces  
all by themselves

Klaus-Dieter Wirth, Viersen, Germany

the curves  
of a bathing woman . . .  
moonlit river

Rita Odeh, Nazareth, Israel

spring drizzle  
the bipinnate leaves  
fold into shyness

Ramesh Anand, Bangalore, India

stretching  
the curve of the sky  
a hawk's cry

Mark E. Brager, Columbia, Maryland

New Year's—  
the cat yowls to go out  
to come in

shoot-out on TV I get a nosebleed

Charles Trumbull, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Cantonese Opera—  
our cat looks at me  
and yawns

Nu Quang, Seattle, Washington

empty sky:  
a lonely puzzle  
piece of cloud

Dominic Cataldo, Albany, New York

fog before dawn  
a ship leaving the harbor  
entering the mind

Doug Norris, Barrington, Rhode Island



we never  
talked about it . . .  
floating weeds

Sue Colpitts, Lakefield, Ontario

fast flowing river  
no time left  
for half-truths

blossom season—  
the sky a blue  
that has no name

Angela Terry, Lake Forest Park, Washington

walking alone  
in the footprints of someone  
walking alone

Bob Lucky, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

morning climb  
among the clouds  
this gnarly toe

Bill Deegan, Mahweh, New Jersey

my lava lamp  
the only light in the room  
returning geese

Rob Dingman, Herkimer, New York

hidden cabin  
the lake so quiet  
my mind settles

Bruce Ross, Hamden, Maine

warm spring day  
everyone else  
holding hands

Mike Montreuil, Ottawa, Ontario

I walk out  
to see what the scarecrow  
is staring at

Bruce England, Santa Clara, California

old journal  
she wrote  
the rain stopped

Fonda Bell Miller, Alexandria, Virginia

as wild  
is to violet . . .  
her laugh

Michelle Tennison, Blackwood, New Jersey

are you real . . .  
darkest purple petals  
ink dust in your heart

Tina Nicini, Riverside, Rhode Island

Stravinsky's Firebird  
a wasp's long legs  
poised in flight

Barbara Snow, Eugene, Oregon

spring rain  
old women bent over  
their watercolors

Robert Witmer, Tokyo, Japan

garden afternoon  
pollen collects  
in Buddha's hands

Francis Masat, Key West, Florida

spring whenever she's dancing

goodbye we hug not knowing it is

Marian Olson, Santa Fe, New Mexico

searching  
for an open frequency  
apricot blossoms

the day opens in safe mode her heart not yet broken

Susan Antolin, Walnut Creek, California

my thoughts  
nudge each other . . .  
bumping bees

Kala Ramesh, Pune, India

obit  
our visible universe  
growing dark

Roland Packer, Hamilton, Ontario

autumn thoughts—  
stark trees  
point everywhere

Adam Kuplowsky, Toronto, Ontario

roads draped in ice  
the winter she slipped  
away

S. Michael Kozubek, Chicago, Illinois

morning  
the pulse in her neck  
a reminder

John F. Scheers, Tucson, Arizona

new year's eve  
the thump  
of the old dog's tail

Robyn Hood Black, Gainesville, Georgia

holiday blues  
turning the bare spot  
to the wall

Julie Warther, Dover, Ohio

a crocus  
catches a snowflake  
my hand in yours

potatoes sprouting in the dark eye-to-eye

Susan Constable, Nanoose Bay, British Columbia

lights blink  
in acquiescence  
Sorrento sunset

Marshall Hryciuk, Toronto, Ontario

early Alzheimer's  
I take the first daffodils  
to the nursing home

Gayle Bull, Mineral Point, Wisconsin

supernovas burst—  
the crackle from inside  
a can of soda

Martin Elwell, Newmarket, New Hampshire

starlight  
once  
again  
falling  
impossibly  
far

new moon . . .  
the map folded  
with home at the center

Melissa Allen, Madison, Wisconsin

meadowlark—  
all you'll ever need to know  
about sunrise

what I did with my time wheatshine brightens and dims

Chad Lee Robinson, Pierre, South Dakota

birdsong  
in the throat of a melon  
dark pips

Billie Dee, San Diego, California

mourning dove voices plummy dawn

summer ebbs—  
grandchildren beside the lake  
clock the sunsets

Kristen B. Deming, Bethesda, Maryland

happy hour  
the nuthatch poised  
upside-down

Berenice Mortimer, Westlock, Alberta

dawn birds  
my employer  
in the news again

field of yarrow  
the butterfly's path  
could be more efficient

paul m., Bristol, Rhode Island



walk to work  
ducking under  
the spider's web

Quendryth Young, Alstonville, Australia

fortune teller  
closing shop  
a little early

Steve Sisk, Spencerport, New York

the night  
so silent  
i can hear it breathe

miriam chaikin, New York, New York

just before bed  
the washed up plates  
shine in the rack

David Jacobs, London, England

twilit sky  
the sound of a bat  
gets darker

Chen-ou Liu, Ajax, Ontario

water,  
seven oceans and  
a human eye

Aftab Yusuf Shaikh, Mumbai, India

she calls to say  
her labor's begun . . .  
winter stars

Joann Klontz, Swedesboro, New Jersey

the way  
he no longer waits for me . . .  
dusting of snow

Michele L. Harvey, Hamilton, New York

one silver hair  
bookmarks the dictionary:  
luny, lust, lyric

Doris Lynch, Bloomington, Indiana

thin ice—  
my mother-in-law  
wants to move in

Tzetzka Ilieva, Marietta, Georgia

church bells  
self-deportation  
suggested to a bee

a pile  
of pistachio shells  
spring melancholy

Fay Aoyagi, San Francisco, California

jolting ringtone the constant ache of this world

Deb Baker, Concord, New Hampshire

all my regrets  
left in the forest  
hunter's moon

Margaret Chula, Portland, Oregon

my mother forgives  
what I remember—  
bare plum tree

Teresa Layden, Seattle, Washington

drake after duck . . .  
seeds finally spilling  
from the sweet gum

Cherie Hunter Day, Cupertino, California

sundresses the sheer delight

John Soules, Wingham, Ontario

long summer day  
I ask the fruit monger  
to spray me too

Seánan Forbes, London, England

the side effects she gets a drugstore rose

the tenderness  
of her first  
summer funeral

Dan Schwerin, Greendale, Wisconsin

more reasons  
more fireflies  
than words

where Washington crossed the Delaware

—  
an old cap  
with the team's name

Gary Hotham, Scaggsville, Maryland

the morning fog  
dissolving differences—  
two eggs over

Claudia Chapline, Stinson Beach, California

just when I thought  
she was out of my head  
lilacs

where the blue goes  
after sundown  
her bedroom eyes

S.M. Abeles, Washington, D.C .

spring maple key to my heart

in the meadow  
everything eventually  
comes to you

Don Wentworth, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

cirrus clouds  
drifting apart  
from old friends

Alicia Hilton, Kenilworth, Illinois

tattered cookbook  
grandmother's notes  
beside the brownies

Polly W. Swafford, Prairie Village, Kansas

my sister's estate sale  
*Miss Piggy's Guide  
to Life*

Deb Koen, Rochester, New York

distant bells—  
framed in my window  
the year's first moon

Ellen Compton, Washington, D.C.

after your visit  
our chairs still turned  
toward each other

Donna Bauerly, Dubuque, Iowa

another dead friend  
the stiff collar  
of my shirt

Carlos Colón, Shreveport, Louisiana

the cloud  
I called her out to see  
reshaped in the winter wind

David Elliott, Factoryville, Pennsylvania

how many times  
do I have to tell you  
meteor shower

Alice Frampton, Seabeck, Washington

creases  
in an old letter  
the holes left by words

Jenny Ward Angyal, Gibsonville, North Carolina

that tone in her voice—  
last week's mosquito bite  
starts to itch again

I imagine  
dying alone  
    mustard seeds

Carolyn Hall, San Francisco, California

afternoon shadows . . .  
    a topiary hippo  
        slips into the pool

land's end at sunset it's come to this—

Scott Mason, Chappaqua, New York

Undertow . . .  
the sea  
wants me back

David Sutter, San Francisco, California



finally her secrets the counter-clockwise moon

Bill Pauly, Dubuque, Iowa

wheat penny  
the grudge  
I hold

Michelle Schaefer, Bothell, Washington

new moon  
my son and I  
on a first-name basis

Cara Holman, Portland, Oregon

lion wind  
a March lamb  
bleats for its mother

Mary Kipps, Sterling, Virginia

downpour ends—  
the nuances  
of her voice

Lenard D. Moore, Raleigh, North Carolina

the mist webbed  
on every head of burdock  
ticks of a wren

in dark places  
where butterflies hibernate  
my tattered soul

John Barlow, Ormskirk, England

ring neck dove . . .  
in my throat, the ache  
of a hymn

Autumn Noelle Hall, Green Mountain Falls, Colorado

fog-covered lighthouse  
I spare him  
no detail

Jyothirmai Gubili, Rochester, Minnesota

February 29  
we get another day  
out of the soup

rob scott, Stockholm, Sweden

something tells me you could rain all day

Peter Newton, Winchendon, Massachusetts

belly dancer  
the evening sun  
in each sequin

Jennifer Corpe, Wayzata, Minnesota

ice receding from the beaver lodge spiderweb spring

Patrick M. Pilarski, Edmonton, Alberta

mourning dove—  
the wavering lines  
of her signature

Merle D. Hinchee, Houma, Louisiana

purple bearded iris—  
my father shaves  
his father

L. Teresa Church, Durham, North Carolina

ducks  
come to my empty hands  
winter

David Boyer, Stamford, Connecticut

my breath  
shadows the river mist  
downstream

Joan Vistain, Antioch, Illinois

sudden frost—  
touching up the paint  
on mama's antiques

Carolyn Hinderliter, Phoenix, Arizona

wild geese  
the beating of my heart  
in the injured finger

Ernest Wit, Warsaw, Poland

writing poems  
beside the old pond—  
nothing but minnows

C. William Hinderliter, Phoenix, Arizona

the glitter of koi  
a tale told so often  
it might be true

early April  
a lopsided moon  
over new snow

Billie Wilson, Juneau, Alaska

a leash dropped on the trail

blossoms  
catch  
the breeze

bursting blue the elocution of drupelets

Eve Luckring, Los Angeles, California

dawnlight—  
a strand of saffron  
releasing the yellow

Sanjukta Asopa, Karnataka, India

summer solstice  
stretched out between  
the sun and moon of him

Karen DiNobile, Poughkeepsie, New York

my muse in the cloud  
her hair changes colour  
from time to time

Greg Piko, Yass, Australia

summer afternoon the sun filling with Shabbat

David Grayson, Alameda, California

roof garden  
a palm tree reaches  
to the stars

Katrina Shepherd, Scotland

speaking  
of darkness  
fireflies

Bill Kenney, Whitestone, New York

silent treatment—  
unbroken white line  
all the way home

Kristin Oosterheert, Grandville, Michigan

waiting room  
the silence  
making a noise

Tessa Essex, Norwich, England

fire alarm  
I practice taking  
nothing

Christina Nguyen, Hugo, Minnesota

the starker it turns what matters

burning bush  
maybe there's still  
hope for me

Christopher Patchel, Mettawa, Illinois

peace talks  
the wrinkled face  
of the Dead Sea

Joseph Robello, Novato, California

the cat high steps  
the backyard grass  
August morning

Geoffrey Van Kirk, New York, New York

convalescing  
all the things I plan to do  
with a weed whacker

J. Zimmerman, Santa Cruz, California

blue  
gill  
gilp  
gulp  
gull

LeRoy Gorman, Napanee, Ontario

lonely dinner—  
the saxophone solo  
joins me

Duro Jaiye, Hirokata, Japan

window plant my one room life

Lynne Steel, Hillsboro Beach, Florida



feeling blue  
while sweeping—  
jacaranda blossoms

Marcia Behar, Los Angeles, California

it's a different lake  
since the blue herons nested  
in the twisted pine

Tom Tico, San Francisco, California

heirloom crib  
three generations  
of tooth marks

Naia, Temecula, California

lightning—  
the fractured sky  
of childhood

Patricia J. Machmiller, San Jose, California

meeting the in-laws—  
the last tea cake  
on the plate

Elizabeth Bodien, Kempton, Pennsylvania

between the echoes  
of our voices

our voices

Helga Härle, Nacka, Sweden

insects on the backs of leaves . . .  
his secrets safe  
for a while

Carla Shepard Sims, Harvest, Alabama

tulips open—  
on my *nook* jane arrives  
at thornfield

Roberta Beary, Bethesda, Maryland

masterclass  
his fingertips tilt her  
away from the keys

Dee Evetts, Winchester, Virginia

morning after  
her little black dress sways  
on the clothesline

Seretta Martin, San Diego, California

approaching squall  
she watches his eyes  
undressing someone else

Cameron Mount, Ocean City, New Jersey

mountain sage  
just the scent  
makes me wild

Renée Owen, Sebastopol, California

she touches me  
before she knows my name  
motel hot tub

Robert Moyer, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

3,000 years old  
a drawing  
of the girl next door

Charles Baker, Mineral Point, Wisconsin

dawn  
the lightness of a hand  
without a pen

Vladislav Hristov, Sofia, Bulgaria

# *In Memoriam*

*hortensia anderson*  
(1959~2012)

## Upside Down

I stand by the window as Chloe does cartwheels with her friend Stella across the hot grass. Suddenly, a cloud bursts, its droplets cooling the spokes of their arms, their legs. They collapse on the lawn, trying to catch their breaths, laughing.

How I miss the feeling of being drenched by rain, not having a care in the spinning world.

headstands—  
the rain  
falls up

*(From hortensia's submission to Frogpond, April, 14, 2012)*

icicles—  
the sun drips into  
pools of light

*Frogpond 32:2, Spring/Summer 2009*

*Virginia Brady Young*  
(1918~2012)

*Virginia began her long haiku career in the 1960s. She served as HSA president during the years 1974, 1984, 1985, and as Frogpond consulting editor during the early 1990s.*

winter sun  
on the comb  
she left behind

*Frogpond 13:1, February 1990*

watching willow trees  
bend, I think of the age  
of the wind

*Frogpond 14:2, Summer 1991*

on the river  
of many names, one cloud  
floating

Harold G. Henderson Awards 1993 (2nd place)



*Spring Peeper*

Raspberries ripen  
they sing in the brambles brown  
waiting for someone

Tunde Paule (age 11)

# Rengay

## Riding the Currents

Julie Warther, Dover, Ohio  
Angela Terry, Lake Forest Park, Washington  
Cara Holman, Portland, Oregon

winter sunrise  
even the valleys  
tinged pink

Julie

her rainbow kite  
caught on bare plum branches

Angela

windy afternoon  
a red-tailed hawk  
rides the currents

Cara

on the ski lift  
rusty icicles

Julie

hot spiced wine  
sipping starlight  
from blown glass mugs

Angela

glowing embers  
moonshadows on fresh snow

Cara

## This Year's Hue

Carolyn Hall, San Francisco, California  
*Cherie Hunter Day, Cupertino, California*

longer days  
the unlabeled salvia  
reveals its color

*flash of this year's hue  
from her peep-toe shoes*

spring showers  
beyond the bridge  
a double rainbow

*family huddle  
we wait for the ghosts  
in the Polaroid*

and in the next gallery  
a Jackson Pollock

*poker face  
the river card is . . .  
the Queen of Hearts*

# Haiku Sequences

## Bingo

Cor van den Heuvel, New York, New York

hot day  
the only sound in the garden  
dripping rose bushes

noon stillness  
the mullein's dusty leaves  
by the railroad tracks

blue sky  
on the outskirts a billboard  
with a blank poster

the old sandlot  
a spittlebug's bubbles  
in the outfield grass

small town afternoon  
a fire hydrant's shadow leans  
down the empty sidewalk

lace cap hydrangea  
sounds of a Bingo game  
from the church basement

summer yard sale  
in a pile of old sheet music  
"Take Me Out to the Ballgame"



## The Dust Bowl

Adelaide B. Shaw, Millbrook, New York

early morning  
before the wind rises  
a glimpse of the sun

feeding chickens  
the children tethered  
to a rope

rolling dust  
the horizon opens  
and closes

wind gusting—  
another meal of potatoes  
and grit

picked corn  
beneath the dust  
more dust

clothes on the line  
the first dry and dirty  
before the last

sheriff's auction  
her good china divided  
into sets of two

Sunday service  
prayers for rain  
blown away

sweat down my face—  
counting the roads  
out of town

## Cape May Diamonds

Kathe L. Palka, Flemington, New Jersey

cold spray  
facing into the wind  
herring gulls

prim streets  
of Victorian houses—  
old woolen swimsuits

fresh paint  
on all the gingerbread  
late winter sun

on the pond  
among noisy shorebirds  
two mute swans

nature trail  
alone in the shade  
of pitch pines

along Sunset Beach  
light tumbles onto shore  
Cape May diamonds

crossing the bridge  
in a closed shop's window  
see you next season

(Cape May diamonds are pieces of clear quartz crystal that wash down the Delaware River and onto Cape May beaches.)

*Descansos\**

Marian Olson, Santa Fe, New Mexico

this Easter  
a vase of fresh lilies  
roadside cross

plastic roses  
that will never die  
roadside cross

for her girl  
a witch and a pumpkin  
roadside cross

tinsel  
gleams on the tiny pine  
roadside cross

where police cars  
gathered New Year's Eve  
roadside cross

\*Along New Mexico roads one will see crosses decorated with various objects marking the place someone has died in an accident.

## Afterlife

Lynn McLure, Burnsville, North Carolina

books in piles  
knitting in baskets  
her good intentions

pale spring sky  
we scatter her ashes  
on last year's leaves

sunlight  
on worn steps  
I pack away her shoes

## Spring Again

David Gershator, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

spring again  
the cemetery  
pays me a visit

so tight lipped  
even after death  
she tells me nothing

looking for my name  
the cemetery map  
leads to a dead end

## Waiting for Spring

Chen-ou Liu, Ajax, Ontario

butterflies flit  
from garden to garden—  
walking my shadow

swatting flies . . .  
alone in the attic  
on this summer day

standing in  
the way of the autumn wind . . .  
my old dog and me

whiskey stains  
on One Man's Moon  
. . . winter dawn

## Movement with Sound, Scent, and Vision

Ferris Gilli, Marietta, Georgia  
*Ron C. Moss, Leslie Vale, Tasmania*

the morning after—  
I brush spindrift  
from his hair

*sunlit curtains flowing on an emerald zephyr*

leaf swirls . . .  
the season scratching  
at my door

*the blur of a doe jumping in mid-air*

ligustrum scent  
carried on a breeze  
I remember home

*a cracked walnut releases dark earth*

we wait for sunset  
the gold deepens  
where rose petals join

*red crimson vibrates with the painter's hum*

## Reflections

Terri L. French, Huntsville, Alabama  
Lucas Stensland, New York, New York  
Cara Holman, Portland, Oregon  
Johnny Baranski, Vancouver, Washington

hidden falls a sock left at the water's edge	Terri
where coins are tossed the struggling composer's jingle	Lucas
Doppler-shifted train whistle . . . just passing through	Cara
after years of thinking his thoughts still a penny	Johnny
daydreams spoon with the river bend	Terri
a sparrow hops near the frog pond— missing your old ways	Lucas
the play of light and shadows on the Japanese maple	Cara
falling star just before dawn river mist rising	Johnny

# Renku

## My Hands Forget

(Solo Shisan Renku)

Aubrie Cox, Muncie, Indiana

April rain  
cells settle at the bottom  
of the centrifuge

Orion wades through  
a sea of stars

deer grazes  
on overgrowth in the ribs  
of a canoe

dandelion fluff latches  
to a girl's tan legs

our arms  
loaded with towels  
off the clothesline

spider web between  
the window panes

a kite skeleton  
tumbles out  
of bare branches

pressed in Revelations  
a redbud leaf

her lipstick  
is faded, but clings  
to the letter

heels click in time  
with the hall clock

halfway through  
a paper crane  
my hands forget

snowdrops in a glass  
by the hospice bed



## Typhoon-Washed Sky

Kris Kondo, Kanagawa, Japan

Johnye Strickland, Maumelle, Arkansas

Raffael de Gruttola, Natick, Massachusetts

typhoon-washed sky crisp play of light and shadow	Kris
in swaying bamboo clinging to a reed the dragonfly	Johnye
red jacket over the fence the collection bag empty	Raffael
so sleepy curled up with the cat	Kris
remembering our poet friend who's finally gone to rest	Johnye
we set the angel on the top of the tree	Johnye
carved in the bark a moment's thought about a wondrous pond	Raffael
hazy night reading Derrida by lamplight	Johnye
downloading her cherry blossom photo— moon at my back	Raffael
separate yet joined dark side & bright side	Kris
reaching for the brass ring on the merry-go-round	Johnye
summer evening's breeze dancing to blue grass	Raffael

# Tan Renga

Del Todey Turner, Waterloo, Iowa  
*Bob Fritzmeier, Sioux City, Iowa*

downhill slope  
an old woman slips  
in the fossil bed

*wind in the leaves  
I dream of flying*

Leslie Rose, Shingle Springs, California  
*Yvonne Cabalona, Modesto, California*

sickle moon slicing  
the evening sky  
this year almost done

*paring the soft spot  
from a persimmon*

w.f. owen, Antelope, California  
*Yvonne Cabalona, Modesto, California*

all day  
a scale  
on the fisherman's face

*the delicate hover  
of a hummingbird*

# Haibun

## Turntable Junction

Glenn Coats, Prospect, Virginia

I have no idea as we wade into the river. Our heads bow as we thread salmon eggs onto golden hooks. The distance grows between us as we toss our lines upstream and let the baits bounce along the bottom. You never say a word.

I do not see it in your face when I say, "See you in the morning." Your car kicks up gravel as you pull out of the drive.

The dance is Saturday. I call Mary first and she says not this weekend—too much homework. Next, I try you and you are too tired. I say that I am not going either—not by myself.

I do go to the dance—alone. And there you both are, out on the dance floor with the disco ball breaking your faces into pieces. The band drowns out all the voices and silences the tapping of shoes. I am the last one to know.

barbed wire  
a memory too sharp  
to touch

## Inside out

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

She claims encouragement from her therapist. Why now, after forty years. Several exchanges later she offers: you were so handsome.

heartwood  
the axe blade  
strikes a nail

Christopher Patchel, Mettawa, Illinois

She shows up with a new boyfriend, apparently a musician of some renown. At her request I teach him a dance step.

scan of the dial  
a little bit of blues  
goes a long way

**bringing up baby**

Roberta Beary, Bethesda, Maryland

again she falls. but nothing's broken and she seems okay. still i go a little crazy. i look around for a nurse. then grab my phone. the big screen is turned up super loud. as usual. she tells me to be quiet and points at the movie. an old black and white. screwball comedy, circa 1938. she says "hush!" then puts her finger to her lips just in case i don't get the message. my daughter, serene at 25, gives me one of her knowing looks. "grandma's fine" she says. she sits down right next to her. side by side their faces edge toward the screen. they laugh at the same parts. when baby surprises cary grant. or gets a big kiss from kate hepburn. i watch the two of them on the loveseat. my own private screening. heads so close together. there's no room for me.

mockingbird song turning from day to dusk

## My reader . . .<sup>†</sup>

Ray Rasmussen, Edmonton, Alberta

will be in a meadow, feeling a bit daring, barefoot, wearing just a pair of shorts (for now), making daisy chains, one to drape like a necklace to cover (just partly) her still sweet bosom and another to weave into silver-streaked curls. She won't mind having gone a bit grey and she's set aside this day for herself—a celebration of sorts for having gotten beyond the empty nest and her ex who's living with someone younger. This is a time for good memories and to dream of things she'd like to do. It's a time to hold the day in her hands. A picnic is spread on a blanket—patterned after one of my favourite songs, with pastel turtle doves woven into shades of red and blue.<sup>‡</sup> The basket holds a bottle of Cabernet, a loaf of farmer's 7-grain, a wedge of aged gouda, and an apple cut into thin slices. She'll pour, swirl, inhale the bouquet and sip, then lay back, drift with clouds, feel the sun's warmth, all these things have been absent from her life for far too long. She's opened the book to one of my poems and she'll read it twice more, and say to herself, "Oh! . . . I'd like to have heard him read this before he died."

entwined  
in a Navajo rug  
memories

<sup>†</sup>After Ted Kooser's poem, "Selecting a Reader," from *Sure Signs*, 1980, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pa.

<sup>‡</sup>Her book's biography section indicates that one of my favourite songs is Ian Tyson's "Navajo Rug." <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGGXX0o3Bu4>>.

## Black and White

Gayle Bull, Mineral Point, Wisconsin

When I was a kid there was a huge house in the next block. It was painted black with white trim. The Treat sisters lived there. We never saw them, but we knew they were really mean and really, really old. They were so old, we just knew they had holes in their tongues.

All Hallows Eve  
she turns away  
an angel

## Museum: Blue Variations

Deb Baker, Concord, New Hampshire

Cobalt hieroglyphs inscribed on a coffin; blue faced Krishna slaying a demon; faience shabti figurines; a falcon amulet, blue as the delta sky; spiky blue-haired Tibetan Maitreya, statue of the loving disciple of Buddha; beaded blue chisendo, Cameroonian royal attendant, waiting on a missing king; bluish green griffin's head on a votive cauldron, found on a Greek isle in the blue Aegean; a blue glass Roman bottle; the head of Pan, also fashioned in timeless Roman blue glass; millefiore beads, clear Venetian blue. When the guards hang up their navy blue jackets for the evening, when the blue handle of the gift shop door latches shut for the night, blue light floats in on sunset beams, museum blues, blues to end all blues.

winter sun  
your question  
hangs in the air

## Pinwheels

Peter Newton, Winchendon, Massachusetts

I'll never get my life done by the time I die, my friend Jenny says over the phone.

Hope not, I say. I mean, are we supposed to? I'm way behind.

Barn's a mess, tractor won't start, soffits are just too far gone to fix.

Hey, life's a ride. Gotta hang on.

All I can do is run and do yoga. Run yoga run yoga. One tightens the muscles, the other loosens em.

Sounds like you're onto something.

Yeah and did I tell you they're building seven Godzilla-sized wind turbines on the ridge just southeast of me? Less than a mile from my house? Did I tell you this already? They're calling them wind harvesters. Can you even believe this? I'm sick over it.

Wind Harvesters?

Yeah it's gonna be like a line of monster pinwheels on the march. My walls are gonna shake with the constant thwack thwack thwack in the background for the rest of my life not to mention the sun's gonna be all sliced to pieces by the time it reaches me.

Pinwheels, I say. There are worse things.

summer's end  
a yellow finch  
on thistle

## **Ghosts Among the Cornflowers**

Naia, Temecula, California

From this place at the edge of a cornflower patch so wide that it seems as if a great wave poured from the afternoon sky and liquefied the land . . . from this place, I begin to wonder. Who planted them? Who knelt here, tended here, bent and yielded here, dreamed here? Who planted these cornflowers gone to seed, to weed, again and again, until this knee-deep sea of them?

windswept cloud . . .  
in blue ink the apology  
owed since childhood

## **Near the Hospice Where My Father Died**

Bob Lucky, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

blanket of fog  
an old nest cradled  
on a branch

Across the silence a crow etches a caw into my heart.

## **Injured minnow**

Tom Painting, Atlanta, Georgia

Spoon, plug, spinner, bait, cast . . . vocabulary by way of my father. His tackle box was the metaphor through which he spoke, if he spoke at all.

hospice  
we part the curtain  
on snow



## **Skeletons**

Harriot West, Eugene, Oregon

She conceals more than she reveals—it's not simply her long-sleeved shirts and ankle-length pants but the gaps in her narrative, the questions she circumvents, yet this is my mother so I understand when she says "It's chilly" she means "Shut the window please. I'm cold."

winter mist—  
reading the trees  
by their shapes

## **Atonement**

Ignatius Fay, Sudbury, Ontario

In Grade 11, I spend six months as a custom-order thief to make spending money. Until the thought: "What are you doing? This is wrong and you know it."

By my calculation, I have stolen about \$185 in merchandise from the same store, a lot of money in 1966. Determined to repay the money, I start shoveling driveways—lots of takers because I do a very good job. When summer comes, I mow lawns, despite being allergic to cut grass. I take a lot of medication!

One fall day, on the way home from school, I stop to see the manager in his office. Explaining, I hand over the money with apologies. He thanks me, but says he can't commend me for correcting a situation I should not have created in the first place. The corporation probably will never see that money. But that's his moral baggage, isn't it?

on the sill  
stealing red from the sun  
green tomatoes

## April

Adelaide B. Shaw, Millbrook, New York

All the pastels of spring. In the sky, in the leaves, in the grass and flowers. The air, washed clean by rain, smells fresh with the richness of wet soil. Early blustery winds have been gentled into soft breezes.

cherry blossoms—  
remembering the ruffles  
on a pink dress

## Jazz

Jeremy Pendrey, Walnut Creek, California

A friend is quitting her job where I work to move across the country. We go to lunch for the last time as co-workers. We're eating lunch out of Styrofoam boxes on a bench in St. Mary's Square. We talk about what we always talk about: office gossip, aging parents, and raising children. She's one of my closest friends at work, though we have little in common besides that we enjoy each other's company. It's a sunny, spring day in San Francisco. A man on a nearby bench is playing jazz on his trumpet. He practices here every day, and as a result, St. Mary's Square is one of my favorite places to have lunch. I tell my friend all this even though she and I have never had lunch here together before, and she won't be having lunch here again any time soon, and probably not ever, but you never know. I tell her that I often come here alone to hear the trumpet player. I want her to know me just a little better before she moves away. But by the time we finish eating, I already see her as someone I used to know.

noon sun  
pigeons peck  
an empty bag

## Mythology

Michele L. Harvey, Hamilton, New York

Items from three generations, chosen from his parents' apartment, line his shelf. There are a few black and white snapshots with a blur to them, youthful drawings laden with dreams, odd tools and unfinished craft projects. Occasionally he rearranges them, as if somehow he could alter history.

slant of autumn sunlight  
blue shadows creep  
into the next field

## Pisse au lit

George Swede, Toronto, Ontario

The dandelion is one of nature's bountiful foods, edible from the florets to the roots. Moreover, it is rich in vitamins and minerals and can be used to make coffee, wine and salads. A minor drawback (or benefit, depending on one's needs) can be the diuretic effect of its roots, hence one of its other names. Yet their bright florets are seen as a scourge by those who have borrowed their ideas of beauty from the estates of the aristocracy.

neighbors in France  
a galaxy of stars  
on their prized lawn

## Our Silent Leap

Duro Jaiye, Hirakata, Japan

my wife is japanese, and i'm an american. we got married in a small town in japan on doctor martin luther king jr's birthday. the sun was very bright that day. the air was cold and gusty. and now, nearly ten years later, we're still not sure if any of these facts were legitimate omens which could predict the fate of our relationship.

my mother-in-law's complaint  
the dark parts  
of the moon

## One in a Million

Marian Olson, Santa Fe, New Mexico

I didn't think I could be tamed. But he did. Balloon flights over fields of poppies, a Carmen Miranda hat topped with assorted fruit, straight fine hair coiled into permanent springs; black rows of olives ringing each finger—all the silliness of him and more: talks into the night about parabolas, alternate universes, void out of void. After thirty years of fire and rain, I can be with him and laugh, and feel my heart skip every time I hear his footsteps clip up the walk before he opens the front door and calls out, "Hi honey, I'm home."

I never knew  
until he kissed me  
last love

## All the Wild Flowers

Mary Frederick Ahearn, Pottstown, Pennsylvania

I've always loved pottery—earthenware, stoneware, redware, and porcelain. The pots come from here and there—a small, perfectly turned dove gray vase from Shepardstown in West Virginia; Pennsylvania redware decorated with slip and sgraffito; tea bowls and teapot the colors of pine and ocean from Maine; and from Denmark, a round vase heavy and strong with shadows of pressed ferns for balance. A favorite is the smallest—a Japanese saucer imprinted with one willow leaf and found in a shaded side street shop by the canals of New Hope.

But there's a pot I lost. It was small, modest with a deep brown glaze. Once it held wood anemones, maidenhair fern, and the sweet wild columbine that grew in the woods near the farm. The pot was my mother's and before her, her mother's. Both knew the names and secret places of all the wild flowers up there in the mountains. My mother never knew the little pot went, forgotten in the rush and confusion of these things, into the estate sale early that spring. Judas child.

creek water  
the scent of summer  
leaving

## Rainbow

doreen king, England

All this—emerald buds splitting, flowers tête-à-tête with bright butterflies, the river extra azure, a rich green spinney contrasting with buff wheatears, the whole day rolling out its yellow hills—and then he squeezes out the word *married* like colourless toothpaste.

through vase glass  
a twisted rose stem,  
strangeness of moonlight

## contours

Terri L. French, Huntsville, Alabama

I watch the look on my father's face—the straight line of his mouth, the parallel furrows between his brows, the unblinking far-off stare. Always, as if he is trying to see into something or through something that remains elusive.

As a child I mimic his look, until it becomes my own.

journeys  
a faded map  
full of pin points

## Spin the Bottle

Jeff Stillman, Norwich, New York

My wife has told me periodically over the years that my “cocktail hour” borders on alcoholism well-hidden (still) by regular & rigorous physical exercise until I reach (or achieve) 4:30 pouring enough Scotch over rocks to glide into the evening in that delicate (and practiced) state between buzzed & smashed: the condition I cannot imagine not anticipating all day justified by empty vows of moderation & restraint; refusing to face what I can only imagine to be the continuous & impossible struggle to start fresh, to clean up without the help of others conquering each day the same addiction.

To this day, I've made no resolutions . . .

hazy moon hung over the new year

## I Do

Carol Pearce-Worthington, New York, New York

It was a small wedding. One limousine packed with the wedding party, a frightened groom wearing a cream linen suit with a rosebud in his lapel, butterfly ruffles on my dotted swiss, lindy dancers on the best man's necktie, my sister in a lavender flowered dress she brought from Chicago, two Baptist preachers presiding (a brother and a father), a small gospel choir that marches in clapping and singing "Fill my cup—let it overflow," a woman recommended by the preacher-brother who sings "Blessed Lord" while the reverend-father sways, his eyes shut. Entertainer friends sing "The Rose" to a strummed guitar. The groom's son and a nephew sort the tiny crowd into inadvertent black and white on either side of the aisle, but it all settles down nicely. My mother, rejected on her offer to give me away, does it anyway. The limo driver stops at a gas station for directions to the river boat reception, and a string of wedding cars threads with us around the gas pumps. The cake arrives with a tiny white bride and groom on top, not the roses I ordered. Our two young ushers go to the wrong reception. June moonlight glitters on the river boat deck, my widowed mother catches the bouquet. Twenty-seven years later I occasionally notice that miniature wedding couple on a crowded shelf. They have lasted far longer than roses.

summer moon  
loving you  
again again

# Essays

## Healing Nature

Nancy Corson Carter, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

*After my father's death in 1996, I realized that I had many unanswered questions about his war-time experience. Seeking re-connection and reconciliation, I wrote Making Up for Lost Time: A WWII Daughter's Letters to Her Father. As the work evolved, the model of Japanese haibun became life-giving to me—not only for the pleasure of linking prose and poetry but also for its suggested healing relationship with nature. Here is an excerpt which shows, in modified form, that inspiration.*

Dear Daddy,

I've mentioned the poet Bashō's classic haibun, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* or *Oku no Hosomichi*, as a treasured model. Our Pennsylvania and mid-Atlantic seaboard landscapes were not so obviously layered with centuries of cultural, religious and political landmarks as his Japanese terrain but we, too, made pilgrimages to such places as family homesteads and sometimes a cemetery or historic site. You took us to see Plymouth Rock, an oddly fenced-in attraction; what I liked best there was the wonderful scent of pine pillows and leather goods that permeated a gift store on a hill behind the Rock. We also visited Revolutionary War sites such as Valley Forge in Pennsylvania and Fort Ticonderoga in New York—the latter notable to me as the site where I was greatly embarrassed by mistaking a cigar store Indian for the real thing.

lichens etch stone buddhas and cherubs—  
I forget whether I am East or West



Our family's gardening, farming and hunting brought us close to the mysteries of the natural world that Bashō wrote about. He tells of wonderful trees he visited in his journey, like the willow "near the village of Ashino on the bank of a rice-field," a tree described as "[s]preading its shade over a crystal stream" by the poet Saigyō.<sup>1</sup> Bashō also celebrates a huge chestnut tree with a priest living in seclusion under its shade on the outskirts of Shirakawa; he is so moved by the feeling of being in "the midst of the deep mountains where Saigyō had picked nuts" that he wrote on a piece of paper: "The chestnut is a holy tree, for the Chinese ideograph for chestnut is Tree placed directly below West, the direction of the holy land."<sup>2</sup>

I know that you too, Daddy, had deep admiration for trees; you loved one stately oak in the woods at the Farm in Huntersville with a spring at its base which you tended. You were certain that the spring was on a path the Native Americans had used a century or so before, so it always had, to my mind, a special aura. Whenever we rode out into those woods in the back of the pick-up, always a treat, we stopped there while you cleared the spring for us all to be able to drink the cool clear water. It seems now, in retrospect, a holy place and your care of it not unlike the care that a priest might give to a sacred well. I wonder if the water still flows, if anyone knows about it and takes care to keep it running clear.

one gold leaf  
falls on still water  
a ripple of bright rings

Thinking back to our pleasure in that spring in the woods, I acknowledge that one of the greatest gifts of working with haiku is the quiet healing of its focus on nature. In his book *Seeds from a Birch Tree*, Clark Strand writes that "haiku is the one poetic form in all world literature that concerns itself primarily with nature, the one form of poetry that makes nature a spiritual path."<sup>3</sup>

You also spoke of the great chestnuts in your childhood landscape and how you missed them since the great chestnut blight of the first half of the twentieth century had made them nearly extinct. I was curious to learn more about chestnuts and what they meant to you and others, so I did some research and found these words from David Vandermast:

The loss of the chestnut was most acutely felt by rural Americans whose stories were oral rather than written. The nuts were an important cash crop for them, and they found many uses for its timber and bark. The chestnut's former importance in the southern Appalachian Mountains, where it grew to its greatest size, lives on in place names such as Chestnut Ridge and Yellow Mountain (referring to the splash of color when the chestnuts were in bloom).<sup>4</sup>

As a craftsman, you admired the chestnuts' fine strong grain, and we remember your pride in finding us an antique table of this lovely, now rare wood. Howard and I enjoy its beauty as it serves as our dining room table.

chestnut table  
sun, wind, rain, soil  
in grained blessings

I learned from you the names of crops that you and local farmers grew; there were familiar ones like corn, soybeans, wheat, rye, alfalfa, sorghum and potatoes—and occasionally the rarer ones like buckwheat, sunflowers and red clover, which makes me think of Bashō's frequent mention of bush clover. You and Grandpap Corson always walked the fields during our Sunday visits to his farm and watched the weather closely. A long while back I had fun writing a paper about weather sayings in a folklore class.

mares' tails mackerel clouds sun dogs . . .  
I turn off the weather channel

One summer day when I was in my early teens, I led the neighborhood children on a "maze walk" as I did my

chore of mowing the big lawn down by the garden with the gas-powered push mower. You were not amused by the inefficiency of my game. Years later I mentioned the incident and neither you nor Mother remembered it. I was amazed that our family memories differed. I'm reminded that even though I'm trying to be fair and truthful in my storytelling, I have to acknowledge that I have my biases as well as moments of simply not remembering. You've probably already read a number of remembrances of mine that differ from yours; none serious, I hope.

Pied Piper lawn mowing game  
I got rats  
for wasting gas

Another time, you called us out to the yard to look at a huge, light green luna moth in the inside top corner of the picket fence. We'd never seen anything like it before. It was like something out of the Lycoming County Fair freak show. I wanted to capture it for my bug collection, but it squirted out a stream of clear liquid that effectively repulsed me. Instead, I dreamed about it—that it was kite size, got caught in the rain and began to shrink, a sad mess.

luna moth  
spellbinds  
an August day

As a farming person, it must have grieved you to see the ways that the well-tended French, Dutch, Belgian, and German fields, forests, and vineyards were devastated by the war. You told us that even as US troops marched east toward Berlin near the end of the war you admired how the Germans were already tending their window boxes in the rubble-strewn cities.

war-ravaged earth  
blood red  
with geraniums

So, Daddy, I've found that the Japanese poets, especially Bashō, even through my amateur's emulation of their art, can bring us back to the land we cherish. And in that land we find signposts for our journey of bodymindspirit together.

Love,  
Nancy

### Notes

1. Bashō, Matsuo. *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*. Trans. Nobuyuki Yuasa. London: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 105.
2. Bashō, p. 107.
3. Strand, Clark. *Seeds From a Birch Tree*. New York: Hyperion, 1997, p. 3.
4. Vandermast, David. "Blighted Hopes," Review of *American Chestnut: The Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Perfect Tree* by Susan Freinkel. *American Scientist* 96:4 (July-August 2008), p. 345.



*After a career as Professor of Humanities at Eckerd College, in St. Petersburg, Florida, Nancy Corson Carter continues to pursue her vocation as teacher-writer-pilgrim. Near the End of the Rainy Season: Japan Poems (Pudding House Chapbook Series, 2008) is her latest book. She and her husband now live in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.*

## The Tsunami

Helen A. Granger, Corunna, Michigan

*This essay records my yearlong journey to come to terms with the scope of the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011. It is based on diary entries that flow between the past and the present. May it honor a tough people (gaman zuyoi).*

On Friday March 11, 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake occurred about 5:45 PM off the northeast coast of Japan. It set in motion tsunami waves that reached as high as 36 feet and in spots where there were narrow inlets the waves concentrated to approximately 50 feet and higher. In low-lying areas it traveled approximately four miles inland.

I found myself grieving for people I didn't know and writing haiku to help me come to terms with it all. Perhaps the deaths of my parents—my mother on January 9, and my father on January 15, 2011—made this disaster two months later more poignant. Some people grieve with tears, I grieve through writing. It has been that way for more than 50 years ever since my introduction to haiku in the fourth grade. At the time of the event I was researching maps showing where the great Japanese haiku poets had walked. It is heartbreaking to learn that many of the inspirational cultural centers, religious shrines and historic sites where the first poets lived and traveled are gone.

weeping in their graves  
the dead poets—  
their memories swept away

This earthquake and tsunami event is one of the best documented in history. Cell phones, handheld and building video cameras, government and news helicopters and thousands of photographs recorded nearly every moment.

One of the more impressive videos is from Kesenuma, Miyagi Prefecture. A videographer films from the rooftop corner of what appears to be a four-story concrete building. The ever-rising water is measured against a five-story building that he is filming: first one, then two, then three floors disappearing beneath the waves. As he films the water is also rising around the building he is standing on—the corner jutting into the rising water like the bow of a ship.

The heavily damaged Fukushima nuclear plant continues to plague the area as they try to control explosions, reduce radiation exposure and deal with the deaths and other problems related to the nuclear plant. Approximately 16,000 are dead and the missing are feared buried under the mud and debris or swept out to sea as the water receded. As people who had fled the disaster areas are found safe and alive, the number of the dead changes daily for months.

death tolls  
the rising . . . the falling  
of tsunami waves

Stories of heroism, courage and just plain miraculous human and animal survivals are touching the hearts of the world. A dog named Ban was found April 2 floating on an island of debris about 1.8 kilometers off the coast of Kesenuma. Ban's owner also survived and she and Ban were later happily reunited at an animal shelter.

On the human side Hiromitsu Shinkawa, 69, of Minamisoma City was found out at sea floating on the debris of what was once his home.

The tragedies are numerous and heart-wrenching. Just knowing that human beings of all ages have died is enough without dwelling on all the horrible images of the way they died. The key is whether or not the survivors and the injured are helped somehow to pick up the pieces of their lives and move on.

tsunami sundown  
my eyes do not wish to see  
what my heart records

New videos, photos and information are being found and circulated on the Internet. One memorable photo shows Sendai airport on the morning of March 14, 2011, the runways and parking areas full of jostled debris, planes and vehicles. Another photograph shows the tsunami waves breaching the sea wall and flowing into Miyako City in Iwate Prefecture in northeastern Japan. Yet another debris-laden tsunami wave was photographed near Sendai as it moved across the open countryside and farmlands destroying everything in its path.

tsunami  
tears  
across the landscape

To add insult to the injury it snowed in many places after the earthquake and tsunami. A photograph of a snow-covered landscape with black earthquake cracks in the woodlands near Sendai looks like a pen and ink sketch of a multi-branching tree. A photograph of six elderly women lined up at an evacuation area after the earthquake, with matching bright blue blankets wrapped around them, suggests how cold things had become.

Over the next year I read about the history of Japan's earthquakes and tsunamis and about the many stone warning markers—some approximately 600 years old—dotting the coastline of Japan.

ancestral warnings  
carved in stone  
this high and no lower

Ancestral markers notwithstanding, seaside Rikuzentakata City was one of the worst hit. It was considered a jewel along

the rocky coastline of northeastern Japan. More than three centuries ago 70,000 black and red pine trees were planted along the mile-long strip of sandy beach to buffer Pacific Ocean winds. Only one tree was left standing.

The poet Bashō noted over 300 years ago that mountains collapse, rivers flow, roads change, stones are buried and hidden beneath the earth. The nation of Japan has endured for 2,000 years through earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, religious and political upheavals, famines and wars.

And yet, the photograph of Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture on April 18, 2011 remains most strongly in my memory. So much destruction all around, shredded buildings with just a path winding through the rubble. A man and a woman make their way through the debris toward a large surviving cherry (sakura) tree . . .

after the tsunami  
cherry trees  
break into bloom



*Helen A. Granger is a journalist/photographer and resides in Corunna, Michigan, with her family, pets and garden.*



## Nick Virgilio, My Haiku Hero

Tom Clausen, Ithaca, New York

*This essay as book review records how the haiku and life of Nick Virgilio helped me to see the way in which haiku could be a manner of relating and sharing with others my love of life and this world.*

By happy serendipity Rick Black, publisher of Turtle Light Press, learned at the 2009 Haiku North America conference that a large archive of Nick Virgilio's unpublished haiku had been left with the English department of Rutgers University in Camden, N.J. His admiration of Virgilio's work, combined with editor Raffael de Gruttola's review of some 3,000 unpublished haiku, has fortuitously resulted in *Nick Virgilio: A Life in Haiku*.<sup>1</sup>

Dedicated to Virgilio's brother Tony, the Nick Virgilio Haiku Association members and all those who have helped keep the poetry alive, *Nick Virgilio: A Life in Haiku* is aptly described on the cover as "a collection of newly discovered haiku gems by one of America's most beloved haiku poets (with a handful of old favorites, some essays, an interview and some photos thrown in, too)." It contains an introduction by de Gruttola, a selection of newly discovered, previously unpublished haiku mixed with well-known haiku (124 all together), Kathleen O'Toole's "Afterword: An Echo in Time," Marty Moss-Coane's "An Interview With Nick," Michael Doyle's "A Tribute to Nick," as well as essays by Virgilio himself, including "A Journey to a Haiku, On Haiku in English" and "A Note to Young Writers." The book rounds out with photos, acknowledgments and an appendix of original manuscript pages.

Virgilio and his many wonderful haiku held a prominent place in the haiku community from the 1960s until his death and this new book is a wonderful chance for anyone who has more recently embraced the form to recognize the brilliance of his work and his life. *Nick Virgilio: A Life in Haiku* offers exceptionally poignant information and insight about the man's

passion for poetry and how hard he worked to perfect his own haiku as a “way of life.”

Virgilio was born in Camden, N.J. on June 28, 1928 and, tragically, died of a heart attack in Washington D.C. on January 3, 1989 while taping a CBS-TV *Nightwatch* segment that was to feature his love of haiku. In his beautiful tribute to Virgilio, Father Michael Doyle of Camden’s Sacred Heart Church shares the incredible story of how they met through a special Mass he led to commemorate 300 soldiers from South Jersey who had been killed in Vietnam. Father Doyle handed out an index card for each soldier so that, as he called out the names of the dead, whoever held the card might rise. The card Father Doyle ended up with bore the name Lawrence J. Virgilio, Nick’s younger brother. Four years later Virgilio’s parents requested that Father Doyle conduct a Mass for their son. Father Doyle remembered the name from his card and eventually met Virgilio through this meeting with his parents. The rest of the story details how Virgilio found a welcoming community at Sacred Heart and how he devoted himself to a daily practice of haiku and the enthusiastic sharing of what he wrote with friends and family—and now, us.

This book is simply and absolutely indispensable reading for anyone interested in the life and work of a genuine haiku visionary. We learn in these pages about Virgilio’s daily round of experience and how he took the tragic loss of his brother and his own personal losses in work and love and forged them into a lasting body of powerful haiku. Absorbing what has been collected in *Nick Virgilio: A Life in Haiku* is also to recognize how haiku can become a way of life. As a poet and a man, Virgilio is an inspiration for all of us who, too, would find meaning and enhanced living with a haiku focus.

When I discovered haiku in the late 1980s and fell in love with it, it was impossible to know that 25 years later the haiku and the poets that enchanted me then would continue to speak to me the most today. “The first cut is the deepest” (from a song by Cat Stevens) is an entirely apt expression for how I feel about the poets and haiku that moved me then to internally vow that I’d

be reading and trying to write haiku for the rest of my life. *Selected Haiku of Nicholas Virgilio*, published by Black Moss Press in 1988 and edited by Rod Willmot, was one of the first haiku books I purchased after dipping my toe in the haiku pond way back when. Looking back on that purchase I am so grateful for the wonderful examples that came to me then and continue to be an inspiration and touchstone to the possibilities that haiku still offer today.

In his substantial introduction to *A Life in Haiku*, de Gruttola pinpoints the source of Virgilio's masterful sensitivity as occurring around the time his family "went from hope to despair in confronting [his brother] Larry's loss . . . it was devastating to them to deal with the ultimate sacrifice. It was about this time that Virgilio's haiku became solemn and elegiac. He attempted to deal with this tragedy by writing haiku as a healing process." De Gruttola further writes, "The pathos, if you will, becomes a constant reminder for Nick that one's life can be transformed if there is a will to believe in yourself and in your art. It's through this search and belief that Nick became the great haiku poet that we know today. As we read his haiku today in this first American edition of his work, we find an almost monk-like approach in pursuit of the deepest moments of his life. His unique haiku written in 1963:

lily:  
out of the water . . .  
out of itself

captured a subtle awareness that the great Japanese haiku poets, from Bashō to Santōka, knew all along. It was possible to say more with less."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the haiku that first hit me with the real power of Virgilio's profound simplicity was this:

into the blinding sun . . .  
the funeral procession's  
glaring headlights

I remember reading this and not knowing what exactly to “think” about it, but feeling some type of mesmerized fascination with “seeing” that procession and those headlights and that sun and realizing that as it is with death there was something “beyond” in what this haiku was suggesting.

I continue to be mesmerized by this and almost all of Virgilio’s haiku. There are the many lasting tributes to his younger brother Lawrence:

telegram in hand,  
the shadow of the marine  
darkens our screen door

summer nightfall:  
dazed, all I heard from the Major  
“ . . . killed in Vietnam . . . ”

sixteenth autumn since:  
barely visible grease marks  
where he parked his car

There are the poems that sear the mind, like this indelible one written in 1967:

the sack of kittens  
sinking in the icy creek  
increases the cold

In the WHYY-Philadelphia interview included in this book, Virgilio commented extensively on this haiku:

Emotion is expressed on the sensory level—this is the essence of haiku . . . one form of existence passes into another, warmth into cold, living into non-living, the organic returns to the inorganic. We too, are involved in this eternal transition; we too are in the sack sinking in the icy creek. The doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism holds that life and the individual are merely temporary manifestations of being . . .<sup>3</sup>

I can remember the instant shock I felt when I first read this haiku. I love cats and kittens and this elicits such a challenging visceral reaction that to this day the poem remains for me uncomfortably sad.

Death in life is a much-repeated theme in Virgilio's haiku. His life was weighted not only by personal losses, but by the losses he saw in his day-to-day walks around Camden and in the daily news.

On the cardboard box  
holding the frozen wino:  
Fragile: Do Not Crush

at the mine entrance,  
on time cards beneath the clock:  
the names of the dead

on the petition  
condemning Agent Orange:  
the names of the dead

Given how memorable are Virgilio's haiku related to loss and death it is rewarding to see as well how he chose to express his love of life. Many life affirming and beautiful tributes to nature, celebrating its eternal cycles, may also be found in this collection:

above the cloud peak  
below the summer moon—  
a flight of snow geese

rising and falling . . .  
a blanket of blackbirds feeds  
on the snowy slope

a bittern booms—  
the harsh cry of a marsh hawk,  
the crescent moon

after the spring storm . . .  
the farm girl washes her hair  
in the rain barrel

a skylark's song  
and a billowing cloud  
fills my emptiness

Virgilio's vast collection of haiku holds room enough and more for readers of many kinds and persuasions—each picking and choosing not only among the very great poems, but among the lesser known as well. Of Virgilio's haiku that I have related to the most there are a few that I just love—among these,

autumn twilight:  
the wreath on the door  
lifts in the wind

for its beautiful and subtle sense that allows the reader to imagine being quietly at this door witnessing this moment alone and touching on a feeling for something that exists within us and beyond us at once. The poem captures the eternal in a brief yet clear moment.

I have also loved “over spatterdocks” for the one word that has resonated and appealed to me since the day I first read it:

over spatterdocks,  
turning at corners of air:  
dragonfly

I must admit I had never heard of spatterdocks before reading this haiku and yet intuitively the idea of “corners of air” “over spatterdocks” delighted me. At first I imagined that spatterdocks was an actual dock but then sheepishly discovered it was a plant! (Spatterdock is a perennial plant with leaves that arise from a large spongy rhizome.) Always a pleasure when we learn more about our world, especially in haiku!

I have loved, too, the inimitable witty wink of solemn satori:

.....

Thanksgiving alone:  
ordering eggs and toast  
in an undertone

For me, Nick Virgilio has been and remains a splendid mentor, an American sage, a true master and pioneer of the haiku form. Those well acquainted with his earlier *Selected Haiku* and with his work in periodicals and anthologies will certainly want to purchase a copy of this book. Anyone unfamiliar with Virgilio will want to do so, too. The marvelous selection of previously unpublished haiku, the essays and the wonderful radio interview beautifully bring to life his zeal, his character and his vision. To visit with his haiku and his illuminated life is truly to recognize his heroic qualities. Virgilio, like many of us, arrived at haiku as a life calling almost accidentally, but his immersion in the form and devotion to its creation leaves no doubt that there was nothing accidental about the passion and precision he poured into his love for it:

my spring love affair:  
the old upright Remington  
wears a new ribbon

on the manuscript  
the shadow of a butterfly  
finishes the poem

#### Notes

1. de Gruttola, Raffael, ed. *Nick Virgilio: A Life in Haiku*. Arlington, VA: Turtle Light Press, 2012, 137 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN 978-0-9748147-3-5, US \$14.95 <[www.turtlelightpress.com](http://www.turtlelightpress.com)>.
2. Ibid., p. xi.
3. Ibid., p. xii.



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## Song of Himself

Scott Mason, Chappaqua, New York

When I was asked to review *Turquoise Milk: Selected Haiku of Ban'ya Natsuishi*<sup>1</sup> for this journal, something strange came to mind: that fateful scene from the holiday film classic *A Christmas Story* in which one of its school kid characters “triple dog-dares” another to lick a metal flagpole. But in place of the frozen pole I envisioned a vertical third rail.

The mind can be funny that way.

As a highly prolific poet, a widely-published university professor, a fixture at international haiku conferences, and both the co-founder and current director of the World Haiku Association, Ban'ya Natsuishi is inarguably the leading representative, on the global stage, of *gendai* (“modern,” in Japanese) haiku—the movement whose unconventional work has either balkanized the Western haiku community or jolted it out of its *shasei*-induced complacency (stuck in the “sketch from nature” chapter of Shiki’s playbook), depending on whom you ask. One truth seems to unite *gendai* haiku’s advocates and its detractors: emotions can run high on both sides.

Despite Ban'ya’s personal ubiquity (I use his familiar name here in deference to apparent practice), my own prior acquaintance with his actual work was modest at best. I had read, and found intriguing, his celebrated waterfall haiku—*From the future / a wind arrives / that blows the waterfall apart*—and had encountered several poems from his well-known series of outré Flying Pope haiku. That was about it. But when I was offered the chance to explore the first comprehensive selection in English (500 poems) of Ban'ya’s prodigious output, my natural curiosity trumped any hesitation about entering the charged arena of modern haiku poetics.

The triple dog-dare worked.

Whether by chance or by charter, the *gendai* haiku movement has had at least one salutary effect in the West: it has provoked



a “call to introspection” about the fundamental question of what makes a haiku a haiku. Of course any substantial departure from (or challenge to) standard practice or convention will tend to do that. And if one has been called upon to critique the “new” work, as I have here, then the intellectual ante is raised even higher: one had better base any such critique on some considered philosophy. So I am prepared to lay my own cards on the table.

First, though, a couple of words should be said about the framing of our current debate over the relative merits and legitimacy of haiku that serve as purely objective, realistic renderings of nature through the senses and the seasons (*shasei*) versus those that offer highly subjective, often surrealistic, subject matter from beyond the senses and experience (*gendai*). Those two words are: “false dichotomy.”

I suspect that few practitioners of *gendai* haiku would see their work as lacking in experience, sensory content or even realism, albeit on a different plane. And although many (mediocre) traditional haiku do little more than describe a scene or moment, “pure objectivity” is a chimera. Most recognized exemplars of Western haiku, even when treating natural subjects perceived by the senses, offer scant evidence of literal reporting and even less pretense to objectivity.

in the gutters of light  
matchstick flotillas  
sail toward a new world of sewers

Cor van den Heuvel<sup>2</sup>

years ago  
a witch lived here  
pokeberry

John Wills<sup>3</sup>

clay on the wheel I confess my faith

Peggy Willis Lyles<sup>4</sup>

horizon  
wild swan drifting through  
the woman's body

Raymond Roseliep<sup>5</sup>

lily:  
out of the water . . .  
out of itself

Nick Virgilio<sup>6</sup>

What's more, these individualistic, subjective, and highly original poems were all conceived decades ago—perhaps, in some cases, even before Ban'ya became Ban'ya (born as Masayuki Inui in 1955).

So, how would I describe my own haiku philosophy? If there's a special place in heaven for those who have labored long over the definition of haiku, I shall never enter that blessed precinct. My own interest dwells less with what haiku *is* than with what haiku *does*. Put somewhat differently, I am far less concerned about what should *go into* a haiku than about what might *come out of* one's encounter with that poem.

What, then, does a “good” (i.e., effective) haiku *do*? What is the desired *effect* of such a poem? I would answer this way:

*An effective haiku is one that positively engages its reader or listener on an emotional basis.*

That's it.

This is not so far removed from the sentiment expressed by Emily Dickinson in an oft-quoted passage<sup>7</sup> from a letter to Thomas Higginson:

If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know *that* is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know *that* is poetry. These are the only way I know it. Is there any other way?

Satisfying emotional engagement can take safer forms as well: experiences of beauty, intrigue, empathy, humor, or realization, to name but a handful.

And just *how* can a haiku achieve one or another of these forms of emotional engagement?

*An effective haiku allows its reader or listener to connect in some meaningful way with the poet, the poet's experience, or the poem's subject.*

The poet must therefore enable his poem and its reader to follow E. M. Forster's famous dictum:

### ONLY CONNECT

I am also taken by this elegant formulation of Dr. Richard Gilbert's in his discussion of Nick Virgilio's iconic water lily poem: "Excellent haiku evoke coherence beyond the text horizon."<sup>8</sup> By design, my own simple haiku "philosophy" concerns *effects* and not *causes*. Regarding tools and techniques, styles and schools, subjects and forms, it's intentionally mute. I happen to believe there are many paths to haiku excellence; accordingly, my own poetic tastes are decidedly catholic—with a non-papal, low altitude "c."

Of course, there are many paths to haiku mediocrity as well, resulting from work that fails to connect with and positively engage its reader or listener. I shall point out just two of them.

The first is *haiku that bore*—also known as "So what?" haiku—because of their mere reportage. These poems say too much and suggest too little, leaving insufficient room or intrigue to permit and encourage readers to enter them and make them their own.

The second, nearly opposite, road to perdition is paved with *haiku that bewilder*. Such poems offer too little, or nothing, with which the reader can plausibly relate or connect.

I call these poems “Say what?” haiku.

Based on my haiku philosophy of positive emotional engagement, I see the principal challenge to haiku poets not in terms of where to encamp stylistically (“traditional,” “contemporary,” or “innovative,” for instance) but, instead, how to successfully navigate between the Scylla of obviousness (“So what?” haiku) and the Charybdis of obscurity (“Say what?” haiku). The only haiku dichotomy that matters to me is the one between poems that connect and engage, and those that do not.

By these lights, there are some genuine pleasures to be found in Ban’ya’s *Turquoise Milk*. Here are a few of my favorites, sourced from or inspired by the poet’s far flung travels:

In blue darkness  
a cat crouching  
Tunis in Ramadan

(p. 84)

Limned by sunset  
blown by wind  
cypresses in Trieste

(p. 114)

Armed with  
four thousand years the menhir  
listens to birds

(p. 93)

Xanadu covered with grass  
an elm  
becomes a god

(p. 166)

The still life  
is food for our life—  
rain in Paris

(p. 92)

Full moon—  
the country is young  
its songs are old

(p. 145)

Attuned to both the present pulse and past lives of his surroundings, the poet engages us with subjects imbued with cultural or natural history: a prayerful feline; time-weathered sentinels; an ancient standing stone standing at (and “listening” with) attention; Mongolia’s version, perhaps, of Ozymandias; a *fête de l’esprit*; and a Balkan echo of Bashō’s rice planters’ songs.

A quick trip to Wikipedia yields additional satisfactions:

No aging no death  
or no ending in old age and death  
Husband and Wife Rock

(p. 71)

The morin huur  
is a compressed galaxy—  
everyone closes his eyes

(p. 164)

No darkness  
or no running out of darkness  
Falling Flower Rock

(p. 72)

Husband and Wife Rock is a natural formation comprised of two large rocks jutting out from the waters off southeastern Japan; they’re connected by a massive straw rope made from rice stalks. The morin huur is a Mongolian bowed string instrument which produces a hypnotic sound. Falling Flower Rock is a promontory from which, according to Korean folklore, three thousand female white-clad royal servants flung themselves when they could no longer repel the fighting force of a rival king.

Other poems in the collection attest to an original eye and imaginative mind.

In a bottle  
two  
Noah's arks

(p. 16)

Wisteria flowers  
suck in our  
sweet nothings

(p. 67)

A yellow butterfly  
and my forgetfulness  
unlimited

(p. 85)

My eyeballs  
deep into the tunnel  
of a rambler rose

(p. 158)

Parliament of the forest:  
every raindrop  
is its member

(p. 148)

These engage with irony, empathy, humor, and wonder.

*Turquoise Milk* features a large selection of Ban'ya's signature Flying Pope haiku as well. Those that follow are the best of the bunch, in my view.

Flying Pope  
visible only to children  
and a giraffe

(p. 127)

Only one witness  
to my alibi:  
Flying Pope

(p. 137)

Flying Pope  
the bride and the groom  
say nothing

(p. 141)

Mid-flight  
the Pope divides  
into several

(p. 138)

The first of these charms; the middle two amuse (I find the bride and groom poem wonderfully droll); and the last one packs a super surprise—I'm reminded of the multi-path antics of subatomic particles.

Ban'ya's Flying Pope haiku have launched a cottage industry of commentary, much of it, in my estimation, overwrought and overthought. My personal take is that His Haiku Holiness is, in nearly equal parts, "projection projectile," slipstream-of-consciousness, and jazz riff. Sometimes, poets just want to have fun. (That said, a confession might be in order: apart from the four poems just discussed, I tired fairly quickly of the Flying Pope haiku. Many felt like they were on autopilot.)

Besides the haiku already cited, another two or three dozen poems from *Turquoise Milk* are praiseworthy in my view—the equivalent, altogether, of a highly satisfying chapbook. That, then, leaves around 450 poems with which I felt little or no connection or positive emotional engagement.

Of those, a few dozen appear to be based on cultural references I was unable to detect through any Internet search. This number includes a majority of the haiku selected from two of

Ban'ya's prior collections: *The Fugue of Gods* (1990) and *The Science of Megaliths and Big Trees* (1995).

Are such missed connections anyone's fault?

I would suggest that the haiku *reader's* responsibility for understanding unfamiliar cultural content might extend as far as a basic Internet search can take him. Conversely, I'd suggest that the haiku *writer's* (and/or *editor's/publisher's*) basic responsibility is to furnish explanatory notes for any cultural content so arcane that it cannot be easily found on the Internet. So in the current instance, it seems to me, Ban'ya or someone from Red Moon Press should have made the effort to include some explanatory notes, particularly since *Turquoise Milk* is intended for a Western audience.

Did some of my missed connections arise from "lost in translation" issues?

The poet himself co-translated his work along with the more-than-fluent publisher of Red Moon Press, Jim Kacian. Yet the phrasing of some of Ban'ya's haiku gives me pause.

The battlefield  
must be being covered  
with feathers

(p. 18)

The yawn of gods  
might it let die  
cherry trees?

(p. 44)

To the wooden church  
a driving  
like a flight

(p. 107)



Issues of cultural esoterica and translation aside, my non-engagement with much of *Turquoise Milk* might be chalked up to my frequent state of bewilderment and occasional state of boredom with, respectively, the “Say what?” and “So what?” poems found in its pages. But, recognizing that our engagement meters are all calibrated differently, I offer below four galleries of Ban’ya’s work for your own perusal, each with a closing “poetic” observation of my own (*centered*).

### Gallery I

Thou, lava flow!  
Please incarnate  
a genealogy of resignation!

(p. 35)

A god of hyperhidrosis  
makes a round  
of a dinosaur exhibition

(p. 62)

To the irreversible  
and uschemic (*sic*) Galaxy  
I would return

(p. 38)

*class, pay attention:  
Professor Irwin Corey  
will now have a word*

## Gallery II

Spring Seoul  
a television  
in the wardrobe

(p. 63)

In Indian summer  
on a large rock—  
a copse and a church

(p. 90)

On television  
a large root dances  
Manhattan below zero

(p. 89)

With an old man  
I walk along the beach  
towards the south

(p. 67)

*the haiku master's  
navel slowly fills with lint . . .  
you had to be there*

## Gallery III

I'm running the cap  
so bloody red  
accompanied by transparent subjects

(p. 31)

Let's wring the neck of a duck!  
Mister What  
in the residence of Mister Not!

(p. 26)

A blue spongy body  
works very hard  
a red spongy body

(p. 57)

Childish plastics  
admitted by  
the forest of the dead

(p. 104)

A heavy rain  
of pearls  
on a deep-black clown

(p. 153)

What is the never-stolen?  
A hotel  
on the fork in the road

(p. 115)

*Open Sesame!*  
*(someone seems to have stolen*  
*my decoder ring)*

## Gallery IV

Natsuishi Ban'ya's  
roost is  
a garishly colored sky

(p. 20)

A crane above clouds  
my heart is  
the meridian of the earth

(p. 14)

Under the sky's vortex  
I play with  
crystal spheres

(p. 12)

A girl to hold a rabbit  
her father to give birth to  
World Haiku

(p. 107)

*rocking side to side  
in his house of mirrors,  
he croons "We Are the World"*

It must be said that Ban'ya's capacious sense of self— "More than three hundred years after Bashō, I am trying to create in my haiku diverse, astonishing traditions and phenomena of the world"<sup>9</sup>—finds a full chorus of hosannas in *The Poetic Achievement of Ban'ya Natsuishi*,<sup>10</sup> a volume I tried to consult for greater insight into his work. Here is a sampling:

This renowned and well educated poet understands people and the universe. . . . His poetry takes us on a journey without being provocative or intrusive.

Floriana Hall (p. 21)

His articulation of imaginative poetic language and the use of stimulating and uplifting words, for the soul, will move the reader to another level that is soothing to the mind with words of loving pleasability, and dancing creativity, as haiku poetic language should . . .

Joseph S. Spence, Sr. (p. 24)

This book [*Flying Pope: 161 Haiku*] is recommended for all readers and all cultures throughout the world.

Rhonda Galgiani (p. 68)

Ban'ya is greatly superior to other writers in his humanism and taste. . . . Ban'ya in his power of satire is unrivalled in literature. . . . Ban'ya's 'neo-experimentalism' in his haiku makes him the perfect singing god. . . . Ban'ya may be said to have wholly perfected the art of writing haiku. . . . No doubt, Ban'ya's haiku are astonishing due to the exuberance of his genius.

Santosh Kumar (pp. 76, 78, 79, 82, 83)

No doubt, Ban'ya's devotees will find his *Turquoise Milk* a happy quaff. Others may find it harder to swallow.

#### Notes

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4. Lyles, Peggy. *To Hear the Rain*. Decatur, IL: Brooks Books, 2002.
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9. Natsuishi, Ban'ya. *A Future Waterfall: 100 Haiku by Ban'ya Natsuishi*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 1999.
10. Kumar, Santosh (ed.). *The Poetic Achievement of Ban'ya Natsuishi*, Allahabad, India: Cyberwit.net, 2009.



*Scott Mason's haiku have appeared widely and received awards in numerous competitions, including first place honors for Haiku Canada's Betty Drevniok Award (2003, 2005, 2006), BHS's James W. Hackett / British Haiku Award (2005, 2008, 2010), the International Kusamakura Haiku Competition (2009), the Mainichi Daily News Haiku Award (2009), and the Robert Spiess Memorial Haiku Award (2012). Mason edited HSA's 2010 members' anthology, Sharing the Sun, and he currently serves as an associate editor for The Heron's Nest.*

## Reviewed

**Allan Burns.** *Distant Virga*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, unpag. perfect softbound, 4.2 x 6.5. ISBN 978-1-936949-08-9, US \$12 + postage <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>.

by Melissa Allen, Madison, Wisconsin

The title of Allan Burns's first collection of haiku gave me pause; I hadn't encountered the term *virga* before. The Oxford English Dictionary informs me that this refers to "streaks of precipitation that appear to hang from the undersurface of a cloud and usually evaporate before reaching the ground." This phenomenon, I learned in further research, is especially common in the western United States, including the Colorado Rockies where Burns makes his home. Precise vocabulary delineating a specific landscape: *Distant Virga* is well-named, since it sums up the salient features of Burns's fine collection.

For instance: There are no generic "rocks," "birds," or "bushes" in these poems; there are (to name a few more words that this book added to my vocabulary) "K-T boundaries," "stonechats," and "cholla" (a type of cactus). In fact, I counted no fewer than fifteen species of birds in fifty-one poems. Sometimes the book reads like an account of a particular journey across a wild, high landscape with an experienced guide eager to share his knowledge. The images Burns conjures up are vivid and utterly convincing; we have no doubt that he saw these things, that he heard these birds calling, that he knows his way across these canyons, that the stars he names burned over his head at night.

headwaters  
the dipper's shadow  
follows its call

a red-tail's echo . . .  
the reservoir the color  
of surrounding pine

Arcturus  
a pinecone glows  
in the campfire

There can be a danger in this kind of preoccupation with painting an accurate landscape in haiku. Some of the poems in this collection, although finely observed, don't seem to offer the reader much but a nice view. This is perhaps especially true of those that treat of the natural world without any reference to how it affects, or reflects, the inner or outer lives of human beings. It can be hard for a reader to get a toehold into such poems; they may evoke the dreaded "So what?" response.

glacial potholes  
a shrike returns  
to the cholla

At their best, however, Burns's poems give the reader a sense not just of the appearance but of the meaning of the landscape. They connect our own lives to the lives of these rocks, birds, and trees. They shed light—sometimes in so many words—on our experience. The two poems below, for example, seem connected both in imagery and theme. Small creatures against the backdrop of a dramatic, larger landscape dappled with light and dark—this is how we seem to ourselves, this is how the world seems to us.

climbing in shadow—  
the canyon rim  
brightly lit

anywhere sun  
finds the creek  
water striders

Burns's skill at placing humans in their proper place relative to the rest of the universe—no more or less important than any other natural phenomenon—is possibly a function of the Buddhism that finds explicit expression in many of these poems.

a willow reveals  
the underground stream  
Dharma Day

half-lotus  
the slow degrees  
of dusk

Here a deep source of sustenance is linked to the teachings of Buddha; the slow folding and unfolding of the human form in meditation is linked to the movement of the earth around the sun. These poems hint at the possibility of human beings finding, or creating, our own meaning in the universe.

It's worth noting in this regard that Burns brings the same passion for specificity to his references to human artifacts and history that he does to his references to nature. There's no "jazz" in *Distant Virga*, there is (Miles Davis's) *Kind of Blue*. No "roads," but bridleways and T-junctions. Names are named.

starlings whistle  
from a gnarled tree  
Shakespeare's birthday

Comanche grassland  
ruins of the mission cast  
the only shadow



It would be unjust not to mention the added dimension that Ron Moss's abstract black-and-white paintings bring to *Distant Virga*. Moss's images, which evoke a landscape that is large, awe-inspiring, and mysterious, and also somehow scaled to human concerns, complement Burns's poetry perfectly. Each is paired with a one-line haiku, many of which move away from the relatively traditional haiku poetics of the bulk of the collection. Some of these are the most memorable haiku here, and perhaps point to a new, possible path for Burns's poetry. It will be interesting to see what kinds of journeys this poet takes us on in the future.

black smoke of a—no trespassing—life



*Melissa Allen lives in Madison, Wisconsin. Her haiku, haibun, renku, and tanka have been published widely, and she also writes the haiku blog Red Dragonfly.*

**Gary Hotham.** *Nothing More Happens in the 20th Century: Haiku Dangers.* San Antonio, TX: Pecan Grove Press, 2011, 39 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN 978-1-931247-98-6. US \$8.00, \$9.00 signed <<http://library.stmarytx.edu/pgpress/ordering/index.html>>.

by Dan Schwerin, Greendale, Wisconsin

The late Irish novelist and short-story master, John McGahern, said that “The writer’s business is to pull the image that moves us out of darkness.” A new work from Gary Hotham opens the ocean, the sky—and more. He uses the word “more” five times on top of exquisitely expansive images in his new collection, *Nothing More Happens in the 20th Century: Haiku Dangers*. His use of images, repetition closely juxtaposed, and precise language are revelatory:

by the open window—  
the part of the ocean  
within hearing

The subtitle for the collection, “Haiku Dangers,” prepares us for a book dedicated to two men lost during the Vietnam war. Hotham’s introduction from the Danish philosopher and theologian, Søren Kierkegaard, orients the reader to a book of poems that explore the moment, and more. Kierkegaard suffered the losses of five siblings and watched his mother die when he was just twenty-one. “Haiku Dangers” takes us to the precipice of these moments not to despair their tumbling away, but to enter them more fully. Here is Hotham placing Kierkegaard before his haiku, and ours:

And, now, the moment. A moment such as this is unique. To be sure, It is short and temporal, as the moment is; it is passing, as the moment is, past, as the moment is in the next moment, and yet it is decisive, and yet it is filled with the eternal. A moment such as this must have a special name. Let us call it: the fullness of time.

*Nothing More Happens* mines the significance of moments unappreciated at first glance. To my eyes, Hotham’s chief skill as

a poet is the way he layers the fragments or extends the phrase in order “to pull the image that moves us out of darkness,” as he does in this selection of poems from the book:

with numbers  
my daughter knows—  
the stars counted

puddle after puddle—  
the bright color  
of her long raincoat

the long part of the trip—  
sky becomes  
more sky

Hotham continues to experiment with punctuation and space within his lineation, as he did in his last collection, *Spilled Milk*. That book introduced us to a dash that expanded the space between the fragment and phrase as in:

middle of the night stars  
—  
views that take  
almost forever

I was surprised to see this spacewalking end with the last collection, and his return to a more traditional lineation. In both collections, Hotham’s poetry asks us to pay attention to how words and spaces function, and how rhythm renders message. None of the poems in this collection is offered in one line. We have great poems in the haiku community written as a monostich, but *Nothing More Happens* is tendered in rhythms that give us space enough to deliver the poetry of a moment. Haiku fashion has been to eliminate—and many offer bracing and effective minimalist poems sans punctuation. Even so, this collection puts us in the company of a poet who gives the expansive image space and language enough to breathe:

before it boils  
different sounds the water makes  
fill the room

Contemporary haiku poetry includes *gendai* tastes that expand a literal selective realism by experimenting with language. Hotham works the language by mining bedrock images. In the way Wendell Berry makes hay out of images like stones, leaves and rivers, this poet pulls the curtain away from skies and stars and deftly takes us beyond so-what poems to the edges of awe. The poems are well-crafted. The images don't show wear. What's more, a mature voice in the haiku community has given us not only evocative poems, but a sense of place in time.

at the gull's feet—  
the ocean spreads itself  
thin

*Nothing More Happens in the 20th Century* is part requiem for the last century's losses, part memorial for what passes unseen and part riff to the fullness of time in the century we are given infinitely now. Buy it. Take it on a long lunch. Give it time.

dew hanging on the fence—  
paint chips off  
the danger sign

#### Notes

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4. Hotham, Gary. *Spilled Milk: Haiku Destinies*. Montrose, CO: Pinyon Publishing, 2010, p. 123.
5. Berry, Wendell. *Given*. Emeryville, CA: Shoemaker Hoard of Avalon Publishing, 2005, pp. 61, 63, 99, 104, 110.



*Dan Schwerin is a United Methodist minister living in the Milwaukee area. His haiku have appeared in Frogpond, Modern Haiku, bottle rockets, Roadrunner, The Heron's Nest, and several Red Moon anthologies.*

## Briefly Reviewed

by Michele Root-Bernstein, East Lansing, Michigan  
& Francine Banwarth, Dubuque, Iowa

**David E. LeCount.** *La Honda Journal*. El Granada, CA: Day's Eye Press and Studios, 2011, 68 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 8. ISBN 978-0-9619714-3-4, US \$12 <[www.dayseyepressandstudios.com](http://www.dayseyepressandstudios.com)>. The preface to this collection, written by James W. Hackett, alerts readers to the form, values and “life-fulness” of the traditional haiku poetry that lies within. LeCount, a long-time haiku poet, captures the many brief and profound moments that have marked his family's rural life in the Santa Cruz Mountains—and does so in three-line, mostly one-phrase poems that eschew both perplexing juxtaposition and dry description. There is family sentiment and humor here, as well as deep feeling for the human:nature interface and for connection to the ancient foundations of haiku. *On daddy's shoulder / his daughter reaches the apple, / then pees warmly; The chimney smoke / first drifts with the wind, then / becomes it; Catching a frog / with only my cupped hands / for his pond . . .* ~MRB

**Robert Boldman.** *everything i touch*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, 64 pp., perfect softbound, 4.25 x 6.5. ISBN 978-1-893959-95-8, US\$12 <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>. An acknowledged master of minimalist haiku, Boldman offers here a collection of haiku using choice words to express the “wordlessness” of the ecstatic “self-erasing” and “open-ended” moment. Pushing past the typical boundaries of lineation, breath length, and other shibboleths of the form, Boldman's haiku brood over the heavy weight of the self, of death, of man's inhumanity to man. Here and there the probing illuminates, too, a fragmentary lightness of being, the miracle of creative awareness. The Higgs boson, the so-called God particle, appropriately graces the cover of this collection, in which every poem and every word is crucial to the reader's

apprehension of the poet's provocative, enigmatic and spiritual purposes. *Jan. 1 / the corpse of the crow whitens the snow; suitcase / beside the grave / soft rain; Death camp in the photograph / the little girl's hair will always be blowing.* ~MRB

**Sandra Simpson. *breath*. Tauranga: Piwakawaka Press, 2011, unpag. (32 pp.), perfect softbound, 5.75 x 8.25. ISBN 978-0-473-19150-4. No price given; inquire from the author at <nzhaiku@gmail.com>.** In this first collection the New Zealand poet Sandra Simpson offers us the best of her work from the past decade. Disarmingly simple and quotidian, Simpson's haiku walk us through the countryside and across town, pause with us before war memorials and Maori meeting houses, introduce us to family in its seasons. The result is a sensitive immersion in a particular, if largely domesticated world, punctuated by the poet's own photographs of the nature right outside her door. *fat spatters of rain / the pulse / in a sparrow's throat; hot night / songs of love / from the petrol station; talking as though he / will die first— / magnolia petals.* ~MRB

**Lee Gurga & Scott Metz, editors. *Haiku 21, An Anthology of Contemporary English-Language Haiku*. Lincoln, IL: Modern Haiku Press, 2011, 205 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8. ISBN 0-9741894-5-6, US \$20 + postage <www.modernhaiku.org>.** The way of haiku is changing ways. In their scholarly introduction the editors of *Haiku 21* trace recent challenges to many ideals of 20th-century English-language haiku. Juxtaposition, stripped down realism, original experience and transparency, long sacrosanct in traditionally conceived haiku, have begun to yield to disjunction, imagination, metaphoric allusion and opacity. This collection captures that transition nicely, with the editors' pick of the best in traditional and experimental (and what lies between) haiku produced in the years 2000 to 2010. Over 600 poems representing more than 200 poets provide much delight, some head-scratching, even more discovery. *dusk rearranging silences* (Philip Rowland); *Kind words stacked neatly before it gets cold* (Paul Pflieger, Jr.); *unmooned in the white woods a bird's wing* (Clare

McCotter); *as the world fails saxophone in the lips of a walrus* (Marlene Mountain); *still committed to the truth / but so tired of / winter poems* (John Stevenson). ~MRB

**Don Wentworth. *Past All Traps*. Pittsburgh, PA: Six Gallery Press, 2011, 76 pp., perfect softbound, 5 x 6. ISBN 978-1-926616-26-1, US \$10 <[www.spdbooks.org](http://www.spdbooks.org)>.** This full-length collection, the poet's first, will chiefly interest readers attracted to Eastern spiritual philosophy as a defining posture for haiku. Mixed among other brief poems and meditations, the verse presented here range from the didactic to the enigmatic, from *The life of the mind / will be the death / of us all.* and *plenty of room / left in the thimble / full of knowing* to *Not one pigeon on the wrong side of the roof.* and *Plastic flowers— / who are you / to talk* ~MRB

**Maki Starfield. *Kiss the Dragon*. Published by <[www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)>, 2011, 55 pp., perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-105-54284-8.** The author of this debut collection credits her introduction to an enthusiasm for “universal haiku” to Ban’ya Natsuishi (see essay review of his *Turquoise Milk*, this issue). Readers can expect some difficulties associated with English as a second language. Nevertheless, like bits of colored glass scattered in sand, haiku here and there gleam in her adopted tongue with *gendai* spirit. *Love is crazy / Which alerts me / To the autumn mystery; Grains of truth / Romeo and Juliet / In a dark red sky; Blue moon / Says goodbye / Rearranging the planet.* ~MRB

**Kaneko Tohta. *The Future of Haiku: An Interview with Kaneko Tohta*, trans. Kon Nichi Translation Group. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2011, 137 pp., perfect softbound, 4.25 x 6.5. ISBN 978-1-936848-02-7, US \$12 <[www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)>.** Kaneko Tohta was born in 1919 and published his first haiku at the age of 18. During his 75-year career he has become one of Japan's leading cultural figures as teacher, scholar, poet, critic, and “pioneer of the post-war modern haiku movement.” Kaneko's work is gathered in fourteen collections of haiku. His *Complete Collected*

*Writings* was published in 2002. *The Future of Haiku* is the second in a four-volume projected series presented by the Kon Nichi Translation Group. The first volume, *Ikimonofûei: Poetic Composition on Living Things*, was published by Red Moon Press in 2011. The second volume features an interview format in which Kaneko discusses topics that include a “living ideology,” “rawness and direct immediacy,” and “haiku and social consciousness,” interlaced with his wartime experience from 1944-1947. Our life experiences mold us into the kind of human and creative beings we become. Kaneko is a poet with a voice, a vision, and spirit: “. . . a life moves by instinct . . . a life moves by stretching out tentacles of instinct. This movement could be called freedom. It’s *nama*—a raw thing.” ~FB

**Ian Marshall. *Border Crossing: Walking the Haiku Path on the International Appalachian Trail*. Danvers, MA: Hiraeth Press, 2012, 291 pp., perfect softbound, 5.5 x 8.5. ISBN 978-0-983585-25-1, US \$17.95 <[www.hiraethpress.com](http://www.hiraethpress.com)>.** In *Border Crossing*, the reader travels with Ian Marshall as he explores, nurtures, and shares his interest in haiku aesthetics during a series of two-week journeys over six summers on the International Appalachian Trail, which extends 700 miles north and east from Maine to Quebec’s Gaspé Peninsula in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. He draws much of his inspiration for this journey of body, mind, and spirit from Bashō’s *Narrow Road to the Deep North*. Marshall’s narrative line is vibrant and engaging. Rather than rush through a day-by-day account of life and external/internal observations on the trail, the reader is invited to explore and contemplate what it means to *be in* the natural world. “Haiku was the map I consulted as I wended my way northeast from mountain to sea, the guidebook that pointed out the more intimate features of the landscape passing by.” The reader will find poetry, too, in the chapter titles: *The Day of Sunlight Shaped Like an Hourglass*; *The Day of Two Rivers Meeting*. Two favorite haiku: *on the trail / between the forest here / and the forest there*; *summer love / a firefly chases / a campfire spark*. ~FB



**Victor P. Gendrano. *Haiku and Tanka Harvest*. Lake-wood, CA: Heritage Publishers, 2012, 123 pp., perfect softbound, 6 x 9. ISBN 978-1-468017-85-4, US \$14 <[www.createpace.com](http://www.createpace.com)>. *Haiku and Tanka Harvest* is Victor P. Gendrano's second publication of collected poems, 2006-2011. His first collection, *Rustle of Bamboo Leaves, Selected Haiku and Other Poems*, was published in 2005. True to its title, this collection is a virtual "harvest" of Gendrano's published and award-winning haiku and tanka, with a sprinkling of senryu and haiga. Many of his tanka evoke a sense of farewell and absence: *the coffee mug / with our pictures on it / I ordered a while back / remains unused / in the cupboard* (*Sketchbook*, Vol. 4, No. 6), while his haiku find their way into the heart: *end of summer / our daughter's vacation / gets shorter each year* (*The Heron's Nest*, Vol. XIII, No. 1). ~FB**

**Svetlana Marisova and Ted van Zutphen. "Be Still and Know": A Journey Through Love in Japanese Short Form Poetry. Upper Hutt, N.Z.: Karakia Press, 2011, unpag. (192 pages), 5.25 x 8. ISBN 978-0-473206-64-2, US \$13 + postage from <[www.karakiapress.com](http://www.karakiapress.com)>. This collection is remarkable in the fact that Marisova and van Zutphen met and knew each other through the Internet for a brief one and a half years before Marisova died at the age of 21, due to the reoccurrence of a brain tumor. In the Introduction, Robert D. Wilson sheds a memorable light on a bond that was created through the "magic of haiku." The poems invite the reader to approach the pages with a still mind, to live deeply, to reach beyond oneself: "The personal life deeply lived always expands into truths beyond itself" (Marisova). In the Foreword, van Zutphen relates how this collection came together in a "journey through love." As the two explored and developed a personal haiku aesthetics, they strived "to get deeper and further into the spirit that animates us": *gentle breeze . . . / who sent me / these goosebumps* (M); *summer shade . . . / a fallen fig / shows its flesh* (vZ); *night wildflowers— / a morepark calls / its own name* (M); *a grackle, / ruffling its feathers . . . / and song* (vZ). ~FB**

# Re:Reading

From *Frogpond* 35:1

**Mary Ahearn**, Pottstown, Pennsylvania, on the article “Research Note: Shiki and Buson—A Case of Deja-Ku?” by Charles Trumbull, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Dr. Trumbull’s article on the authorship of “two autumns” caught my eye as this was something I had been puzzled by in the past. His conclusion concurs with Abigail Friedman’s “Notes from the Field,” *Frogpond* 27:2, which she so kindly sent to me several years ago. In addition to her own research, her sources were the Shiki scholar Janine Beichman and her own haiku master, Momoko Kuroda. Shiki it is.



## *Call for Designs*

Help stock this pond with frogs! We welcome frog designs, in black and white, for review and possible inclusion in the pages of this journal. Our hope is to choose a different frog design for each issue, so submissions may be made at any time. Please email high-quality .jpeg or .tiff files to the editors of *Frogpond* at <frogsforthepond@gmail.com>.

## *A Tribute*

With this inaugural issue we pay tribute to *Frogpond* Founding Editor Lilli Tanzer (1978-1980) and to all of the editors who have preceded us. We will remember the legacy they’ve left us as we continue to polish this “diamond in the rough.”

~The Editors

# Corrections

## *Frogpond 34:3*

*p. 60*

The title of Duro Jaiye's haibun should be "Evolution Blues" not "Evolution Blue."

## *Frogpond 35:1*

*p. 21*

Barry George's haiku should read:

musty and somewhat  
worn around the edges—  
the used bookseller

*pp. 169-170*

Correct lineage for the 2011 Brady Senryu Contest winners:

Father's Day—  
a potato  
without a face

stirring my coffee  
every which way  
flamenco

Susan Marie LaVallee (2nd)

Sheila K. Barksdale (3rd)

Trick-or-Treat  
a sailboat's name  
reflects in the sea

Martin Luther King Day  
I readjust  
my rear-view mirror

Alan S. Bridges (HM)

Carolyn Hall (HM)

*p. 173*

The correct spelling for the 2011 Haibun Contest winner's name is Lynn McLure.

# 2011

## Kanterman Merit Book Awards

### Judge

Michael Dylan Welch, Sammamish, Washington

*These awards are for books published in 2010. The First Place award is made possible by LeRoy Kanterman, cofounder of the Haiku Society of America, in memory of his wife Mildred Kanterman. Congratulations to each of the winners, and to many additional poets who published other worthy books. If you might be interested in serving as a judge for future Kanterman Awards, please notify any Haiku Society of America officer.*

### First Place (\$500)

**Tenzing Karma Wangchuk. *Shelter/Street*. Port Townsend, Washington: Minotaur Press, 2010. 5.5 x 8.5 inches, 36 pages, saddle-stapled. No ISBN.**

Karma Tenzing Wangchuk is a modern Santōka, with dashes of Issa's compassion and Bashō's wandering soul. This book of utterly honest and self-accepting poems, despite their depiction of a sometimes hard place in life, works well not just as a collection of 84 individual poems but as a nuanced sequence that celebrates life as it is, as in "it's the worm / inside the bird / sings the song." The poems explore homelessness, living on the street, and soup kitchens, with touches of nature and joy. Even the book's humble production values (a black-and-white cover photograph and simple typesetting in a stapled chapbook) echo the stark and sometimes gritty subject matter. Tenzing channels Santōka—minus the sake—in so many of these poems, as in the one-liners "bare feet in the grass write five poems" and "shave once or twice a week no one cares." In his stone buddha poems, the buddha is often Tenzing himself, as in "doing nothing— / the stone buddha /

hard at it.” We see shades of Issa in “school’s out / the skate-board park / fills with children” or “little sparrow— / eating, shitting, chirping . . . / me too!” Ultimately, Karma Tenzing Wangchuk’s *Shelter/Street* is urban haiku at its finest, a book that sneaks up on you in an unprepossessing way and makes you care.

in the end  
just as I am  
will have to do

### Second Place (\$100)

**John Parsons. *Overhead Whistling*. Labyrinth Press, 2010. 5.25 x 7.5 inches, 130 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-872468-83-9.**

*Overhead Whistling* by John Parsons begins with a quotation from Alan Watts, who said “We do not as much look at things as overlook them.” What follows is a collection of more than 350 haiku that closely look at things, and see them closely, all of it the stuff of life. The poems carry a fresh and distinctive British voice, including subjects, cultural allusions, and linguistic nuances that sometimes differ from what Americans might be used to. Two cathedral poems: “cottage garden / through canterbury bells / her ring tone” and “new granite steps / to the mall already smooth / as the cathedral’s.”

### Third Place (\$50)

**Christopher Herold. *Inside Out*. Winchester, Virginia: Red Moon Press, 2010. 5.5 x 7 inches, 102 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-893959-96-5.**

A Mobius strip graces the front cover of this book, which begins by invoking Chuang Tzu who wondered if he was a man dreaming he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was a man. Such are the ins and outs of this book, divided into two

sections, first “Inside Out” and then “Outside In.” The poems fit these classifications in both expected and unexpected ways, exploring not just the indoors and outdoors, but the internal as well as the external, the transcendent and the mundane. The opening and closing poems: “first light / everything in this room / was already here” and “dusk / with nowhere to turn / sunflower.”

### Honorable Mentions

(in order)

**George Swede. *Joy in Me Still*. Edmonton, Alberta: Inking Press, 2010. 5.25 x 8.25 inches, 82 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9810725-5-5.**

**Gary Hotham. *Spilled Milk*. Paintings by Susan Elliott. Montrose, Colorado: Pinyon Publishing, 2010. 5.25 x 8 inches, 134 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9821561-5-5.**

**Carolyn Hall. *How to Paint the Finch’s Song*. Winchester, Virginia: Red Moon Press, 2010. 4.25 x 6.5 inches, 80 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-893959-94-1.**

Each of these three books offers something distinctive. George Swede is an old hand at haiku, and we would expect nothing less than excellence—and of course he delivers. This book reflects on his career as a psychology professor (he’s now retired), and tends to look back on life rather than forward, as in “the line cast / where the river flows / things long forgotten.” Gary Hotham has been doing haiku for just as long as Swede, if not longer, and delivers another pleasing volume of his poems, beautifully presented at one per page, interspersed with sumi paintings by Susan Elliott. A sample poem: “at the bus stop— / her hand out / in the rain.” Carolyn Hall is a newer voice, relatively speaking, but has become a standard-bearer for the haiku genre. Her newest collection paints the songs of both the visible and invisible. The opening poem, a one-liner: “to whom it may concern cottonwood puffs.”

## Best Anthology

**Stephen Henry Gill and Okiharu Maeda, editors. *One Hundred Poets on Mount Ogura, One Poem Each*. Kyoto: People Together for Mt. Ogura and Hailstone Haiku Circle, 2010. 6 x 8.25 inches, 136 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-4-9900822-4-6.**

The year 2010 seemed to be uncommonly populated with many excellent anthologies. I consider this one to be best because of its clear concept, carried out well. Perhaps its selection also serves as a nod to other bilingual Hailstone haiku anthologies that have been overlooked in previous years. Mt. Ogura, on the northwest side of Kyoto, is the most celebrated mountain in Japanese literature, especially in Fujiwara no Teika's *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu*, after which this book is modeled. In recent years, however, Mt. Ogura has been neglected, with much trash dumped there. A nonprofit group started by Stephen Gill has sought to clean it up and beautify it, and this anthology seeks to bring attention to Mt. Ogura's poetic legacy and natural beauty. It does so without the environmental agenda getting in the way of most of the poems (mostly haiku, but also a few tanka), and provides great variety—young, old; new poets, and the more seasoned. All content is translated into English or Japanese from the original language and presented in a professional layout and design. For those familiar with Mt. Ogura, the book is a treat, especially with its map and informative footnotes. For those not familiar, the book is an invitation to learn more. A sample poem by Yoshihiko Suzuki (Sagano is the region of Kyoto at the foot of Mt. Ogura): “Temple bell at dusk . . . / Sagano begins to receive / a winter shower.”

## Honorable Mentions

(in order)

**Lidia Rozmus and Carmen Sterba, editors, paintings by Lidia Rozmus, photographs by Mamoru Luke Sterba Yanka and Lidia Rozmus. *The Moss at Tōkeiji*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Deep North Press, 2010. 5.25 x 8.5 inches, 52 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-929116-16-4.**

**Billie Dee, editor. *The Island of Egrets*. Pasadena, California: Southern California Haiku Study Group, 2010. 5.25 x 8.5 inches, 110 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9829847-0-3.**

**Stanford M. Forrester, editor, Donna Fleischer, contributing editor. *Seed Packets: An Anthology of Flower Haiku*. Windsor, Connecticut: Bottle Rockets Press, 2010. 5 x 6.5 inches, 100 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9792257-4-1.**

**Allan Burns, editor. *Montage: The Book*. Winchester, Virginia: The Haiku Foundation, 2010. 10 x 7 inches, 144 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9826951-0-4.**

**Spring Street Haiku Group, Efren Estevez, production editor. *Suspiciously Small: A Collection of Haiku*. New York: Spring Street Haiku Group, 2010. 5 x 6.5 inches, 92 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-615-32318-3.**

This year seemed to be the year of the anthology, as many fine anthologies were published in 2010, hence the many honorable mentions in this category. In another year, almost any one of these anthologies could have won as best anthology, and *The Moss at Tōkeiji* would be the forerunner because of its high concept and excellent execution—haibun by women only, about a temple in Kamakura that served for more than 600 years as a sanctuary for women during patriarchal times. Professional production and color photographs throughout contribute to making this a must-have collection that also could have won in the haibun category.

The other anthologies mentioned here include the Southern California Haiku Study Group annual anthology edited by Billie Dee, which is notable not only for the range of voices, but the inclusion of Spanish-language haiku from just south of the border in Mexico. Stanford M. Forrester's *Seed Packets*, though not the first anthology of flower haiku, is especially pleasing in the pacing and subtle grouping of poems. *Montage*, edited by Allan Burns, is a huge anthology of more than 1,113 haiku that appear at the rate of 21 poems on every other



page (opposite short essays introducing the themes covered in each “gallery” of poems, with themes such as frontiers, life and death, and fall migration). The book’s sheer number of poems makes it daunting to read, but the thematic groupings and focus on poets as well as themes make it accessible. Also worth noting is the Spring Street Haiku Group’s latest anthology, which assembles five smaller annual collections (not previously published) into one pleasing volume by a number of notable poets.

As in other years, if the latest Red Moon Anthology were published only once instead of being part of an annual series, it would deserve greater recognition. For those who read the leading haiku journals, however, the material is already familiar. In the other collections listed here, most work is less familiar, thus fresher, or appears in engaging new arrangements. For anyone new to haiku, though, the Red Moon anthologies continue to be a vital and interesting perspective on the haiku scene.

### **Best Book of Haibun**

**Cor van den Heuvel. *A Boy’s Seasons*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Single Island Press, 2010. 6.5 x 7.5 inches, 206 pages, perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9740895-8-4.**

Any project that Cor van den Heuvel undertakes is typically equivalent to a home run. And he’s done so here with *A Boy’s Seasons*. This long-awaited haibun collection, a sort of memoir, explores the author’s boyhood New England memories by season, focusing primarily on sports, but also on popular culture and other topics, concluding with haibun covering holidays throughout the year. This weighty and nostalgic book is essential reading for anyone exploring the genre of haibun. The book’s final poem, as a sample: “on a train / Christmas lights in all the towns / flicker into the past.” Also notable in this category, but given awards in other categories, are the haibun books *The Moss at Tōkeiji* and Ruth Franke’s *Slipping Through Water*.

## Best Book of Translation

**Ruth Franke, translated by David Cobb and Celia Brown, paintings by Reinhard Stangl. *Schwerelos Gleiten/Slipping Through Water*. Schwinfurt, Germany: Wiesenburg Verlag, 2010. 7.75 x 9.5 inches, 120 pages, hardback. ISBN 978-3-9422063-40-1.**

The production values of this hardback book by the late German haiku poet Ruth Franke are the best of any of the books mentioned in this year's awards. But more importantly, the content delivers a series of excellent haibun in both German and English translations. The haibun, presented in four sections interspersed with a few individual haiku, reveal the author's life and locations with disarming directness. Readers will feel the subjects of water, waves, aging, loneliness, and many rich memories. Here's a sample poem: "auf einer Parkbank / verdorrte Kiefernadeln / paarweise," translated as "on a park bench / withered pine needles / still in pairs."

## Best Book for Children

**Valerie Bodden. *Poetry Basics: Haiku*. Collingwood, Ontario: Saunders Book company; Mankato, Massachusetts: Creative Paperbacks, 2010. 8.25 x 11.25 inches, 32 pages, perfect-bound. ISBN 978-1-926722-44-3.**

The majority of English-language haiku books for children perpetuate the urban myth of 5-7-5 syllables, but this book is an exception. Much of the material is familiar from numerous other sources, but for a compressed and informative overview of the haiku genre for children, there have been few other books equal to this (Patricia Donegan's book, *Haiku: Asian Arts & Crafts for Creative Kids*, is still the best such book, however, with Paul Janeczko's *How to Write Haiku and Other Short Poems* not far behind for older children). This richly illustrated large-format book covers haiku's history in Japan and its jump across the pond to the West, especially through

Imagism. Although the “onji” myth is perpetuated, syllable-counting is minimized (“most English-language haiku . . . do not have a set number of syllables per line”), and we learn such techniques as using present tense and season words, exploiting the five senses, and employing a two-part structure with a pause. Sample poems by leading Western poets, or perhaps children, would have made the book even better. A short bibliography points to additional resources.

### Honorable Mention

**Kala Ramesh. *My Haiku Moments: An Activity Book for Young Haiku Lovers*. 5.5 x 5.5 inches, 12 pages, saddle-stapled. Sold together with: Kala Ramesh. *Haiku*. 5.5 x 5.5 inches; no “pages” or binding (see the following description). Both books: Illustrations by Surabhi Singh; New Delhi, India: Katha, 2010. ISBN 978-81-89934-63-7.**

These two small books, sold as a pair, have high production values, full-color printing, and a pleasing selection of age-targeted poems. The activity book has brief descriptions of the form, structure, language, and subject matter for haiku, plus writing exercises, and an introduction to haiga and suggestions for teachers. The list of “simple tips” is surprisingly similar to my own “Haiku Checklist” (repeating much of the same wording and order), doing a good job of distilling the key strategies for haiku composition. The companion book provides numerous example haiku to emulate. What is particularly attractive—amazing, really—is how the book unfolds. If you hold the first and last pages between your thumbs and forefingers, and pull, the entire book unfolds, accordion-like, into a large poster-sized novelty. It has no traditional “pages.” You can’t read it linearly, but can read different triangles and squares of the book in whatever order you like, and then read the other side. This novelty presentation for children—also attractive to adults—imbues haiku poetry with excitement and appeal. A sample poem: “kite contest / the rise and fall / of ohs and ahs.”

## Special Award for Best Letterpress Book

**Michael Ketchek. Letterpress production by Ed Rayher. *Over Our Heads*. Northfield, Massachusetts: Swamp Press, 2010. 6.25 x 3.75 inches, 60 pages, perfectbound. No ISBN.**

Haiku poetry and small letterpress publications are made for each other, and *Over Our Heads* is a case in point. Another Swamp Press creation, printed on fine papers, the book is shaped like a house, with a moon overhead. A round moon shape is cut into the pages, each circle moved slightly on each page, giving the effect of a waxing and waning moon. Each page features one haiku. The innovative presentation threatens to overshadow the poems, but a careful reading reveals many moving and varied haiku and other short poems, such as “backwoods cabin / still not far enough / from the war” and “even without dewdrops / all those / caterpillar hairs.”



*Michael Dylan Welch is vice president of the Haiku Society of America. He has won first place in each of the Henderson, Brady, Drevniok, and Tokutomi contests, among others, and has published his haiku, senryu, and other poems in hundreds of journals and anthologies. He has also published numerous books of poetry, including several books from Japanese, cotranslated with Emiko Miyashita (one of their waka translations was featured on the back of 150 million U.S. postage stamps in March of 2012). Michael cofounded the Haiku North America conference and the American Haiku Archives, and founded both the Tanka Society of America and National Haiku Writing Month (NaHaiWriMo). His website is: [www.graceguts.com](http://www.graceguts.com).*

# 2012

## Nicholas Virgilio Haiku Contest

### Judges

Geoffrey Van Kirk and Patricia Doyle Van Kirk

New York, New York

*Haiku written by secondary school students often exhibit some divergent qualities. The poems can soothe, or they may startle. They can strike out in fresh directions, or they may tread familiar paths. They can be in tune with nature or seem wholly absorbed in self. Sometimes they are subtle; sometimes they are really in your face. That is to say, the poems are a good deal like the poets who pen them.*

*The 457 poems presented to the judges this year in the Nicholas Virgilio Memorial Contest featured this great divergence in topic, treatment, and tone. We took real pleasure in reading them and thank all the poets for their efforts and involvement. Quite a few poems zoomed in on homely topics; many depicted scenes shared with just a single parent or presented the things left behind by a grandparent. The potency of such felt moments of absence was often quite clear, the more so when emotions were evoked in true haiku style rather than expressed or explained. Still, a number of poems lacked the restraint needed in this area. Some student poets chose to tell rather than show, thereby limiting the readers' ability to enter into the poem and explore the feelings inherent in the moment.*

*After reading the entries on our own, we compared our choices and found there were nearly two dozen poems that made the first cut. Quite a few of these were joint favorites. We conferred; we sifted. In the end a half dozen poems had the spark and the allure to earn our votes as winners for this year's contest. We congratulate these six winners and offer our individual comments on each poem.*

Geoff Van Kirk and Patricia Doyle Van Kirk

winter dusk  
the crows  
clotting the wind

Olivia Babuka Black, 14, Grade 8  
The Paideia School, Atlanta, Georgia

This short poem summons us to look and to listen. The images are both delicate and stark. In the winter, that in-between moment, when last light ebbs, can have an elusive beauty. But here, even if the trceries of bare branch against sky seem feathery and pure, the majority of the poem summons a whoosh of sound which suppresses the visual delicacy of nightfall. The whirl of wind is thick enough that crows can congeal it into masses of black and noise. Not even mentioned in the poem, but still loud in our ears, is the racket the birds make as they caw and circle. The poet's choice of the word "clotting" here is powerful. It is a wonderful alliterative fit with "crows," and the open vowels of the two words together also suggest, as you say them aloud, the round clumps that are forming in air. However, the use of the verb in the poem also perplexes. Is wind "thick" enough to clot? Is the verb too figurative or metaphoric? While we can pause to explore the image and urge it to make sense, it ultimately succeeds and swirls us along in its wake, tingling with ominous power in the coming darkness. -gvk

There is a wonderful tangle of natural imagery here, the merging of "winter dusk," "crows," and the "wind." Where the seasonal reference conjures up images of the stillness of the impending darkness, the appearance of the birds, and not just any birds, but luminous, black crows, breaks the scene and the silence. And because these creatures of the air are so agile and perhaps so numerous, they seem to have power over the very wind itself, "clotting" it with their numbers and their flight. The combination is unusual and magical. -pdvk

at the funeral  
headphones hidden  
beneath my sweater

Dino Romeo, 14, Grade 9  
Sage High School, Newport Coast, California

The author here has a secret. At a time of life when families tend to band together and share communal pain, the poet may be about to tune out. It is easy to leap to the conclusion that, by the very mention of earphones, the speaker is not engaged at this solemn event. Although it's possible the headphones represent a callous wish to be elsewhere, there are other possibilities. This could be a poem about discretion; what's hidden under the sweater may stay hidden out of respect for the moment. Or there may be music cued up which connected the poet and the departed, and, by donning the headphones, our poet would escape into rather than escape from the moment. In any case, there's an appealing honesty to the poet's revelation of what's hiding behind the sweater. The haiku invites us to explore the ways, as individuals and as families, we approach what's momentous in life. -gvk

This poem offers a wonderful juxtaposition, pairing the image of a "funeral" and all the associations it conjures up for the reader with the subsequent, unexpected image of the "hidden" music "headphones." So we imagine the narrator present, not just at a funeral, but at "the" funeral, which implies it is for someone special or important. And in the midst of what is generally a solemn, dignified, even ancient, ritual, modern technology intrudes. Is music being played secretly as a distraction? Does it provide some comfort? Is the speaker only here out of obligation and, dare I say it, perhaps a little bored? Or have the headphones been left on inadvertently? Is there music even playing? -pdvk

summer waves  
leave belly button sand  
in my shower

Alex Manolakas, 18, Grade 12  
Sage High School, Newport Coast, California

Those summer waves—they're powerful. Ride one wrong and, thunk, it tumbles you to the bottom. You come up sputtering, anointed with salt and sand. And then you do it again! In this poem, the waves reemerge powerful, almost personified. They reappear at home and seem to laugh as the poet does a last scrub. The remnants from a day at the shore, they cling! In the poem the beach sand goes toward the drain. But what about the sunburn? What about the echoes of waves crashing toward the beach and the sibilant rush they make sliding back the sandy slopes? It's all still with us long after the sun has set. Through a homely, amusing image, this haiku immerses us in the whole magic of a seaside day. -gvk

I like the way this poem captures an experience most of us have had, coming inside after a day at the beach, sun-soaked and water-logged, mellow and contented, but wanting to hit the showers first thing to wash off all that pesky sand. Sea sand, while fun to walk and play in on the beach, feels all the more uncomfortable the further we get from the shore. This writer offers us a playful take on this common scene with the use of the alliterative image of "belly button sand," which is reminiscent of childhood, and also manages to link the recent past of the beach visit to the sandy aftermath with the "summer waves" that "leave" the sand in the "shower." Outdoors effectively merges with indoors. The choice of the proprietary word "my," rather than "the," with "shower" is also intriguing, implying that the trip back from the beach is a return to the comforts of home, or at least to a familiar spot. -pdvk



rainfall  
grey sky  
in big puddles

Siani Macklin, 13, Grade 7  
Sacred Heart School, Camden, New Jersey

This simple poem speaks of the drab and damp. As each line progresses, the poem widens a bit until the last line spreads out in imitation of the puddles it describes. But the poem is not just a portrait in monochrome. It seems to be about perception as much as it is about precipitation. While many of us bow in response to falling rain, the grammar of the poem says that puddles are the canvas, but the leaden sky is the subject and story of the last two lines. It's a bit of an inversion, isn't it, looking down to see what's up? The sky, be it boiling grey masses or flannel blankets, is at our feet. And if the puddles cover pale concrete, will the heavens look the same as when the puddles blanket playground asphalt? Does a falling drop spread rings? It's an imperfect view, this reflected vision of sky, and certainly an impermanent one. But who's to say we'd get closer to the truth of clouds by looking up? The poem here acknowledges that we may sometimes come to know a thing by its reflection and by what it brings to pass. -gvk

This haiku poem caught my attention immediately and left me pondering what "grey sky" in "big puddles" really looks like. As a long-time puddle splasher myself (the bigger the puddle, the better, by the way), I realized I couldn't quite imagine it, probably because any opportunity to view the reflection of the sky was lost with all that splashing. The writer reminded me that stopping to observe the beauty of this natural phenomenon was as important as playing in it. And the scaffolding of three lines, starting with one word, moving to two, and then three, knits the three different but connected images of the haiku delicately together for the reader. -pdvk

night on the lake  
I touch  
the moon

Abbey Shannon, 13, Grade 7  
The Paideia School, Atlanta, Georgia

Here, in simple words, the poet presents a scene of quietness and delicacy. The two sections of the poem are well set out and sonically distinct. The hard consonant sounds of both “night” and “lake” make for a definitive beginning. In the hush of a still night by the water, all sounds are amplified. If you were in a canoe, a light bump of paddle on hull would resound the way the “k” sound clobbers the long “a” in the word lake. But the poet, alert and alive, hears no jarring sound. Instead, the last two lines present a mystical moment. In touching the moon, perhaps with finger or paddle brought to still water, the poet takes advantage of the quiet to make this delicate connection. The long, open vowels help to stretch out the phrase and highlight the moment of intimacy. -gvk

At first this poem appears to describe a fairly normal sight in nature, the moon’s reflection in water. A closer look shows there is actually a lot more going on here. Is the speaker reaching down to graze the lake water with a gentle hand to “touch” the reflected “moon”? Or is this about standing on tiptoes and stretching towards the unreachable sky? Or is this, in fact, suggesting a figurative image about someone having achieved something great by soaring to the moon’s heights? Or trying to? And what brought the speaker here? Is the speaker alone? Or with others? I wonder. In just eight words, this appealing haiku presents a scene open to many possible interpretations. -pdvk

*Geoffrey Van Kirk, a teacher, photographer, haiku poet and haiku workshop leader, has taught English to middle school students at the United Nations International School for twenty years. He is one of the two organizers of the Student Haiku Contest, an annual poetry competition sponsored by UNIS for students writing haiku in Japanese and/or English. He has published haiku in a number of journals and has been a member of HSA for the past year.*

stair of roots  
I step  
on each knot

Ainura Johnson, 13, Grade 7  
The Paideia School, Atlanta, Georgia

While this haiku, with its short second line, has sort of stuttery line breaks, that staccato writing works in its favor. This is because the poet has depicted a story that is equally full of jarring motion. In addition, the succession of clipped consonants in all three lines gives a wonderful sonic echo to the painful progress of footsteps along this root-bound path. Is the poet going up or down? Each way would have its own challenges. What seems more important is the poet's own determination to take the roughest route. By tramping on each knot, the poet hits the hard spots. Even if the goal is to get the maximum traction on what could be slippery terrain, the poet has committed to the more difficult path. Sometimes there's no better choice. -gvk

This haiku, aptly reflective of its meaning, seems to be structured very much like the actual steps of a staircase, with one three-word, three-syllable step on top of another, separated by a smaller, two-word, two-syllable riser. Beyond that, it works on many levels. The roots may have sprawled across a staircase in the park, or they may have formed a natural one over time. The inclusion of the human "I" in the scene reminds us that nature was there first and may sometimes impede human progress, in this case, up or down a staircase, or it may do the exact opposite, providing a means to assist us on our journey. It's all part of the natural order. Interestingly, the speaker here seems up for the challenge of overcoming any obstacles, in fact, almost going out of the way to "step on each knot" in the series of roots. Perhaps it is an inviting challenge. This haiku is certainly inviting. -pdvk

*Patricia Doyle Van Kirk is a teacher at the United Nations International School and has served as Head of the English Department there for well over two decades. A Senior Examiner for the International Baccalaureate program and IB workshop leader, she teaches middle school and high school, and both she and her students have won prizes in haiku poetry competitions.*

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## From the Editors

*You must do the thing you think you cannot do.*

~Eleanor Roosevelt

Winter has turned to spring, and spring to summer, as we add the final touches to our inaugural issue of *Frogpond*. Faced with a daunting challenge, coupled with an extreme learning curve, we've proceeded with faith and daring to do the thing we thought we could not do. First and foremost, we didn't do it alone. Thank you to George Swede and Anita Krumins for entrusting us with the editorship of *Frogpond*, which embodies their four-year effort of labor, love, and excellence. Our gratitude to them and to the HSA Executive Committee for their trust, support, and encouragement. A deep bow goes to Noah Banwarth, who, with the patience of six saints, tutored his mom in the workings of the design program used to produce this and future issues. We tip our hats in appreciation to Charlie Trumbull and Bill Pauly, whose expertise and sharp attention to detail guided us in the final proofing and editing stages.

We are fully aware that this letter could not be written if we didn't have the support of our readers and contributors. Your talents and desire to create and share are reflected throughout these pages. During the submission period we received over 3,000 haiku and senryu and over 150 haibun and other linked forms, as well as thought-provoking essays and books for review. We encourage you to take your time with each selection, to discover the links and shifts, to ponder and question, to explore your vision of the haiku arts, and to strive for excellence in your writing life.

As we look to the future, what we do know we can—and want to—do is assemble a *Frogpond* that reflects the multifarious nature of haiku practice, whether in solo poem and prose or collaborative sequence. We want to make room for many voices: the new as well as the familiar, the near as well as the far, the young as well as the old. We want, as well, to represent the full range of our community's thoughts and reflections in insightful reviews and concise essays that touch on process, purpose, and possibility. The root word of essay means, after all, to try, in essence to dare ourselves to experiment, explore, and grow—something Eleanor Roosevelt obviously knew a lot about.

Francine Banwarth, Editor  
Michele Root-Bernstein, Assistant Editor

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