

FINE FEATHERS

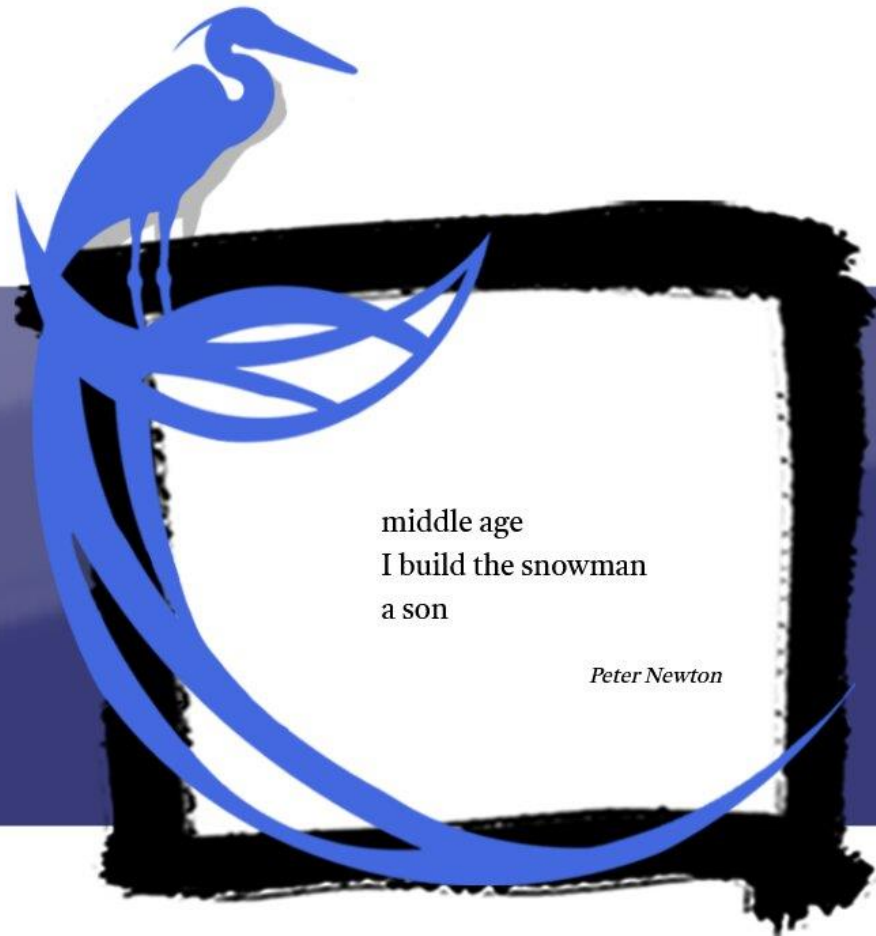


A Dozen Favorite Haiku Written by Editors of *The Heron's Nest*

Scott Mason * Haiku Society of America - National Conference * 6/13/21

The Heron's Nest

where tradition and innovation meet



middle age
I build the snowman
a son

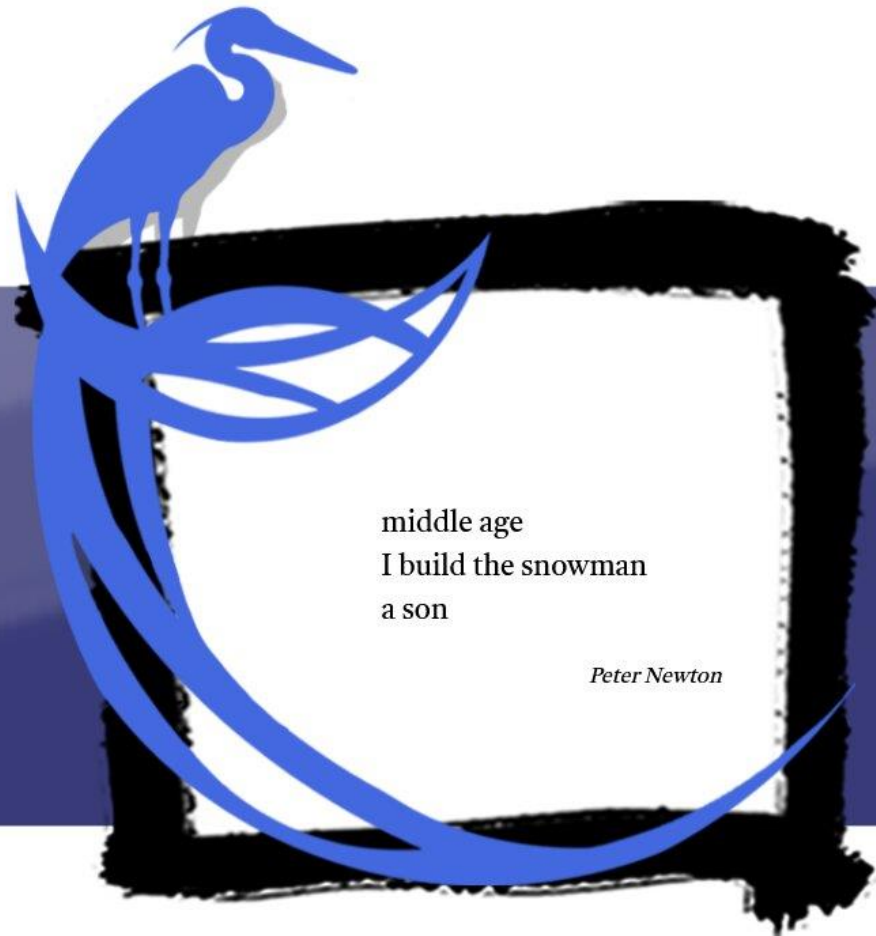
Peter Newton

*readers'
choice
awards*



The Heron's Nest

where tradition and innovation meet



middle age
I build the snowman
a son

Peter Newton

The Heron's Nest Award

middle age
I build the snowman
a son

Peter Newton
Rutland, Vermont

This well-crafted haiku is both timely and timeless. There is sufficient framework to situate the experience while retaining enough room to explore further. The reader has the opportunity to invest that open space with their own memories and meaning.

It's been a while since I've built a snowman, but growing up in Maine I had plenty of opportunities to build snowmen and snow forts. I spent hours outside in the snow. My son, on the other hand, didn't see snow until he was five years old. He didn't like the cold, and he wasn't all that interested in making a snowman. The hot chocolate afterwards was the best part for him.

The winter scene suggests aging as a theme and the poet states this quite plainly in the first line. Middle age can be thought of as the midpoint in one's life—a lifetime folded in half. The exact span of years that constitute this season is open for debate even among social scientists. It's not so much a number but a series of life events that mark a transition from a carefree young adult to the physical decline of old age.

One major characteristic of middle age is generativity—investment in the welfare of others. It naturally occurs within the family as we care for our children and negotiate ongoing relationships with our siblings and parents. It is in middle age that we start to contemplate our legacy. What do we want to leave behind for others? How can we contribute to the next generation?

Peter Newton's haiku goes right to the heart of this concern for others. After an afternoon of play creating a snowman, he steps back to observe this lone figure. Something is missing. He creates a smaller version out of snow, not for himself, but for the snowman. It is such a simple gesture but it conveys so much connection and compassion. Even this lump of snow shouldn't be alone to face the remainder of its short time in existence. The haiku doesn't dwell on regret, but frames this circumstance in the most positive terms.

Due to the lockdown and shelter-in-place orders loneliness is at an all-time high. And while this haiku doesn't mention the coronavirus pandemic directly, it is there nonetheless. Not seeing our friends and family for over a year has taken a toll on our collective psyche. When will we be able to see, hold, and play with our children and grandchildren? Will we ever return to an old sense of normalcy, or will social distancing and masks be the new normal? In the meantime we can look outside and see a snowman and his snow son through the poet's eyes. This reassures us that things will go back to normal someday. We will be able to congregate with loved ones without fear of contagion.

Cherie Hunter Day
June 2021



Christopher Herold

Paul MacNeil

Robert Gilliland

Alice Frampton

Billie Wilson

Cherie Hunter Day

Ferris Gilli

Peggy Willis Lyles

John Stevenson

Fay Aoyagi

Julie Warther

Jeff Hoagland

first light

first light

everything in this room

**first light
everything in this room
was already here**

**first light
everything in this room
was already here**

Christopher Herold

last night's rain

**last night's rain
cupped in a banana leaf**

last night's rain
cupped in a banana leaf
a small green frog

last night's rain
cupped in a banana leaf
a small green frog

Ferris Gilli

Evening wind

**Evening wind:
water laps**

**Evening wind:
water laps
the heron's legs**

Evening wind:
water laps
the heron's legs

Yosa Buson (trans. Robert Haas)

last night's rain
cupped in a banana leaf
a small green frog

Ferris Gilli

snowed in

**snowed in
the wedding ring quilt**

**snowed in
the wedding ring quilt
lumpy with children**

**snowed in
the wedding ring quilt
lumpy with children**

Peggy Willis Lyles



**snowed in
the wedding ring quilt
lumpy with children**

Peggy Willis Lyles

a rusted truck

**a rusted truck
the wheel wells filling**

a rusted truck
the wheel wells filling
with rhubarb

a rusted truck
the wheel wells filling
with rhubarb

Paul MacNeil

stubble field

stubble field

a hawk and its shadow

**stubble field
a hawk and its shadow
meet at the mouse**

**stubble field
a hawk and its shadow
meet at the mouse**

Robert Gilliland

steam rising

**steam rising
from the dog's pee**

**steam rising
from the dog's pee
witching hour**

**steam rising
from the dog's pee
witching hour**

Alice Frampton

winter nears—

winter nears—
in the dog's eyes

winter nears—
in the dog's eyes
the wolf

winter nears—
in the dog's eyes
the wolf

Billie Wilson

night ocean

**night ocean
death's puppeteer**

**night ocean
death's puppeteer
clears his throat**

night ocean
death's puppeteer
clears his throat

Fay Aoyagi

biking downhill

biking downhill
an Amish girl with bonnet straps

**biking downhill
an Amish girl with bonnet straps
clenched in her teeth**

**biking downhill
an Amish girl with bonnet straps
clenched in her teeth**

Julie Warther



**biking downhill
an Amish girl with bonnet straps
clenched in her teeth**

Julie Warther

twilight

twilight

a child's pail taken

twilight

a child's pail taken

by the tide

twilight
a child's pail taken
by the tide

Cherie Hunter Day

raw umber the hill's shorthand for want

Cherie Hunter Day

board meeting

**board meeting
the cricket**

**board meeting
the cricket
has the floor**

**board meeting
the cricket
has the floor**

Jeff Hoagland

a deep gorge

**a deep gorge
some of the silence**

a deep gorge
some of the silence
is me

a deep gorge
some of the silence
is me

John Stevenson



Thank you!