

COUNTY SEAT

by

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Experiments with haiku and senryu comprising
variations on a theme by Chasei, who wrote:

Hito yori mo
kakashi no ōki
zaisho kana.

More, even, than people—
how many scarecrows there are
here where I live . . .

(Translation by Harold G. Henderson)

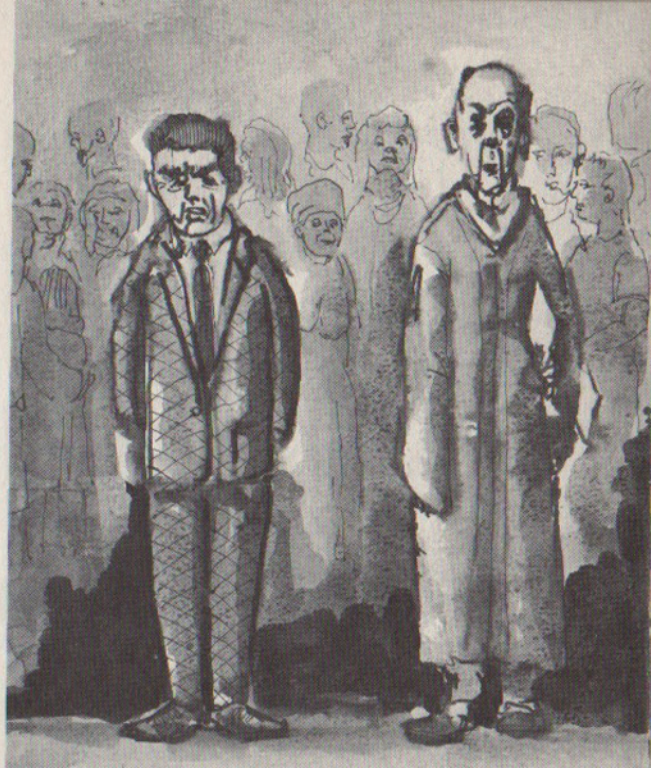
Illustrations by Vern Thompson

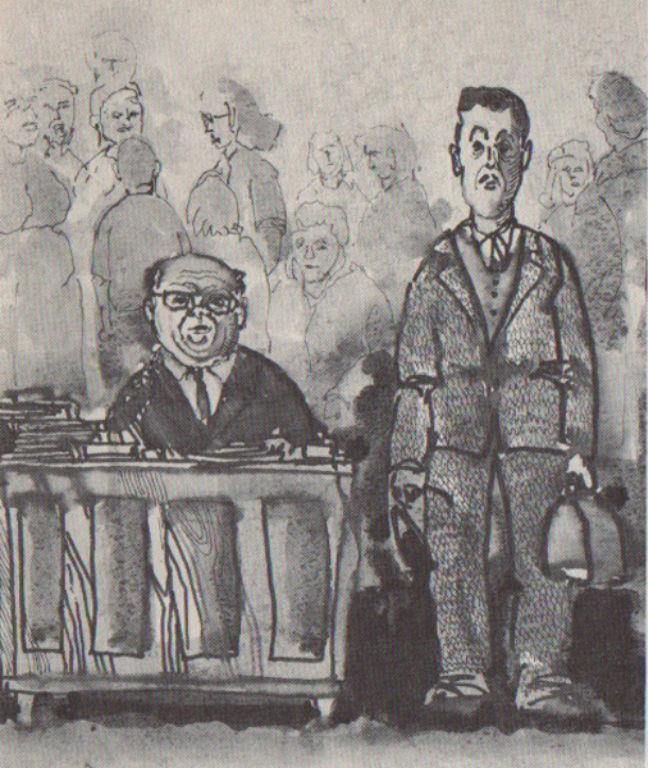
Lawyer

Farmers lose their corn;—
finally the crows are shot;
only scarecrows win.

Preacher

As if it said, "Boo!"
a scarecrow, in fields at night,
scares hell out of you.





Banker

Even the dead pay,—
with the shirts off of their backs!—
the scarecrow's wages.

Doctor

That fancy gadget,
making the scarecrow's arms flap;—
it never did work.

Judge

The scarecrow threatens,
even condemns them with glares;
but look!—the same crows!

The Lawman

See them together,
inseparables; crows and,
of course, the scarecrow.

Candidate

The crows took too much!
There *must* be a change! New clothes,—
now—for the scarecrow.





Oldest Family

Sun, moon, rain, snow, birds,
animals, men come and go.
Scarecrows stand just so.

School Teacher

This year's examples,
set for crows by the scarecrow,
are wasted once more.

Small Storekeeper

Count your shrinking store,
as plundering birds fly off,
neat little scarecrow.

Tavern Keeper

What about voices?

Claws, on singers or scolders,
wear scarecrows' shoulders!

Farmer

Clothes, on scarecrows, too,
are as they were worn to town;—
neither do crows care.

Gossip

I always know it,
when he buys new clothes,—That snitch!
That scarecrow of his!





Professional Virgin

Not the drunkest bum,
nor even a freezing tramp,
sleeps with a scarecrow.

Town Whore

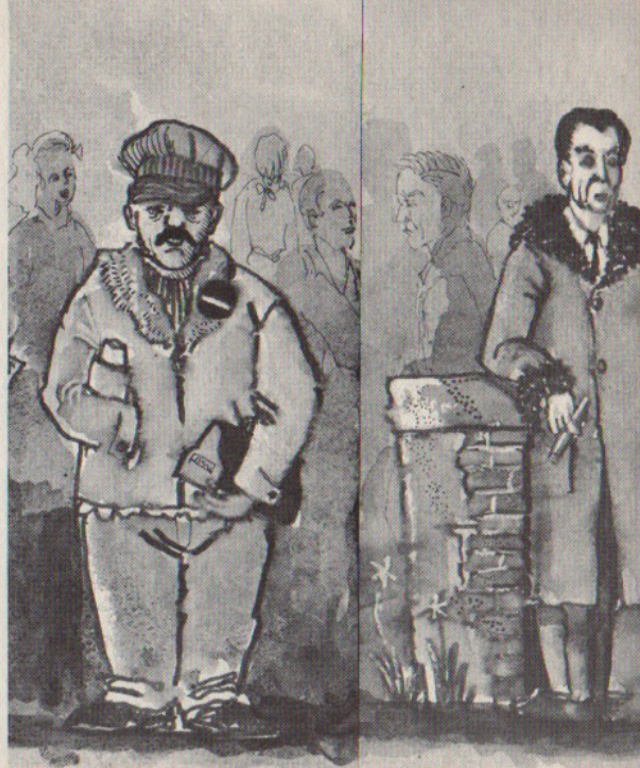
Rejoice, bright scarecrow,
in yellow skirt and red blouse!
See? Even more crows!

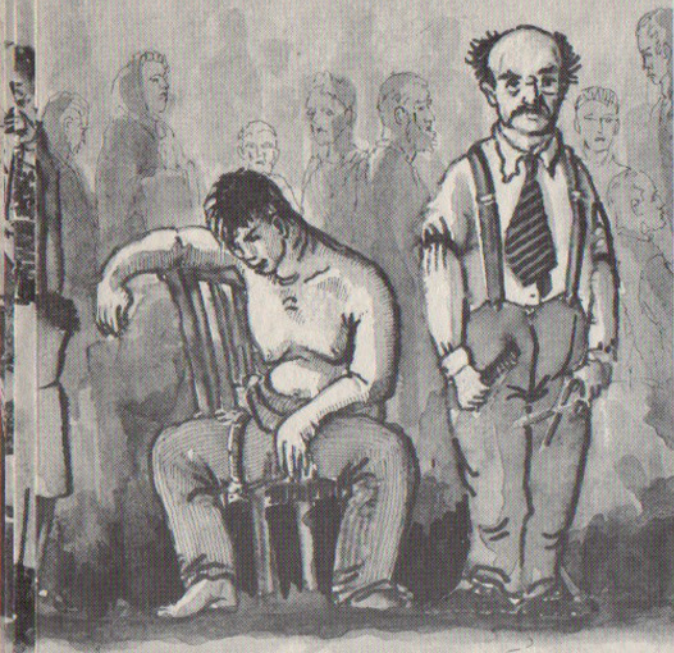
Drudge

The scarecrow works days,
then 'moonlights' another shift,
yet grows shabbier.

Town Cynic

Leaned on a wall,
it is called, not scarecrow,—
but philosopher.





Town Martyr

They were just broomsticks.
Yet the scarecrow hung on them.
They made a good cross.

Barber

Strange that a scarecrow,
keeping order for others,
has to be shoddy.

Village Wit

Some crow always waits,
perches on the old scarecrow,
then it defecates.

Village Halfwit

That Big Wit, scarecrow,
who fashioned your fool's face,
made you His image.

Town Drunk

With head hung backward,
arms flung out and legs twisted,
the scarecrow revels.





The Just Dead

Not even crows' eyes,
keen as their eyes are, scarecrow,
follow your long stare.

Undertaker

Scarecrows are so sure.
All the empty shapes of men,
at last, will be theirs.

Gravestone

His clothes—*in that rain!*
but, if we had no scarecrow,
all the folks would talk.

Family Album

Sis loved that hat;
paw's coat . . maw's dress and—my shoes!
on a damn scarecrow!





Ghost

You burn old scarecrows.
When fields are out of your sight,
they keep coming back.

