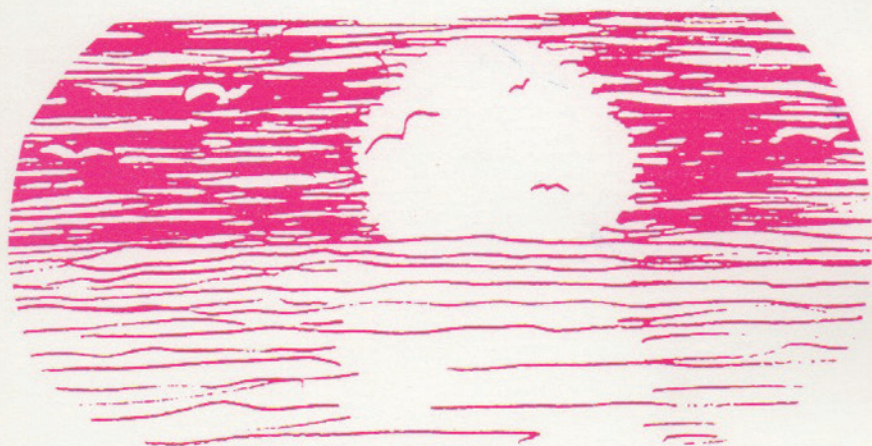


Dance Of Light



Elizabeth St Jacques

Thanks So Much,
Martin. May you
find some pleasure
here. (I've tucked
in a few lit-gifts.)

Joy & Light, My friend.

Elizabeth



◆ MERIT BOOK AWARD WINNER ◆

(HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA)

◆ ALBATROSS AWARD (ROMANIA) ◆

◆ NOVEMBER 1995 "PICK" (SMALL PRESS REVIEW) ◆

Dance of Light

Elizabeth St Jacques

*Joy & Light be with you,
Martin
Elizabeth St Jacques*

Artwork by Ruby Spriggs

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Warmest thanks to Christopher Herold for his valuable time and counsel as well as his Introduction, and to Ruby Spriggs for illustrating this collection.

Special thanks to my husband, René, whose patience and support have helped another dream to dance in the light.

Top award-winning poems in this collection:

- Pg. 103: 'the circle' - 1st, San Francisco International Haiku Contest, 1990
- Pg. 14 : 'baskets of houseplants' - Editors' Choice Awards, *Woodnotes* #16, 1993
- Pg. 108: 'In autumn woods' - 3rd prize, North Carolina Haiku Society International Contest, 1990
- Pg. 53 : 'the small boy's yellow' - 2nd prize, *Amelia* One-Line Awards, 1990
- Pg. 87 : 'Amish Territory' sequence - the Museum of Haiku Literature Award, *Frogpond*, Vol. XV:1, 1992
- Pg. 17 : 'little finch' - 1st prize, Tallahassee Writers' Association International Contest, 1992
- Pg. 85 : 'hands' - 1st, *HWUP*, March 1993
- Pg. 112: 'In the deep snow' - 2nd prize, North Carolina Haiku Society International Contest, 1993

- Pg. 93 : 'Farm Light' sequence - 1st prize, Kentucky State Poetry Society Contest, 1993
- Pg. 113: 'starbursts' - 2nd prize, Hawaii Adult Education Association International Contest, 1994
- Pg. 110: 'first heavy snow' - Editor's Sholice Award, *Haiku Headlines*, #70, 1994
- Pg. 31 : 'dance of light' - 1st, Arizona State Poetry Society International Contest, 1994
-

Some published poems have undergone revision for this collection.

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INTRODUCTION

Would you like to dance? If so, you're in for a treat because, by reading the book you now hold in your hands, you'll be accepting Elizabeth St Jacques as your partner.

In a *Dance of Light*, St Jacques sensitively travels back and forth between sorrow and joy, between pain and pleasure. Her compassion is evident throughout this volume of haiku, haiku sequences, and senryu. It can be felt in the weight of a dying finch as she passes it from her hands into ours. St Jacques is keenly attuned to the significance of seemingly ordinary events, even when they take place under extraordinary circumstances: the guttering of a candle near her mother's deathbed, the falling of a leaf as her father passes away. The senses sometimes mingle in St Jacques' poems: taste the color pink as a sparrow sips it from a puddle; envision the shape of sound as she stays a sweep of her broom to listen to returning geese.

This is a difficult world at best, and it is often painful, so we are quick to form cocoons to protect ourselves. There comes a time, however, when we realize that the life we've striven to protect ourselves from is the very one in which we want to participate. And so we break out of our cocoons, exposing ourselves to the light. We are the most creative at such times, giving artistic expression to an often overwhelming flow of revelation.

It is clear that Elizabeth St Jacques has found the strength to look deep inside herself, into her own history, and it is there that she discovered some of her most difficult transitions. She shares these with us generously, using a rich palette of emotions and moods. Above all, St Jacques' writing style is distinguished by exuberance. *Dance of Light* breathes; it is vibrant.

Among these pages, we are reintroduced to childhood:

tiny porcelain cups
tipped against our lips
. . . warm air tea

to adolescence:

carefully washing
around my mouth . . .
first kiss

even to a second childhood:

Christmas Eve . . .
in the snowbank
a full-grown angel print

St Jacques' poems often express wisdom, not passively, nor in tones hushed with awe, but rather through delight and laughter. Her sense of humor has a wide range, from the ludicrous image of a taxidermist's son

stuffed into a football uniform, to the ease with which she pokes fun at herself learning to walk in high heels.

Long before you finish reading this book, I'm confident you'll discover what I've known for some time, that something special comes from within Elizabeth St Jacques' poems, a quality that speaks more loudly even than the experience each conveys - it is her gratitude, her sheer joy at being alive.

Christopher Herold
May 11, 1995



Spring



Summer

Spring



Summer



break of dawn . . .
sparrow at the small puddle
sipping pale pink light

baskets of houseplants
swinging on the line
first spring rain

castanets
into the night
raindrops on a pail

wedge of sound
rests my broom
geese heading north

through the wind
a boy and his dog
the getaway kite

his collie sprints
into the windswept field
grandpa's old straw hat

little finch
in my hand the slow slow weight
of its april death

from wet clay
where no seed will grow
the worm

gently nudging
the green onion to one side
last year's petunia

again and again
the white butterfly . . .
thoughts of an unwell friend

sleeping, newborn chick
in the hollow
of her wrinkled hands

the neighbor's cat
welcomes me belly up -
april afternoon

swollen cow
chews its cud . . .
rhythm of the bell

in the field
chirping wrens
on the mean bull's back

going home
through the clover field
dancing
from the bees

taking
its sound
the hurried snake

across a neighbor's lawn
the search of her white cane
. . . peonies in bloom

quiet twilight
even the birds are listening
to the old push-mower

midnight prairie
grass and wheat
touch the stars

flat out under prairie stars

slow dewdrop
down a length of leaf
bumps the snail

lone wolf howls . . .
below dark cliffs
bison shift as one

mid-morning trail
his old dog sniffs . . .
the mountain waterfall

crowding in
around the waterfall
wildflowers

sunlit pool -
the nearby branch
and sweat-stained clothes

underwater
the sparkling flow
morning light

cool sun -
the fish pass darkly
overhead

dance of light
in the frog-filled pond
. . . blue heron

heavy with song
in the evening pond
lilypads

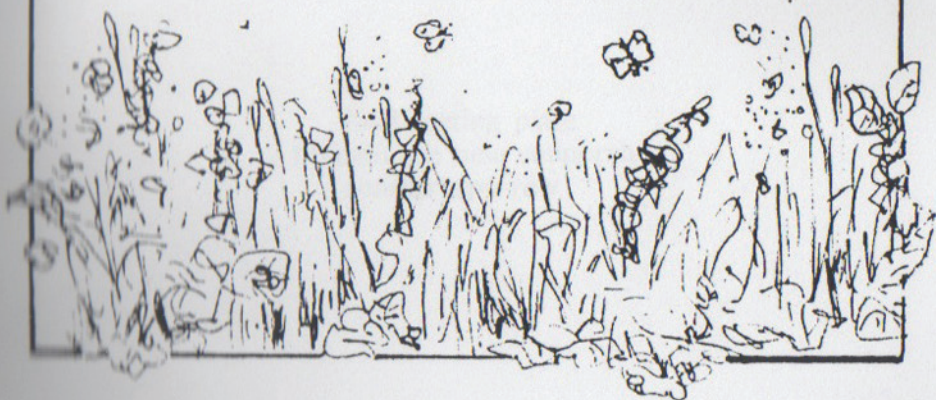
through the moon
waterbug

petals
on

late night pond
a fish springs
looking from the moon



*petals
on
my
looking-glass*



All In A Day: Little Girls

soiled birdbath
washing the mud
from dolly's face

final resting place
beneath the new sunporch
another sparrow,

tiny porcelain cups
tipped against our lips
. . . warm-air tea

melon slices
misting up the shop window
a row of small pink mouths

jumping from the swing
the little girl leaves some warm
dampness on the seat

just for mom
a bouquet of red flowers
from the neighbor's yard

evening prayer
God bless all my family
. . . my dollies too

Busy Little Boys

april night . . .
fishing pole, the pail of worms
stashed beneath his bed

final yank:
the rusted roofing nail pops out
his baby tooth

finished now,
he shimmies down the tree . . .
crooked little house

naked
in the swimming hole
boys duel with cattails

duck pond -
behind a bush
slingshots at the ready

hockey puck scores by accident
the grouch's windowpane

icy hill -
whizzing down the street
on a STOP sign

Family Portraits

mother braids
bright childhood tales
into my long blond hair

morning light . . .
the trout lure's shine
in my father's eyes

call of the sea
my brother's brush
listening to the waves

big brother -
on his shoulders
my five years of weight

shadows on the wall
my brother's hands carving
cartoon figures

victory cheer:
young brother's cedar airplane
FLIES

grandmother kneading
song and prayer
into our daily bread

grandfather's cackle
filling wicker baskets
. . . warm brown eggs

on the farm
under grandma's quilt, a dream
of wild-eyed geese




The author's parents
Mary (Maisie) & Tom Cybolsky

(One of the few photos I have
of Mom & Dad, and one of my
favorites - as I best remember
them.)

At The Farm

new year pledges
in my hand
pumpkin seeds

almost dawn . . .
bacon sizzling
before the roosters crow



battle won,
the rooster strutting
with a limp

the old hen squirms
- a glass egg

the small boy's yellow waters a corn stalk

sweet pear scent
through the window screen
the fly tries again

spilling
from his fallen boot
a few mustard seeds

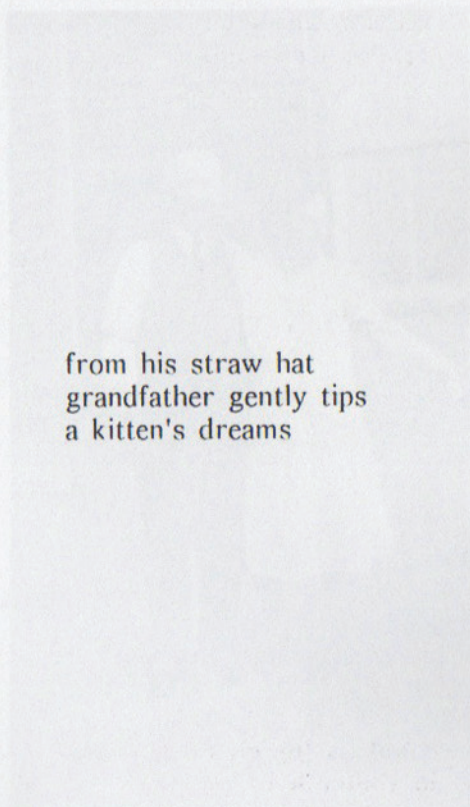
we all take cover:
grandma on the run again
with the flyswatter

another argument
Grandpa's heavy sigh
as he removes his teeth

november chill
creeping through
grandfather's house
the scent of wintergreen

woodshaving curl
in winter light
grandfather's violin

First Day Of Spring
for 14 years of age



from his straw hat
grandfather gently tips
a kitten's dreams

The author's mother, grandmother
Helen & Elizabeth
on the farm that was home to them
and their first days
from their first days



The author's maternal grandparents
Delia & Stanislaus Bernier
on the farm that was home to them
until their final days.
Both lived into their 90s.

*First Day Of Convent
(at 12 years of age)*

a mountain
at the convent door
the nun

in the courtyard
solemn convent girls
. . . missing my doll

high wooden fence
around the old convent
the knot-hole

in single file
up three flights of stairs
my suitcase filled with fear

in the dorm
i am assigned
to the thirteenth bed

unpacking
i find my cat's bell
and cookies shaped like hearts

convent rules
stuffing every sock
with chocolate bars

beside my cot
i pray and pray
for home

night sounds . . .
padded feet
and clicking beads

about to cry,
the girl in the next bed
farts

Thirteen

thirteen . . .
i hide inside
my baggy pullover

new diary
bright red ink
for my first kiss

carefully washing
around my mouth . . .
first kiss

biting my nails
the acned boy begs
my hand in marriage

1900
1901
1902

1903
1904
1905

1906
1907
1908

Coming Of Age

my only wristwatch
now in the bottom drawer:
Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer

all my dolls
tossed into the cedar chest -
the pungence of moth balls

in the morning trash
my first lipstick (passion red) -
scent of Mom's perfume

the feel of silk
against my legs . . .
strutting with the hens

dropping quickly
to my knees -
broken garter belt

first high heels
i learn how
not to run

first strapless gown
i learn how
not to breathe
deeply

floating through moonlight
to the New Year's dance
on big brother's arm

leading him
into the fresh night air
garlic on his breath

after the dance
swearing
against high heels

High School Sparks

he asks me for a date
the taxidermist's son
stuffed in football gear

at the football game
girls huddle, giggling
- new game plans

choir practice:
the handsome alto looks my way
- high note out of key

Whirling Through The Wind

the wind
after the school wrestling match
everyone in pain

another dream
sails smoothly by
the sigh of every girl

higher than the
in memory's distance
no longer

full moon . . .
after the school wrestling match
everyone in pairs

highschoolers' cars
in cemetery shadows
. . . moonlight

Wheeling Through The Wind

deep echoes
all along this country road -
my bicycle on stones

pumping pedals
up the lakeside climb -
laughter of the loon

down the hill
the bicycle
spinning wind

full moon behind
losing the bicycle race
to my darker self

dark shadow -
bicycle pushes
a willow's chill

driveway . . .
my bicycle reeled in
by a wedge of light

Assorted Blessings

ripping his cassock
blessings of another sort
for the barbed wire fence

the priest blesses
the prisoner's child -
twice

preaching against falsehoods
the priest adjusts
his new toupee

stop light
a child's sealskin sleeve, touched
by the youngest nun

hands
inside her sleeves again -
the old nun's habit

darkened church . . .
in cold holy water
a dead fly

Amish Territory

long beards longer
black clothes blacker
july sun

the gentleman's
brief warm smile
my skirt long and plain

gas station
his wide grin
cycling past

the gloom within
the handcraft store . . .
dolls without faces

through the late night camp
a gentle melody
horse hooves heading home

facing mirrors
the long-skirted woman
and her young daughter

warm glittering eyes
shaded by his hat
the young girl's pink cheeks

music on the wind
the solemn man taps his foot
and abruptly stops

Pure Light

early light
through broken slate
the dawn's report

through the late night camp
a gentle lullaby
horse hooves heading home

darkness
in the night of night
across the sky

some glowing words
and not by chance
the young girl's pink cheeks

through the late night camp
a gentle lullaby
horse hooves heading home

lance all no dream
and not just another all
quite reverse the bar

Farm Light

early light
through broken slats
. . . the barn-cat's purr

sunbeams -
brown mice skitter
across the straw

in the sun
the cow yawns twice
the tinkling bell

evening silence . . .
the play of silver light
in the water trough

late night barn . . .
in yellow light
the new calf's cry

in the sun
the cow yawns, low
the rocking bell

late night here
in yellow light
the new call a cry

evening silence
the play of a light
in the water trough

Darkenings

dimmer and dimmer
this winter candlelight
mother's deathbed

muted light
mother's moonstone rosary
chill in my hand

as a leaf falls
father's final breath
the naked branch

Autumn

travelling all alone
the night's work
the same

first day of the year
my brother's eyes folding light
for the final time

and the
the night
the night

Winter

outside the graveyard
the oriole's song
the same

cold day
the sparrow
tucks in deeper



Autumn

The strike of the wing
of the winged hawk
lightens to a day

Winter



the circle
of the winging hawk
tightens to a dot

sunflower
in the gentle breeze . . .
slow metronome

in the heart
of the peach
still life

midnight wind
on the footbridge all at once
the clatter of chestnuts

with swollen cheeks
the chipmunk dashes off
- empty birdfeeder

hawthorn leaves
tipped with frost -
robin faces south

just as the red sun sets
a bullfrog burps

hunt rained out
the sound of ducks, muffled
by his rubber boots

in autumn woods
silence tightens
the rifle's click

last night's cold
the water glass empty
a small lamp

from beyond water
a small lamp
a small lamp

this autumn night
the small moth's touch -
shiver of the moon

from heavy snow
the broken lamp
a little lamp

last night's cold
the water glass empties
a small thud

first heavy snow
the broken fence leans
a little lower

snow-covered roof
 a raven breaks through
 quiet dawn

in new deep snow
beneath the apple tree
a perfect hole

winter light
the windowpane
a kaleidoscope

starbursts

the cold earth floor -

the knife-grinder's wheel

winter dusk
the rhythm of her knife
chopping fruit and nuts

the scent of Christmas
on her old brown hands
crushing cloves

Christmas Eve . . .
in the snowbank
a full-grown angel print

softly falling snow . . .
 a poinsettia petal
 flutters to the floor

December dawn -
 a strand of tinsel glitters
 in the raven's beak

i

c

i

c

l

e

almost to the snow

the space between
moon and star
another special dream

blue
stillness of the evening snow
a whispered prayer



first day of the year
letting down light snow
the flutter of small wings

Her book of Korean folk poetry, *Collected Poems of the 19th Century*, was published in 1967 by the University of California Press. The book is a collection of the Korean language by a non-Korean female poet.

Elizabeth and Rose have resided in San Francisco since their marriage in 1957. Their two sons, David and John, reside in British Columbia.



Elizabeth (Cybolsky) St Jacques was born in 1939 in Iroquois Falls, Ontario. Much of the material for this book revolves around her youth, family and friends there, and the lush forests and sparkling lakes of Northern Ontario.

Elizabeth's haiku appear in leading haiku journals around the world and have earned numerous awards. She regularly reviews books for *Amelia*, *Canadian Book Review Annual*, *Frogpond* and others. Presently *Canadian Writer's Journal's* Poetry Editor, Contributing Editor with *Small Magazine Review*, and a Book Review Editor with *Albatross*. She was juror of The Haiku Society of America's 1990 Merit Book Awards, Arizona State Poetry Society's 1992 Haiku Competition, among others.

Her book of Korean Sijo poetry, *Around The Tree Of Light*, also published in 1995 by maplebud press, is the first North American sijo collection in the English language by a non-Korean female poet.

Elizabeth and René have resided in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. since their marriage in 1957. Their two sons, René Jr. and Del, reside in British Columbia.

Other Books by the Author:

- **Diary of Thoughts* (poetry), Carlton Press, 1967
- **Silver Sigh & Shadows Blue*, (poetry) Modus Operandi Publishing Co., 1978
- echoes all strung out* (haiku), maplebud press, 1989
- on a fair day ...* (broadsheet), Haiku Canada, 1988-1989
- Survivors: The Great Depression (1929-1939)* (nonfiction), maplebud press, 1991
- curve of light* (haiku), Trabarni, 1993
- landings soft* (haiku), Cicada Haiku Chapbook Award; Amelia, 1994
- Around The Tree Of Light* (Korean sijo), maplebud press, 1995

* - out of print

Editor of:

- Canadian Poets & Friends*, Modus Operandi Publishing Co., 1977, and Laurentian Valley Press, 1978-1980
- Canadian Encounter*, Laurentian Valley Press, 1981

About The Artist

Ruby Spriggs' art has appeared in poetry publications, Haiku Canada postcards, as well as in her haiku collection, *Sunshadow, Moonshadow* (1986).

Her illustrations can also be found in *The Swan's Wings* (1995), a collection of renku co-authored with Grant Savage. Her watermedia paintings are included in private collections in England and Canada.

Ruby is also an award-winning poet whose work has been published in five countries, and in numerous anthologies including *The Canadian Haiku Anthology*, *Haiku Moment*, *The Haiku Hundred*, and others.

She was editor of Haiku Canada Newsletter, 1990-1992, and during 1994, served as co-editor with Dorothy Howard for *RAW NerVZ*, a haiku quarterly.

Ruby emigrated to Canada from England in 1957 and resides in Ottawa, Ontario.

*... her haiku not only are on target, but hit the
proverbial bull's eye ... an uncanny vision,
genuine voice.*

Wally Swist, MODERN HAIKU

... lines shine with gem-like brilliance.

Jack Brooks, CANADIAN AUTHOR

*She has a good eye and a sharp wit, as well as a
light touch ... thought-provoking or
beautiful.*

Sheila Martindale, BOGG

*St Jacques smoothly weaves her haiku into a
gently flowing stream of ideas and images ... a
smiling gentleness, a softness that is not
sentimental.*

Jane Reichhold, MIRRORS

... exquisite literature.

Liz Fenn, MODERN HAIKU

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