

LYNX
A Journal for Linking Poets

XVIII:2, June, 2003

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WITHOUT GENRES:

ORANGE by June Moreau, Sheila Murphy

BOOK REVIEWS:

Embracing the Firebird: Yosano Akiko and the Birth of the Female Voice in Modern Japanese Poetry by Janine Beichman. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu: 2002. Trade bound paper, 339 pages, 6 x 9 inches, an Appendix of kanji of the poems and each poem is accompanied with the romaji version, \$23.95. ISBN:0-8248-2347-8 is available in bookstores.

Haiku Noir by R. Gray. Infinity Publishing.com:2002. Perfect bound, 8.5 x 5.5, unnumbered pages, \$9.95. ISBN: 0-7414-1182-2. Contact or call toll-free (877) BUY BOOK.

Jamaica Moments by L. A. Davidson. DLT Associates, 3245 Village Green Drive, Miami, FL 33175 Perfect bound, 5.5 x 8.5 inches, 50 pages, \$9.75 + S&H \$2.50.

Pensées by Stanley Pelter. A Hub Editions, edited by Colin Bundell, Longholm, East Bank, Wingland, Sutton Bridge, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 9YS, England. Perfect bound, full color cover, 5.5 x 8.5 inches, £5.50. ISBN: 1-903746-25-6.

Spirits Of The Wind: Tanka by Gerard John Conforti. AHA Online Book:2002. (Click on the title to read the whole book now)

Take a Deep Breath by Sylvia Forges-Ryan and Edward Ryan. Kodansha International, Tokyo: 2002. Hard cover with jacket, 130 pages, 5.5 x 7.75 inches, US\$16.00. Available at all book stores as ISBN: 4-7700-2885-7 or Amazon.com offers it with a 30% discount.

Where Dog Dream by Kit Whitfield. Barron's Educational Series, Hauppauge, New York: 2003. Series Editor Leanne Bryan of MQ Publications. Hardcover gift book with jacket, 6 x 6 inches, 96 pages with full color photographs and ink drawings. Available in stores with ISBN: 0-7641-5640-3.

TWO ROOMS: TWO ROOMS: A Journey into the Interior of Poetry Review of Four Zero Four and In the Time of the Fall of the Two Towers by Michael Helsem AHA Online Books, 2003. (Click on the title to read the whole book now)

By Gordon Hilgers

Writing and Enjoying Haiku: A Hands-on Guide by Jane Reichhold (Kodansha International, 2002),

165 pages, \$15.00. Available at all book stores as ISBN: 4-7700-2886-5 or Amazon.com offers it with a 30% discount. By Carlos Colón

SOME THINKING ABOUT WRITING AND ENJOYING HAIKU by ITO Sumie

ARTICLES AND LETTERS :

ARTICLES

Haiku and Haiku Societies — the Future? by Caroline Gourlay

KIDS WRITE RENGA (so you can too) by John Carley

LETTERS TO LYNX

by Tom Clausen, John Carley, Gary LaBel, Stanley Pelter, Still mourning for Kiyoko-san by eiko yachimoto, Tony Beyer, gary warner

PARTICIPATION RENGA by AB - Alice Benedict; CC - Carlos Colón; CF - Vikki Maldonado; cg - Cindy Guntherman; CSK - Carol Stroh Kemp; dht - Doris H. Thurston; DPK -Deborah P. Kolidji, DR - David Rice; DWP - Darrel W. Parry; EF - Eric Folsom; ESJ - Elizabeth St Jacques; FA - Fay Aoyagi, FP - Francine Porad; FPA - Francis (Paul) Attard; GD - Gene Doty; GM - Giselle Maya; GR - George Ralph; JAJ -Jean Jorgensen; JC -Jeanne Cassler; JMB - John M. Bennett; JR - Jane Reichhold; JS -John Sheirer; JSJ - Joyce Sandeen Johnson; KCL - Kenneth C. Leibman; LCG - Larry Gross; LE - Lesley Einer; LJ - Lael Johnson; MHH - Madeline Hoffer; ML - Minna Lerman; MM - Marianne Marks; MWM - Mary Wittry-Mason; N - Nika; NA -Nasira Alma; PC - Penny Crosby; PGC - Pamela Connor; PJS - P.J. Sharpe; PS - Pat Shelley; R - Ronan; RF - Robert Flannery; SCH - Suzette Hains, SD - Simon Doubleday; SMC - Steve McComas; TLG -Terri Lee Grell; TV - Teresa Volz; TW - Tundra (Jim Wilson) Wind; WEG - Elliot Greig; WR - Werner Reichhold; YH - Yvonne Hardenbrook; ZP - Zane Parks.

SYMBIOTIC POETRY

ON A THOUSAND BRANCHES

Linda Jeannette Ward

Pamela A. Babusci

Christmas day -
centered on each sea star
a remnant of last night's snow

snowbound
opening a window to the sea

her heirloom tea set -
a crane fly taps fitfully
on the glass door

guests depart
finishing the last scene

autumn moon at midnight
eclipsed
by the drifting swan's shadow

a brocade of leaves
each day higher & higher

wearing her red beret
she walks beneath
half-naked maples

she finds a stranger's love note
in his overdue book

infidelity...
she strokes her hair
over & over

another petal falls
from the bouquet he gave her

writing
a novella...
her blank stare

playing with emptiness
two cats in a discarded sack

summer moon...

breaking her new inkstone
on the tile floor

crack of thunder
the sudden hush of cicadas

first light...
pulling the blankets
over her face

her new thrift-shop shoes
like the ones mother wore

forsythia sprigs
illuminating the
moonless room

lining her Easter basket
with fresh-picked moss

golden swamp warbler -
a beak full of rootlets
slows her flight

pacing the floor
her kimono slightly parted

he opens the door
to the room
no one ever enters

through the paper window
distant windchimes

in the Japanese garden
fan-tailed goldfish
suspended under thin ice

reflected on the pond
frozen shadows

late for their tryst
she crosses the bridge
in a swirling mist

their moist kisses
dripping with dew

lover's reunion -

another woman's perfume
in his hair

wounds reopened...
a forgiving wind

harvest moon -
she plucks another gray hair
from her eyebrow

a flight of swallows
on the wings of autumn

motley leaves
on a thousand branches
falling silently

the glint of sunbeams
in a cup of jasmine tea

ikebana arrangement...
she loads her sumi-e brush
with fresh ink

through violet bands of clouds
a falling star

bringing in hyacinths
to scent last year's robe
waxing moon

snowmelt creek -
a filly splashes through it

This renga won a "commended award" in the Yellow Moon Contest 2003. Congratulations to the authors!

DUST BITES MAN

Marlene Mountain
Suhni Bell

dust bites man a jury finds for the dead woman though still dead

fifteen minutes of fame arrive fashionably late
you're nobody if you're not on the haiku 'watch list' of the fbi
painted desert in a dry swirl of cerulean & burnt sienna
a beach in spain or is it a beach in spain but what it is forever
low tide another moon swing

ancestral voices move closer to a slow dance at dawn
winter solstice just around a stonehenge corner
red light green light red light green light holiday traffic
martian conspiracies kissinger heads the 9/11 kiss-off *
artificial intelligence white house press conferences rehearsed
dear god-he 'are you washed in the' earth
snake goddess a few clay shards still coiled after all this time
new battery a fresh start to hang here alone
the next big race to find caucasian wives then 'sub-races'?
zero-tolerance policy in the hands of empty heads
a few more late night weaves a honeysuckle basket & the grapevine
tangled up in old maybe-poems

brag on a hundred-year-old crony and turn into a pillar of salt *
dnc sharks as shark-bait bait gop sharks as shark-bait
sean penn 'a hollywood-type' trashed as unamerican by tv-types
trading post grandma's still glare across the bramble bush
lives under the covers of darkness under the cover of darkness
at the end of the tunnel a train whistle

convenient flat back thru the aisles of winn-dixie a can of tire food

a bed of nails instructions found on the internet

how to suspend a female from a tree & quarter only the beginning

an apple a day i think i don't like eve

from the ark's alpha sperm or 'out of africa' smoking guns galore

seven-point doe the art of taxidermy mastered

a certain dullness sinks into the end of a very long brainstorm

without much evidence the daylily patch

her suicide note sent without stamps returned to sender

unworldly now most of the world

alienated they don't clone the black sheep do they?

the last and the first of a male calendar

note

* they both resign - more proof that haiku can change the world

november 20 2002-january 1 2003

STAPLED

Suhni Bell

Marlene Mountain

stapled to another tree another child missing in the park

on his way to san quentin to jerk off

discounts on bruised bananas next to the rotting vegetables

fresh snow on the getting-even-older hills

talons of a bald eagle and prayer feather for the journey home

countdown and showdown and here i sit

'women's art' in a world devoted to each exploitation of 'the other'

issues around frayed edges

plastic bags worse than paper or paper sacks worse than plastic

wrapped in foil someone's next high next low

finally the end of a long day that wasn't even long enough

sinking into sunset new colors for a dream

an old song & dance not yet frozen in time 'the haiku people blues'

locked horns easy targets for the predator

frantic wren trapped on the screened porch blame it on terrorism

pacing in the dark into the even darker

affirmative action trashed followed by a speech on mlk jr the nerve

uncle sam IS a weapon of mass destruction

heavier the weight of my own breasts after hers are removed

mother/sister au set do you still drape our earth

depends on who and what and which side of town no headlines

an afternoon to run out of words

no smoking gun world leaders conjure up evidence out of thin air

1 in 4 live near a superfund site 4 in 1 w/o funds

unemployed counting pennies counting sheep counting sheep

a famous baby due today forever due

roadkill she did not mean to run over him then over him again

a thawed path to the blacktop not ready to take

leftovers reheated even the after-dinner conversation

a guy's 'freedom fries' to diss the french

late february iris tips in a second push toward the end of purple

seeing thru apache tears after one more tumble

temporary power failure in the valley the power failure at duke

penis envy sometimes yes there i said it

change of scenery changes back no chance of being hung out to dry

the waiting list for rehab has a waiting list has a...

january 4 - february 27 2003

THREE CROSSES

Suhni Bell

Carmen Sterba

three crosses
a silhouette leans
into sunset

then and now
a mother mourns her child

petroglyphs
the language of the goddess
mingles with graffiti

temple walk
clinging to the concrete
miniature maples

moonlight sweeps slowly
into saffron shadows

pale dawn

a woman digs for crocuses
hidden by snow

RICH AND POOR LIVES

Renjyu: Alex, Amy, Andrew, Chloe, John, Jordan, Josh, Lee, Paul, Matthew, Sarah, Sean H, Shannon,
Shauni, Stephen & Thomas

Teacher: John Carley

a fancy crib
and diamond bracelets ~
lots and lots of food

ripped and tatty rags of clothes
a second-hand baby's bottle

Rockport, Reebok
teenage drivers
Sure deodorant

no cosmetics and no college
stuck with mum and dad

nights out
in the Chinese restaurant
healthy bank accounts

no medicine to help their illness
massive worries for their children

ornaments
and a comfy chair ~
a tranquil country cottage

a chipped and broken rocking chair
a mattress from the dump

Autumn Term 2002 - St Antony's R.C. Primary – Blackburn

LAP MINGLE

John M. Bennett

Jim Leftwich

lap swallow mingle sap
chink spoon plight pound
logo centric spins cougar
past wallet cone horn
hound sink crab bubble
huddle slab noun s link
corn phone ballet clast
sugar lens limbic solo

wound flight rune pink
map single hollow nap
map wound sap pound
sugar corn cougar horn
huddle hound bubble s link
past logo clast solo
chink lap pink nap
swallow spoon hollow rune
centric wallet iambic ballet
sink slab noun crab
phone lens cone spins
flight single plight mingle

Sfluit

John M. Bennett

Jim Leftwich

suit hock apple green
awful door lid sperm

toggle miff lute ark
spit pork luggage sag

snag roughage tort snit
dark loot lifts soggy

berm squid ort austral
clean dappled sock flute

BREDA 750 YEARS

Jacques Verhoeven

Silva Ley

Locations: Castle Gardens, St. Mary's Church, City Museum

Music in town
beauty flows off shore
the trodden tombs

soundless footsteps
passage of ages

the fortress dismantled
the founds possessed
designs of disarming

played on as the bodies
of women, of organs

tenderly covered
passing the city
in sashes of tulle

an insatiable longing
wrapped in calligraphy

sky - connected towers
as the murmur of woods
the babble of brooks

run away from squares
miles of foliants:

soul and body torn apart
suffering glorified
close the dusty books

the shrug of deep notion
surrogate mothers

curious in eye and lap
bargains of the market
young purses jingle

homewards with full bags
the gardens breath

between station and office
the beer drums roll

over the moon tonight

a visit to your hidden self
birds flown away

trombones climb the trees
a smell of fairies
mingled worlds appear

my dance with Hadewych
secrets of the trees

pavilions red and blue
public preference
the thoughts of monuments

roots of plants will break
the wish idealized

a powerless prospect
a game with documents
evening chimes

tumble over the roofs
the moving shadows

words in the clouds
wide gestures on the stage
the readers missing

the mystic's silent ear
loyal to the unlimited

the bell ringer's fists
salvo's at small windows
a different memory

restoration of canals
modern water tricks

winding boulevards
a range of ancient thoughts
embraced by moats

quaysides for dealers
birth-wrinkles back

in the aged skin
accelerated time

the years burnt up

a smiling moon
celebrates renewing
musea dream

a start without count down
the well known politics

sinister documents
measuring the pier steps
new masonry

gsm geometry:
be in the red for years

February sun
the plans evaporate
the days are drawing out

hidden in the clock
saved goat and cabbage

a stuffy nose and ears
a shimmering, a fever
crocuses come out

the open eye of the square
the pinnacles glitter

December 2002

DONUTS, FUEL AND HOT DOGS

Soin: Luke, Sarah & Zoe

Higashi: Aleasa, Beth & Hanna

Basho: Daniel, Mathew B., Mathew H. & Sam

Hokushi: Huzaiifa, Mahmood, Mubeen & Zakir

Teacher: John Carley

high above the seagulls
Blackpool Tower -
a boy waves his hand Soin

the whistling wind drowns out
the children's laughter Higashi

donuts, fuel and hot dogs
sweating
people in the queue Basho

gritty sand mixing
with the sticky candyfloss Hokushi

in the deep blue sea
a tug boat
drifts through coral waves Soin

railings rough as rocks
bump beneath my hand Higashi

flashing lights on the tram
cleaning up
the midnight sky Basho

a roller coaster stops
on the horizon Hokushi

28 January 2003 - Witton Park High School, Blackburn

EAST LANCASHIRE

Megan, Joe, Jared, John, Nathaniel & Andrea.

Teacher: John Carley

pillars of smoke
rise from the rooftops
dissolve into the sky

sugar cubes
on a quiet café table

a skateboard ramp
around the pyramids
grinding through the night

broken windows watch
from India Mill

on the hill top
Darwen Tower
lasers for the Jubilee

spring and summer
autumn, winter - rain

Darwen Moorland High School in Queens Park Technology College
14 November 2002 - The Textile Hall, Blackburn

ICE CREAM SUNDAE

vs1 Hannah B & Laura
vs2 Anthony, Jordan, Liam & Sam
vs3 Ryan, Daniel V & Chris
vs4 Nathan, Lee, Reece, Jake & Daniel Pr
vs5 Samuel, Daniel & Lynn
vs 6 Jaimee-Lee, Hayley, Bethany, Sonya & Kelly
vs 7 Hayden
vs 8 Sarah
Teacher: John Carley

ice cream sundae -
flying ants crawling
round the kitchen sink

car keys and passports
stolen at the check-in

crusty leaves
and howling winds
squawking ducks head south

the smoky smell
of burning grass and fireworks

roasted turkey
and Christmas pudding
wicked selection boxes

chucking snowballs
hugging a mug of hot chocolate

cold rain drumming
on a tiled roof
three yellow chicks cheeping

new born lambs

and shiny tinsel wrappers

11th April 2003 - St Mary's CE Primary School, Cadishead

GLUED IN THE MOSAIC

Karina Klesko

Betty Kaplan

Cindy Tebo

early morning snowfall
pine boughs bend
towards the sun

motionless... a red fox
on a blanket of white

spilled coffee
beats from the neighbor boy
drumming

Columbian beans roast
in the hot-air popcorn popper

a new coolness
we put on sweaters to see
the man in the moon

tear-stained cheeks
the scarecrow without eyes

halloween night
a stray cat alone
in the rain

...crossing paths
an exchange of addresses

not just July 4th
on every house
the American flag

overseas call
he proposes marriage

intermission
at the aquarium
dolphins play tag

energy surrounds us
sounds from the orchestra

fireflies dance
on and off
with the moon

summer solstice
a new flavor at the soda shop

"As The World Turns"
the soap that never
washes out

oil spots on the bill
from the car mechanic

special delivery
first knock at the door
a basket of daffodils

discovered in the grass
eggs in a bird's nest

march winds
as I lift the lid of the urn
ashes blow away

'Great Expectations"
some pages missing

under scrutiny...
Master Chuzzlewit's pedigree
at the poodle show

travel security
"please remove your shoes"

Alberta Clipper
an extra dash of rum
in the cookies

winter in Jamaica
they carve coconut shell turtles

always...
on a kindergarten desk
initials in a heart

eroded by time
the cliffs along lover's leap

rows of get-well cards
I pick the one that says,
"Thanks for Teaching Me Courage"

under twinkling stars, they cheer
the parade of the boats

harvest moon
laughter from the dead-end
of a corn maze

withered tips
a titmouse digs its burrow

cozy hide-away
a hang-glider trespasses
over autumn mountains

from a cocoon
the butterfly of many colors

unfinished project
strands of loose hair
glued in the mosaic

War Emblem
a jewel short of the triple crown

festoons of blossoms
adorn the huppah...
he breaks the glass

generation to generation
transplanting grape vines

Started: January 15, 2003 - Finished: January 30, 2003

THE CURVED SEAT

Catherine Mair

Patricia Prime

autumn afternoon
after the south's
drought-stricken mountains
the green of
this homeland park

down from a friend's
haiku boulder
new road
the labrador sniffs among
leaves

white turban
reflecting sunlight:
does the old Hindu,
traditionally clad,
long for his homeland?

emergency siren
the valley's
silence
butterflies circle
the curved seat

LIGHT IN THE SHADOWS

Jane Reichhold

Giselle Maya

slow winter river
with light in the shadows
glints of ice

from the pond's heart
a silent ripple

the quivering
our family is coming
for the holidays

winter olive trees
pilgrims in the northwind

check points
wise men asking the way

between stars

desert traces
searching for a king

endless valleys
lead celestial horses
to a tiny village

a man and a woman
strangers in a marriage

a new life
springs secretly and grows
from the longest night

a long-awaited dream
the trip to Iceland

lava fires
the earth's center
dancing with the goddess

mother moon and father sun
as we children create them

doves released
from a metal cage
clover and chickory

going where they want to
our prayers for peace

rays of sunlight
on green sea of winter wheat
dark feelings dissolve

in spattered wax
the memory of a candle

first snowflake
a sense of caring for creatures
in the wild

no two seconds are alike
the splendor of creation

in galaxies
all that space to hold

cosmic intelligence

where is that bright star
dreamlines to follow

peacemaker
our former president
speaks the truth

can't we the people
use new energy sources

on the lettuce
leaves sprinkled
with walnut oil

the earth devas
restoring balance

from the menorah
faith dissolves the darkness
with small points

a wreath on the front door
cedar boughs and rosehips

the colors circling
each person's head
will and desires

prayers of peace
can they prove stronger

rising with the moon
from a frosty hillside
an unearthly shine

glazed limestone tableland
full of hidden springs

guests come and gone
their spirits linger
in the tearoom

to each anew this day
a heart-basket of joy

a few handmade gifts
into the flare of oak logs

unresolved feelings

in accepted poverty
a certain richness

by the window
blending into dawn shadows
a white cyclamen

with no desires, no sorrows
melting into the river

December 4, 2002 - January 1, 2003

THE OLD GRAVEL ROAD

Catherine Mair
Patricia Prime

round the next bend the murmur of rapids
splashing through cold water the labrador sniffles
montbretia - a flash of colour
from the hills, lifting rain clouds
black dog & black cow take exception to one another
cropping the grass - the rasp of the cows' tongues
a disdainful, wet nostril
overgrown, the path we used to take
surveillance - swamp hen on the highest willow branch
embedded in long grass derelict cars
swooping at disturbed insects - welcome swallows
in someone's garden a furled sun umbrella

BARRYMORE COULDN'T SWIM

Catherine Mair

Patricia Prime

choosing a gift
we pass over
the most exquisite -
taking our attention
a sachet's embroidered butterflies

deciding on lunch
two elderly women's
pleasurable noises -
the scent
of lavender

outside the window
creamy-white roses
blow in the breeze
ladies sniff free cards
presented with their food

savoury smells -
no need of a menu board
the fox terrier's nose
points directly
at the kitchen

delphinium or larkspur
the decision too hard
to make
"Printed in England," they say,
turning over postcards

we eavesdrop
the next table's
quaint conversation -
sliding to the floor
my paper napkin

tea plunger
the scent of blackberries
rises from the pot
Mauoa appears
out of the mist

is it the venue
attracts these old world folk?

Somerset Maugham
& celluloid
black & white

terrace pottery tubs
contain trimmed trees
a hawk circles the valley -
"The sun has lost its day,"
they remark

* Mauoa - Maori name for a nearby mountain

CONTRAPUNTAL HUM

David Rice
Lynn Leach

this wintry Sunday
I rewind the chiming clock
its antique heart
springs to life in my hands
and fills me with quiet joy

new grandson
I walk and pat him
as he cries
my mind races ahead
trying to glimpse the future

gloom of world news
leaders sound their war trumpets
again this year
daffodils thrust through the earth
with healing persistence

anti-war march
signs and chants claim the street
tomorrow morning
the newspaper will appear
yellow-bagged in our yard

through the din and roar
the clamor of opinions

my ears pick up
a contrapuntal hum -
insects hatching in a hedge

military marches
then a heavenly chorus
that's the daily concert
our government plays
I prefer bluegrass or jazz

LONG WAY HOME

gary warner
Layne Russell
Paul David Mena

a dusting of snow
footprints disappear
into the woods

from white fir boughs
a lone blue jay squawks

passing the drunk
grandfather drops a five
and keeps walking

the market plummets -
I crave a bitter ale

out the east window
large yellow moon...
shoes fall to the floor

raindrops on the glass
school bus steals her baby

under the wiper blade
two bright red leaves
and a parking ticket

after the movies
at last a kiss

waiting at the gate

in her best dress
last flight from Houston

falling in love
with another stewardess

footsteps
down the staircase -
a shadow

whispering in the alley
her children asleep upstairs

summer moon
ignoring
the mosquitoes

splash!
book left by the pool

awakened
by dripping candle wax
at my desk

following a pair of headlights
along a distant highway

by the front door
purple primroses...
someone's key

the doe with two fawns
lingers behind the rest

a father's dream
my son is old enough
to mow the lawn

waking at dawn
got to write this one down

crumpled printouts
and crushed Mountain Dew cans
beside my keyboard

scraping my windshield
with an expired credit card

through the drifts

to see the iced stream
hit by sunlight

leather driving gloves lying
on the newspaper rack

her stiletto heels
keeping pace
with my heartbeat

packing for the weekend
perfume and lace

searching
the tangled sheets
in the darkness

eyes illuminated
by the Disney Channel

river evening -
the Empress tree
crowned by the moon

gourds and squash
arranged as a centerpiece

Thanksgiving dinner -
the dog on high alert
beneath the table

sky of calling crows -
what's the ruckus?

power failure
around the theater
the glow of cell phones

microwave popcorn -
that fake butter smell

almond blossoms
cover the garden plot
daffodils stand guard

pausing on the bike trail
everything so green

SOLO WORKS

GHAZAL

WORKSHOP GHAZAL

Ruth Holzer

This line is trite, and so's your whole ghazal,
you don't know how to write a real ghazal.

In Farsi and Urdu, tongues of the original,
couplets rhyme smoothly - they're forced in your ghazal.

Refrain and repetition are boring after a while;
we've dispensed with them in the modern ghazal.

Don't bother defending it with pride or guile -
we've wasted enough time on your ghazal.

Thank god, Ruth, it's not you taking the fall;
someone else has written that no-good ghazal.

HAIBUN

CATCHING FIRE

Edward Baranosky

I guess the expression is "I dodged the bullet." I came home late on Monday, 10:30 PM. Parkside Drive was blocked off, so the Queensway 80 bus-driver offered to pull around Roncesvalles south to Queen and Parkside. Walking up Parkside, I counted 16 fire-trucks and police cars. An ambulance rushed by towards St Joe's. I just wanted to relax after work, and thought it was a car accident. Then I thought, "Boy, that's close to my house." Then I saw the fire-ladder, towards the flames pouring through the roof. I thought "Oh, shit! Now what?" I tried to get into my apartment, but was stopped by police and firemen. "but I live there!" - "Not now, you don't." Then they let me have five minutes to get "all" my "valuables." With a fireman-guard holding a flashlight, but my place had the only electricity in the house. I had gotten a hold of Melisa and her friend Yuri, by a cell phone commandeered from another house person. They soon showed up (a fireman told me my daughter was outside asking about me) and asking where my paintings were, as I emerged from the smoke and water spray. I went for the mail, dropped a letter addressed to me, and grabbed another person's phone bill; lost my scarf under a fire-truck's wheel (picked it up the next day). Mae Li insisted I get back in and pull out the paintings, and though we negotiated another run, it really couldn't be done. We did get about six framed drawings, and the turkey I cooked the night before for New Years. Took a cab to her place. The next day (Dec 31) I went somewhat unwillingly to work, left early and went to my "place" to discard the genuinely trampled and smoked. The third floor was gutted. One of the tenants from the second floor was moving his stuff into a van. "Moving out?" I asked. "Unplanned" he said. "Coming back?" I asked. "Would you?" he said. Then, for the tenth time, "Do you have any insurance?" ... "No."

My computer, perversely, booted smoothly and trouble free. Then I spent New Years as an unexpected guest. First night back "here" last night, the house was empty of men and women, dogs and cats, rats and mice, and ghosts. Only me who represented all of the above. Read a book on Probability and Life in the Universe: Perverse fractals and differential calculus. Better than sleeping pills. Discarded the discardable. Somehow, the things that are lost stay with you forever. (The fire was on the news on TV, but I didn't see it. Too occupied. I got a clipping from the Paper, but they called this a "rooming house." Rooming house?!! The top floor that burned overlooked High Park, and had a view of the Lake Ontario Horizon and went for upwards of \$2000/mo. My apartment in the basement still isn't cheap. But I guess "rooming house" caught a certain inner city charm for the journalistas. Ah well, another day, another 63. 25 cents. Thereport of my demise was somewhat premature.

Somebody interviewing Jean Cocteau asked, "In case of fire , what would you take among your treasures?" "I'd take the fire!" he replied

Through the charred
roof beams and broken windows,
a bright, full moon.
Coldest evening of the year,
catching fire, I burn still.

HAIBUN

F. Matthew Blaine

It is a hot brilliantly sunny afternoon on the Little Choptank River, which is located on the eastern side of the Chesapeake Bay about midway between the mouth and the head in an undeveloped area. I am anchored well up the river on a little side creek just behind a sandy spit of land that is too narrow to allow building. It has a white sand beach and a thin line of trees. There is not another human being in sight as far as the eye can see in any direction. On one side of me the river opens to a wide expanse of five or six miles of open water, but it is very shallow. On my other side the creek winds its way into the distance. It is bordered by marsh, sparse bushes, and trees. The trees look like bonsai trees swept by storms and stunted by the harsh growing conditions. All morning I had been watching the resident Bald Eagle swoop and hunt then return to the highest perch in the thin line of trees that run behind the beach.

dragonfly
patrolling
no fly zone

The temperature is like an oven and the breeze is non-existent. Because there is no breeze or boat activity as far as the eye can see the surface of the river is like a mirror. Only an occasional swimming blue crab touches the surface. This touch creates a bull's eye rippling effect on the water surface. I have decided to stay in this protected spot for a day or so and spend my time reading and taking in the sights. There is no use in trying to sail until there is some wind, anyway.

I sit silently on the deck and gaze at the shoreline. In my peripheral vision I notice some slight

movement just next to the boat about two or three feet from me.

watching
minnows
watching
me

WHAT I KNOW OF VAN GOGH AND HAIKU

Gerard J. Conforti

It's been over four years since my last hospitalization in a psych ward. Through my hospital stays, I've learned how much suffering Van Gogh must have gone through in his life time. Throughout Van Gogh's stays in psych units, he suffered from convulsive fits which increased and caused great stress and his heightened psychosis. When he was able to paint pictures of what he saw outside the window bars which kept him prisoner of a ward where he saw great suffering among the other inmates, he kept his mind focused on his painting which was the only way he could somewhat cope with all he was going through. Every day was a constant battle to over come some of the suffering he was experiencing. When he painted pictures of the less fortunate, it was his way of showing all the sorrow he witnessed and the love of nature which was a great part of his paintings. As the years passed he also wrote many letters to his brother, Theo, who lived in France, and whom Van Gogh visited a number of times. Van Gogh's greatest works were painting of his self-portraits which showed much of the emotional turmoil he was going through.

Through my on-and off years in a psych ward, I experienced the turmoil of emotions the in-patients also suffered from. In Van Gogh's time there wasn't too much help for the mentally ill like we have today. At one time, the doctors who treated Van Gogh and the others didn't have the medication and other help we have in our present day. In Van Gogh's time, the mentally ill were locked up for life and this still goes on for many psych patients who can't function on the outside world because the medication they are on doesn't work well for them. It was what I had gone through in psych units over the years that I learned how to express myself in pictures as written words. This was done through writing haiku or tanka which I had learned from the Japanese, American, and other haiku and tanka writers in other countries. It was all the misery I was going through which formed me to put my pen to the paper and write about what I've seen and witnessed in the hospitals. This was a release for me, the same way Van Gogh found in his paintings.

Sitting on a bench
facing the falling white buds
the pain in his eyes

This is what I experienced one late spring day outside the locked psych ward. In the above haiku, I tried to express in my own words the beauty of nature and the suffering it entails. It is the sorrow I feel every day, along with the emotional pain which has caused me to write what of psych wards or people trying to mend their own lives the best way they knew how.

The heat of the day:

alone to bear the emotions
of rejection

I often felt very alone in those hospitals.

Tonight,
I'll stare at the white ceiling;
not the galaxy

One of Van Gogh's most famous paintings was "Starry Night." He, too, wanted to be out under the stars when he was locked up.

In the spring winds
outside the locked ward
the swirl of dandelions

When I could finally roam the meadows outdoors I was sure Van Gogh felt the same when he painted various kinds of fields and orchards.

Autumn chill:
even in the locked ward
the coldness

And finally, the last haiku describes how far to go and how much Van Gogh wanted to achieve in his lifetime when he killed himself in Arles, France:

This road
is long enough -
please

SEASONS

Allen McGill

Yellow crocuses popped open during the early spring morning, to join the purples and whites already bordering the garden of our upstate New York home. They illuminated the bleakness left by winter's freezing, the first sign that our heavy coats would soon be spirited away - to wherever children's padding goes when warmth infuses the air.

My little brother Jackie and I peered closely to ooh and aah at the new arrivals, and to congratulate each other on how clever we were. We had planted the bulbs the previous autumn and the results of our superb labor were now obvious.

thin leaflets of green
thrust upward into light
a squirrel darts past

The garden hose was a delight during the heat of summer, so much more fun than any pool. Dad would

stand on the sidelines, to follow Jack, me, and groups of our friends with the water spray as we ran squealing across the lawn, not trying very hard to escape. The antics were always followed by a communal picnic lunch on the long redwood table: pitchers of fruit drinks, all imaginable sandwiches, including peanut butter and jelly, potato and macaroni salads, and enormous slices of watermelon.

a stone nymph
smiles beneath mom's roses
the hammock sways

A grand maple tree stood sentry at the corner of our garden nearest the street, providing us with shade when desired and beauty always. It was especially striking when the veined green of the tri-corner leaves began to ease into autumn shades of reds and yellows, coppers, rusts and golds. On windy days Jackie and I would stand on the porch and watch the confetti-like shower of leaves fall to blanket the lawn, swirling and tumbling as the breeze played with them.

We would watch eagerly as Dad raked the leaves into piles and then retreat into the house. Diving beneath the mounds, we'd wait until he came back with the leaf bags, then jump out with a loud "SURPRISE!" Year after year he was startled.

aster blooms
abundant in the chill
smell of chimney smoke

Appearing forlorn, with plastic-wrapped fruit trees, pruned bushes and bare limbs, the winter garden would soon take on the guise of a magic place for Jackie and me. Daily, we'd watch the skies for snowflakes to fall, eager for the fun that millions of them would bring. But somehow the first snowfall never came during the day, always at night, like Santa Claus, to leave the most wondrous of gifts. Where the garden had seemed barren and dull, it now afforded abundant material for building forts and packing battle snowballs.

maple and nymph
standing guard in the cold
children's laughter

green buds appear
on brittle branches
a crocus stirs

THE BUILDER'S ROAD

Gary LeBel

Arriving at twilight and anxious to smell the spring air four states from home, I find here are little ponds behind the motel to explore. Swimming side by side, silent white ducks forage without fear as I approach, accustomed as they must be to many strangers. In the places where we do our fieldwork, motels often form that last line of development beyond which lie the nameless tracts of woodlands

between towns.

The builder's temporary road ends abruptly at a place where the night has already fallen. Town lights shine in the rain-filled tracks of dozers. In the soothing dark of several acres of brush and pine beyond, no neon glows.

twilight fades...
there is one for each star,
the cries of spring peepers

SIJO

REQUIEM TO AN ACTIVIST

Victor P. Gendrano

she left a life of comfort
and other youth's obsessions

but instead joined pacifists
who abhor war and oppression

in a picket line abroad
she died, martyr to her cause

45TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

April 21, 2003

Victor P. Gendrano

the gnarled trunk betrays its age
battered by blasts of wind and rain

but the tree remains stronger
providing sustenance and shade

like our forty-fifth years' marriage
often shaken yet prevails

THE SIJO

Gino Peregrini

forty years - the full moon and venus outshine the memories
snow and ice saw us wed, that and bright sun, your father's tears
sidewalks wet with melted ice we move together towards home

TANKA

TIMBER YARD

Tony Beyer

the thousand colours
of plain wood
sun faded
from the gate
to the back of the yard

either side
of the forklift
floorboards
not yet a floor
clap together

strakes lumber
nogging joists lath
cord and board
names to do
with wood

careful measure
sighting along
the shaft for flaws
dowelling
to make a kite frame

rough stuff
just for boxing
or smooth
joining grain
the saw sings

stockpiled
window frames
against the fence
the sky in them
supplied free

after lunch
the yard men
returning to work
always find something
to pick their teeth

flat pencil
behind the ear
marks the cut
stirs the tin mug
of tea

under a lean-to
out the back
the boss's
dream boat
growing slowly

split grain
dry sawdust
curled shavings
smells Christ knew
as a boy

FIND IT IN YOURSELF
Owen Bullock

unable to concentrate
on Victorian literature
lecturers on strike chant:
"what do we want?
eight per cent!"

a young man
harangues the M.P.
I can't help thinking
of the phrase
"find it in yourself"

city street
two young women

embrace in greeting
an old lady smiles
and I at her

a Chinese boy
with pigeon feather
and flax leaf
directs traffic
near the fountain

late afternoon
the mirror's
reflected sunlight
shines on my list of
things to do

LITTLE BITS OF LOVE Tom Clausen

once it took so long
for the season's change
but now everything faster -
how strange the way I want
time to just stand still

last day of classes
gathering on the slope
to party let go and dance
to the music -
there's wind in the trees

the river must make
so many curves
to pass through the lowlands
the way nature always
says something to us

nothing in the clouds
to suggest that the morning
is not good enough
yet here we are, in our house
whining our complaints

the spring just begun
and already I sit a bit lost
knowing full well
I can't keep up

with too many things

planes lift off,
roads go most everywhere
and still inside
the marvel
of even little bits of love

sad too
this lack of tears
or a feeling to dance
or sing;
her death too young

the trick of a decade,
how perspective changes,
humbles even my passion
to be for you
your very everything

I walk in front
with too many thoughts,
apart from my family -
sunlight broken through
on the forest floor

so many signs to find
this warm spring day
buds and blossoms galore
and there, left in the bushes,
some woman's navy blue bra

CARELESS LOVE
Ruth Holzer

Mother's Day card
I picked at random -
roses and robins
never suspecting
it was the last

after the funeral
her son walked along the shore
white pelicans
motionless

on separate rocks

fascinating book -
Animal Life of the World
I enjoy dipping
into this intruder's gift
and learning from it

evening walk
across the town green
from the courthouse
to the gas house
not a word spoken

all night listening
for the sound of your key
jiggling in the lock
releasing the raw joy
of your return, careless love

MOISTURE
Annie Gustin

march melts into green
damp earth giving way, stems stir
scents of sudden spring
your words emerge, tiny buds
disclosing mixed hues of awe

breeze bearing perfume -
hyacinth lost in our hair
lavender drizzle -
fragrant with questions, we stroll
blushing between sentences

tiptoeing on stones

ankles submerged, we submerge
thighs, waist, smooth shoulders
through endless curves and currents
we search, fingertips trembling

cascading sunlight
between rocks unraveling
breathless down our backs
cool splash sliding, bodies arch
hands clutching fistfuls of foam

dawn perspiring dew
time conspiring against us,
from the start we knew.
fingers and souls interlaced
daybreak. salt wells in our eyes

in a soft white fog
our lips parting, we parted
running back three times
i watched you melt into mist,
vapor curling from puddles

i listened closely
as april covered the earth,
rivulets streaming
across my face and window
signing your name in the pane

tasting a segment
of a pomegranate berry
tart juiciness surrounds
a hundred seeds
more future servings

Momi Kam Holifield

AMARYLLIS
Elizabeth Howard

where we floated the creek
an inner tube
stuck on a dry boulder -
a stalemate, too,
our relationship

ice-coated sticks -
I recall a mass of bushes
burning scarlet
a myriad of songbirds
plucking red berries

fairy parasols
in a tiny circle
striped wintergreen
bending to look, I wonder
how do you call a fairy?

after showers
the first hint of green
gulls swirl over the lake
like snowflakes -
the cusp of seasons

April forest
mushrooms concealed
in the leaf litter -
gourmet morels
or counterfeits?

clouded over
woodpecker's bobbing red head
brightens the morning
my spirits brighter too
the amaryllis you sent

a blush sweeping the sky
cardinal's prelude entwines
whippoorwill's finale -
can the music of the spheres
surpass this?

unable to visit
the wildlife refuge

sandhill cranes visit me -
mating dances
in the meadow

WILD TURKEYS

kirsty karkow

three turkeys
across the back lawn
noisy gobbling
black heads lift and swivel
like feathered periscopes

turkeys move
with the northing sun
field to field
a peck here and there
sustains the journey

dressed in mist
these new arrivals
are enormous -
their gleaming feathers
iridescent black

sharing corn
with doves and sparrows
how out of place
the elegant slow steps
of turkeys from the wild

acceptance
long time companions
crowd together
chipmunks doves and squirrels
ignore turkey shadows

Unable to leave
my computer, I pick up
my binoculars -
and the violets by the fence
come into the room with me

I stop to ask if
he's hurt, the young man lying
on the damp grass at
midnight. He says he's thinking
about how his life's gone wrong.

A young black woman
standing sobbing with her child
in the street. "My boy
friend took of with my money."
I puzzle what to do. What?

Andrew Lansdown

GONE?
M.L. Harrison Mackie

adults
always children
called to
her bedside
watering

one root
of this family's
tree under
the umbrella
of her love

memories
generating
laughter
awake before
the wake

her breath
the last one
as thin as
the air keeping
us alive

her letting go
beyond our grasp
the peace
the surrender
of her repose

her take off
for who knows
where
a mystery
clouding eyes

but not
those opened
by the
radiance
of her spirit

SNATCHES OF BIRDSONG Thelma Mariano

a March wind
whistles round the corner
where I stand
even in the numbing cold
I listen for birdsong

at the river
some waves ripple towards me
others away
as if they too have trouble
deciding which way to go

something pulls me
out in the driving rain
this dark night
hoping to find answers
in the words of a stranger

so much sadness of late
I throw out pieces of bread
to hordes of ducks
hoping their hunger for life
will somehow feed my own

I search
the frozen shoreline
for signs of spring
my grief mirrored
in a brittle sheaf of ice

snatches of birdsong
and the familiar sound
of my own footsteps
there's comfort in little things
as I face the really big

THE SEA IN WINTER - FUYU NO UMI

Excerpted from Breasts of Snow: Tanka by Fumiko Nakajoo (1922 – 1954)
Translations by Hatsue Kawamura and Jane Reichhold:

By January of 1954, Fumiko's cancer had spread to the lymph nodes so it was decided she should have radiation treatments. These had to be given in Sapporo, so she moved in with her married sister, Michiko who lived in Otaru, a seaside town about ten miles northeast of Sapporo, on the Sea of Japan. From there she could take a train to the hospital for her treatments.

toodai mo
kamome mo ware yori
toonokite
kokoro itamanu
yuugure wa kuru

a lighthouse
and the gulls too recede
from me
to an untroubled heart
twilight comes

Seeing such a terrible sea in the evening twilight, she imagines she can feel the sea's pain. Yet, in the cold evening twilight she felt so alone and drained that nothing could bother her anymore.

kuroki shooru
tatamite sunahama ni
ware wa suwaru
umi yo sono hanashi no
tsuzuki kikaseyo

folding
a black shawl I sit
on the sandy beach
oh ocean let me hear
the rest of the story

Facing death and yet not know how her life will end, she can only ask the wisdom of the sea for an answer.

While looking at the sea, she has a hallucinatory image that she might be becoming a fish. She imagines that the terrible pain she feels is due to a fin emerging from her smooth and breast-less chest.

hire ouru
itami fuan na
waga mae ni
umi wa haiiro no
suisoo to naru

a fin comes up
uneasy with pain
in front of me
the sea becomes
a gray water tank

The phrase "hire, a fin, ouru, comes out," also suggests her fear of the cancer's reappearance in another part of her body as well as this part of a shark protrudes from the water.

yorokobi no
ushinawaretaru
umi fukaku
ashi tojite tako no
rui wa kooran

its joy
having been lost
deep in the sea
the octopus will freeze
with its toes curled

The phrase *yorokobi no ushinawaretaru umi*, the sea which has lost its pleasure, is a beautiful way of describing the sea in winter also equates with Nakajoo's mind. The octopus is a metaphor of herself who cannot move freely due to her fatal disease. She is a poet who explains herself by using an apt metaphor and does not express herself realistically or directly. The image "curled toes" is a sexually stimulating description of pleasure. This, again, is one of her well-known *tanka*.

Between Otaru and Sapporo, the railroad runs right along the edge of the sea. On her trips to Sapporo for the many radiation treatments that winter, she sat in the train watching the cold sea, with high waves whipped up by the wind. At this time she was thirty-two years old.

fuyu no shiwa
yoseiru umi yo
ima sukoshi
ikite onore no
muzan wo minka

wrinkles of winter
develop even on the sea
if I live longer
will I see this atrocity
happen to me?

This is another of her famous *tanka* and the big stone monument inscribed with this poem was installed in her home town on the 3rd of August in 1960, as her seventh anniversary after her death. Beside the monument a grove of cherry trees were planted, so that people can enjoy walking around in it, especially in spring.

COLORED HOURS

Jane Reichhold

12:00 a.m.

the black purr
of no engine, voice
or cry
a wave climbs the cliff
to fall back on itself

1:00 a.m.

from the dark

inside a deer's belly
grasses are pulled
with a green-giving sound
the seaside meadow grows

2:00 a.m.

the tide turns
the wind from the sea brings
the buoy bell's
iron clang of the monastery
urges one to rise to kneel

3:00 a.m.

splayed sleepers
before the jagged edge
of the world
the color of blindness
illuminates unreality

4:00 a.m.

sinking deeper
into the deflating balloon
of dreams
a comforter loses
its calico name

5:00 a.m.

first light
the earth separates
from the sky
renewal blazes as a pale
glimmer in the east

6:00 a.m.

newborn colors
pink and blue shared
by the sea sky
floating above as clouds
the day's rain takes shape

7:00 a.m.

swirling
the smell of coffee colors
the rooms
warm and friendly awakes
a golden sun on an oak table

8:00 a.m.

lines on
yellow tablet paper widened
by a pencil
the mousetrap of an idea
snaps on a clipboard

9:00 a.m.

time fades
numbers on the clock
slide to the floor
in the pattern of wood grain
sun writes of its other life

10:00 a.m.

the silver
of Alzheimer's
on track
with single-mindedness
will I get this done today?

11:00 a.m.

piling up
of orange and cream
at its zenith
the word weaving
begins to unravel

12:00

watching my hands
carrots prepare for their
reincarnation
with the losing of their roots
they pass from plant to animal

1:00 p.m.

joy & release
the just-out-of-school
color spins
a clay pot into the air
wet and glistening it stands

2:00 p.m.

did you know
birds take afternoon naps?
fatigue rules
until an idea rears up
loud as a sleepless child

3:00 p.m.

the water color
of cleaning up the shine
a certain coolness
in the loss of inspiration
the reality of dusty clay

4:00 p.m.

no thanks
no walk for me today
yet the feet
find the road and its hill
spangled with delight

5:00 p.m.

a black pot
glassed on a black stove
always the same
yet sunset rays Midas-gild
even the left-over turkey

6:00 p.m.

reversing
the water of dishes
a soap bubble
turns itself inside out
in a stainless steel sink

7:00 p.m.

changing nightly
the colors of cotton dollies
sewn
a wakeful needle guides
a pliant tiredness of thread

8:00 p.m.

oblation
of the monks' chanting swings
the crystal rosary
a jaguar-spotted cat finds
merely another of my toys

9:00 p.m.

for moonlight
the white book pages
of a day
comes down in blue ink
separated into memory

10:00 p.m.

unfocussed
as in the hour seeking
a lover
of stairs, the toothbrush
and a puddle of clothes

11:00 p.m.

a dog barks
from his teeth the flash
chips the night
each particle of sleep
broken again by barking

COPPER ON A MINARET
Werner Reichhold

her dusty dress
soft obliterating
yellow (if not orange

probably) in its own entourage
split
English tongues they realize
imploding breath by
Shock and Awe

ultra sound
widening a crater
black of burned bushes

spiraled prayer
home of a mosque

underneath
the oil floating the oil
the woods of ancient roots

I shall offer you
a slice of the summer moon
to be the light of your life
but if that won't suffice
I shall give you the rising sun

our sandcastles
built upon the pebbled shore
are totally gone
promise of undying love
fades with the summer wind

you could even hear
the drop of a single pin
it is the silence that kills
how long will this last...how long
this loneliness without you?

Shirley Cahayom

Snow knits green sage brush
with red mesas the same way
your hands touched
mine on our last night in Taos,
cool before the spring thaw comes.

Frosted tumbleweeds hang
from a high plains barb wire fence
on a cold sunny day,
sparkling like her lips wet
with a desire she'd forgotten.

Winter snow fell short
this year. Sun dried cedar.
Fire coming over
Taos mountain for sure in spring
coffeehouse Indian says.

Don Shockey

WIND'S BAREFEET

Aya Yuhki

I cherish
the wind -
moving swiftly
on transparent barefeet
filling the thin air

without revealing
its appearance like a spirit
the wind shakes trees,
waves the waters
wind's metamorphosis

the moon lights
the tiny pieces of white hagi's*
fallen flowers,
I feel lonely calling them
as "universe's dusts"

over
the dark sea of the universe
drifts
Earth,
emerald green ship

no difference
between the endless macro
and the limitless micro,
we're travelers only while
drops of dew remain

even in dreams
my husband hasn't appeared
fireflies, please
drift in front of my eyes
trailing your blue lights

*the Japanese bush clover

WITHOUT GENRE

ORANGE

June Moreau

If you want to enter
the color orange
you need to wear
a broad-brimmed hat,
whistle a tune
from the deep south,
whirl with the dancing cat
named marmalade,
to the rising moon
sing a serenade.
Orangy things can be
tangy or tango
reddish yellow
and occasionally mellow.
Remember to be thankful
for the color orange.

~!~

a sure sewn levity
scented, focused,
and so blue

the shingles gather opulence
As sifting of the sea blue sky
replete with sun's opposing camisole
forecast to match
a season's worth of gemtones

as the light procures a gesture in return
wings lift to transcend
one ceiling then another

Sheila Murphy

—

I like the day's having a little give in it
the same as walking in the breezeway
sweet as listless rain

some wings are poised to life their way
out of the symptoms
practiced in curved rain's impending

sport of saturation
promised and with facts

Sheila Murphy

Long flowers river their way
Forward standing flute-lipped
Normal in the window
Sated with sacrifice
As plum silver gives up what it gives off

Hypotheses craft populations
Level with the faculty of hope
Left to imagined stipulation
Cornered by default positioning

Unless time fastened to encryption
Surfaces the letter carried to the law
That drifts down openly forgotten

Sheila Murphy

rain light softens
dayside rapture

of the window stains

and matching chimes

the rain birds trilling
each to each

Sheila Murphy

BOOK REVIEWS

Embracing the Firebird: Yosano Akiko and the Birth of the Female Voice in Modern Japanese Poetry by Janine Beichman. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu: 2002. Trade bound paper, 339 pages, 6 x 9 inches, an Appendix of kanji of the poems and each poem is accompanied with the romaji version, \$23.95. ISBN:0-8248-2347-8 is available in bookstores.

If you have wondered how a young girl, from the provinces of Japan, who had been running the family's candy store, could suddenly be rocketed to fame and fortune with her first book of tanka, this is the book that will tell you the story of Yosano Akiko's early life. Janine Beichman takes a fascinating story, tells it well and manages to work into it an amazing amount of translated tanka. Being a scholar, and long-time expert on the works of Yosano, and because she also collects valuable editions of her work, Beichman brings to both story and poems a breadth of experience and understanding of the work possessed by no one else.

She begins the life of Yosano (1879 – 1942), by accounting for her grandfather and how he began a confectionary store on a busy corner in the town of faded glory - Sakai on the Inland Japanese Sea - telling in full of Akiko's birth, her rejection by her family, and how the courage and drive of this girl brought her, by the age of sixteen, to be running the business. Even more incredible is the tale of her meeting with Yosano Tekkan, a famous editor of the Tokyo poetry magazine, *Myoojoo – Venus*, and how she fell in love. The rich poems, from this first flush of love, titled *Midaregami (Tangled Hair)*, were published in 1901, just two months before the couple managed to marry. The major focus of *Embracing the Firebird*, is on the times in which these poems, that made Yosano the most celebrated tanka poet of the last century, were written.

Beichman was able to piece together the story with the utmost detail and realism due to the incredible mass of literary material left behind by Akiko Yosano. Never again able to capture people's hearts as her first book, this did not stop Yosano from writing over 55 books and articles. She continued to write tanka, and critic tanka, but after she began having her 13 children, she wrote also fairy tales and other books for children. Having read *The Tale of Genji* several times as a child, and having earned money for her growing family by teaching and lecturing on the subject, she retranslated the whole book twice (her first draft was burned in the fire after the earthquake in Tokyo in 1923), from archaic to modern Japanese. Lest I lead you astray, let me remind you that *Embracing the Firebird*, though the title is taken from a later Yosano poem, only covers the period of her life up to the publication of *Tangled Hair* and the event of her marriage.

In her discussions of *Tangled Hair* Beichman comes up with an amazing theory. No one could figure out how Yosano had arranged the tanka in the six sections. They were not chronological, nor based on the real time of her growing love for Tekkan Yosano, nor in the order the poems were first published in his magazine. Beichman advances the amazing idea that Yosano linked the poems in a sequence according to the methods of *renga*. Since we have no complete English translation of *Tangled Hair*, Sanford Goldstein and Serishi Shinoda's *Tangled Hair* contains only 165 of the 399 poems (and is out of print) and they are not in any order or sections, this fascinating prospect will have to be proved by Japanese readers. From the samples Beichman does give in translation, it seems she has made an important discovery.

From my small inventory of Japanese words, it certainly seems to me that Beichman's translations are much closer to what Yosano was trying to say. When one person finds *chikara* to mean "my supple breasts" and Beichman writes "my powerful breasts" I would guess that with Yosano's attitude toward

life and love, that she was thinking powerful. Yosano's poems are, almost without exception, full of sexual innuendoes, references, metaphors, double meanings and direct statements of her pain and mostly her pleasure in her body and its sexual aspects. Writing as boldly as she did can be daunting to men and the squeamish, but it is there and it needs to be brought across into English with the grace and accuracy she used.

My one problem with some of the Beichman translations, and every translator will pick on another because none of us use the same methods, was her decision to shape some of the tanka into three-lines and even worse, (ala Seidensticker), into couplets. When she does this, the line breaks have nothing to do with the sense or meaning of the words or phrases, but are purely typographical constructs. Under each of her translated poems, no matter how it looks in English, something she admits does not interest her, is the Japanese romaji with slashes to indicate these five well-known parts of the tanka but the reader of English has no sense of how these two versions relate. Not only does her use of a non-reflecting shape for the tanka disturb the sense and understanding of the way the parts of the tanka interact, I am afraid that people wishing to imitate the power and force of Yosano's work will try to imitate these three or two-line versions of the English without understanding the underlying structure built on sound units which has no representation in the English. In her introduction to the book, Janine Beichman spent several pages defending her methods, and she also wrote to me:

"The main reason is that some of the poems that I included, particularly in the early chapters, are there because they are important to the story of Akiko's life, but do not have great literary value in themselves. For such poems, it was most natural to use a three line or, in some cases, a two line form. I kept five lines for poems that deserved it – where I wanted the reader to slow down and savor the poem, or where there were certain complexities in the original that called for unfolding the poem and having time and space to give a greater sense of sound/image complexity. Also, you have to remember that I was working within a template of prose: the poems, with their broad margins, are nestled within blocks of prose, with their narrow ones. Therefore, to present a poem in five lines is to be making a statement about it, namely, that it is important, in a literary sense, worth slowing down for and thinking about."

I can understand and accept her reasons as valid for her, but this does not lessen my pain at seeing the English versions of Yosano's words treated with such disregard for them as reflections of the tanka poems of a genius. My complaint does not in any way diminish the magnificence of Beichman's accomplishments with *Embracing the Firebird*, nor should it stop you from getting this book and studying it like a Bible. Tanka readers, and writers, have been given another chance to catch the magic of Akiko Yosano. Take it!

Haiku Noir by R. Gray. Infinity Publishing.com:2002. Perfect bound, 8.5 x 5.5, unnumbered pages, \$9.95. ISBN: 0-7414-1395-7. Contact or call toll-free (877) BUY BOOK.

Again, a title took me to my French dictionary for the complete connotation of "noir" which are given as "black, swarthy, gloomy, dismal, foul." I suspect that Bob Gray, if picking one word of translation would pick "gloomy" because one gets the feeling he thinks his haiku come from the dark side of life. In many cases this is so, but yet, in the sense of the poem, or the reverberation from the ideas in his poems, I found them to be positive and uplifting, as haiku are thought to be.

near death

the old woman enraptured
by a vase of flowers

This means his haiku are well written and often very deeply connected to great moments of insight, as the above poem shows; they are, each in their own way, small way markers to deeper thought and consideration. Yet when he makes a small, haiku-like joke, it contains elements of sadness as in:

nudist family
around a picnic table
dad's toupee

This man looks at life with the raw eye of our fragilities, the brevity of our humanness, and yet comes to haiku for cane and banner pole.

The poems are presented one to a page, dead center on the pages with the acres of white space that helps dispel the "noir" of the title.

Jamaica Moments by L. A. Davidson. DLT Associates, 3245 Village Green Drive, Miami, FL 33175
Perfect bound, 5.5 x 8.5 inches, 50 pages, \$9.75 + S&H \$2.50.

For the fans of the haiku of L.A. Davidson, Jamaica Moments finally brings a satisfying portion of her poems, which previously readers could only find in the numerous anthologies and haiku magazines. Since the publication of her last book, *The Shape of a Tree* twenty years ago, we have hoped every year would bring us such a book as Jamaica Moments is.

First impression is the in-your-face red-pink hibiscus that fairly dances off the cover. There is no doubt that this is a powerful book with all those red vibes waving like flags around the room. Even without opening the book, there seems to be a bouquet of flowers in your hands. No shrinking violets here under the false modesty of a little Japanese poem!

This collection of poems centers around her visits to Davidson's daughter, Laura and her husband, Dhiru, in Jamaica and the friends and experiences Davidson had there. As reader, one gets the feeling that she was in haiku mode much of the time and took the care to record her innermost thoughts no matter what they were.

having come so far
to visit them both again
to the beach alone

Just reading the haiku for information gives a wide and varied impression of what life must be like on this tropical island. The haiku are carefully arranged so that wisps of stories emerge, merge and float back and forth from incident to event.

after the firm "No!"
peddlers pass along the beach;
the surf louder

But one can also read her haiku for examples of well-written haiku techniques as she is a very practiced writer and one worthy of study and even imitation. With four haiku to each page, in a large, easy-to-read font, it is hard to stop with just one. The reader wants to peruse the whole book and then page back through it for favorites.

Pensées copyrighted by Stanley Pelter. A Hub Editions, edited by Colin Bundell, Longholm, East Bank, Wingland, Sutton Bridge, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 9YS, England. Perfect bound, full color cover, 5.5 x 8.5 inches, £5.50. ISBN: 1-903746-25-6.

The title is the French word *pensée* for "thought" that gives new meaning to our cliché, "pansies are for thoughts" since *pensée* can also mean "pansy."

Sometimes a book is advertised as being "a steal," meaning that its price is so low one is getting it almost for nothing. Stanley Pelter takes this phrase into actuality. He has "written" a book about haiku in which he takes liberally from everyone who has ever written on the subject, wreaths their ideas with the complications of his words and offers it up in a jumble of stream of conscious writing that denies comprehension in the way of a French intellectual. In the same way you would enjoy the play of words and thoughts in, for example Joyce's *Ulysses*, you can learn about haiku in *Pensées*.

I loved the artwork on the cover. I think I have rarely admired one as much as I enjoy looking at this one. It is extremely apt for the book. The title, written in a grid of the art-school style, peters out where the author's missing name should be on the cover into a mass of faces (I suspect that are photos of the author) made unreadable by slashes of lines of black or smears of color. It is fascinating artwork and completely true to the material in the text.

Pensées contains no poetry except the flights of fancy of the author of the book. As he pontificates on telling the reader what a haiku is and how to judge one, our senses are jangled by digressions and explosions of extraneous thought ala Roland Barthes. Once he has impressed us of his worth, his wide reading and his ability to quote anything from everyone, and his understanding of haiku, he seems not interested in the actual poetry. Perhaps this, the lone three-liner in the whole 110 closely-set pages tells you more than I can.

ancient vine
now more dead
than alive

Occasionally he does credit others for quotes, but beyond these are vast masses of borrowed material, trimmed and expanded to seem his own which is very disconcerting. The publisher, Colin Bundell writes that Pelter wanted to publish the book anonymously, but he as publisher, to protect himself? puts in a very curious copyright notice.

Spirits Of The Wind:Tanka by Gerard John Conforti. Aha Online Book:2002. (Click on the title to read the whole book now)

Spirits of the Wind is Gerard John Conforti's third book of tanka and in this one, his desire to dedicate

his work to his friends and family expands as has his circle of support. Due to his childhood years being raised in an orphanage, his several years in and out of various mental hospitals and recovery programs, Conforti has had to learn to surround himself with an atmosphere of love and friendship as has no other person I know. Much of his time not spent on his writing goes to the care and nurturing of this group of people. Thus, when he writes his tanka poems, his awareness of the closeness and the necessity of these people is so actual that he dedicates each poem to his thoughts of that person.

Writing on Staten Island, Conforti finds nature everywhere at his fingertips, yet he presents it in such a universal manner that geography disappears in the intensity of his feelings.

An excerpt from
For Maureen

This coming summer
the heat of the noon sun
will rise from the traffic
and the roofs of houses
blazing on the steaming earth

In the summer rain
our embrace
will cool the heated winds
but for this relief
there are furious storms

After the passing rain
I can smell the green grass
and the honeysuckles
growing on the fence
across the building steps

I have traveled many States
and seen many mountains and meadows
fill with the life of spring
or frozen solid in winter
I have traveled many States

The clock on the night table
is ticking in the silence of night
each second claiming a life
and each second a reborn
the crying sound of a child

From out of the womb
comes each birth
and it is easier to be born
but difficult to die
which we avoid at all costs

Take a Deep Breath by Sylvia Forges-Ryan and Edward Ryan. Kodansha International, Tokyo: 2002. Hard cover with jacket, 130 pages, 5.5 x 7.75 inches, US\$16.00. Available at all book stores as ISBN: 4-7700-2885-7 or Amazon.com offers it with a 30% discount.

Take a Deep Breath is my idea of the perfect haiku book. To have it lying in their hands must seem like a dream come true for the authors – this husband and wife team. It seems nearly every haiku writer wishes someday to have a small, tastefully made collection of their poems. An even greater dream is to have someone else take up the poems, gently one at a time, to discuss them, enlarge upon them and to bury them deep in the heart of the reader. Ever since R.H. Blythe did this for the old masters of Japanese haiku, no one, until now has taken haiku so seriously, and to use the force of words to expand the haiku to fill a position in meditation.

Edward Ryan has done this for the haiku of his wife, Sylvia Forges-Ryan. The couple takes only forty-four haiku, which are tastefully presented on the left-hand page, framed as if a photo in an old-time album, and on the right-hand side, for just one page, Edward writes a meditation on the subjects of the haiku. Suddenly the haiku seem accessible, engaging and inspiring as the reader's mind is stretched out into the vastness of feeling and understanding of the importance of awareness.

Though not touted as haibun, and certainly a collaborative work, as haibun usually is not, the whole of this book becomes an excellent example of what a haibun could and can be. There is enough of a reference in the prose to the haiku to maintain a connection, and yet the forces of inspiration are moving in different directions to expand, exponentially, to the farthest horizon. A haiku cannot ask for a better treatment.

The two authors have equally flawless work. Not one word of the many haiku comes off as needing more polish and the meditations are variable and yet enough alike that the reader can relax into Edward's way of thinking. You can't have excellent haiku without drawing near to religion, so the meditations are ecumenical enough to incorporate the feelings and ideals of both Buddhists and Christians. He teaches the Christians how to breath and the new Buddhists how to see value in the religions of their childhoods.

Interestingly enough, the couple had the fortitude and the understanding of psychology enough to make a change in the way the seasonal poems are arranged. Instead of starting with spring, as the Japanese do, the poems in Take a Deep Breath begin at the summer solstice. This allows them to begin with the full and joyous poems of that season and, best of all, to end with the hopefulness and inspiration of the spring poems. This is a new and absolutely marvelously apt, for a psychological book, to grab the readers and then send them back into the normal world with happiness and uplift instead of starting good in spring, like a young life, and ending with the death and solitude of winter.

This hardcover book, perfect as a gift, is done with taste and style from its sexy cover through its cream-colored pages with just the right amount of print in the right places. The cover illustration, by Noriko Murotani always brings a smile to my face. It shows a photo of a temple made of two hands with one red tulip pushing up into the cavity between them. The tulip, cut away from its bulb, has roots hanging from its stem! It is certainly eye-catching, as much as the book is breath-giving.

Where Dogs Dream by Kit Whitfield. Barron's Educational Series, Hauppauge, New York: 2003. Series Editor Leanne Bryan of MQ Publications. Hardcover gift book with jacket, 6 x 6 inches, 96 pages with full color photographs and ink drawings. Available in stores with ISBN: 0-7641-5640-3. \$9.95.

Again, Leanne Bryan, has managed to guide another of these expertly designed and dreamed books into being. Using a variety of editors, she has gathered amazing collections of short poetry into charming books – perfect for gift-giving. What I admire most is that she does not separate haiku and tanka out into a side channel, as is usually done with books in these genres, but integrates the English poems of these Japanese genres right beside short or partial English poems from such well-known authors (in the case of *Where Dogs Dream*) such as Emily Dickinson, John Muir, William Carlos Williams, Helen Keller, John Masefield, and Walt Whitman. Thus, in this company you will find Robert Spiess, Anita Virgil, Elizabeth Searle Lamb, and the editor, Kit Whitfield. I have endless applause for these efforts to integrate the genres in the name of enjoying poetry.

In *Where Dogs Dream*, as you can imagine, the poems and the photographs are about – dogs. But the vision of the work goes beyond into reading the mind of a dog and our relationships with our dogs. The metaphysical is everywhere waiting on you to discover it. The perfect book to give or to pick up at odd moments for a Dalmatian spot of inspiration.

If you are cat lover, there is a companion book, *Where Cats Meditate* (ISBN: 0-7641-5638-1).

Jane Reichhold

TWO ROOMS:

A Journey into the Interior of Poetry

Review of *Four Zero Four* and *In the Time of the Fall of the Two Towers* by Michael Helsem. AHA Online Books, 2003. (Click on the title to read now)

By Gordon Hilgers

"Abide by rules—then throw them out! - Basho

On an early summer night, you will stand beneath a huge, full, orange moon and realize something quietly breathtaking: Someone somewhere is also looking at it, but has come to their vision of the moon accompanied by a completely different chain of circumstances and influences. Who is it? And who are you now? Classical Japanese poetry is a little like that. The relation between two human beings or one human being and a poem can be described as the relation between two rooms.

But what is that called? Codependent origination is perhaps the closest English equivalent to a Buddhist idea that all things and events are fully interdependent and that nothing is self-originating. The haiku and tanka, especially, juxtapose images that are interpenetrating and, once again, interdependent - as they operate by indirection to generate often astonishing observations about both the laws of nature and those of society. Better, the little poems are short, easy to memorize and, for

many people in many times and places, have served as tiny koan or bits of ambiguousness that, when cracked open like pistachios, awakened them to wisdom or spiritual insight. Traveling with a haiku or a tanka on your mind is like moving through the desert while sucking on a small stone to alleviate thirst.

Classical Japanese poetry also operates under a number of literary ethical standards, or what have we, and the most important of these is known as *sabi*: An undertone of aloneness, hollowness, like the rainy tones of a Japanese Shakuhachi wood flute, pervades both the ideal Buddhist experience and the essence of the very finest Japanese haiku and tanka.

In today's world, however, it's almost impossible to be alone. Even in remote natural settings, the hollow and empty beauty of a pristine lake on a morning spiced with mist is often interrupted by passing 18-wheelers roaring across the flatlands five, six and seven miles away. Perhaps the technological whine makes the scene even lonelier. A tanka would probably describe the mechanical moan as the shadow and sadness between opposites, the moment just before or after a kiss, a birdcall or a leap off a cliff.

"I have a theory about Japanese prosody, or rather a feeling about what I know of it. I see the lines written out on a picture, & the pattern is plain: like the dots on a domino face, in fact. Or like a drumbeat composed of one sequence of staccato beats, & then four more . . .," writes Michael Helsem in a short, Basho-esque introduction to *Four Zero Four*, one of two short online collections of tanka this Dallas-born poet says he has been accumulating and writing intermittently since 1982. As in Basho's famous vision quests, particularly *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, literally a journey into the interior or core of poetry, Helsem's two enigmatic series of tanka contain short prose breaks that serve to both illuminate the reader and tighten the spell of his wide-ranging tanka.

Helsem, who admits haiku has heavily influenced him in nearly all his poetic experimentation, approaches his tanka in another way similar to Basho's method: Both believe the essence of the craft is encapsulated in the act of "watching and walking." That seemingly simple activity, however, entails much more than literally walking through the woods and watching the procession of natural events before you. Rather, one of the rarefied miracles of classical Japanese Buddhist thought is that the world itself is poetic and that each and every detail within the natural world is akin to a metaphoric communication from primal reality to those who are attuned to it. Loosely, the Japanese term for this highly trained way of seeing the world is *kokoro*—the ability to feel the essence of an object or a relationship between objects, the presence of mind to literally relate to the heart and mind of something. *Kokoro*, however, is often translated simply: heart.

Basho's world, however, was quite a bit different than Helsem's is, not only in that the steady hum of the automobile neither lurked nor loomed in the future or otherwise, but also because the spirit of poetry in 17th Century Japan was wholeheartedly social.

Renga, the expansive "threads" of linked verse with which both haiku and tanka are conventionally associated, originally developed when groups of rich courtiers, sitting together and drinking tea, began composing witty, conversational poems that were loosely connected between the second and third lines or third and fourth lines by a common image, a retort or (to Basho's consternation) an apt metaphor: Geese flying in the sky, in one famous example, are linked to the dumplings in a poet's soup.

The tanka in Helsem's *Four Zero Four* and *In the Time of the Fall of the Two Towers* spring wholly from the mind of a single poet. This severing of traditional social characteristics of a classical form is

widespread and common today, but it also shows how divergent the abstractions of the world we accept are from those of Basho's day. To further exacerbate the so-called wound it seems, Helsem has filled his own tanka with dozens of technological, conceptual and entirely imaginary images: clocks, screen doors, skylines, napkins.

From *In the Time of the Fall of the Two Towers*:

poems in the shower
arise as clear as wires
 & then I lose them
streets I miss for years, returned
to on an idle errand

In Helsem's vision of tanka, clearly shown in both short online books, contemporary Western culture has invaded the psyche of the individual with a disconnected emptiness qualitatively different from the *sabi* of Basho's day. Sure. The witty repartee remains intact by the poet's whim. But the verbal joust takes place in only one mind. Which, of course, is really cosmic from a Buddhist perspective. The second big disconnect between the organic nature of the classical Japanese culture of Basho's day and the inorganic meld of a postmodern amalgam of fast food and existentialism is the thrall to abstraction and illusory construct into which we all seem forced.

"I would have liked to use a lot of nature imagery, but about all of that I'm usually exposed to these days is the changing light at different times of day and the birds that are not deterred by city living. In lieu of that, I spend a lot of time in the car," says Helsem.

However, sometimes it seems as if Helsem has gone too far in incorporating imagery that flouts basic tanka tradition. But that's a matter of personal taste. The phrase "Matterhorn seatbelt," for example, almost pokes out your eye. The use of the French *volta*, a word that essentially refers to an ornamental turn executed by trained horses or a sudden fencer's thrust, may not only confuse some readers but could disrupt the Japanese aware, or the pathos inherent in the relation of natural beauty to the primal mind.

One more observation: the arrangement of Helsem's tanka on the page may also confuse readers into thinking they are reading either one long poem or a connected cycle of tanka. Helsem says he understands the problem and insists each tanka is to be taken as

the history of an isolated experience. But he also seems to enjoy the illusion. What would a traditionalist think? If it were only possible, each individual poem in Helsem's *Four Zero Four* and *In the Time of the Fall of the Two Towers* would be more effectively isolated on a single electronic page. An electronic page? What would Basho have made of that?

Gordon Hilgers is a poet and writer who lives in Dallas, Texas.

Writing and Enjoying Haiku: A Hands-on Guide by Jane Reichhold (Kodansha International, 2002), 165 pages, \$15.00. Available at all book stores as ISBN: 4-7700-2886-5 or Amazon.com offers it with a 30% discount.
by Carlos Colón

This well-written, easy-to-follow guide is for everyone who loves haiku, from the beginner to the more experienced. Reichhold starts with an overview section which explains how to read haiku and how the conflict of counting syllables in English-language haiku developed. She then outlines "Six Basic Haiku Rules":

1. Write in three lines that are short, long, short without counting syllables.
2. Make sure the haiku has a fragment and a phrase.
3. Have some element of nature.
4. Use verbs in the present tense.
5. Avoid capital letters and punctuation.
6. Avoid rhymes.

Following these haiku rules, Reichhold lists 24 "Valuable Techniques" for writing haiku. These include comparison, association, *sabi*, *wabi*, and wordplay. After the haiku writer completes a poem, s/he is advised to review Reichhold's 19-point checklist for revision, so unnecessary punctuation, adverbs, articles, and gerunds are removed and so the final poem is concise, polished, and not a product of unintentional plagiarism. For writers who wish to be even more engaged, Reichhold offers 65 additional rules/methods for writing haiku. The only noticeable omission is the method of writing a balanced haiku with fewer than 17 syllables (e.g., using a 4-6-4 or 3-5-3 pattern).

In the chapter "Enjoying Haiku with Others," Reichhold advises how to copyright, publish, publicize, and teach haiku and how to share haiku at a public reading. The final section, "Using Haiku Skills in Related Poetry Forms," gives a short history and explanation of other Oriental forms including *tanka*, *renga*, *rengay*, and *haibun*. The reader is also given a resource site at www.ahapoetry.com/aguide/ for an extensive bibliography.

Reichhold's guide would have been a stronger, richer book had she used more contemporary haiku examples besides her own and a few others. Nevertheless, her book is a perfect complement to Cor van den Heuvel's *The Haiku Anthology* for an up-to-date understanding of English-language haiku.

Carlos Colón, widely published in books and magazines, is also known to Lynx readers for his *renga* and valuable contributions to the "Participation *Renga*."

**SOME THINKING ABOUT WRITING AND ENJOYING HAIKU, A BOOK BY MRS.
REICHHOLD**
ITO Sumie

Most often it is very hard for Japanese persons to read or appreciate the so-called haiku written in other languages than Japanese. To us, they are not really haiku even when the writer tries to follow all of our rules. We have tried to teach others how to write haiku, but the results are so very different from our own work.

Yet, we now have a new book by Mrs. Reichhold called *Writing and Enjoying Haiku: A Hands-on Guide* published by Kodansha International in Tokyo. When the book first arrived on my desk, I was prepared to not like it because I did not think a Westerner, and a woman, should be teaching how to write haiku. I looked down the table of contents and saw that she was also going to teach about tanka and renga. Who did she think she was?

In Japan we keep these different forms, or styles of writing poetry separate. We either are haiku writers or tanka poets. The idea that a writer can hop from style to style is not one that we practice. So even more I was unhappy with this book. But then I began to turn the pages and read Mrs. Reichhold's words.

She writes very simply and clearly. I could understand everything she was saying. She writes like a haiku writer. Very exact without confusion. Page by page I followed her thinking across the words. To my surprise I suddenly realized that she had understood Basho. What she was writing about was a way to understand the way he worked.

Basho had a very special way of putting words together to make understanding that stood outside of the words. This is what makes him so great in Japan and why we love his work so much. But because we love and admire his poems so much we never think about how he worked. I was very surprised to see this truth coming back at me in English.

I felt angry at first but as I thought over her 24 techniques I thought she had found something very precious and worthy that we had overlooked in haiku. I think that according to Mrs. Reichhold haiku in other countries is more sacred than some of the people have thought it to be. I liked this because we feel that too. I later enjoyed opening my book of Basho's works and seeing if I could find the techniques she had given names. Yes this idea works.

When I came to the part of the book on tanka I did not know what to think. Again I did not think a non-Japanese person could understand our poetry. Here again she surprised me because she does. Her study of haiku had strangely prepared her for tanka poetry. This idea is painful for me but it seems to work. We often do not think of the two forms being related but in her words they are. In many ways they work alike but she did understand the difference or at least she explained it a way that was clear to me.

It was uncomfortable but a good surprise to read that Mrs. Reichhold could write more about renga, or linked verse than I knew. I have not considered this a literary style since Shiki Masaoka declared it dead in the Meiji era. Here in this book it seems other people have continued with it and have breathed new life into the old form. It is painful to think we threw something away that now has meaning for other writers.

I think it is important for Japanese who read English to study this book. Though we feel we know how to write haiku from our bones and the earth that makes our food she has lighted a lamp that makes us see better our own masters and our own work.

As I said before in this letter, the haiku outside of our country, are growing up in ways very different from ours. I am not a fortune teller or one who reads the future so I cling to old ways. It is best for people to learn from our old masters. In my mind it seems Mrs. Reichhold is one who is teaching Basho's way.

Snapshot Press is proud to announce the publication of 'Ebb Tide: Selected Haiku' by John Crook. Many people in the haiku world were saddened by John's death in 2001, after a long and brave struggle with cancer. This posthumous collection has been edited by Brian Tasker with close cooperation from John's family. Further details and haiku are available on the redesigned Snapshot Press website: www.snapshotpress.co.uk The book can be ordered online <http://www.snapshotpress.co.uk/orderonline.htm> in various currencies, or by mail order <http://www.snapshotpress.co.uk/orderform.htm> £1 for every copy of the book sold will be donated to the Katharine House Hospice, where John spent his last weeks.

summer solstice -
the sun reaches a new place
on the fridge

ARTICLES AND LETTERS

Haiku and Haiku Societies — the Future?
Caroline Gourlay

The idea for this paper began to germinate in my mind about two years ago and since that time I have become increasingly exercised by the question of the future, not only of haiku, but also of haiku societies and in particular our own British Haiku Society. I eventually got down to the writing of it this spring, when the title of the HNA 2001 Conference, Haiku and Beyond caught my attention; no doubt the future of haiku has always been a relevant topic, but for many reasons, it now seems so more than ever.

Where are we going from here? Does haiku have a future, a 'beyond'? There is little doubt in my mind that it has. Basho's frog pond haiku is arguably the most famous poem in the world, and a form that has lasted for 400 years, is as widely practiced in as many countries as haiku is today, and is argued about as passionately, is not likely suddenly to die out. However, the future of the BHS, or of any other haiku society for that matter, depending as we all do on multiple factors, is not so assured and certainly can't be taken for granted. Haiku and haiku societies, which came into being to promote haiku, inevitably have a bearing on one another, and their inter-relatedness is something I would like to touch on today.

I think most would agree that haiku in the West has in the last couple of years reached a watershed. What ten years ago was a poem of minority interest has suddenly become overwhelmingly popular. Haiku is fashionable — referred to in national newspapers, TV sitcoms, even cartoons. The proliferation of haiku websites tells its own story and a competition in The Times last summer attracted over 7000 entries. Although the competition was organized in conjunction with the BHS and details of

the organization were given, very few, if any, of the 7000 who entered were BHS members or, it seems, felt moved to join as a result and the response to this competition was perhaps the first real indication we have had that there are many people writing haiku who do not relate to, probably are not even aware of, the organization. Ten years ago the BHS was almost synonymous with haiku in Britain; those who became interested in the practice of this form had often got to hear about it through the BHS and stayed on to become members. Today it would seem that many who write haiku don't care about its origins and traditions and much of what is being produced is trite and commonplace — rather, in fact, as haikai was before Basho and his disciples got hold of it and demonstrated its potential. A glance at some of the websites does not lift the spirit; on-line many seem to see haiku as a kind of game rather than an art form and the jargon used to attract potential enthusiasts would send off most serious writers. For the initiated, good websites are not hard to find, but for newcomers to the scene their first experience of 'haiku' is likely to be Honk if you Haiku, Presidential Haiku, Dog Haiku, Teen Crush Haiku, Bad Haiku, Gangsta haiku ...

Haiku most certainly has a future, but it may not be the kind of future that we who care about it can feel altogether happy with. There is a danger in what seems to be the present trend of haiku out there with few guidelines and little or no editorial control, and for this reason I believe that where things go from here matters a great deal. They could go in one of several possible directions, and today I would like to look at the three likeliest of these, suggest which I feel would most properly ensure the healthy development of haiku, and what part haiku societies might play in this development.

One route down which haiku might go, or continue to go, is the one I have already mentioned — a kind of dumbing-down, its practice uninformed by knowledge of, or interest in, its history. A second possibility is that haiku's increasing popularity can be harnessed to a recognition that it is an art form — that it takes a lifetime of work and experience to become good at writing it, and that membership of a haiku society probably offers the best apprenticeship. The third possibility is that haiku gradually finds its way into our own literary tradition, accepted as valid poetic expression, written by serious poets and protected by the integrity of the best journals whose editors care about poetry and strive to publish only what is good.

If the first happens — a kind of unchecked free-for-all — haiku will soon lose what credibility it has outside the haiku movement. If it goes down the second route and accepts the authority of a recognized body such as a haiku society, the high standards thus maintained will guarantee that it is taken seriously by both writers and readers. To those of us interested in haiku this would seem to be the most satisfactory development. However, as I say, there is little evidence that things are moving in this direction; while there has been some increase in the BHS membership this year, I doubt if it reflects the rash of enthusiasm for haiku in the community at large. Last year as well as The Times competition, quite a bit of media publicity attended Susumu Takiguchi's Global Haiku 2000 Conference in London and Oxford and also Stephen Gill's lively and well-researched Radio 3 programme, but in neither case was there any significant expansion of the BHS. This autumn there have been two well-advertised national haiku competitions, one associated with the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival, but as far as I know, there was no suggestion that we as an organization should be referred to, or involved in the judging of it.

It seems that the horse of haiku has escaped not only from what most people would regard as the safe stable of the Japanese culture that created it, but also from the relatively safe stable of an organization that came into being in order to point those who are serious about haiku in the right direction. I do not know if this is the case with the HSA or haiku societies in other countries, but in Great Britain, if anything, it seems that rather than increasing our links with those we would like to

influence, we are actually losing touch with them. Therefore I believe that the third possibility is the best chance for the future of haiku — down the road that pushes it in the direction of the mainstream, doing all we can to persuade those involved with the wider world of poetry to acknowledge that the time has come for haiku to take its place in our own poetic tradition. Apart from the principle involved, if the best haiku is to circulate further than our own small haiku society readership, we need more commercial publishing and marketing outlets and only recognition by the poetry establishment will give us this.

Makoto Ueda says in his introduction to *Global Haiku: English poetry enriched itself by assimilating the Italian sonnetto*. There would not have been the sonnets of Shakespeare or Milton or Wordsworth if the 14 line form had not become part of the English literary tradition.... Some 400 years later English poetry is in the process of assimilating the Japanese haiku (but) the assimilation of the 17 syllable form has been more problematic, because there lies a greater linguistic and cultural distance between Japanese and English verse. Problematic yes, but not impossible. I don't know by what stages the Italian sonnet was assimilated into our literary tradition, but it would be sad indeed if it needed a society to give it credibility. It is interesting that while some Western writers of haiku have doubts about the validity of haiku as a poetic form, the Japanese don't seem to. Kevin Bailey writes in the latest issue of *HQ Poetry Magazine*: (I quote) When Prof. Atsuo Nakagawa, the Editor of *Poetry Nippon*, came to visit me in 1988 ... he made very clear his view that haiku should not be segregated from mainstream poetry, but should be an influential part of it ... The popularity of haiku in the West proves that we are now ready to assimilate it into our own tradition and it is up to us, as members of haiku societies, to be in the vanguard of this transition by doing all we can, by whatever means, to see that the best haiku reaches the poetry-reading public. Ueda ends his Introduction: Will there ever be a great English haiku poet who might be compared to a great English sonneteer such as Shakespeare or Spenser? Surely the answer must be 'yes', but in order that he/she can emerge, the haiku stage must be large enough to give platform, not only to our own established haiku poets, but also to those in the mainstream who (like Nigel Jenkins) will bring their own vision to it. We must be prepared to approach poetry festivals with ideas for haiku events, maybe start a haiku column in a local newspaper, join writers' groups, take workshops, enter into dialogue with mainstream editors.

But before we can go any further, there is another question that must be asked — and answered — and that is: do haiku societies want to move closer to the mainstream poetry establishment or are they perfectly content as they are? I touched on this topic in my last *Blithe Spirit* editorial, suggesting that the best proof of the success of the BHS would be that it put itself out of a job — the implication being that haiku would have asserted itself and moved beyond any organization into a full acceptance of it as one form among other poetic forms. I had little reaction to this, but what I did have was positive. However I know that there are some members of the BHS for whom the mere suggestion of any dialogue with the mainstream is sacrilege — a kind of betrayal of the 'purity' of haiku. There are also those, who understandably enough, feel that it is pointless to try and engage with a mainstream movement so apparently dismissive of haiku. David Cobb was right to point out in his *National Haiku and Global Haiku* paper in Chicago last year, that the history of our relationship with the poetry establishment has not encouraged optimism, yet I sometimes wonder if their legendary unfriendliness hasn't been somewhat exaggerated — Susumu Takiguchi seemed to have had no difficulty renting rooms at 22, Betterton St. for his haiku workshops last year and Pearl Elizabeth Dell, another BHS member has also hosted events there. Haiku is not without its supporters among established poets in Britain. Nigel Jenkins and Peter Finch both write haiku and have done a lot to raise its profile in Wales; and some presses do publish collections of haiku, Planet being the latest convert in this respect, — the result of an exchange with *Blithe Spirit*.

Part of the problem has been the fact that haiku comes from a culture that still seems alien to many in the western tradition. Alan Ross, recent editor of the London Magazine remained until his death convinced that haiku is so quintessentially Japanese that no Westerner should have the temerity to attempt it. Well, the Beat Poets did and we are grateful to them for doing so; nevertheless, theirs was a movement peculiar to its time that flourished and died, leaving haiku still outside the Western mainstream in America. Likewise, haiku's association with Zen has led many in the poetry establishment to see it more as a spiritual exercise than a poetic form. Henderson's famous saying Haiku is more akin to silence than to words has encouraged the belief that there is something mysterious, even esoteric about haiku — that it isn't for ordinary mortals, but only for more rarified souls.

Something common to most societies, not just haiku ones, is a resistance, sometimes unconscious, to outside influences. A society is by nature a closed circle and the temptation is for members to look inward rather than outward. In order to reinforce our own sense of identity, we tend to develop a kind of siege mentality; it's important to be vigilant and work against becoming isolationist and self-sealing, otherwise haiku will be the loser, leading to a situation where haiku societies sit contemplating their navels while the rest of the world rolls on by. Before we can influence anyone outside the haiku movement we must be prepared to listen and this means reading mainstream poetry magazines, their editorials, letter columns etc.— getting ourselves acquainted with what is going on out there. A move to forge links with the poetry establishment should be against the background of having some idea of where it is at, seeking to share insights about haiku, rather than telling them where we think they are getting it wrong. This is not an unrealistic goal; Gabriel Rosenstock, the Irish poet and translator, successfully has a foot in both the haiku and mainstream camps, and in New Zealand (although Cyril Childs tells me the situation has never been quite as cozy as it appears from the outside), the gulf between haiku and mainstream is not nearly as large as it is in the UK. Maybe we need a Richard Wright among our ranks, a universally acclaimed writer, at home in all forms of literature, to help bridge the gap; his collection Haiku — This Other World must have sold the concept of haiku to hundreds of people who had probably never heard of it before. Chance connections can play their part too; in the 'eighties one of the committee members of the New Zealand Poetry Society, David Drummond, discovered haiku on a trip to Japan and on his return encouraged interest in it from within the New Zealand poetry establishment; as a result of his commitment, haiku activity within their Poetry Society continues to this day.

We need contact with mainstream writers if the writing of haiku is not to become a kind of cult activity, practiced in isolation from other forms of poetry and regarded as esoteric and somewhat eccentric by the majority of other poets. A poet who writes longer poems but whose main interest is haiku wrote to me recently: I think we're in danger of putting the mainstream off when we appear to be more interested in the peculiarities of form than in the content. Jim Kacian, too, in the Introduction to his recent Frogpond International questions some of our assumptions. If haiku is poetry, then why do mainstream poets not consider us poets? It is too self-serving to dismiss them as not knowing better — some of these poets have made serious study of haiku and have arrived at a place different from our mainstream ...

Many editors as well as mainstream poets genuinely feel that haiku is the poor relation of poetry and only for people who can't write the real thing. We have to convince them otherwise. It is too easy and self-serving to assume that whenever our haiku, haibun, haiku sequences, or whatever, are rejected by mainstream journals, the fault lies in their editorial policy rather than in our work. Maybe some of our submissions just aren't good enough to compete with all the talent there is out there. Martin Lucas suggests in his Spooks, Spectres and the Haiku Spirit (BS 11/3) that there is 'a drift towards

homogeneity' in the haiku movement and points out that though the third edition of the Haiku Anthology maintains the level of quality of the second edition it is 'noticeably less adventurous'. Is this not because haiku societies are too incestuous, relating only to each other, this leading to unconscious imitation? We need to open ourselves more to outside influence, to read good poetry, not only haiku; we need the stimulus of contact not only with other poets, but artists too (Miro's late 'minimalist' drawings are an inspiration to anyone who responds to brevity, be it in words or with a brush) — there has always been cross-fertilization in the arts and it has enriched all forms. What matters is whether a poem works, however it works; perhaps editors are rejecting our haiku because while they might be competent enough, too few of them have wings.

How many of us try our haiku on mainstream editors? If we feel we have written something that has quality, would it not be worthwhile submitting to a poetry journal, before taking the relatively easy option of sending it to one of our own in-house haiku magazines? By so doing, we open ourselves to the possibility (even likelihood) of rejection and will lose that pleasantly reassuring sense of identity, something that all us writers enjoy each time we see our names in print; it is much more comfortable being a large fish in a small pool than a small fish in a large pool, but it is also self-limiting. By submitting our work to mainstream journals we will not only stretch ourselves, but raise the level of awareness as regards haiku, proving to editors that there is a public who takes it as seriously as other forms of poetry. For sure, editors of poetry magazines will often have different ideas to us about what constitutes a good haiku, will reject ours and print some that we (perhaps rightly) think are not so good, but such jostling for position is par for the course with all the arts which have always been competitive. It's a natural and healthy process of their evolution which so far, with a few notable exceptions, has not proved such a bad way of sorting out the good from the mediocre; we have to prove our point to editors by exciting them with our work.

Over the past 12 years the BHS has done an invaluable job in promoting haiku, in increasing people's awareness of it and the culture from which it came. But I believe the time has come for us to see ourselves now as part of the wider poetry movement rather than separate from it, to pay more attention to the contemporary poetry scene and somewhat less to the internal affairs of the society and to trust that the essential nature of haiku will be recognized and respected by poets who also enjoy writing other forms of poetry. There have always been good and less good poets and there always will be; Bashō acknowledged as much when he said: 'those who are good at combining or bringing together two topics are superior poets'. This statement proves that he did see haiku as a form of poetry, and the question I would like to leave you with now is not, why should we bother with the poetry establishment? but why shouldn't we?

My thanks to Cyril Childs for reading this paper and for his valuable comments - CG

Caroline Gourley is the editor of Blithe Spirit. In addition to being published originally in Blithe Spirit, this article was also translated into Dutch for *Vuursteen*, the journal of the Haiku Circle of The Netherlands. Thanks to Adri van den Berg for pointing it out to us.

KIDS WRITE RENGA (so you can too)

John Carley

You can read these notes first. Or you can jump right in and read the poems (which are in SYMBIOTIC XVIII-2, June 2003). Either way we want you to give writing renga a try.

What is it all about?

Kids - Well any age really. there are poems here written by authors as young as nine years old, through to later teens. The plural - kids – is right though. this is poetry written by several people at once. Yes really. Write - Actually it's more a case of swapping ideas and generally bouncing them around. So if you're in the same place as your partners then 'speak' is just as likely; if you are using email: 'type'. Or, for SMS messaging: 'text'. There's more than one way to write a renga. Renga - It's a Japanese word; this style of poetry comes from Japan. 'Ren' means 'chain' and 'ga' means 'poem'. Chain of Poems. Linked Verse. Renga.

What goes into a renga?

Renga is like a collage or mosaic of ideas and images. A good collage uses all sorts of different materials to build up interesting shapes; a mosaic uses lots of little pieces to make a single picture.

Renga is like a party where everyone brings different things to eat or drink: the fun is in swapping and sharing. Two or three can party, or even twenty three. And the ingredients. well, no one is here to tell their life story, or argue about politics or complex problems. Renga uses short, simple images.

Renga doesn't speak at the reader; it doesn't deliver a lecture. So, don't tell us about your county in Autumn (Fall), show us what a dry leaf feels like; make us hear the sound of the wind. Don't tell us you like grilled vegetables; give us some of the smells from the kitchen, the texture of toasted eggplant, the cat flicking it's tail because it wants you to have fish.

How do the verses join up?

Renga doesn't try to tell a story, or prove a point. Renga is an adventure that changes direction from verse to verse. The verses do link together, but in unexpected ways. A link can pick up on a mood, or one of the senses (taste, smell, touch, sound, sight). The link might refocus: the new verse zoom in on the verse it joins with, or pan out and away to show a much bigger background.

Imagine. a noisy classroom becomes the quiet beneath a tree. The sound of bees becomes a motorcycle engine. The smell of exhaust becomes a busy highway. The lights of the vehicles become the stars. A sailing ship travels a sea of darkness. Back in the classroom we awake from a dream.

A link in renga is like a lesson on the Romans. A bad lesson on the Romans means you are told everything very quickly and with too much detail. A good lesson on the Romans has just enough to show you something, but leaves enough room to get your imagination going.

Does it just ramble on?

No. Renga does not tell a single story, but it isn't just shapeless either. The Japanese tradition is hundreds of years old and uses patterns of seasons, subjects and moods. These poems will often have

more than thirty verses, sometimes fifty or even a hundred!

But there's no need to learn to write such long pieces to enjoy the creation and sharing of renga. A simple, open framework is all that it takes - like a trellis to grow your vines on. Let's take a look at the four poems in this issue:

"Ice Cream Sundae" - follows the seasons, taking eight verses to complete a cycle, and tells us exactly what it's like to be aged 10 in northern England.

"Donuts, Fuel and Hot Dogs" - tracks the cycle of a day, in a sea-side town called Blackpool. The verses, like the place itself, are a busy kaleidoscope.

"Rich and Poor Lives" - goes through the stages of a lifetime, flicking back and forth between the 'haves' and 'have nots'. "East Lancashire" - at only six finely linked verses, needs nothing more than a general geographic area to make it feel complete.

Who chooses what goes in?

The four poems in this issue were written by groups of between five and fifteen poets. They were written under the guidance of someone who knows renga well. The name for such a person is, in Japanese, a sabaki - judge or arbitrator.

If you look carefully you will see that sometimes individual verses were written by a team, sometimes by a single person. Sometimes all the people present put in their ideas and suggestions for every part of every single verse in the chain.

Whatever the circumstances, it is the arbitrator's responsibility to decide the final version.

The most important thing is to experiment and find a system that works well for the people involved. When there is a large number, forming teams might be a good idea. If there are only two people, and they are swapping verses as text messages over a mobile phone network, taking it in turns is probably best.

The role of sabaki is important in renga; the sabaki is the team coach. If there is an experienced person present, it makes sense for them to be sabaki. If not, poets can experiment - person A can be sabaki for one piece of renga, but next time it will be person B etc. Attention - being sabaki is a big responsibility!

Taking turns or competing?

There are two basic ways of deciding which individual (or team) gets to write a particular verse. In Japanese these methods are called hizaokuri and degachi. But no matter which method is chosen, the most important word is za.

hizaokuri- taking it in turns. Poet (or team) A writes verse 1. Poet (or team) B writes verse 2. etc, with the sabaki offering help and suggestions.

degachi by competition. All poets (or teams) write an offering for verse 1, and the sabaki chooses the 'best'. Then all poets (or teams) write an offering for verse 2, and the sabaki chooses the 'best', etc.

za – This word describes the spirit of renga. It means lots of discussion, but no arguments. It means big on engagement, but small on ego.

What do I do next?

Read the poems. Notice how they use a long verse followed by a short verse, followed by a long, etc.

Show this article to your friends. Print it off. Email the URL to everyone you know. Tell your family, your teachers, your team leaders.

Write some renga. You can swap verses on a mobile phone, via email, via instant messaging. If you live in a town or city, you can even sit down in a room with your friends and write it!

Welcome to the poetry of the future.

Here are some poems that some children wrote last week - mainly mentored by their class teacher - using teaching materials authored by Paul Conneally and based on the 'phrase and fragment' analysis proposed by Jane Reichhold. These are from the Fifth Class (nine/ten year olds). A very constrained socio-economic profile; all white; civic housing project; neither town nor country. Group work is up under 'St Mary's Cadishead'.

litter all over -
sticky bobs*
clinging to my jumper

Laura

*burrs

pink blossom -
nursery children
pulling faces through the fence

Nathan

abandoned marble*-
a little ladybird
lost in a field

Jaimee-Lee

* a small coloured glass orb, a child's plaything

hiding place -
clinging vines climbing
up a crooked wall

Niall

LETTERS TO LYNX

Gracious good green spring wing greetings and all best always... You are too generous to me letting me know when you are on the verge of putting together the new next Lynx but I am very appreciative of the kind encouraging and honestly am not organized enough to get my tanka out of my little notebooks without such a well timed prompt... Major thank you and I spent part of today digging out some tanka for you to review. I must say again I'm not at all sure if any of these are worthy but hope maybe a few are (if none fit or feel quite right please just say so and I'm perfectly fine with that... I believe several I'm sending need work or are perhaps in a early genesis to where they might go?)

Grateful thank you for the feedback and it is wonderfully gratifying to have these tanka find a published home with you. I hope you know how much I appreciate your kindness and to me the reality of my tanka is that many are personal to a point that I am unsure whether they have a "universally" valid voice that others will find levity in or poetic reassurance or some kind of truth-value in finding them... Your willingness to publish some of my tanka gives me hope that they may have something worth sharing and I'm glad for that and will try to keep scribbling away when the muse and moments move me!

I'll be looking forward to all the great work you gather in the next Lynx and wish you the longer light in your home and hearts. I just went and picked Emma up from her closest friend Cora's house and she was so happy coming home... we had a good talk in the car and then the scent of damp old leaves mixed with new green grass and a lovely crescent moon... ah, so many gifts each day! There is a poem by Billy Collins in his latest book *Nine Horses* called "Aimless Love" in which he describes a sequence of things that he "falls in love" with and that sense is very much my own and that of any poetically inclined person. Tom Clausen

That's brilliant news indeed about Jane's recent publishing success. The gender issue so clearly needs to be addressed: I honestly believe Japan will not rise from its current social and economic impasse until it realizes the potential of its whole population. But we occidentals have urgent need of these bridges too I believe – for all the good intentions, the Matsuyama Declaration reads like a divorce settlement to me, and I hate to see world class literature divided into cantons. So thanks for cheering me up. Best wishes to you both, John Carley

Hi Jane, nothing wrong with Lynx at all - it's that piece by those crazy Reichholds that bothers me!!

No, in all seriousness though, "A Box of Renga" is a very strong piece and I still can't isolate out exactly what disturbs me about it. Part of it is the doll I suppose: all those low culture associations - horror movies etc. Then there's Dali - the showmanship that overlays a deeply disturbed psyche: also low culture according to much of the Brit intelligentsia (hmmn, always assuming I can spell it!). Cats. Lights. Broken Eggs. Sortilege! I suppose it's those things allied to the fact that the continual recontextualisation of a core image set ('box') in such a relatively long piece seems to generate a sense of obsession. Don't get me wrong, this is a tribute, not a criticism - but it isn't a cozy read. Not to me

anyway.

the circle half-drawn
why did I feel so scared

Seiai

So thanks for the poem. And thanks for Lynx. It's a pleasure to read. Best wishes, John Carley

Thanks for your comments about my card. I've been writing less and drawing more lately, trying to accompany each piece with haiga, calligraphy or collage, etc., to make it (at least for me) a more complete experience. In this mood of war with its anxieties and uneasiness, I submit something which I hope circumvents it for a moment. Gary LeBel

Pensées is now going into a second run - the first wasn't that long. The publisher, who wrote, without my knowledge, the blurb on the back, is suggesting that it should now be replaced with 'brilliant', 'perceptive', 'supportive' comments of readers and reviewers. I leave it to him and, apparently he has some in storage from a review yet to appear in the British Haiku Society journal, Blithe Spirit. Others, he has indicated, would be welcomed.

The cover was designed to visually signify the gradual but total obliteration of the 'Self'. For the same reason I had intended that my name did not appear anywhere but this was somehow got around by the publisher! I really wanted to indicate that the mere omission of the 'I' in ha(i)ku is a simplistic evasion of the problem. I do wonder what would happen to that infamous celebrity 'Ego' if everything we wrote was published anonymously, or under endless pseudonyms. Presently, the few remaining copies of Edition Numero Uno copies can be obtained from two sources: myself at Maple House, 5 School Lane, Claypole, Newark, Lincolnshire NG23 5BQ, England, or Stonehouse Editions, Holly Cottage, Crowell, Near Chinnor, Oxfordshire OX9 4RR, England. The Price is £7 or US \$10, both include postage and packing (I like your metaphor - most apt!)

Pensées evolved as a result of a suggestion a previous multi-titled book, including 'I'll unsee u in my dreams' and 'we meet in the inbetweenitee'. printed with little explanation, needed a supportive rationale. The first one was a practical example of what could happen if.... It changes perception of 'Season', strongly indicated that that we, who pride ourselves on calling a-spade-a-spade, really do no such thing, and questioned and prodded at other cherished notions of 'core' characteristics. I am presently working on a couple of more 'example' books, which, if I can afford it, hope to gift to anyone interested. I am also getting together 'Afterthoughts' - a natural extension of Pensées.

I have recently heard about 'Writing and Enjoying Haiku' But not sure whether it was Frogpond, the HSA Newsletter or one of the British Mags. Although not particularly aware of the world haiku picture, (tell me more about LYNX) I have been Editor of the BHS Newsletter for the last twenty issues. I am giving it up following number 21, in June 2003. I am delighted to hear of Jane's success and if I had more details (ISBN number - do you have these in America? - cost, availability, etc.) I will try to include it in Number 56.

I have to say that I have now read a fair bit of Haiku Literary Theory, much of which I find is rather 'tinkering at the edges', or the equivalent of 'so what' haiku. Jane has been, for me, the most important exception and influence, (despite OCR Van den Heave, Philip Lowland, Lee Gurga and Martin Lucas [who adopts too many ideas of others) and, so it seems to me, is at the centre of 'significant issues' and writes in a way that is amusing as well as erudite.

If one learns within specific parameters and becomes used to 'the best' within them, it does not mean an automatic qualification to make a value judgment about work that, while using the same or

similar language, structures and form, extends the boundaries. Unfortunately, the initial and knee-jerk reaction is to denigrate (another word for 'rubbishing') rather than viewing it as inability to connect with that which is beyond a personal experience. Our own limitation is not easy to recognize, come to terms with and do something about. It happens in every field, so why be surprised by it. It has been her ability to perceive beyond existing tradition that impressed me when I first encountered her writing. So, a big Thank You to her for that. - Stanley Pelter

Still mourning for Kiyoko-san
Eiko Yachimoto

My heart is talking to Ms. Tokutomi Kiyoko. In fact I gasped when I found the sad news in the Lynx. I did not know she died in December. I met her on the 17th of November while her daughter took her to Japan. Prof. Fukuda spent a whole day with them on that day and dropped by at AIR meeting which was about to finish.. The session was unusually held in Central Tokyo. Some of the people there knew her but she could not remember them. But memory loss did not affect my conversation with her, because I met her for the very first time then. She told me she was originally from Saga Prefecture in Kyushu. She showed keen interest to the closing renku session and hold the pencil to write down the Japanese text of Prof. Fukuda's moon verse.

a full moon remains smiling home-coming

I was impressed with her beautiful writing, very accurate and very sincere way of Writing each kana and each Chinese character.

Ms. Sugiura Kikuyo's link to this moon verse;

bell-crickets' voices around the kitchen

I am sure Kiyoko-san keeps writing haiku in the heaven.... My condolences...

~!~

I particularly appreciated your letter discussion with Owen Bullock in the February issue about links between tanka in a sequence. Meanwhile, Jane might like to know distribution of her "hands on guide" has made it as far as this distant part of the English-speaking world. I like the sections on structure in haiku and tanka very much and I'm recommending the book to all my contacts. Tony Beyer

The interesting thing about our poem ["Long Way Home" in symbiotic poetry of this issue of Lynx] is the timeline, which has been a constant amusement to us as we've written this piece. We're proud that we made it to the end, and we'd love to do something with it, but we're not sure what. The main question we have is . . . should we go back and hack and edit and try to fix our problems? Or should we share what we have and say "good, bad, or indifferent, this is what we wrote". We would love to hear your opinion. Layne Russell (who knew you in CompuServe days), Paul David Mena (who I believe you know as well) and I were the poets. This isn't a "submission", because we don't know if we're finished, but we covet your advice. Gary Warner

PARTICIPATION RENGA

AT THE BEACH

Rule: 3 – 2 lines alternating

Ends with 12 links

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
in rain the rocks find their colors cg
drilling three holes - the rose quartz bowling trophy CC
in the pub end of September most darts missing the target WR
getting the point everyone laughs at his joke at the wrong time JR
eating ice cream in the dark no more blondes WR
Carrot Top's telephone time travel . . . back in the Rotary Club CC

dark curls from under
swimming instructor's suit
1950s lessons GD

~*~

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
in rain the rocks find their colors cg
missing the obvious he slashes his foot on a mussel-covered rock JAJ
coming home quietly broken shells and I WR
her new treasure a wagon full of driftwood JAJ
the stick I threw now in a dog's teeth WR
smushed sandcastle curl-lipped snarl of the 98-pound bully CC

covert photos
nude beach GD

~*~

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
in rain the rocks find their colors cg
drilling three holes - the rose quartz bowling trophy CC
in the pub end of September most darts missing the target WR
getting the point everyone laughs at his joke at the wrong time JR
Irishman explaining the steering wheel in his crotch: "It drives me nuts!" JR

spitting out
a shell and a tooth WR

~*~

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
tourists wading in surf eyes open for sharks GD
from afar calling her through both hands white teeth WR
bright green thong between pale cheeks GD
playing frisbee a mouth full of sand hair too JAJ
your eye low water JMB
swirling swirling the sound of a siren CC

Ah – those uniformed
uncovering us WR

~*~

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
in rain the rocks find their colors cg
deep in the wave just as it breaks light glints GD
I twinkle and I shut my eyes for in the dark appearing stars WR
wearing sunglasses the Hollywood wantabee stumbles JR
on her hands and knees in front of Grauman's CC
"Whata beach!" the young tough snarls through slitted eyes JR

a dolphin jumps
or was it Eve? WR

~*~

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
tourists wading in surf eyes open for sharks GD
from afar calling her through both hands white teeth WR
bright green thong between pale cheeks GD
playing frisbee a mouth full of sand hair too JAJ

your eye low water JMB
concentrating on the gulls to neutralize the nausea - CC

oh watch
the cage JMB

GENTLY WIPING DUST

Alternate 3-line and 2-line links for 100 lines

Theme: impermanence, transitoriness

gently wiping dust from grandmother's photograph october windsong TW
warm fall days chill at sunset BJ
last rush of color outdoing itself virginia creeper PC
nights behind closed eyes images in red float by JR
taps at sunrise opening daylilies on their graves PC
flowers of our youth gone – everyone MM
mind wasting memories disappear one by one JAJ
haiku eagle gliding in a sea of chance LCG
meteorite streaks across the night sky sudden cool breeze MWM
morning sun on a bayou mist KCL
first snow already melting dancing barefoot JAJ
thinking of Tundra buying new shoes TLG
breath suspended overhead, the northern lights in slow dance JAJ
father and son pause for a long moment RF
breeze changing course weeds in the dark field bend again GR
up ahead another hidden curve ESJ
SOFT SHOULDERS warning he glances at his wife their 50th year GR
finishing the school of hard knocks YH
digital display counting down the failing heart GD
she tries to add up all the good times YH
was never very good at math MHH
one more short story attempt into the waste basket GR
sharp edges cutting through the trash bag shadows leaking out GD
thickening juice from the black beans can JMB
long time on shelf honey crystallizes sticky jar JSJ
mustard seeds pop in hot oil GD
it will be a cold day in July when I cook again YH
even the firecrackers refuse to light – a rainy fourth! dht
indoors all afternoon two boys play Civil War one gray; one blue RF
refugee children / strangers to laughter PGC
stray sniffing / stranded starfish – / gray sky's cold FPA
mackerel clouds reach every horizon piling the sea JR
broken thermometer poisonous mercury scatters everywhere JAJ
driving through a school zone spray of sparrows RF
waiting at the end of the block police speed trap JAJ

another hole in the cheese CC
small tear in the yellowed love letter folded, refolded cg
anthrax scare the office smart-aleck CC
we go to bed goose pimples appear wanted WR
bare feet find the linoleum CC

the gloss
I once have taken care for
now divided WR

grano
coffee ground
heel thought JMB

~*~

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finishing the school of hard knocks YH
digital display counting the failing heart GD
she tries to add up all the good times YH
battery low the calculator reads "ERROR" GD
the new player late for the first game RF
dealing cards to an empty chair careless of how they land GD
face-down \$10,000 poorer CC
richer for the experience bottoms up YH
"How do you stop a wino from charging?" CC
at the end of that rainbow no credit card cg
back to the diner waiting tables JSJ
old woman slips jelly packets into her purse cg
mistaking a condom / for a condiment GD
runs her tongue / over red lips, / snaps her purse shut cg
Quiet out at sea the boat sinks JMB
hot songs melt the wax from sailors' ears GD
listening to a star leaving the lake WR
heaving light beneath the wave JMB

fingerprint in the pink birthday frosting cg
watching a cow's spittle only eating grass WR
smell from next door something stronger than just tobacco JAJ
ashes as the police leave burning marijuana WR

flick. . . flick . . . flick
stench of lighter fluid GD

~*~

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driving through a school zone spray of sparrows RF
waiting at the end of the block police speed trap JAJ
she remembers when fast was dad's Model T cg
man on the running board the answering machine gun CC

two Firestone front tires flat my personal "axis of evil" WR
stripped one lug nut on each wheel CC
churned crust JMB

old dog appears at my hands
hoping for a treat GD

~*~

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at the end of that rainbow no credit card cg
back to the diner waiting tables JSJ
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Quiet out at sea the boat sinks JMB
hot songs melt the wax from sailors' ears GD
listening to a star leaving the lake WR
heaving light beneath the wave JMB
fingerprint in the pink birthday frosting cg
bubblegum smack across her face JAJ
wiping her feet at heaven's gate Pat Shelley CC

"wind do not muss my hair" calm skies on the day of her death JR

the dropped marble
rolls out of sight GD

A RENGALOCA

Rules: This is an acrostic renga. Subsequent links must spell out some haikai-related word by reading the first letter of each word down the lines. Finish with 12 links.

La Renga Loca
Your muses lock horns with
Night Blooming Jazzman
X-treme Poetry – Carlos Colón

She wouldn't be as
Holy
I
F
The neighbor's boy wasn't that shy WR

Kiss
Incenses
Grizzled
Opponent CC

Soon
Even the birds won't

Nest
Right by
Your home you
Ungrateful slingshot wretch JAJ

Turquoise
Egret
Neck
Stretched
Into a knot
On
Niece's Big Chief Tablet CC

Pope
Introduces
Veterans
Of the Swiss Guard
To sharp shooters WR

Military intelligence
Oxymoron
Obfuscates
Normal life JR

~*~

La Renga Loca
Your muses lock horns with
Night Blooming Jazzman
X-treme Poetry – Carlos Colón

How easy it is
Always writing verbs that end
In ing
Keep it to a minimum and
Use the present tense without JAJ

talking
willingly
in the manner of
stereotypes used for a
thousand times WR

Proper feelings
Often
Edges
Thrust into a
Reactive
You JR

Right now she's had
Enough of hot weather
No doubt in winter
Going to somewhere warm
All that she will desire JAJ

To
Answer
Notes
Responding
Emotion
Names
Greater
Appetites JR

Love is
Ever waiting
At another

Place you don't expect WR

SWARMING

6-word links on the

Theme: swarming

Storm a hand, shape of wind - John M. Bennett
carrying the birds' idea of food JR
news of doughnuts in the break room cg
the case of the pedophile priest CC
memories of a my own shame JR
that I couldn't count to six JMB

a handful of ideas to touch JR

~*~

Storm a hand, shape of wind - John M. Bennett
carrying the birds' idea of food JR
news of doughnuts in the break room cg
the case of the pedophile priest CC
memories of a my own shame JR
your daydreams crowding out the cobwebs CC

water the window dry the face JMB

~*~

Storm a hand, shape of wind - John M. Bennett
carrying the birds' idea of food JR
news of doughnuts in the break room cg
children flipping raisins at the wall WR
flies rest on the burning floor JMB
one victim states he's not Moslem WR

a crowd at heaven's gate fighting JR

WITHIN/WITHOUT

Alternate 3-line and 2-line links for 12 links

Theme: interconnectedness

sliding open this bathroom window startling Orion -Robert Flannery
with jeans a belt of stars the radiance of a daughter JR
tied shoelaces tug of war between two teams of Barbies CC
in mirror: the head upside down JMB

jigsaw puzzle factory her missing timecard CC
hissing hose beneath the table JMB

after forty years
her breasts still sweet GD

~*~

sliding open this bathroom window startling Orion -Robert Flannery
left the hair combed my hand JMB
fair grounds the bearded lady dunks the clown CC
he reaches down to help him up a step JAJ
AIDS the joy of giving turned around JR
blue heron passes overhead RF

sky food
the gopher learns
to fly JR

~*~

sliding open this bathroom window startling Orion -Robert Flannery
left the hair combed my hand JMB
fair grounds the bearded lady dunks the clown CC
he reaches down to help him up a step JAJ
AIDS the joy of giving turned around JR
at the gulf course hole 18 flooded WR

Sunday
the rain clears for a
sun day JR

THESE FOLLOWING RENGA END WITH THIS ROUND
DO NOT ADD ON - JUST ENJOY THE GOOD WORK

JUST DAUGHTERS

12 links
theme: family relationships

In the graveyard a carved stone angel with my daughter's face GM
grandma in her rocker turning clouds into faces cg

"get water from the well" she said, wanting me out of the kitchen GM
mother and son discuss making pickles JAJ
sex education must, say the educators begin at home JR
up on the armoire kids find the porno mag JAJ
sticky wings a moth JMB
first time for lipstick, her mouth wider than her lips GD
whispering "no" she turns a little more red WR
under my feet a spring of Spring water rushes over them WEG
both eyes shut at night I see more WR

smoke
billows from the forgotten
skillet GD

In the graveyard a carved stone angel with my daughter's face GM
grandma in her rocker turning clouds into faces cg
"get water from the well" she said, wanting me out of the kitchen GM
mother and son discuss making pickles JAJ
sex education must, say the educators begin at home JR
old uncle's eyes slowly derobe his niece ESJ
out of the closet so many cases of family incest JAJ
his face cut out of every photo – family album GD
bickering siblings dys-ing each other CC
what's that you say? family all scattered? pity JAJ
girls walking 14 miles to join war protesters WR

the battle continues
for security JR

~*~

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grandma in her rocker turning clouds into faces cg
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sex education must, say the educators begin at home JR
up on the armoire kids find the porno mag JAJ
sticky wings a moth JMB
first time for lipstick, her mouth wider than her lips GD
whispering "no" she turns a little more red WR
"Yes" might have been easier but she didn't love him JAJ
strong women raising hell along with the kids JR

April of Baghdad
one deep wound
through our faces WR

MOST BEAUTIFUL GAME

7 Links (now extended to 12)

Rule: each link is a question; no answers!

ENDS WITH THIS VERSION – DO NOT ADD ON

What are the rules / for the most beautiful game, / and who can play? RF

What are you seeking / when you smile / at strangers? JSJ

Where do we come from / Why are we going? GM

what's the joke about navel seamen? JR

how many syllables does it take to screw up a haiku? CC

does it come from your head or your gut? cg

How can rain fall from empty sky? RF

Will that be a C cup or a D? JAJ

Wasn't this supposed to stop at 7? CC

Does 12 sound any better? JAJ

Shall we measure it by the yard or by the meter? CC

Can you name the peter? JMB

~*~

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How can rain fall from empty sky? RF

Will that be a C cup or a D? JAJ

Wasn't this supposed to stop at 7? CC

Will your poetry be a true salve? WEG

Whatever cures your itch? JR

What if an unjust war

mutilates you forever? WR

TIME

with 3, 2 liners up to 12 links

Theme: time's length and limits

Finished! Do not add on.

birds winging south / no speed limit / only time JSJ

for how long / this dream? RF

clocks changed again - / spring ahead / fall back GM

patches of snow mound of primulas in bloom JAJ
the tension gone from his strings Howdy Doody CC
how many neighbors don't "Make Room for Daddy" ? cg
behind the screen on Sullivan's stage Elvis writhes GD
Bob Dylan still waiting in the wings CC
"A Hard Rain . . ." how time changed when the towers fell JR
Like Harold Lloyd another hanger-on CC
name-dropping the same sounds come and go JR

you came the
name the same JMB

~*~

birds winging south / no speed limit / only time JSJ
for how long / this dream? RF
clocks changed again - / spring ahead / fall back GM
Nasira waiting for us at the edge of eternity CC
oh to sit forever in the warm cradle of the moon ESJ
the thinnest sickle of light beyond clouds GD
sun rise the curve of a hill spreads the glow JR
her breasts' curve slopes lower GD
softer now like water: swimming JMB
out with the tide one hand not clapping WR
clung sand hot napping flat with the ride JMB

a pack of cards
becomes the enemy JR

birds winging south / no speed limit / only time JSJ
for how long / this dream? RF
clocks changed again - / spring ahead / fall back GM
Nasira waiting for us at the edge of eternity CC
oh to sit forever in the warm cradle of the moon ESJ
the thinnest sickle of light beyond clouds GD
sun rise the curve of a hill spreads the glow JR
her breasts' curve slopes lower GD
softer now like water: swimming JMB
out with the tide one hand not clapping WR
a few miles out they want to scuttle nuclear submarines BF

railway embankments
cleared of underbrush -
house finches gone GD

FINIS