

Roadrunner Haiku Journal

August 2005 Issue V:3

Welcome to the Roadrunner Haiku Journal. Roadrunner is a international quarterly online journal that publishes quality English-language haiku and senryu. We chose Roadrunner as the name for the journal because we want it to be at the forefront of haiku thought and practice with a regional flavor.

Jason Sanford Brown, Editor

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Special Feature

The first installment of *Roadrunner's* Special Feature showcases five sets of paired poems by Robert D. Wilson and Anita Virgil. These remarkable poem pairs show a new development in collaborative verse which can only be described as extraordinary. *Roadrunner* is pleased to present this as its first Special Feature.

this lazy afternoon . . .
a thousand bees
lulling me to sleep

Anita Virgil

under
a fragrant tree
the song of water

Robert D. Wilson

spring afternoon . . .
even while I doze, things green
flowers open

Anita Virgil

on page
after page,
the same shadow

Robert D. Wilson

stirring the stream
with her finger, a woman
not unlike myself

Robert D. Wilson

refreshing
my dug-up fern roots,
cool water

Anita Virgil

the evening sun
drains the last gold
from the jasmine arbor

Anita Virgil

at sunset,
the raven becomes
its shadow

Robert D. Wilson

knee deep
in moonlight,
a heron dreaming

Robert D. Wilson

warmer than my dream
this spring night,
your voice

Anita Virgil

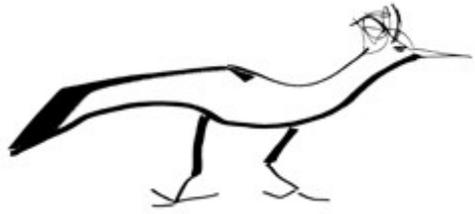
Anita Virgil

A past president of The Haiku Society of America. Poetry, essays and book reviews by her have appeared in all major haiku magazines and anthologies since 1969. Most recently, her poetry and essays appear in the online literary journal *Simply Haiku* (2004 and 2005); *Haiku* (2003, Alfred A. Knopf Everyman's Library edition); *Where Dogs Dream* and *Haiku for Lovers* (MQP London 2003). Her six books *A 2nd Flake*, *one potato two potato etc*, *on my mind: an interview of Anita Virgil* by Vincent Tripi, *Pilot*, *A Long Year*, and *summer thunder*.

Robert D. Wilson

Robert D. Wilson is the owner/managing editor of *Simply Haiku*, an online literary journal that showcases Japanese short form poetry (www.simplyhaiku.com). He is also a columnist for *Teacher Librarian Magazine*, the director of a community day school for troubled teenagers, and has written a murder mystery novel entitled, *Late for Mass*. His *Vietnam Ruminations* are available at www.vietnamruminations.com coltrane@lodelink.com. He lives part of the year with his family near Yosemite National Park and the remainder of the year in the Philippines. He was born and raised in Los Angeles.

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Haiku/Senryu

Elizabeth Howard

storm warning
thin blades of fog
windmill across the pond

eye exam
doctor and I compare the ravages
of breast cancer

hat in the wind
thistledown spins
over the hillock

Irene Golas

mother's funeral...
the prickle of wings
between my shoulders

postpartum:
I leave the hospital
cradling flowers

bitter cold—
the dog's bark
runs away from it

Shane Bartlett

After ashes to ashes
the porchlight coming on again
at the old family farmhouse

cleaving another day from my life the crescent moon

New state
same sky
same stars

Carlos Colon

backyard workshop
a pull chain snaps the shadows
back into place

traffic stop
Mercury aligns
with Saturn

Labor Day
a kiteful
of sky

Marian Olson

rising moon
suddenly
the white owl

a quiver and my dog retrieves his purity

surgeon
her face when she pulls off
the mask

Laura Orabone

summer storm
the sound before
the wet

lonely night
the cats and I paint
all the doors red

in the old sandals
my footprints
remain

John Stevenson

a big diamond...
just imagine
the pressure

morning clouds
blue bottles
on the windowsill

her hug
makes me think about
what's in my pockets

Ferris Gilli

family reunion
a patch where bluebirds
used to nest

morning sun
cupped in a mushroom
earthscent

house for sale
incoming robins
circle a rain pool

Scott Metz

the way
a firefly makes...
the two of us breathe

daffodil scent
in every row
of the library

afternoon rain...
again the simple sound
of Frogger...

Petar Tchouhov

full moon
an orange from the bowl
missing

running water
moves
the dead fish

night train
at the end of the corridor—
a firefly

an'ya

no sleep
me and this errant
mosquito

a starless backdrop
behind the crescent moon
scattered showers

sunlit log
mantis hatchlings
pile high

Saša Vazić

And so I stumble
through my dreams
sitting still in silence

Far from home
gazing at the wing
of a butterfly

Pedaling to the grocery
after my doubtful illness...
How fresh the air is!

Kevin Paul Miller

sunny day -
sweet music fills
the busker's cup

late afternoon
in a darkened room
light finds her face

pawnshop window -
the moon's reflection above
my old guitar

Vanessa Proctor

underwater observatory
the grouper's eye
level with mine

crescent moon the curve of a lyrebird's tail

awake all night...
this hotel room
so far from home

Stanford M. Forrester

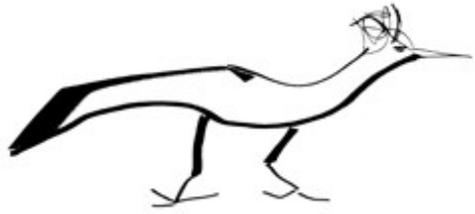
Zen garden
watering it
with gravel

the toddler's flashlight
left on...
August moon

om-less
the crow too

-to Santoka & Hosai

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Southwestern Haijin Spotlight

Naomi Y. Brown

Naomi Y. Brown was born in Japan and learned from her father how to write haiku at age eight. In high school her Japanese language teacher encouraged Naomi in her haiku and tanka writing.

In 1951, Naomi married Clayton Brown and moved to the United States. She realized the possibilities of writing haiku in English in 1983, after reading R. H. Blyth's *Haiku* (Hokuseido Press).

Since then Naomi has published two collections of haiku, *Season's Enigma* (Yucca Books) in 1989 and *Haiku Tapestry* (Yucca Books) in 1996. She writes haiku and tanka in both Japanese and English. Naomi is listed in *Who's Who of American Women* and *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*. She is a member of Haiku International Association, the National League of American Pen Women as well as the Haiku Society of America where she previously served as the Southwest Regional Coordinator.

moonrise

I sing "moonlit desert"
a song of my youth

winter sky...

whitecap after whitecap
on the Japan Sea

peeling an apple

my grandson's eyes
follow my fingers

in me

father's love of flowers
chrysanthemum

at last

the potted cacti bloom
long morning tea

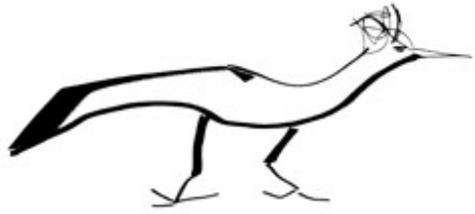
moonless night

driving desert highway
the North Star

my car keys
locked in the back seat
oleander blooms

he died in battle
between pages of *Manyoshu*
dried forget-me-not

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The Scorpion Prize for Best Haiku/Senryu of ISSUE V:2

Scorpion Prize Winner:

daybreak
the snowplow clears
my nightmare

Dietmar Tauchner

One mark of a good haiku is often whether it stays with you, and this one stayed with me. I kept returning to it just a little more than other poems in the previous issue of Roadrunner, and I think it's because of this poem's effective use of wordplay, the unexpected last line, the clarity of expression, the seasonal grounding, and the positive feeling the poem produces despite the tension or terror of a nightmare. We can see the person in bed at daybreak, at the moment when a loud snowplow awakens him. While being awakened by this noise might normally be unwanted, in this case it disrupts a nightmare and becomes a blessing. An additional meaning, of course, is that the nightmare may not just be literal, but figurative as well, in that the snowplow has cleared the "nightmare" of too much snow on the road. The simplicity and immediacy of this poem has much to recommend it, and the twist upon the expectation created by the word "clears" is masterfully done. One expects snow to be cleared, but not a nightmare, yet it makes perfect logical sense at the moment of being woken up for the nightmare to be "cleared" instead.

Honorable Mentions (in order):

we walk in silence
a sea stone
not there at high tide

paul m.

The first leap that this poem lets the reader make is that this silent walk is a long one, one that has lasted beyond the turning of the tide. Just as the tide has turned to rise to its highest point, the walkers have presumably walked along the beach for a distance, but have turned around and walked back to where they first saw the sea stone. We do not know if the people walking have been silent the entire time, or why, but they are silent at the moment of noticing that a stone that they had seen earlier is now underwater at high tide. The powerful emotional echo here, the second leap that this poem lets readers

make, is that the silence of the walkers is just like the disappearance of the stone into the water. Something is hidden, unsaid, perhaps buried, or not confronted. Or perhaps the walkers are done with the serious topic at hand, and they are content to let the tide of time and memory cover it up. Yet still they know it is there, and they remain silent as they continue their walk.

coming nor'easter
all the coins
younger than me

paul m.

I see this poem as recording a moment of sorting coins, perhaps rolling them to take to the bank. Or perhaps it's merely looking at the coins in one's hand received as change after making a purchase. Either way, in the context of a coming wind or storm, the person is reflecting on his life and age, most likely with a sense of mortality. When one was younger, most coins were older than you, but as you get older, the number of such coins diminishes. That sensitive moment of being older than all the coins in view is sobering, and may be seen as dark, perhaps like the coming storm. This poem's two parts, the context and focus, balance each other well, fitting together emotionally as they indicate the changing seasons of life.

distant thunder
a crow loses
its shadow

Laryalee Fraser

The implied darkness of the clouds is nicely captured in this poem. Though the thunder is distant, the clouds that presage the storm are nearby, close enough to darken the crow in front of the person viewing this scene. It is vital in this poem that the bird is a crow, a very black bird. The poem would not have worked with a flamingo or a robin. Instead, with a crow, we instinctively know its blackness, and we transfer that perception, and the blackness of the shadow, onto the approaching clouds. The clouds would not be so dark in this poem if the bird referred to was something other than a crow. So again, as with the "coming nor'easter" poem, this poem has an intuitive rightness to its context (the first line) and its focus (the rest of the poem). The simplicity and immediacy also make it very easy to see and feel.

sunset
my shadow washed
by a wave

Allen McGill

We go from daybreak in the poem by Dietmar Tauchner to sunset in this poem. And we have another shadow, this time a person's shadow instead of a crow's. And we also return to water, perhaps by the ocean. Sunsets are naturally contemplative, and in this poem, the contemplation of one's own shadow takes on a deeper meaning, perhaps a desire that one's self, like one's shadow, could be washed by a wave. Note, also, the physical description here -- a logical subtlety that might be easy to miss. If the person can see his shadow, he must be facing away from the sunset, and thus facing east. If the water is

to the east of the person, then the shadow is being washed by a wave in front of him, and he is seeing this from a place where his feet are dry -- and the sunset must be at his back as the person faces east. But the poem emphasizes the sunset, so surely the person is on a beach where the water is to the WEST of the person. Thus, to see his shadow, the person would be facing away from the sunset and away from the water in order to see his shadow. So one can conclude that the person in the poem has walked close to the water and turned away from it, and the sunset, and is walking up the sand, seeing his shadow. Yet he is still close enough to the water that water has come past him, wetting his feet as it slides past him to wash his shadow. So, unless the person is up on a bridge or rock facing away from the sunset, with his shadow down below, the logic of this poem suggests that he must be on the beach, in shallow water, where he himself is being "washed" by the wave. Thus, very concretely, the poet IS being washed by the wave, just as his shadow is.

I'm grateful for the chance to review all the poems in the previous issue of *Roadrunner* to make these selections. Several other poems came close. The opportunity to consider these poems has turned out, for me, to be an opportunity to plumb the greater depths of these poems, where I might not have noticed such depth with a quicker reading. I invite all readers to try making themselves "judges," to read slowly, with all the doors of perception open, both intuitively and analytically, to make as rigorous a selection as they can as an exercise in seeing what really makes various haiku tick. It is a rewarding experience.

Michael Dylan Welch

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