

Ri

13.2





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I want to thank editors Scott Metz and Paul Pfleuger, Jr. for asking me to judge the Scorpion Prize for the latest issue of *Roadrunner*. It was a pleasure, a challenge, and an adventure for me as I surveyed the land- and seascapes of these 38 poems. The voices of the haiku community have continued to evolve since the inauguration of the Scorpion Prize in 2005, and I commend each of the authors in issue 13.1 for expanding the borders and stretching the boundaries of my haiku and senryu sensibilities. These are poems that almost feel as if they were born from a stream of consciousness, yet one senses that the words and images have been put together with intent, to mean something, as the author painted the air around the canvas rather than the canvas itself. Each one of these 38 poems engages and inspires the reader/writer in me. I haven't set out to explain the poetry, but rather to suggest what took hold of me and wouldn't let go after multiple readings and ponderings, and yes, even discussion on a recent Saturday morning with neighbors who happened to stop in for coffee. Each poem in this issue speaks for itself, with word choices that entice and juxtapositions that intrigue the haiku mind. This is poetry that requires time to ferment on the subconscious level, for it is not what we know by the intellect alone, but what also reveals itself to the heart.

Over time, the most difficult part of this exercise was that of choice because I found myself engaged by each poem and wanting to explore the threshold of awareness it awakened in me. But because time and space are limited, I'd like to mention a few of these poems and finish with the Scorpion Prize.

A number of the haiku challenged me more than others. They weren't readily accessible at first but as I thought, felt, and talked them out, nuances of meaning and insight surfaced:

unfamiliar alphabet cleaning the talons of winter

Cherie Hunter Day

This haiku, with its stark imagery, speaks to me about the hunger for knowledge. What we don't know or understand, what we can't decipher, keeps us frozen in the season of ignorance and misunderstanding. We must sharpen the desire to feed our minds as well as our bodies if we are to adapt and survive.

Other haiku reminded me that the world is at our fingertips. These poets do not live marginally, but immerse themselves in the open spaces, the solace, beauty, and bliss that only nature can offer us:

Moist clods earth
scented stream blades
of corn the words easy

Rebecca Lilly

open
ocean

no
hand
holds

(her
mirror)

Mark Harris

all night I've tried on houses butterflies taste with their feet

Sabine Miller

And still others captured me with their lighthearted look at what it means to face ourselves in the mirror. In the following senryu I love the play on words and the long “e” sounds, which echo the ego: the “me me me—it’s all about me!” attitude, which permeates the human condition:

the fantasy that is me central singularity

George Swede

There were haiku that drew me into the mysteries of the underworld:

one eye on
the green octopus
at the bottom of night

Patrick Sweeney

and those that looked squarely at where we’ve been and how we’ve conducted ourselves as a species. Like nature, human beings have always had enormous potential and promise for growth on an evolutionary scale, but we come with thorns, our mistakes and failures, some of which have drawn blood on a grand scale:

so greenly history puts forth thorns

Eve Luckring

And finally, that theme brings us to the award for the Scorpion Prize:

a blue coffin
one nail escapes
the solar system

Peter Yovu

The blue coffin, is it not our blue planet spinning through space? This compelling image overwhelms and saddens me. We function under the misguided assumption that the earth is here to take care of us, but is it not the other way around? And what kind of progress are we making? The hole in the ozone, melting icecaps, overpopulation, the drain on and destruction of natural resources, the extinction of species. But still, this is not a poem of dire consequences. There is hope: one nail escapes and the coffin is not sealed! Poetry can bring us to greater awareness, give us hope, and move us to action. We know this through the history of literature. And we witness it here, in the example of this remarkable haiku.

Francine Banwarth

Francine Banwarth is the editor of *Frogpond*, the journal of the Haiku Society of America. She has served as second vice president to the HSA, on the board of *Modern Haiku*, and is a member of the Mineral Point, Wisconsin, haiku group. Her haiku, senryu, renga, and haibun have been widely published.



afternoon

incomplete beings
you and me
complete the city

Kala Ramesh

lavender
through the wall, softly
waves or lovers

Mark Harris

Beth
a house
I wanted
to live in

Jack Galmitz

afternoon when love that takes

Paul Pfeuger, Jr.

mind
ful
minus

Philip Rowland

time in the dark the longer

Jim Kacian

in a dream of unrequited love
the language seeds itself

Michelle Tennison

into a shell
the sun as if
sex

Mark Harris

condiments stand she screams wife him

Adrian Dziewanski

barely caught her breath on medium

Richard Gilbert

this
low
dance
bug

sex
or
dying
map

bid
claw
spurn
zygote

thy
blue
ago
ism

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

licking the cleft sweet aspirin after rain

Richard Gilbert

after rain the seems of the moment

Jim Kacian

past drunk
the assonance
of lost chances

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

barren subjunctive buys her a pony

Lee Gurga

כרחם כרחם כרחם

beside himself besides beside me nemesis

Jim Kacian

in winter sun
blood and grain on the verge
of conversation

Philip Rowland

Over-amped the dark

body head off animal

suspense the first rise

Rebecca Lilly

death

Roland Packer

viral
guns
dot
come

west
punk
dogma
lyric

owned
black
fist
jury

try
minus
hope
flag

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

generations of rage burn all told

Eve Lueking

lest we conjugate with a bomb the west wind

Mark Harris

poppy seeds the bomb we never see

Mark Harris

bomb nor embody to take blue sky

Mark Harris

no right turns a bomb on summer sun

Mark Harris

alit the gone space crowded

Paul Pfleuger, jr.

access only the heavens pour

Thomas Powell

mirror of a nightmare held to stars

Darrell Lindsey

Spanish moss
ghosts
walking
away
from
you.

Mike Andrelczyk

the red legacy of a tool misused

Eve Luckring

the noun is on

deep amid
the falling snow
a truer word for it

Philip Rowland

sharing clouds of equations beyond us

Helen Buckingham

starfish in the mathematical Bahamas

Mike Andrelczyk

fishbirdsnail driftwood not the other *I am*

Lee Gurga

sun under the waves the bodies we wake to

Mark Harris

answers appear questions remain the ocean's cancer wing

Scott Metz

mountain alone inevitable pronoun

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

the
a
born in England

Jack Galmitz

reburying the bone
the direct chemistry
of footnotes

Cherie Hunter Day

A night I know grass blades

dark, mining moon, day

startles the waking stones

Rebecca Lilly

night
the side of earth
the noun is on

Gary Hotham

years of kanji
every spill
is

Patrick Sweeney

where the pennies jingle
copperheads hiss
at plaster shaman

Michael D. Goscinski

lost wages for what salt has to say

Cherie Hunter Day

too hard to reach the white trash waving surrender

Dan Schwerin

between IQs a shiny truck

LeRoy Gorman

as if a lottery ticket and then

Eve Luckring

blond wood

freed word

lightning chip

Sabine Miller

rush
bank
chop
fix

do
my
invest
laugh

eat
up
of
sin

big
zero
thank
sum

Paul Pflieger, Jr.

human remains the year a buffalo nickel

Adam Traynor

blue swallowtail corner of the psyche

Lee Gurga

into the next

topography fields, colors

jaws cast in close blades

moult big yourself up

Rebecca Lilly

of transcendental robots
 isn't a tone
for stutter & step

Michael D. Goscinski

film
swan
body
erupt

own
airy
elm
us

of
light
paused
by

threw
sound
ax
if

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

particles of change lean hard on one blue day on

Richard Gilbert

Sunday evening
the straight-backed discipline
of the illiterate

Patrick Sweeney

acquaintance concern bible width

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

a bird cries a stutter crosses across the x-ray sky

Rocky Marcotte

a sunset of clouds
awaits
my gum line

Michael D. Goscinski

sealed hotel room window in my dream I suckle a child

Philip Rowland

light bouncing off strong voices
the Bach Cantata ends
in German

Gary Hotham

lining my skull a mirror dissolving sky

Peter Yovu

embedded within the dashboard the father waits

Lee Gurga

as a window to
a window of
as father seen

Scott Metz

Chinese remainder of the dandelion beyond

Patrick Sweeney

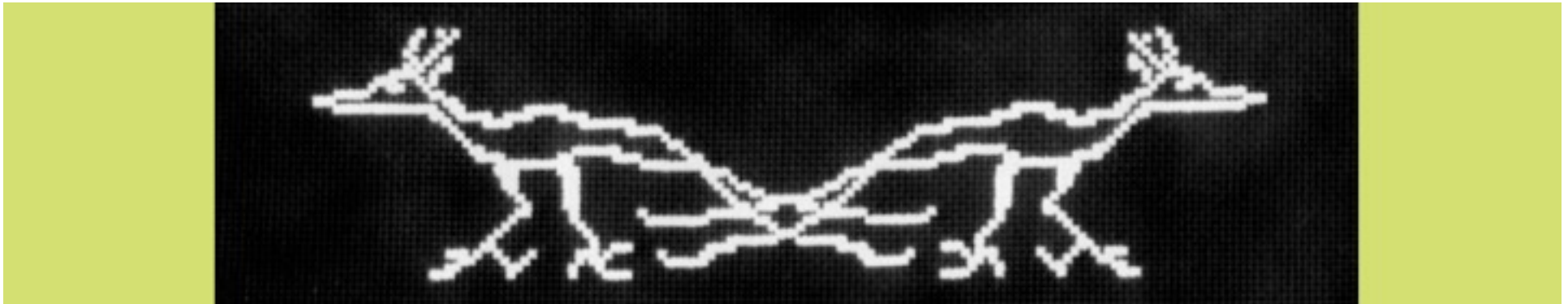
shedding night wingless into the next

Eve Luckring





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Jason Sanford Brown / founding editor, 2004 – 2008

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