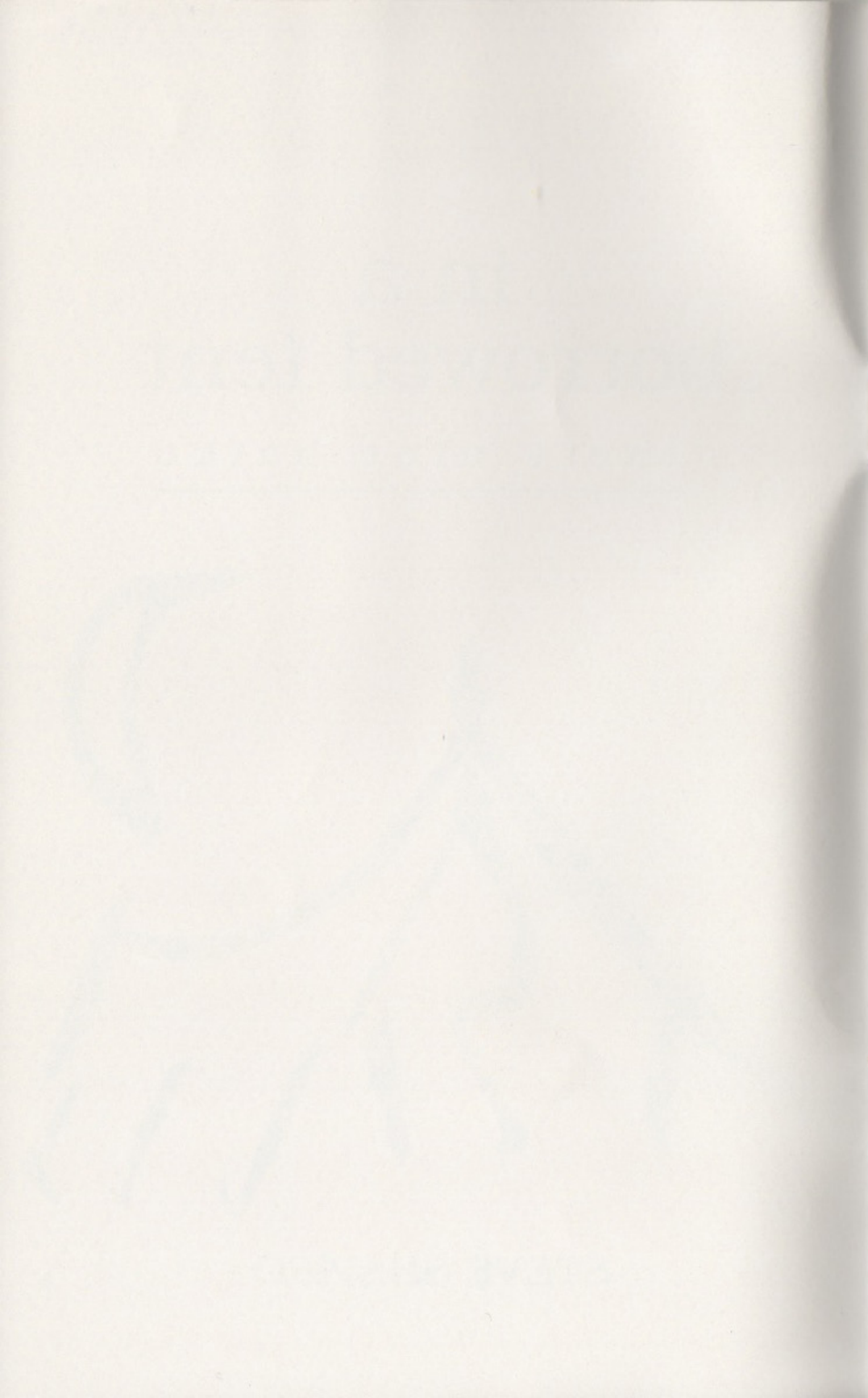


in a
borrowed tent

ninety nine haiku



STEVE SHAPIRO

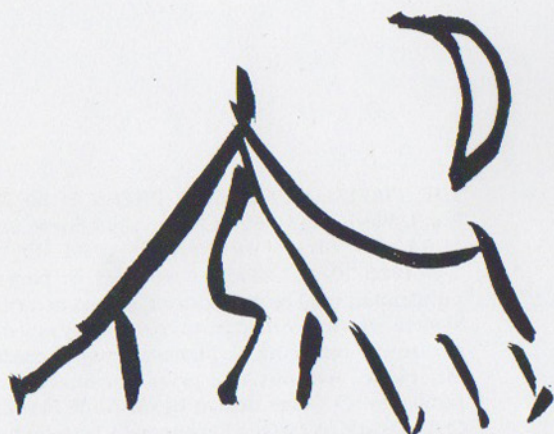


71

in a borrowed tent

ninety nine haiku

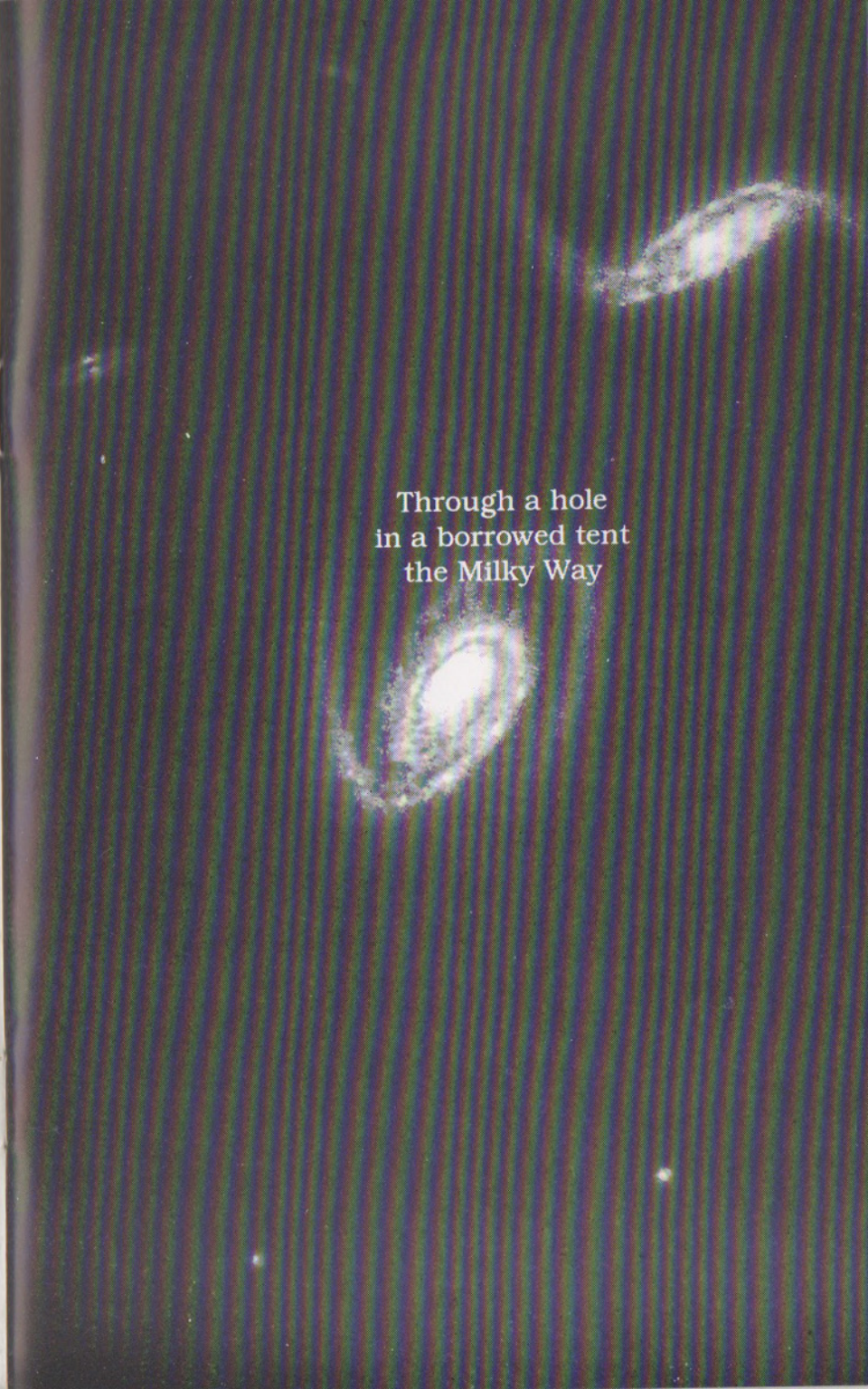
STEVE SHAPIRO



THE FIRFIELD PAMPHLET PRESS



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The image features a dark, textured background with two prominent spiral galaxies. One galaxy is located in the upper right quadrant, and the other is in the lower center. Both galaxies have bright, glowing cores and distinct spiral arms. The overall tone is dark with some greenish-blue hues, suggesting a night sky or a deep space environment. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

Through a hole
in a borrowed tent
the Milky Way

The Milky Way
in a borrowed beam

Diving
a cormorant surfaces
outside its pool

SPRING

The storm
the sound
the sound

To this world
in spite of everything
another spring



Dusk
the arum holds its light a little
longer

7

SPRING

To this world
in spite of everything
another spring



Diving
a cormorant surfaces
outside its ripples

The storm over
the sound of a bird
the sound of an axe

Shouting
at their crumpled cars
spring rain

Dusk
the arum holds its light a little
longer

Convalescence:
starting with
the morning glory

Driving rain
the eye of the pigeon
blinking



After the rains
as if it had always been there
the Milky Way

What good fortune
– the spring day carries on
by moonlight

Misty morning
a guinea fowl landing
runs a little

The Great Morning
clothespins on the line
dripping dew

A bank of mist
enveloping the mountain
... leaving it wet



Rain on the pond
plum petals fall
on their reflections

Treeless stream:
one arum lily
is an egret

Heartbeat
of the fallen fledgling
filling my hand

Washing my hands
thoroughly
the dead dove

Scarecrow too
begins his term
with a new white shirt

Not washing my face
and going outside
– gentle spring rain

Squalling rain
the small pond visited
by a kingfisher

Closing the book:
seen through the dirty window
flowers of the plum

After they left
walking barefoot
in the moonlit garden

SUMMER

Waiting... Bokmaklerie
in the morning – in the evening
from the Plet-my-vrou

Doves...
but the dawn
slips away

Whistling for
a butterfly
on the breeze



After they left
walking barefoot
in the moonlit garden

Waiting...
while the cricket drinks
from the garden pond

Doves...
but the dawn
slips away

Whistling for the dog
a butterfly comes
on the breeze

Having eaten
the foundling puppy
goes to sleep



At the bottom
of the tea bowl
a better world

After the third glass
I put my cap on crooked
a moonless night

The frogs are silent
seeing out the guest
who won at chess

The heat:
a breeze touches my face
and passes on

Liberating the feet
listening to the frogs
a summer evening

The shaded plum tree
a bee visiting
its few blossoms

Vleiloerie:
they are irrigating
by his lair

The lullaby
flows out of the window
into the forest

Morning haze
an empty road with a gate
at the end of it



By moonlight
sleeping at various angles
– his father's son

Evening falls
the crickets take up
where they left off

New Year's Eve passes
after the fireworks
the stars

Add two muggies
to his name
the bathroom spider

Midnight heat
the fly in the lavatory
has died of it

Beneath my door
the fishmoth's day
begins

Not a sound
the rat poisoner lies
awake

My baby asleep
the frogs fall silent
the wind stops blowing in the
trees



Biting it:
fine spray from the apple
in the morning sun

All the pallbearers,
one hand on their yamulkas,
the first southeaster

Madoda!

splaying the cement bag with his
spade
splitting it open

The postman's moped
heard coming down the avenue
a small dog barking

Past my open door
the first Southeaster blows
a swallow

Bending
by a flower in the rain
smelling plastic mac

Dusk
a snail comes down
to the great lake

Amongst the scum
on a tidal bathing pool
dawn breaks

Christmas Eve
all the stars
special

Christmas Day
one or two gathered here
would like to weep

The barefoot tramp
approaching my door
takes off his hat



Pissing on the stone
a small brown snake
stops and listens

Melancholy
in the vleiloerie's voice
the first southeaster

Me with my glass
a frog with his dreams
evening cool

Upside-down, inside-out
every nook and cranny
– the witogies garden

Despised by all
the starling sings
his own sweet song

A little breeze
opens the door
the sound of water

Deep in the pond
evening light touching
a turning carp



A leaf falls
the lamp-lit pool
blackens

AUTUMN

An autumn
the
stand
Talking and talking
and talking about talking
autumn rain falling



A little breeze
opens the door
the sound of water
AUTUMN

Autumn
Autumn
Autumn



A leaf falls
the lamp-lit pool
blackens

An autumn evening
the lumber men left one pine
standing

A sudden gust
the cows in the field
stop chewing

The poplar tree
beside the stream
lets fall its leaves



The forest at dusk
tramping pine needles
into pine needles

Through the fallen leaves
the boots of the farmer
the shoes of his guest

Picking it up
– a hole in the fallen leaves
where the milk bottle stood

If it were warmer
I would uncover myself
– autumn mosquito

On the pavement
outside the polling booth
a robin shits

Left alone
with the bottle and the view
an autumn evening

A sudden gust
leaves blown from the roof
and a feather

Visiting a grave
next to the squatter camp
– an old farmer

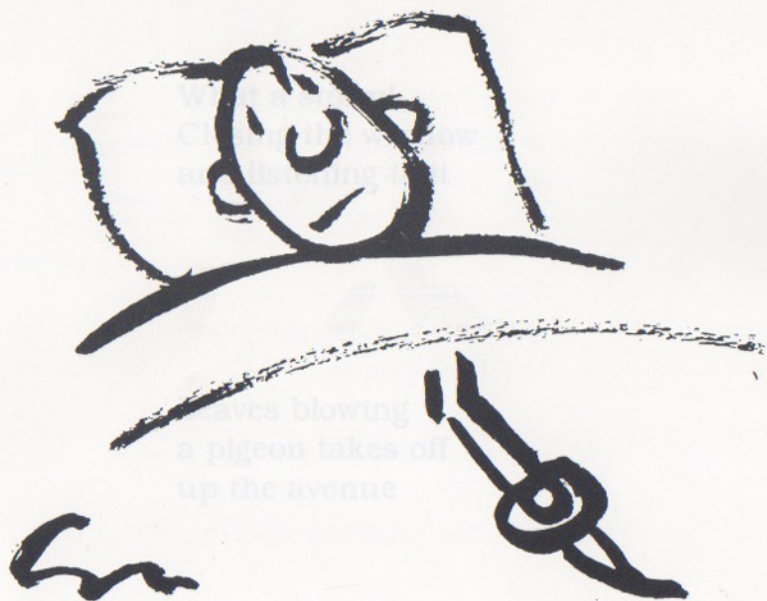
Getting up
to write one verse
He writes another

Left alone
with the bottle and the view
an autumn evening
Through the fallen leaves
the boots of the farmer
the shoes of his guest

Watching the rain
and signing with his forefinger
on the whiteboard

WINTER

Moulding
moulder
the winter
I sit and listen
winter after winter
it rains harder



A sudden gust
leaves blown from the roof
and a feather
WINTER

Visit the grave
winter is the winter camp
tomorrow's winter

Getting up
to write the verse
He writes another



Watching the rain
and signing with his forefinger
on the window fog

Moulding their world
moulded by their world
the winter waters

What a storm!
Closing the window
and listening to it

Leaves blowing
a pigeon takes off
up the avenue

Deep into winter
the loerie of the poplar grove
reveals himself

After the storm
a gutter running moonlight
down to the sea



The first rain
the first wellington boots
the first snails

Lighting the heater
a spider comes down
from the roof

By twilight
as all else fades
arum lilies

Cold and clear
from the furthest star
a nightjar calls

Between two houses;
arum lilies
and the evening star

It rains
it stops
the pines begin to drip

The farmer
in his Sunday suit
has hands

Running back
to the injured dog
keys jangling

At the edge
of the forest
dawn

All alone
it makes a special noise
– filling the wine glass

“A poem”
“life’s a poem” I shout
and my dog wags his tail



Inside his coat
the nightwatchman
breathing

Four in the morning
searching for meaning, feeling
for the third blanket

From a shanty
the sound of a tin plate scraped
is cold

Where they pierce the cloud
water trickling down
the mountain pines

A winter's day
coloured in
with cheap red wine

Steve Shapiro has chosen to enlist imperfection and frailty as the standard-bearers of his quixotic campaign to endure against the Unfathomable Mystery of Existence. It is an existence that, for all its absurdity, has value when it is lived consciously. Haiku is the tool that makes possible this great adventure into the inescapable poetic realm of the small, mundane and everyday "dewdrop" world. He stumbled, gratefully, into the genre in the late '60s after the, then mandatory, crash course in Zen and "other joys". It worked, and in its brevity, simplicity and nearly imperceptible profundity came perilously close to filling that great chasm of self-indulgent meaninglessness which followed the earlier exciting excesses.

Steve was profoundly influenced by the English/Japanese scholar R.H. Blyth, whose translations and commentaries on Zen and haiku are his most treasured literary possessions. His own work has been published in haiku journals and anthologies in Europe and North America and has been translated into several European languages including Rumanian. He has been stimulated and inspired by the friendship and support of the Afrikaans haiku poets, Deon and Hélène Kesting, whose encouragement has led to this publication.

Steve and his family live, love and squabble in a leafy little home and garden in Hout Bay, where he almost earns a living making reduction-fired, functional pottery. He has a passion for bicycles and is reasonably well-disposed to red wine.

He has absolutely no strong feelings about Fidel Castro, other than unqualified support for that dictator's early policy of forcing academics to cut sugar cane during their holidays.

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