



MOSS-HUNG TREES

HAIKU

*of the west coast*

*by award winner  
Winona Baker*

*calligraphy by Christine McKim*



MOSS - HUNG TREES

# HAIKU

*of the west coast*

*by award winner  
Winona Baker*

*calligraphy by Christine McKim*

Moss-Hung Trees  
HAIKU of the West Coast

Copyright © 1992 by Winona Baker

Cover illustration: Delia Becker

Published by  
REFLECTIONS  
P.O. Box 178  
Gabriola, B.C. V0R 1X0  
Canada

**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Baker, Win, 1924-  
Moss-hung trees

ISBN 0-9692570-3-1

1. Haiku, Canadian (English) 2. Canadian poetry  
(English)—20th century 3. British Columbia  
—Poetry. I. Title.

PS8553.A3855M6 1992  
PR9199.3.B34M6 1992  
C811'.54  
C92-091047-5

To Don and Mary



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Haiku of Winona Baker have appeared in the following publications:

*Alchemist*  
*Alberta Poetry Yearbooks* 1984, '87, '88  
*Discovery*  
*Frogpond*  
*Hai*  
*Haiku Canada Sheets*  
*Haiku Zasshi Zo*  
*HI: Haiku International*  
*International Naiku Work Collection* 1987  
*Mainichi Daily News, Japan*  
*Mirrors*  
*Modern Haiku*  
*New Cicada*  
*Poetry Review*  
*1991 Ituen Tea Haiku Contest*  
*World Haiku Contest Work Collection* 1989  
*Writer's Quarterly*

### *Anthologies:*

*A Fall of Leaves*  
*Haiku Canada Anthologies*  
*Milkweed*

### *Books by the author:*

*Clouds Empty Themselves*, 1987 Red Cedar Press,  
Nanaimo B.C.  
*Not so Scarlet a Woman*, 1987 Red Cedar Press,  
Nanaimo B.C.

## A Faint Gash on Time

*"Haiku is simply what is happening in this place,  
at this moment."*

— Matsuo Basho

*"A haiku...puts forth images reflecting intuitions."*

— Daisetz Suzuki

HAIKU is an intuitive response to a direct experience with nature. Transcendent time, when nature and human nature become one, is sketched in the present tense even if the action happened in the past. Seemingly unrelated things may be juxtaposed, but no explanations, moralizing or judgements are made. Haiku holds the mirror to nature and the experience is revealed.

Today, old styles are not always followed and many haiku change at least one. Traditional texts describe haiku as Japanese seasonal verse having 17 syllables arranged in three lines of 5, 7, 5 syllables. Counting syllables is an example of guidelines often ignored because Japanese syllables are not the same as ours (something many early translators did not understand). What can be said in one breath is a better guide than counting. One line, one word haiku have been written. "Invisible poem" defines the haiku moment.

Haiku is objective and avoids many Western poetic devices. R.H. Blyth said that a "jewelled" finger or a "deformed" finger distracts from what it points at. Haiku is a poetry of nouns. Invest in them, as b.p. nichol advised, with the power they have. Modifiers, similes, metaphors, and end rhyme do not belong in haiku.

Season can be stated or implied by the use of "kigo", a season word. Daffodil could be kigo for spring in some places and haiku poets (haijin) have many of these words. Some western writers have begun compiling kigo applicable to today's times and different geographical areas. Winter words for the coast of British Columbia are not winter words in the Yukon or California.

Haiku is meant to be enjoyed and appreciated. It has been written during festivals, parties, nature tours, walks and other delightful diversions. Historically, the idea of foreigners writing haiku did not please all Japanese. They felt the languages, sensibilities, and philosophies of western countries were so different from theirs that "aborted flowers" would best describe any such attempts!

Today, however, Japanese corporations, foundations, and haiku associations encourage the writing of haiku worldwide, a voice to the spirit of union when nature and human nature become one. That moment, which sharpens our awareness of the natural world around us and our inseparable relationship to it, is without boundaries.

Haiku is, as Roland Barthe writes, "a faint gash on time."

In the midst of the plain  
Sings the skylark  
Free of all things  
— Matsuo Basho

*Winona Baker*  
*February, 1991*



# Table of Contents

1 Spring

Summer 15

33 Autumn

Winter 47



Spring

Spring

two bald eagles  
in two trees  
watch our boat



first warm day  
mother lets down hems  
of summer dresses

piano keys move fingers  
nesting bird outside  
never a wrong note

spring girls walk in malls  
old men on benches watching  
fall in love again

strutting young men  
glare at old men  
girl watching

tree screened river  
two blue heron battle  
the rain is green

startled red tulips  
bloom in concrete boxes  
signalling help

purple violets  
beneath the monkey tree  
again

he plays a flute  
in moonlit fields  
to help seeds grow

mouse  
in the garter snake's jaws  
screaming spring

apple tree  
if no one watched  
would petals fall ?



laburnum drip yellow  
dogwood whisper white  
aching spring

the way  
the foal tries clover  
returns to milk

round white nubbins  
coming through the loam  
Indian pipes - ghost flowers

yellow monarch  
helicopters over lawn  
the grapes are green

squirrel  
still pursues her  
tail half gone

crowded bus  
sweating placental mammals  
and a butterfly

gardener

hangs bags of human hair  
to keep deer away

through the trees  
hiding the ocean  
sea lions bark

forest hike in spring  
on the ground fresh cougar scat  
bristling with deer hair



gentle

longe longe of human hair  
to long long away

gentle like in spring  
in the ground fresh coniferous  
breasting with her hair  
about the ground  
about the ground  
in the heart

Summer



dedication

a new picnic shelter

it starts to rain

"Don't pick wild flowers!"  
Marj focuses her camera  
to gift me again

blue puddle  
gull appears  
disappears



postcard blue ocean  
Gabriola's grey cliffs  
orca leaps

leave the ferry  
they won't explore the island  
want to build a raft

downtown cathedral  
white roses cartwheel  
to the sidewalk

woman in the park  
you make your child a jewel  
wearing him in front

city sunlight  
the blind girl  
staring at noise

what would happen if  
all that concrete tumbled  
blackberries would grow

summer zoo: Dianne  
ignores bars and cages  
for daisies in grass

above Cameron Lake  
a vagrant white mist  
explores the mountain

summer trail

a trashed car in the salal  
rusting in peace

finally the lake  
bend to drink  
drowned cougar kit

huge toad  
in small cupped hands  
"Aren't his bumps cute?"

deserted rest stop  
wild flowers grace the table  
thank-you unknown host



picnic at the river  
where wolves came down the mountain  
became human

summer hawk  
above small boat  
endless sky

hotsprings  
sit in them and look  
toward Japan

August heat  
the roadside daisies  
smell of dust

pub's neon lights  
luring boats  
in the harbour

father drinks his beer  
mother and daughter battle  
smoke - wreathed heads

Miss Nude Canada  
gyrates on the damp stage  
rhinestone noise

pitcher of beer  
tossed garter falls in  
splash!

my son  
and his son  
wade into their shadows

all the flowers cropped  
they came so silently  
the black-tailed deer

left at the base  
of the world's tallest totem  
a throwaway diaper

sunlit Adam  
lying on the small bridge  
tries to pat koi fish



Autumn  
headlights  
reflected in the deer's eyes  
the leap

left at the base  
of the rock's tallest tower  
a stormy night

and at the base  
of the rock's tallest tower  
a stormy night  
lying on the small bridge  
was to get hot fish

# Autumn

Autumn

moss - hung trees  
a deer moves into  
the hunter's silence

Winner of the Japanese Foreign Minister's Grand Prize  
(international section) in the World Haiku Contest  
Yamagata, Japan      July 15, 1989

hunter stood  
at the sea and sang  
calling the whale

sun in the east  
geese fly into  
the western moon



my daughter cartwheels  
between me and  
the setting sun

white dogwood  
a second blossoming  
as leaves turn red

old graveyard  
a student doing rubbings  
wild geese cry

Gallows Point  
the lighthouse blinks  
where men were hung

ripening corn  
whispers taffeta secrets  
a warm moon

Indian summer  
green dies in the leaves  
sun sets

two empty rockers  
silver-plated  
by the moon

graveyard poplar  
bumps and grinds in the win  
shedding yellow leaves

one month in school  
she smells of chalk dust  
and erudition

one two three four five  
sailboats in the fog  
between land and island

autumn cleanup  
in house and garden  
sun's last rays

moonlit children  
scatter among the headstones  
playing frozen tag



dry October  
this river should be full  
of spawning salmon

folded wings  
loon enters lake  
no splash no sound

where I am  
in the garden  
and the sun

what is  
the old world with  
many friends

many children  
with the children  
playing happily  
and some not  
to be alone in

too late

November rains

the fish whose spawn are gone

the first where space is  
the second where  
the last

Winter

Winter



twisted arbutus  
carving waves  
attack the rock

she tells stories  
there were drumming gooey ducks  
and dancing salmon

killer whale swam  
up the inlet to carry  
the dead soul away

chair lift rises  
we reach the mountain top  
strange look down on trees

the tractor rolls  
over sheets of plywood  
on the graveyard grass

black birds wheel  
in front of grey clouds  
moving in the wind

the moon is cold  
around the porch light  
no moth flutters

the crippled crow  
hops on the icy edge  
of the compost box

rain torn letters  
in the mailman's hands  
black raincape smiles

heavy winter rain  
green things beaten down  
and things not green

winter maple  
stripped of everything  
but a blue kite



mind grandchildren  
my son's divorce final  
winter day

sunrise  
a child's plastic wheelbarrow  
red in the snow

who can  
withstand the rain  
only these green conifers

teaching haiku  
a class of boys  
it starts to snow

snow burdened town  
robin eats holly berries  
no one calls

toppled fir  
it made the kitchen dark  
but.....

he brings in cold  
a perfect snowflake melts  
in his dark hair

baby in heaven  
rides his father's back  
skaters on the lake

a white kitten plays  
in her long dark hair  
she scolds in Wakashan

specter trees  
where a beaver dam  
flooded this forest

snowflakes fill  
the eye of the eagle  
fallen totem pole





snowflakes fall  
the eye of the eagle  
fallen from pole









*"It's been said that a haiku lives by the silence around it. Winona Baker's haiku is fine proof of this."*

—Takeshi Sakurai,  
"Haiku Corner"  
Radio Japan NHK

*"Symbolically and realistically, the message and image are profound."*

—Elizabeth St. Jacques  
*The Haiku Society of  
America Newsletter*

**B**orn into a large family on the Prairies as the depression approached, Winona Baker spent her early life achieving the necessities of survival: an education and a vocation. After marriage, she and her husband Art moved to Nanaimo where they raised four children. During those years, she wrote and published, receiving awards for sonnet, modern and humorous poetry. Her love of the "haiku mind" and the "haiku hand" has brought her the most prestigious award given: The Japanese Foreign Minister's Grand Prize presented during the International Section of the World Haiku Festival in Yamagata Japan, July 15, 1989. This festival was held in celebration of the 300 year anniversary of Matsuo Basho's famous work, *Oku No Hosomichi*. Four of her haiku were published in Peter Gzowski's *New Morningside Papers* (1987). She was featured on Radio Japan's Haiku Corner and read on CBC's *Gabereau*! Ms. Baker has judged haiku contests, given workshops and taught creative writing to seniors and children. This collection takes its title from the award winning haiku.

*Christine McKim lives in a cabin surrounded by fields and forest on Gabriola Island. The grace of her calligraphy reflects her other interests of gardening, herbology and nutrition.*

