

Roadrunner Haiku Journal

November 2008 Issue VIII:4

"The dialogic nature of haikai determines that the establishment of a new style depends more on reinventing the existing poetic conventions than on individual talent. In order to reinvigorate the existing poetic conventions, including images, themes, vocabulary, codes of expressions and interpretations, as well as the audience's expectations, have to be changed or infused with new connotations."

-from *Basho and the Dao (The Zhuangzi and the Transformation of Haikai)* by Peipei Qiu

Jason Sanford Brown and Scott Metz, Editors

[☐ Poems](#)

[☐ The Scorpion Prize for Issue VIII:3](#)

[☐ Gendai Translations](#)

ISSN 1933-7337

Copyright © by *Roadrunner Haiku Journal*. All artwork and haiku, unless otherwise noted, are copyright by the indicated artists/writers. All rights revert to the authors and artists upon publication. The roadrunner logo and the scorpion images are by Scott Metz.



Roadrunner Haiku Journal

November 2008 Issue VIII:4

Poems

bruising the moon
shreds of Hiroshima
bleeding into silence

turtles on a log
making no speeches
world peace

in tears
a slug leaving lettuce
at dawn

William M. Ramsey

whales gather
at dusk
to sing

atoms
made of
concrete

Dick Whyte

shrine gate
end of
dream

Oceanglass

in green times confident of doing good work

lovers i whisper to the dictaphone

expecting the baby to have a womb

John Stevenson

staggered by a gut bug
I step into the medicine's
heavy punch

we sail the night
roof creaking above us
spread to the wind

William Hart

“not animal-shaped,
the mounds of Suburbia appear
to be fortifications”

Michael Nickels-Wisdom

her broken soul
surrounded
by logic

accidental orchard: I am found

Mike Dillon

massive clouds
dwarfing my
resolve

dear cloud
what were you before
yesterday's bones

blue wolves are howling grapefruit orange . . .

baby beans racing moonlight . . .

the midnight shadows looking cold buddha stories . . .

poe, you will be pleased to hear, is now in perfect health . . .

Tyler Pruett

Shall I harvest the garden in your veins

How wide is the trying :: between the rose and the sea

The book should be the last :: poem, lifted from the grass

The eggshell is asleep in my hands :: long before spring

May your voice be the ropes I am lowered on

Grant Hackett

snow on mars tonight earth's flaming arrow

Helen Buckingham

i stuff the thunderstorm
inside a cicada shell
that's been around the world

under its green wing
every single creation
story

infringing
on the dunes
mercenary's smile

lakes
& now wolves
entering Pegasus

like a mosquito
or an old empire
city night

Nucleolus

touch-me-nots begin the takeover role of orange

carbon-eating poem evaporates

some of his limbs and mind returned

haiku of my photograph photograph of my haiku

the heat somebody else can do whatever it is

marlene mountain

winter wind through
fistholes in the walls
small naked sounds

Joanne Merriam

two-dimensional wise men across the pulp mill roof

dark seed pods
rattle
the Judas tree

ground ivy flowering the small blue earth

Peggy Willis Lyles

fox mask :: what have
you become

cracked vessel :: an octopus crawls out of
low tide

in these old clothes :: i am the falling leaves
and their shadows

earth :: scale

granite hills
under bracken
a deer's red heart

falling star
a starshaped space
miscarriage

in his black hair the bones of old prayers

at the burial -
a wasp reminds me
of last night's dream

Clare McCotter

the weight of the moon the relief of the moon

arms spread wide—
this sun
could eat me

Dana Duclo

i did it for love asteroid hurtles

the words
rise in the solar wind
line breaks

the pines--their scent, their sound . . .
their fallen measures
of time

on my back
in the freshly-cut grass . . .
a blue horse

George Swede

a far off wind
but where are you
listening

we come
here: beneath the waves
the rest of the ocean

coming out of
a hard house
the flowering dawn

Peter Yovu

on streets with no names, numbered crash-sites

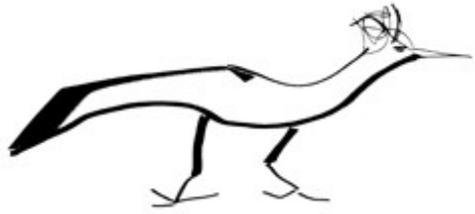
the ocean's
 algorithms . . .
a few loose strands of hair

in a windowless world seeking osmosis

(with a phrase by Jim McKay)

sturplus

Philip Rowland



Roadrunner Haiku Journal

November 2008 Issue VIII:4

Gendai Haiku Translations by Hiroaki Sato

Tomizawa Kakio (1902-1962)

Kakio was born the first son of a doctor in Ehime; studied economics at Waseda University; while a student, wrote some haiku; in 1926, shortly after finding employment at a distribution company, was drafted into the Army's corps of engineers; discharged less than a year later with the rank of second lieutenant; employed by a bank in 1930; sent haiku to the conservative Hototogisu (Cuckoo), which did not accept any; in 1934, started a business but failed; became an active contributor to Kikan (Flagship), which was started in 1935 to embody "a new spirit" and liberalism; in 1937, redrafted into the Army's corps of engineers and fought in China until he was sent home on account of malaria in 1940; discharged with the rank of first lieutenant the same year; under increasing pressure against liberalism, democracy, and such, Kikan closed in May 1941 and merged with two other haiku magazines to become Kohaku (Amber) the following month; Kakio became its representative poet; in August, published his first book of haiku, Ten no Ōkami (The Wolf in Heaven); in October, drafted, once again, into the Army and deployed in the northern part of the Kurile Islands; discharged in March 1944; after the war, started a few magazines; in 1952, published his second book of haiku, Hebi no Fue (The Snake's Flute); 1961, his third, Mokushi (Revelations); died of lung cancer the following year; in 1965, the definitive edition of his haiku was published.

Glaringly in the tiger's eyes fall dead leaves

Transfixed in the leopard's eyes withered vines

Furious at the sun the black panther sharpens his black claws

Winter comes the fire-spurting mountain lets fire spurt

A butterfly crashes a thunderous noise the freezing time

Night flowers fall I sniff the earth with beasts

A leopard's cage not a drop of water is in heaven

Poetry withered a white autumn rooster slaps the clouds

Poetry parched blue sky's stone scorches in my palm

Poetry useless on the riverbed burning a lone bull

A certain night I hold my breath to hear the Yangtze's steps

Clang-clang we go clang-clang we just go to the front

Deep in my eyes a trench I crawl red I crawl

My palm has turned into a white Wuhan map

**(Wuhan was a great industrial zone that came into being when three cities were combined.)*

I'm still alive mountains rivers moisten in my eyes

Roadrunner Haiku Journal

November 2008 Issue VIII:4



The Scorpion Prize for Best Haiku/Senryu of ISSUE VIII:3

*entering barefoot
the scent
of lemon*

Patrick Sweeney

*running
for nothing
rainy headed boys*

Patrick Sweeney

dust devil on a dead planet

John Stevenson

*down all the alleys
of seventeen
lilacs*

Ann K. Schwader

through me the reedy night harmonica

Billie Dee

in a seed I don't know the answer

Peter Yovu

Is forsythia the wrong destination

Grant Hackett

*I was born here
with those cold angels
and their trumpets*

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

Capturing a butterfly the American in me

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

where blood shouldn't be young leaves of dogwood

marlene mountain

*altered memories
birdsong tugging
at the sky*

Carolyn Hall

*glühwein—
a dark hole
in his laughter*

Fay Aoyagi

into the whys of the river bend the pied-billed grebe

John Barlow

*moonlight
on the tips of her fingers
crushed moths*

John W. Sexton

wind-borne seed
I have
my doubts

Peggy Willis Lyles

There is much to say for all of them, but I will restrict myself to the top 4:

Capturing a butterfly the American in me

This is second runner-up for me, and in part because of its timing. It has not been a good time of late to be an American abroad. This is in large part a self-inflicted malady, but to be better fellow co-habitators with the world, we will certainly need more rather than less self-awareness. Paul's sensitivity to certain predispositions in himself is a start. The poem also suggests that there is more than the single component involved here, that other options reside within and in no way does the poem condemn this component: it marks it, making it available to the poet as he grows and shifts perhaps at another time and on another continent some other choice will be made. Hopefully the poet will be just as aware—and communicative—in that circumstance.

down all the alleys
of seventeen
lilacs

First runner-up is this compressed idyll. I enjoyed running with "sally down the alley" of reminiscence, courtesy of that most primitive and powerful of the senses, scent. But what opened for me was the poet's deft conjuring of the haiku art—she might easily have chosen sixteen, fifteen, eighteen and they would have worked fine but seventeen is a magical number, a totem, to haiku poets, perhaps even more to those of us who don't use it any more. Seen this way, the lilacs open those many alleys to further sensuous experience, beyond reminiscence and into the present and we are all seventeen in the present.

wind-borne seed
I have
my doubts

And

in a seed I don't know the answer

A pair of seed poems is my top choice, and I offer them as equal firsts. Both seek, successfully, through similar content and different techniques, to distinguish between meaning and value. Both seize upon the image of a seed, the quintessence of promised life, fecundity and hope. Both take for granted the value of the seed but neither poet can be at all certain of the meaning of the seed. The manner in which they each solve their common challenge is instructive.

In the first instance, the occasion for doubt is obvious: the wind-borne mode of seeking new and fertile opportunities seems fraught with risk and so it is, but we also know nature's strategy to overcome this risk: sheer overwhelming number. This seed is one of billions, most of which will fail to realize their potential. But nature is content with this strategy, seemingly, since she employs it in so many diverse

circumstances. What of the individual case, this wind-borne seed—what are its chances? It is with the individual that we must pause, because seen this way, the specific instance has just as much value, but loses meaning. With the poet we too might have our doubts as to our individual enterprises, and for much the same reasons. Technically this poem is a haiku qua haiku: that is, it is exemplary of its type. It is also a compelling explanation of why we don't use metaphor in haiku. The reason is because haiku is already metaphor, and entertaining metaphor within its compass most often dilutes its larger effect. And a fine metaphor it is, resonating in each of us via an experience we have all had and can conjure whole.

Perfect co-equal with this tour de force is a one-liner which is equally outstanding in its way. What often makes one-liners expand beyond mere lines of prose is the option of multiple readings. Here one may read the poem as 3 words, then 5, or else as 6 words, then 2. Both are interesting readings, and neither is so ultimate as to preclude the other. The first of these readings is the more circumspect: a statement that even faced with this burgeoning life, the poet doesn't know the meaning. The second is more gnomic: an unknown seed offers some insight that has previously eluded the poet. Is it meaning? This particular meaning? Is this the key to understanding, the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, and the way of the universe? To quote the first poet: "I have my doubts." Still, an answer—a glimpse of meaning, even if it will prove provisional, as with the rest of life. These poems concur with the same reservations we might have pondering this plethora of life on our own but they do it poetically—that is, as one of the highest acts of culture we have realized. What more can words do than to confront our largest questions?

This is why both are first-rate haiku.

Jim Kacian

Copyright © 2004-2008 by Roadrunner Haiku Journal. All rights revert to the authors upon publication.