

Roadrunner

Haiku Journal



February 2009 Issue IX:1

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ku

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Editor

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“koi nobore” by yuka yamaguchi © 2007

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climbs

places
for the ocean to end
——
his birthday no longer a party

no way
to correct the dead
——
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Gary Hotham

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sun pull arm shot with electric shocks

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marlene mountain

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no one to greet me
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paul m.

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a moment
before I bleed

into winter—
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Clare McCotter

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Paul Pfeuger Jr.

plavetnilo
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cvet vetra

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stakleni brod

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Tatjana Debeljacki

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Dan O'Hare

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Carolyn Hall

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Deep winter . . .
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my punches

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Patrick Sweeney

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fever dreams arrive as mail with tainted attachments

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winter morning where we left off yesterday

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 you turn to snow

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 milky way

raccoon—
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 all winter

subzero schoolyard's an empty ice crystal

subzero

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size of my chest

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an unpaved road

& don't know where

john martone

deep winter

I walk the wind
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Laryalee Fraser

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William M. Ramsey

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An old man
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Of hue

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Pompeii is born

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A knife

A love

Of flight

To switch

The respite

A beetle's

Secret life

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Chinese New Year
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in every shadow

Fay Aoyagi

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twilight my right mind escapes me

Helen Buckingham

clear day turns stars stare back

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Rob Scott

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completely in the dark
the view from here
and now

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love

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my
self
in

side
yours

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Sunday morning
air god
gets the last
word

Jim Kacian

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fists exploding
a delicate school of air

above the road-wind

Russell Brickey

between the woods the quiet voices of the brook

John Barlow

where the old house was winter wind

coal au cars tu clicking mn wi by nd

Philip Miller

a snake across leaf month

_kala

rose thorn
would summon the color
of its rose

Mike Dillon

dragonflies
how long did we know
before we knew?

Peggy Willis Lyles

on the sea rocks
iguanas dreaming
of Darwin

time-heli-space-skier-continuum

George Swede

cutting sea slug
so where is the start
and end of life

Removing blankets from the last wrong forecast of the year.

The youngest cow
sniffs my new mocassins and
I recall the Year.

ro

葉の裏に青き夢みるかたつむり

A snail
Dreams a blue dream
On the back of a leaf.

from *The Haiku Universe for the 21st Century* (Modern Haiku Association 2008)

R.H. Blyth



-Special Feature-

tiny mortal drums

Grant Hackett

Grant Hackett was born in Missouri in 1955. He currently resides in Great Barrington, a town in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts. He works as a freelance indexer of books.

Asked about how he came to haiku and short poetry, as well as his views on them, Mr. Hackett wrote:

“In 1974, in a small transcendental bookshop in Columbia, Missouri, a book opened my hand and put Ippekiro’s poems there. *Cape Jasmine and Pomegranates*. Reading his poems, I began writing poetry. Depending on how one defines haiku, what I wrote was haiku, or not. Like this:

this boy
could be the everlasting one
vernal sky

I wrote for a long time listening to Ippekiro. Sometime later I found Robert Bly’s *Tiny Poems*, as well as his *Silence in the Snowy Fields*. Also, Santoka Taneda’s *Mountain Tasting* and Makoto Ueda’s *Modern Japanese Haiku*. Kenneth Rexroth’s *One Hundred Poems from the Chinese*. Each of these having a profound influence. Later still, I came to Jack Kerouac’s haiku. Then the music and sensibility of James Schuyler. Lorca. Neruda. Oliver.”

&

“The poems I write inhabit the borderlands of haiku. There are many definitions of haiku. I don’t want to create a definition of haiku that will umbrella my work though. Others can create definitions. And yet, if I am a weed, then haiku is my soil.

I began writing the one line poem about a year and a half ago—the day I found the double colon. The double colon is there to create an unweighted pause. A pause in the breath, a pause in thought. A pause that is different than the weighted or directional relationship our standard punctuation indicates. And that is also different than a hard line break. The two sides of the thought-pause may exist in harmony or in ambiguity. At the moment of the pause there may be peace or there may be tension. The thought-pause is a poetic tool, a poetic device, used poetically.

The clearest voice I have to speak in this world speaks in one line poems.

The path to the one line poem is not reduction but distillation. The path through the one line poem should not be simple or straight.

I passionately believe that a single one line poem creates a universe of poetry.

Forgive these words, they are not birds. (Cora Brooks)

Perceiving itself, my mind is the path of birds (Grant Hackett)”

—

Readers are invited to visit his poetry blog, [Falling Off the Mountain](#).

With a title of his choosing, here follows a selection of recent poems by Grant Hackett:

tiny mortal drums

Walking into snow through an inner veil I disappear

Nobody asks me why rain is my shelter

Whatever my chaos I leave clear tracks by the sea

When I block my ears :: a multitude of tiny mortal drums

By being a small and simple boat :: I capsize upon a rose

Will one leaf on the last tree be time enough

Aren't the two halves of my life wind, rain :: and a needle going through

As the snow begins :: you want nothing more to fall

A lithium rain :: and the radio of self playing midnight hours

Shut down a voice for singing :: and it will snow

Shall I braid chaos or silence with the missing strand

Is it your blue sky when I am younger and gathering up the sun

Between intimacy and the unmarried sea :: drowning shouldn't be so hard

Aren't poor stones smaller before they drop from the sky

Are the colors dreamers hoard one :: or cold

The air rusts and our bones stain :: sated with the smell of rain

I sometimes yearn the inward slope next year's spring will climb

A hopeless wind brought me my love against the moon

Waking up a thousand birds :: I have to be a perfect dawn

Autumn distilled in a maple tree :: light without a wing

Self is the whisper in a castle :: the rose is rosewater spilled

I will use the pain I use :: to lift my face from a dying moon

As the pine tree sways in the needle :: we can hardly govern ourselves

As your nightfall darkens my veins :: I dream your ballads and sayings



Gendai [21st Century-Modern] Haiku Translations by Hiroaki Sato

Fujiki Kiyoko (dates unknown)

Fujiki started publishing haiku in 1933. She became a prominent figure in the Shinkō (New Rising) haiku movement, and disappeared in 1940 when its leaders were arrested for advocating liberalism and “anti-traditionalism.” Practically nothing else is known about her.

One feature of Shinkō haiku poets was a rejection of seasonal elements, but Fujiki often employed them. The haiku selected here were all published in the magazine *Kikan* (*Flagship*), which played a leading role in the Shinkō movement.

In an old bed a devil grabbed me by my black hair

Pity the stokers at the ship's bottom summer has begun

Early autumn's good ocher-colored my limbs my body

Insomnia

In winter rains I'm listening to a nurse's tale

An Oppressed Wife's Memo

Lonely spring a wife lives as if she were machinery

The quiet sound of a falling mosquito resounds in my body

Through my temples a locomotive dashes dark

A parting

Trees budding officers and men quietly return

Fingerprints of desolation everywhere clouds white

On the tatami of August a woman has grown fat

Katydid my perspective gradually narrows

In a monks' quarter I swallow down painful love

I wouldn't want war and women to be separate

Boy going to war reticent the sukiyaki singeing cooks down

Killed in battle all his thirty-two teeth untouched

Under a clear sky healed I smell my own loneliness

Having gotten used to the depth of war I love a dog

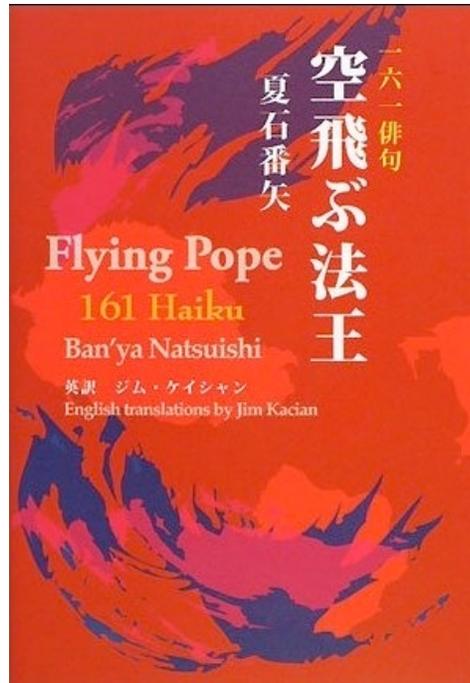
Not being the widow of someone killed in battle loneliness

Friend's husband in a distant battlefield the sea glistens

I turn off the lights and enjoy the solitude of solitude

Having lived single-mindedly I've lost my goal





The Pope Doth Fly

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

In *World Haiku 2005* (Nishida Shoten, Japan), Ban'ya Natsuishi divulges how he uttered the words “flying pope” (soratobu hoo) to himself in a dream and, without perceiving what this meant, he set out in pursuit of what meaning might lie behind this curious expression by working the motif into an ongoing and evolving series of haiku. He suggests that the image of the Pope taking to the air is “quite clear,” while also putting forward the notion that it “may only be a caricature of Christianity.” The image seems to beg to be interpreted in many ways though, ranging from a set of Judeo-Christian ideals with all the underpinnings of globalization, to a champion or protagonist of modernity, to the allure of flight which also symbolizes thought and imagination. The possibilities are boundless. One tempting vantage point which the poet himself has offered is that of the view from the Papal shoes taking to the air, whereas “we can watch anything that might occur on the Earth.”

Since its conception, the haiku *l'enfant terrible* has multiplied the figurative possibilities and potential personas tenfold. He has gone on to compose a menagerie of haiku based on the image including *Flying Pope: 127 Haiku* (Cyberwit.net) and the expanded *Flying Pope: 161 Haiku* (Koorosha), both from 2008. Both collections include Japanese and poised English translations by the poet and Jim Kacian. At times, the Flying Pope offers some

semblance of a manifestation of the self, as is the case in the following which appear in both editions:

While flying
the Pope reads aloud
haiku without season words

Flying Pope
apologizes to
the thousand-year-old cedar

Carl Jung proposed that there is no single method for interpreting a dream and that each of us is equipped with enough devices to self-interpret what comes to us in our sleep. Only Ban'ya Natsuishi can say how much closer he is to an understanding of the Flying Pope after a hundred something splendid cracks at his muse. Few doors go left unopened, or stones unturned. That is not to say though that Natsuishi's catharsis excludes readers at all from the experience, as they are invited to participate, unravel, marvel and unwind with him. When entering the poet's subconscious, readers should be little surprised by abstract and sometimes quirky haiku such as the following:

Flying Pope
visible only to children
and a giraffe

Flying Pope
loves an island
like a red bean

The Flying Pope—
hairy caterpillars and children
making merry

Flying Pope
is he an emphasizing dot
to a telephone pole?

Stream-of-consciousness illustrations by Kuniharu Shimizu in *Flying Pope: 161 Haiku* (Koorosha) expressively capture the panorama that Natsuishi portrays, making it the more highly recommended of the two editions, while either gives one access to this world where the Pope doth fly. As personal as these collections may be—digging from the poet's subconscious innate psychic structures which are often abstruse—he avoids having his haiku come off sounding stuffy, often, instead, displaying a lighthearted or blushing tone. Ban'ya's humorous side shows particularly in his peculiar homage to Hosai Ozaki:

Flying Pope
even coughs
alone

All punning aside, Natsuishi's mystifying Pope flies in the face of the very idea that haiku should refrain from self-indulgence. It is quite bold in this sense. There is an instantaneity about the ongoing Flying Pope saga that is akin to that of a dream diary kept by the bedside, and it is enticing to linger with the most rousing of his haiku. Take these, for example:

Flying Pope
many times many times
crunches sand

Mid-flight
the Pope divides
into several

The Flying Pope
throwing gold coins
down to a wolf

from both Flying Pope collections. And these from *Flying Pope: 161 Haiku*:

A singing voice
from a village of mud
the Pope flies

The Pope flying
in an ukiyo-e
floating on the pond

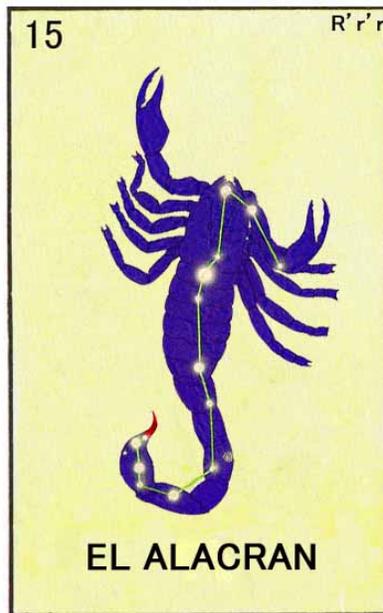
Flying in the sky
of the vanguard
the Pope so glossy

While these Flying Pope collections may not be the ideal starting point for those new to Natsuishi's haiku, readers with even the slightest interest in his poetry, as well as avid devotees, should be more than pleased with what they have to offer, and expect to return to them time and again. Both have soul at their heart which transcends the limitations of the ego. The Flying Pope says much about the potential for creating abstract haiku that challenge and at the same time enchant, making these titles significant additions to the haiku canon.

Flying Pope: 127 Haiku by Ban'ya Natsuishi (Allahabad, India: Cyberwit.net, 2008). ISBN 978-81-8253-106-2. 139 pages. US\$20.00. <http://www.cyberwit.net/flying.htm>

Flying Pope: 161 Haiku by Ban'ya Natsuishi (Tokyo: Koorosha, 2008). 110 pages. 18.6 x 13 x 1.2 cm. 2,520.00 yen. <http://koorosha.com/page14.php>





The Scorpion Prize for Issue VIII:4

First Place:

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

Tyler Pruett

Runners up: Clair McCotter, Dick Whyte, John Stevenson

First Place:

Tyler Pruett's beautiful, funny, and almost perfect sentence "poe, you will be pleased to know, is now in perfect health . . ." is made even more perfect with the knowledge that it is not only a sentence but a poem! If the news is good for Poe then it is also good for us. In my own poems I know it takes me line after line to get across a single idea. Here, Mr. Pruett has created a deeply philosophical moment with the complex flavors of dark comedy and suggestive spirituality in a single moment. His haiku is something that would be wonderful to find spray painted on a wall as you walk to work or received in the mail on the back of an old postcard. It makes me laugh and it makes me pause, mortality all

around me, but in Pruett's poem it is both so casual and celebrated one does not shrink from the idea of Poe's death or our own. I should also mention the formal quality Mr. Pruett uses in his haiku. In place of the standard three line poem he has utilized the sentence which is perhaps the most beautifully wrapped present we have as animals that read and write. I am moved by the very human heart and brain that thought of Poe, death, and then wrote this lovely poem.

Runners up:

There were three other poets that moved me while reading this issue of *Roadrunner*. John Stevenson's poem "lovers i whisper to the dictaphone" reminded me of a figure like Beckett's Krapp, alone in his office but instead of the diatribe we get, in Mr. Stevenson's haiku, this simple heart breaking moment. Dick Whyte's poem "atoms/made of/ concrete" does to the brain what a well built bridge does to two very different neighborhoods: connects them and creates value out of each other. And finally, Clare McCotter's tiny drama "at the burial—/a wasp reminds me/of last night's dream" is a poem of so much action in such small parameters it is like a window forced by it's own form to be an unchangeable size but with all the world happening within it.

Matthew Dickman

"El Alacran" by masako © 2009

