

LYNX
A Journal for Linking Poets

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LETTERS: Khizra Aslam, Owen Bullock, Jamie Edgecombe, Larry Kimmel, Cindy Guentherman, Keith McMahan, Werner Reichhold

PARTICIPATION RENGA by AB - Alice Benedict; CC - Carlos Colón; CF - Vikki Maldonado; cg - Cindy Guntherman; CSK - Carol Stroh Kemp; dht - Doris H. Thurston; DR - David Rice; DWP - Darrel W. Parry; EF - Eric Folsom; ESJ - Elizabeth St Jacques; FA - Fay Aoyagi, FP - Francine Porad; FPA - Francis (Paul) Attard; GD - Gene Doty; GM - Giselle Maya; GR - George Ralph; JAJ - Jean Jorgensen; JC - Jeanne Cassler; JMB - John M. Bennett; JR - Jane Reichhold; JS - John Sheirer; JSJ - Joyce Sandeen Johnson; KCL - Kenneth C. Leibman; LCG - Larry Gross; LE - Lesley Einer; LJ - Lael Johnson; MHH - Madeline Hoffer; ML - Minna Lerman; MM - Marianne Marks; MWM - Mary Wittry-Mason; N - Nika; NA - Nasira Alma; PC - Penny Crosby; PGC - Pamela Connor; PJS - P.J. Sharpe; PS - Pat Shelley; R - Ronan; RF - Robert Flannery; SCH - Suzette Hains, SD - Simon Doubleday; SMC - Steve McComas; TLG - Terri Lee Grell; TV - Teresa Volz; TW - Tundra (Jim Wilson) Wind; WR - Werner Reichhold; YH - Yvonne Hardenbrook; ZP - Zane Parks.

This issue of Lynx
is lovingly dedicated to the memory of Keiko Imaoka

SYMBIOTIC POETRY

HAPPINESS BUDS AGAIN

David Bachelor
Cindy Guentherman

happiness
hummingbird drinks from
long scarlet blossoms
trip to the bank
forgotten

warm December
blue snow shovel
keeps its cobwebs
backyard lilac
buds again

piles of brown leaves
about my ankles
I think about my life
a child dashes by
shrieking "Catch me"

New Year's Day
she lines the bird cage
with recession news,
pauses to glance
at "help wanted"

in an August
a leaf wafted onto my desk
I stopped my job
gave up memos
read trees now

I turn the cup
as seasons tumble on
mingle in my mind
tea warmth
on cold fingers

TONIGHT THE SNOW

Marjorie Buettner
hortensia anderson

tonight the snow is as light

as one thousand silken moons
balancing so perfectly
on boughs of pine trees

the pale glow of our one moon
as it shimmers on the snow
illuminates from within
the soul of the pine

the snow falls as various
as our lives unflowering
each crystal with its own face
reflecting starshine

with the approaching daylight
as we emerge from our dreams
all has drifted to oneness
beneath the vast sky

TRACINGS

Martine Joseph
Shelly L. Hazard
Decia Lazarian
Courtney Johnson

stem quivers
under pink mimosa CJ
mantis waits

nightfall bringing life and death SLH
flowers close, hunters stalk

morning mauve
hemlock branches rustle MJ
hawk wings silent

clouds collect, thunder promised SLH
downpour, raging wind, lightning

notes of flute drift
bridge, or stepping stone? CJ
dew falls to shadows

black panther footfalls
under the Elephant Ear MJ

peanut shells and straw concrete sub-Sahara weight shifts	CJ
Atlantis across the way rising crystalline towers	MJ
intuition fine sonar better investment off the Keys	CJ
flamingo smile puzzles monstrous birth in the lagoon	MJ
the Charles chops, scrolling white triangles hobnob flutter, bob, weave	MJ
on the porch a glass of lemonade	CJ
dragging a chair pennies in the top drawer candy aisle riches	CJ
watching eyes, round with wonder memories, distant and full	SLH
summer winds beckon laughter at the water hole bass and perch swimming	SLH
first set of keys. road sings. you in the passenger seat	CJ
hair whipping, breath caught blurry landscape rushes by flying, whole new view	SLH
ginger-skinned swimmer clenches papyrus in mouth	MJ
rinse cycle ending machine's centrifugal dirge wakes winter women	MJ
the pull of an ovoid moon synapses and stars, firing	CJ

sunk about her heart haha fences foil musky invaders	MJ
smooth texture of skin warm breath, hot hands slide across	SLH
midnight quickening dawn brings coffee kisses world of sequined snow	CJ
billow brash of ardent burr around the body bare	DDL
inverted desire stalactites for stalagmites icicles, yucca	CJ
your touch silken power every wheel on fire	MJ
passion rages wild growing hungrily, burning craving for release	SLH
spent matches letters in the fireplace	CJ
against freezing odds roseate Betty Boop shoots chives and meadowsweet	MJ
drifts turn to meltwater rivers swollen, buds burst forth	SLH
relucant gemstones on the grass a crumpled coat old baggage	CJ
gentle showers, gray skies earthen browns turn to green	SLH
squirrels race, vining old dog sniffs the air sun warm on his hips	CJ
green foam crests chase toes tidal tracings of mica	MJ

air crisp with life
heavy with fragrant blossoms SLH
and musical trills

spring calves
beneath a changing sky CJ

CUPID & THE WOMAN

Ann Jones
Marie DisBrow
Lisa McCool

Indigo waters.
Cupid steps from the sea.
His foam-flecked house.

Grubby hands on green backpack.
Her small campstove. Boiled coffee.

Shining arrowheads.
Bracelets of woven leather.
She watches him.

His bare feet. His tangled hair.
His eyes. His mouth. His tongue.

In his satchel:
tequila, massage oil,
chocolate, and Trojans.

Ebb and flow of fleshy tides.
Cupid, woman: their legs twine.

Segmented shrimp
on a bed of crystal ice.
Tin spoons in the sink.

Pink iridescent seashells
lie among tangled seaweed

Murk, stirred delta silt.
Squeals from delighted girls
Muddied sundresses.

Burned driftwood on white sand.
Champagne bubbles. Tinfoil crowns.

Cupid's arrows fly.
The Earth spins on its axis
1000 miles per hour.

Seagulls peck beer cans,
sandwich rinds, each other.

SNOW PATCHED EARTH

Giselle Maya
Jane Reichhold

snow patched earth
on the horse's chestnut mane
rays of rising sun

freezing winds in a sister's hair
sewn into the talisman

thundergod
in his geta through the clouds
running

still in the flowing river
the child's lost sandal

together and apart
we vacillate
phases of the moon

as dew and the autumn sea
this striving to be joined

on a blanket
by the empty fish pond
fishy smells

smooth and cool in my hands
shells brought by slate waves

rejection
the grit in the oyster becomes
her necklace

love notes in cedar box

faded and unanswered

e-mail piles up
the pondering of a link
topples nothing

who is that ancient bard
on the far side of the globe?

I am you -
the shining stone warmed
by a summer moon

brushed by a cool breeze
pale petals of sunflowers

flesh-colored cliffs
they too have known
hard times

fire-hollowed tree
will it become a shelter

trying it on
the bee wiggles into
foxgloves

after spring rain
migrating monarchs

early spring villagers
from their houses peering
snails at sunrise

lured in by stale beer
the bottle-trap works

tossed to the stray cat
leftover chicken carcass
a woman who drinks

from the Fountain of Youth
awareness of fragile bones

a heron has come
in the round water basin
only poplar leaves remain

a colder wind blows

skaters off the ice

the river's silver
remember how close we were
on that high stone bridge

the shock of sleeves touching
static electricity flares blue

we walked together
pools and white roses
mirrored in your eyes

the reality of an argument
and each of us is right

autumn moon
seedpods spill their glossy seeds
into hand-shaped jars

vacant lot overgrown with weeds
tin cans and used condoms

under a lid
the heart answers the bell's tone
with two swallows

scent of fresh tea spirals
from the ash-glazed bowl

a whiteness
the memorial of Hiroshima
burns in my brain

a letter consumed
under the cherry tree

we had agreed
to meet here in spring
leaves on branches

meadow a deeper green
a grazing mare and her foal

LATEST JOKE

marlene mountain

carlos colón

latest joke politicians prick about another's 'lies' pass it on

god watching the polls

she faces & asks what are your feelings leaves him in the trees

sales receipt wrapped around an engagement ring

the other woman blown out of the water news of a pregnant bonnie

behind the searchlights storm troopers

holocaust victims a second time swiss bank accounts empty

concentration lost yet cucumbers under a full moon

heckled comic rotten tomatoes flying toward the audience

dna material on material & more graphic material cumin'

miniature cornfield an acorn cup on the broom-straw scarecrow

homer fights another male sport more statistics to keep

cowhide crystal ball with his crown maris passes on his asterisk

a plan to put a note on my foot: haiku is a nature poem

traffic jam between two southbound lanes blue of the harley

in an inner tube no one as lucky as me such dirty pool

booster club seat cushions my own personal exploitation device

we raised bonsai –johnmyth –like we raised peanut butter

flynt's millions for bigwig affairs outhustles the wrongwingers

paulatics

take off a happy face and frown the world frowns with you

lithium does the entire universe need to be on it?
radiation therapy begun she wonders who will get little jenna
our halloween scene: the scarecrow in the iron mask
up late i crave a video by marilyn manson smooth-talking & all
quadraphonic speakers the who rattling my windows
lift-off here & now just as ambiguous as it's always been
perth lights up the cosmos
from a green plastic lean-back a scan of my shadow in the leaves
hound dogs a bark's distance away from the fox

between the hoe two halves of the snake
still saving myself for a hominid but nothing's forever
popeye looking green as a fistfull of spinach 'et tu, bluto'
words words words corrupt my visual world
woman with no arms painting a portrait of venus
what does a vegetarian beat

Aug. 21 - Nov. 17, 1998

PROBABLY

Marlene Mountain
Francine Porad

far from falling bombs American flags replaced with Christmas lights
three years and counting a witch hangs politely
'Wicca' and the word 'victim' in English have the same derivation

sucked in by another religion that kid from california

Thai gardeners available December 25th to wrap up the year

health and unemployment package dead in the water

arthritis here and there clouds cover these old mountains at dawn

psychic message of sadness received but from whom

if our spooks hadn't been asleep no 100-day marking of you-know-what

hot spots alphabetically: Afghanistan, Argentina...

warmer in the kitchen but little interest in getting up a head of steam

Jacuzzi preferred to a Mexican gecko in the shower

from now until then the days longer whatever else might happen

brass-monkey cold under regular clothes 'jammies

in the valley just to say i was if only i'd better mulched the transplants

To Do list: geranium starter plants in decorator pots

in a hurry to waste time a broken plate the second it's spotless

Jeff's immaculate home in Bend, OR and his new number

winter wind pigeons relocate to the 72nd SE telephone wires

from a distance the pickup truck still red

news of John Walker* I expect Bernard will 'bah-humbug' all day

high-powered speechwriter childlike speechifier

Stephanie's e-mail: hi Grandma I love your pantings they are pritty

knock on plastic unaffected by the viruses going around

steering clear of sneezes, runny noses and those with sore throats

subdued in-flight strange sneakers with a man attached

Person of the Year** choice in simplistic terms good versus evil

the tumbling down date of Jericho in ruins

shave and a haircut popular with Taliban dissidents in Kabul

a steady rain on the roof over my head

larger than life the dead pine full of pileated woodpecker holes

darting little birds crest of a Steller's jay

all the fat man's deer*** misnamed it's a patriarchal world everywhere

geezer shorthand I coin IIRR for IM's on AOL****

five or six number-&-letter groups for one dang html-colored page

worthwhile project gift glows in firelight

*American Taliban terrorist [[John Walker Lindh]]

** Rudy Giuliani, New York City Mayor [versus bin Laden]

*** male but not female reindeer shed their antlers before winter

****IIRR=if I'm remembering rightly; IM=Instant Message; AOL=America Online

12/16/01 -12/24/01

A BASKET

Marlene Mountain

Francine Porad

a basket of clothes to the line the pins just beginning to thaw

sun rays glitter the frost endless airport wait-time

a jar of peanut butter just for the wrens & other frequent flyers

heads up duck decoy near an ironwood eagle

5m imprisoned mother on drugs to justify society's pedestal ideal

great new lawyer TV show The Guardian

one advocate can make a difference voters swarm the town meeting

i decide to do one thing end up doing another

an attitude like Scarlett O'Hara's I'll think about it tomorrow

the land imprinted within more to feel than to see

snow in the distant foothills bleak and deep quarry of sand and gravel

cave by cave what's a mother nature to do

bonds that bind both adopted best friends discover they are brothers

what about our rensmate kris you think she's ok

silence surrounds the silence within finding the right words

behind the scenes hope i hope among the enemies

father of the neighborhood bully applauds his son's 'gumption'

meanwhile back at the white ranch

unfortunately a gardening book opened a raised bed of tomatoes

trellis home of one wrinkled leaf

'exercise common sense' dr scholl's shoes wait near the wood stove

...but where is Osama bin Laden running

fake social security number a deadbeat dad in the next county

'String him up!' Richard Reid will get a fair trial

a ball to fall a ball to kick two more potentially-bad days coming up

'What's good about it?' response to 'Good morning!'

bored with the stash of so-i-won't-have-to-go-anywhere food

chick-flicks eight-hour tape of romantic comedies
whatta joke one of the most violent countries praises its way of life
awake all night planning a haibun of sorts The Last Word

another opinionated editor my thanks to Werner for his feedback
self-spooked i refrain from closing the can of worms
not even a pretense of plans for New Year's Eve maybe build a fire
bedspread from my sixteenth year 'modern' design
homemade chutney in a fancy little jar the flavor of plums
winter solstice just keeps on giving
12/25/01 – 12/30/01

REPEATED STORY

Marlene Mountain
Francine Porad

our longtime marriage an often-repeated story still makes us laugh
unfocused the poem slipped through
the kid explains: it's a thing that you have little things that are colors
one of those days i'm older than i am
on hold waiting for an airline representative only five minutes more
too cold to wash dishes too cold not to

if creosote hadn't run down the pipe's outside perhaps no house at all
and now the furnace guy...sun in the forecast

do we watch 'times square' for what happens or what doesn't happen
commuter: I'm not very romantic my wife tells me
lucky to be out-of-love a mind of irises and scrappy pieces of art
I sketch a dozen bushtits hiding a fat-filled feeder
cheese with something those exercises when the climate turns over
back to the drizzle one visitor only New Year's Day
doubts that the old toyota will start are deer pregnant in the valley
car ad no payment 'til 2003 no interest 'til 2004
seven hundred forever owed on the broken mac winter's green grass
good-bye note taped to the TV heart before signature

IceCreamKiddo: Who is Grandpa doing (I believe she means how)
so many words sayable if i remember which
it's all semantics frustrated builder calls rockery an outcropping
'latest development' he's still on the loose
laid-back writers at the haiku meeting five poems apiece
bits of snow more than twice-bitten in this retreat
estimated tax tally scraps of paper scattered throughout the room
unbalanced checkbook for a jillion wobbly months
stranded in the south need an atlas to hone up on geography
broken frames fixed with floss such intelligent eyes
sawtoothed shape Classic migraine aura without the headache
dang 'em old translators screw basho but bad

the choice between this and that sometimes the choice of nothing

biorhythmic low should have created more last week
a walk on the tame side little shrubs follow the way of their curb
complementary twosome nary a compliment
did a fly on one of walls file a report: the pet store now a pet clinic
how long until the world spins joyously
12/29/01-1/4/02

LOUISIANA SPRING

Carlos Colon
Alexis K. Rotella

Louisiana spring –
along the bayou
six herons and a hawk.

Floating away
on a cream puff cloud.

Christened infant
a crown of
baby's breath.

Easter lily pollen
on the priest's nose.

Windexing
my face back
into the mirror.

My old mother asks,
"What's good for wrinkles?"

Helpful husband
Third-degree burns
on the ironing board.

A hundred years pass –
still he hasn't finished his sentence.

"Over my dead body
will you build that house,"
screams a neighbor.

Policeman's knuckles
on the front door.

Everyone gets invited
to their party
but us.

He enters the conversation
even the moon drifts away.

As I walk my dog
this early morning,
sneer from the bigshot.

Does he realize
he gave us the "evil eye"?

Lashes-
she gives my heart
fifty of them.

Oklahoma City
death toll: 169.

Sweet sorrow
after
the sugar binge.

My flavored water
watered down.

When I open my eyes
a seahorse
sharing my pillow.

Sidesaddle
the baroness and the burr.

Chamois skirt
clinging to
her curves.

Water spot
on the black Corvette.

Stamp collection –
it's worth
nothing?

So tiny
the tongue tattoo.

Feeding the goldfish –
how some try
to get it all.

Season's first football game
packing a poncho.

An osprey
circles the stadium
before heading south.

Nostradamus prediction:
dynamite-eating goat visits Mayberry.

Sharpening
my fingernails before
boarding the plane.

Decompression
chambermaid.

Turbans
no longer
in vogue.

Absolut ads missing
from all the magazines.

The landscape
of the big apple
changed forever.

Like "Cats" –
reluctant to leave New York.

Roma Café –
two blood puddings
to go.

Waitress fondling
a Franklin.

March 29, 2001 - February 12, 2002

COMING HOME BY A DIFFERENT ROAD

Carol Purington

Larry Kimmel

finally we're off! -
"home for the holidays"
on the radio
as bumper to bumper
we watch the gray clouds speed ahead

putting out birdseed
a verse about thankfulness
on the place cards
in calligraphy the names
I say most often

night of heavy snow
back from the barn by flashlight
footsteps already blurred -
in the window
the red-tipped electric candle

over the crèche
a music-box angel spreads
golden wings
lumpy Christmas stockings hang
by the unlit fireplace

"Auld Lang Syne"
under a starry sky
sparks from a hilltop bonfire
what's done is done
and some things best forgotten

snow-mulched garden
wind batters the frozen stalks
of unpulled weeds
remorse nibbles like a mouse
in need of forgiveness

out of a pearly sky
a few snowflakes fall
through black branches -
utter silence . . .

but for a woodpecker at work

jellybeans hidden
high and low in the kitchen
for kids to find
after the sunrise service
coming home by a different road

THE LAST DANCE: 3 - RHYMES WITH EEE

(FROM OTHER RENS Book Five & Six)

Kris Kondo
Marlene Mountain
Francine Porad

renstagnancy
m f k

the little-bitty pond with a scummy space for whatever needs it
mother and child view the rain puddles
how many times a day do i actually stop time with a blank stare
on hold things needed to be done on paper
art exhibit of floral watercolor paintings hoping for a surprise
mindset of the president of the garden society

renmalady
m k f

parking lots golf courses other artificial turfs the world's come to
how people love to label what's wrong with me
now a post-nasal drip against my better judgment I ask: what next
'business lobby' even more in charge of life & death
learning to scratch my head rather than my eyes cypress pollen allergy
a named ailment for each complaint

renmacaroni
k m f

under a macaroni bear 'thanks mom for always watching over me'
lots of dough to contemplate a suburban zen garden
to feel 'dolloed up' the macaroni or wax-candle-drippings necklace?
another new-fangled gadget for the Goodwill box
one of the dandies 'stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni'
was he the guy who discovered wireless telegraphy?

renOdyssey
k f m

always want to add another 'd' 'cos it seems like a long odd trip to me
a haiku journey through time and space
deadly pursuit of a woman's rights thru the crap of 'maledumbination'
after 30 years a vegetable plot to trek to
travels of a slug from tomato plants to marigold seedlings
mama nature creates the way a tadpole becomes a frog

rendiscovery
f m k

don't you remember you 'discovered me' at the last dance?
to open up with wrens and flock together
beyond the laptop glowing on the kitchen table stars come out
crescent moon one lifetime is not enough
'the discovery channel' a continual discovery of adjectives & adverbs

the first leaves of the first potatoes i ever planted

renagree
f k m

no need to agree at Old Country Buffet eight desserts on display

let's all agree that it's ok to disagree

'fear' a common word in the media for another drop in stocks

trapped by a phone survey on journalism

we conceded the paradox of marriage ah the moon's reflection!

after a long drawn-out process i agree with myself

March 13-24, 2001

GENRE -AN ONGOING PROCESS OF INTEGRATION IN A DIALOGUE

Werner Reichhold
Larry Kimmel

WR

For some time in the poetry scene we have been watching a tendency to interbreed, to hybridize and amalgamate genres. Given a chance to make your own case about it what would you as a writer like to state and discuss?

LK

Everything is in motion. It is the nature of the universe to be in a state of constant creation and evolution. To resist that is to invite neurosis. That is a general metaphysical principle that I always have in mind. It is as applicable to art as it is to any other area of human endeavor, social, political, religious, whatever.

Having said that, obviously it is in the nature of things that art, poetry in this case, will always be in a constant state of evolution, whether we will or not. The mixing of genres is as natural as the blending of ingredients in a chef's gourmet dish. It is an aspect of creation.

Everything evolves of itself, of course. We still write sonnets, but (and I might say here unlike the clinging to a past aesthetic we hear so much about in the haiku community) we no longer even attempt or desire to write sonnets like Shakespeare, and neither did Shakespeare try to emulate Patriarch, but devised his own English-language rhyme scheme. So we look at the sonnet and we see how it has evolved from Shakespeare up to, say, e.e. cummings. This happened without much effort or deliberation, I think. But the mixing of genres is a more conscious and deliberately controlled kind of

evolution, but evolution it still is and must be. Can't help but be.

We've just come through one of the most exciting centuries ever. The 20th century has been a tremendous adventure for the artist. Everything has been available to us. We have had the ability to experience Bach and Charlie Parker, Botticelli and Dali, Beowulf, Genji, and Hemingway, all on the same day, if we like. We have both the past and the moment and the complete freedom to blend and experiment with them.

WR

I agree, yes, mixing genres is not at all a new phenomenon in literature. There was always a tendency to interbreed genres at a time when societies in the west developed themselves socially and politically at a certain stage of history. Mixed genres reflect mixed races. Artists followed and had been often clearly ahead of new perspectives. We live in an open society. Here, writers felt always free to study foreign poetry forms and integrate them. The spirits seemed to blend a process of growth. We are used to looking at controversial processes, and we are convinced that critique in the arts is a necessary instrument and supports change. Collision, decay and even disaster in daily life have become motives strongly reflected through the mind of the artist. Distortions of existing forms are in the eyes of Westerners a naturally occurring advancement, a progressive step toward a more matured state of consciousness. In this respect I would like to say that I do strike out for the unknown, consciously or by chance. To explore the so called 'unknown' is my declared goal. If existing forms expressing energies cross my way, I analyze them for possible integration.

Here follows an example:

It Passes

A shade occurs

 the cross marks its door
 passes over
 Friday
(it may later move a stone)

Saturday that warm dresses will be losers
"I am not home on Easter Sunday think of hiding
eggs as an arrangement referring to Semites'
rose water sweets, you know they come powdered"

communicants their questions dipterous and tizzy

do I

want to lay myself down in grass
desire to swell with breath that keeps swelling
request to move with water that is gushing
wish to go with marbles' faster rolling
yearningly ask to switch to chalk's white growing?

overflow

 flux oozing
this amount of April rain.

'Form follows function' is a principle that is not kept strongly enough in mind by those writers caged in a clubby situation in Europe as much as it is in the States. Most Westerners, who in a first step studied the very small forms of haiku and tanka, stayed for too long writing single verses. They overlooked the fact that historically seen Japanese writers didn't have a chance and the guts to free themselves from ruling group leaders. Abroad, even participating in collaborative writing sessions, the grip on each individual person to write in a restricted and manipulated way seemed to cut them spiritually and physically off from any attempt to promote the advancement of the haiku form. In the States, where most editors from the early beginnings supported this foreign thinking and stopped short for both, first for a change in subject matter, and secondly by not encouraging writers to use the haiku form itself adequately to western poetic developments in the 20th century. The integration of Japanese forms into western poetry concepts had not been even seen as a valid consideration and to speak or to write openly about it became branded as a sacrilege until up to the early 90's when Jane Reichhold and I explored the possibilities publishing multi-layered single poems.

LKHow would you suggest, or what sort of suggestions, would you have for the adequate use of the haiku to western poetic developments? I mean by this, do you have any thoughts of change in the size, structure, or nature of the haiku form. I'm not speaking here of subject matter.

WR

Larry, I feel it is the strength of our dialogue to keep thoughts in a stage of transition. After letting your question sink in deeper for a while, I would like to say I would rather want to leave the use of a three-liner as open as possible. By a screaming love for language and by the naturally implemented amount of chaos hidden in it, the innovative poet will find a way to break through existing forms of relations. We'll watch the strategies of the rebels: they may carry features of destruction until their work takes on shapes acceptable for a growing audience. Seen from this point of view the fates of the haiku lie in the energies of writers to invade the form.

Here is the place to mention that forms of writing are always reflecting new spiritually based concepts. The starting point from where to go on is neither the small form of the haiku, tanka or other verses nor is it an experimental thinking that may bring us to 'a mix of forms'. What comes first, and asks for a long investment into freely swirling energies, is the desire, the obsession to prepare oneself for the visualization of so far unknown, unexplored territory. Only then begins the investigation of techniques and strategies to find the adequate language for the mysteriously offered message. And only after that time consuming work and in a second state of creativity we may consider blending small Japanese forms as an important detail within the bigger western poetry concepts.

I would like to mention that with the publications of Handshake and Tidalwave in 1989, and with Bridge of Voices in 1990, I myself combined my artwork- mainly consisting of drawings collages, photographs and installations- with haiku, tanka, renga, sijo, ghazal, free verse and prose. Since 1997, with AHApotry.com, CYBERTRY II, I intermingled prose with haiku sequences, prose with tanka (haibun-like, using 25 syllable tanka written like prose + haiku), free verse with dialogue, tanka and haiku (introduced in two short plays), sijo sequences and prose, ghazal with free verse and prose.

With most of the forms mentioned above, Jane Reichhold and I also wrote collaboratively. Here an example:

Watery Colors

It is painful waiting for the noise of someone undressing.
The light dimmer works; sweets comparable to syrup.
Hours with the cook, her treatment of steam balances the soup.
Spices - may I see tears, almost a puddle?
Wasn't time always running between 'help yourself'
and 'get acquainted'?
How much dream-work is used in hands splicing hemp?

at the end of spring
the bookstore lowers the prices
for calendars

Suppose an embryo marks itself into the territories
of a woman's brain cells. Light is the subject.
Watery, the game about a new entity ends
as a play concerned with only one subject matter.
Trustworthy, a little feverish, then soon obligations

hard to go
into sleep when the dart
what shape
is pure enough to call
food for the white dreams

It starts snowing in the name of winter. We put hot chocolate
on top of ice cream. What a thrill of a soft encounter
sinking a spoon down through such a warmth. Hungry?
Yes, but the main interest is aimed at the apple that is never
allowed to be tasted spreading its smell over Cézanne's canvas

painting the kite
blue
the color of home.

I coined the term 'symbiotic poetry', recognizing the need for an English language term to indicate the many different ways to write collaboratively. Put it another way, my basic principle always was composing text similar to what in the visual arts is called 'collage', or respectively 'installation'. I learned and took off from the inventions of the early symbolists and surrealists in Europe, changed, mixed and added the use of Japanese genres to the spiritual purposes that fits my western concepts.

And here, I think we are back to our theme: blending forms.

LK

Perhaps we are having a reaction to all this freedom. I know for myself, that I prefer to work within a form, as to working in a too organic, or too free a form, meaning vers libre, that strange, contradictory term.

But for my purposes, in working with form, I do not mean a strict form. Not 5-7-5 syllables, for example, but a flexible form. A haiku that has shape and form, yes, as Jane Reichhold has named it,

"fragment and phrase," though fragment and phrase of an approximate length. Eleven syllables or fourteen, or whatever, as the need of the poem requires. Form, but flexible form. And here, I hope I have come to the need and reason for the mixing of genres. A constant need and search to accommodate the inner needs of expression, whatever that may be to any particular individual artist. And to acknowledge, as well, that without evolution and/or deliberate experimentation to keep art fresh we have stagnation. Or, in a word, boredom.

I don't see myself as an innovator, but as one who takes the building blocks that are available and find what I can do with them to satisfy my own artistic needs. In the process, perhaps, some innovation takes place. But I am not trying to strike out into unknown territory, but to take tradition and freshen it for the need of the new moment. This happened for me in a form recently written about in an article between myself and Linda Jeannette Ward, who also found a similar solution to artistic expression in what she has named the tanku. In my case it is the tanbun, which is simply a very short haibun. The prose text being 31 syllables or less, capped by a haiku or tanka. Linda's tanku is quite similar, only she has linked a tanka with a haiku, the traditional shift in tanka often coming between the two poems. In my tanbun what we have really is a tanka presented in prose format capped by a haiku or tanka.

To get back to my original point about accommodating needs of expression without really being an innovator, this tanbun form came about by the fact that I had a tanka that was not really working as a tanka, there wasn't a strong shift within it, and while I pondered those five lines, I remembered a haiku that complemented it. And I brought them together. And something interesting happened. Another early tanbun came about (and this is more significant to our discussion), when I had a tanka with additional material left over. It wasn't quite a two tanka sequence, however, and as I tried various ways to accommodate my need of expression within our western haiku tradition, I reverted to my earlier experiment of combining a prose tanka with an already existing but related haiku. You can easily see how my need of expression, the need to include the whole experience works in this second experiment, or mixing of genres:

Winter Cottage

Unworldly wind, and dark the midnight forest.
So cold the branches click like antlers. Beyond
that, not much to know.

in the black of nothing
phantom bucks
battle

Here the "additional" material, that became a haiku after the tanka text, is italicized, for what I hope suggests the ghostliness of those last three lines, and adds a little something extra typographically to the poem. And here, too, in this particular mixing of genres, I think I have discovered a potential for something new in haibun. Because of its very conciseness the tanbun will often work as a lyric, rather than a prose text followed by a linking haiku.

WR

As much as I like to support any kind of innovative work, I would like to express my strong aversion for giving each attempt at changing a form a new name. I think we end up in confusion giving the

reader the feeling that he/she is dumb and does not know about form and evolution. Further more -and here I myself end up with resistance- I have not the slightest intention of rearranging Japanese sound units or mix them with English syllables for the purpose of naming new poetry forms. When I talked with writers in Japan, they see that as highly problematic and even as an unwelcome approach to their language and culture as a whole. They are right, since we are talking of a product of English language poetry so far not exercised in Japan, one can state that in case there is an urge and a true reason to name a form anew then an English word should be created. One more reason to avoid using Japanese terms for English language poetry is the fact, that mainstream poetry qualifies such attempts as 'a dilettante's mania'.

LK

Huh. I hadn't thought of that. But I can tell you this, that if I were submitting the work, my tanbun, just quoted above to a mainstream magazine, I wouldn't have named it. Why did I name it? Consciously, I'm not sure, but subconsciously, perhaps, I felt that I was alerting a haiku editor and a haiku audience that I was still working with the haiku and tanka "English-language" tradition in mind. I'm speculating retrospectively here. Still and all, being human, I feel a slight need to justify myself. If we didn't have names of forms we couldn't speak of them, or refer to them quickly and easily when having discussions such as this. We would have to give a long preamble in which we named its defining points each time we referred to it. You yourself coined the term "symbiotic poetry" to indicate different ways to write collaboratively, granted, however, you were not naming a new form, rather indicating a more comprehensive technique, still ...

But getting back to my tanbun, I do see it as a distinct form, not only a mixing of forms. A form, to me, as distinct as the sonnet. A form, like the sonnet, that can be played with, but that has a fundamental shape and internal organization that make it namable. It began as a mixing of two Japanese forms, the haiku and the tanka, and became something else.

On the other hand, I am troubled to think of having named a form with a Japanese word, a coin-word at that, when in fact the form in question is an English-language form. I can see the offensiveness in that, which I regret. As far as being identified with 'a dilettante's mania', I can live with it. I did it and I'll own it. But in truth, I was not comfortable with the name I came up with from the start, and if I get a chance to rename it, I may. To answer your feelings of aversion to giving each attempt to change form a new name, I can see that. It would become quite a mishmash if each, and often a once in a life-time, new and organic form were given a name. Still, Werner, I think that the way I am using this 31 syllable or less text capped with a haiku or a tanka, is unique, and I must insist on it as a new form, though the jury is still out as to its ultimate name. But name it must have if other poets are to work with it, understand it, speak of it.

WR

I recognize the innovative part in it. But in case one writes less than 31 syllables, takes out the pivot line and its function to blend two different things, disregard line breaks, then I ask what's left there to be called a tanka? It appears as text or prose, and yes, one may combine it with a haiku. Right, you can call it a very short haibun but I don't see it as a new form only because it's shorter than haibun normally appear.

I feel sometimes quite uncomfortable with poetry societies because there is something going on – like a race to become the accepted "inventor" of a form. Since early on I myself have chosen another way – I presented my hybridized materials as an offer to readers interested in innovative change. I patiently didn't underline that it can be recognized as a 'new form', but I am glad that after years a growing

number of writers come along to share the same path.

I would like to mention Paul Celan, recognized as a master of contemporary short poetry. Reading his poems (all of the highly difficult poems are outstandingly well translated into English) one feels that, living and writing mostly in France, he got acquainted with haiku and tanka. But here again is my point: Celan did create his own new forms but never claimed that haiku and tanka have been resources he studied. That's all right, because he integrated both Japanese and Yiddish forms organically so that his poems became unique creations: form and content are one thing.

LK

Yes, Celan is an exciting poet, an exciting master of the short poem, and I think you are probably correct in saying that haiku and tanka informed, or was an influence, in his innovative work, but his forms are not what I would call FORMS with capital letters. That is, they are each and everyone organic, each of a certain manner of writing that we can easily say "this is Celan", but still each poem has its own organic form. To me, to speak of a form is to speak of a structure that is repeated each time a new poem in that "form" is written. It is, even if somewhat flexible to line length or syllable count or whatever, it is always recognizable as the same form, not a newly evolved organic form for the need of each poem, but a set form into which each new poem must be poured.

Berryman's "Dream Songs" would be an example of such a form, each being eighteen lines, but beyond that quite open to variation. A very flexible form. And that is what I am looking for at the moment, form, but form with a certain ability to expand or contract.

WR

I would like to express why I have my qualms about hearing this: "here is a prose piece capped with a tanka, or capped with a haiku". It refers painfully to an antiquated Japanese thinking and is not in line with contemporary western poetry. To me "capped" looks outdated, much too close to "added". But in fact that's what we often read in magazines and anthologies publishing haibun. There, the content of the prose part is somehow repeated in a verse when indeed we wish to find a poem, new in every poetical aspect, seemingly in contradiction to prose and yet occurring as a part of the whole that enlarges the prose part unexpectedly and vice versa. Getting prepared to hybridize or amalgamate material is a singular creative act, each time different in concept and strategy.

LK

Well, I haven't any argument with that. There is too much recapitulation of text in the so-called "capping" haiku or tanka in much of the published haibun I've seen. One does yearn to see more of a leap from text into poem that lets a gap in which something unexplainable can resonate, or be felt. The technique of non-sequiturs should be explored more, for example. As to whether it is called "capped" or not, I'm somewhat indifferent.

WR

After thirty years, most writers get disgusted with the boring work group magazines still print. There are new strategies how to write an English language 3-liner or 5-liner and combinations of genres. Most poets are used to offer them through their works without claiming 'rights on the form', and generally speaking I would state, that American haiku are occurring as 'the fine hair on the body of a poets complete value of work'. To put it more humorously, the Japanese haiku is not dead – it is integrated into our short poetry. Long live the one, two, three and more-liner!

LK

Again, putting aside any differences of the naming of forms or not, I must agree that after working within the haiku form for a few years, I did become disgusted with the still born work being published by most of the magazines publishing that genre, and I must stand with you, shoulder to shoulder, in proclaiming the long life of the short poem. Interesting, though, is the fact that while the first four of these "tiny haibun" which I restricted to a 31 syllable or less text for the resistance it gave me (and I like a certain amount of resistance in creative work, because it often causes me to work harder and to write better), that while the first four of these were given the name of a new form, I did published some half-dozen or more, later, presenting them to the editor of one of our prominent haiku magazine, as simply haibun.

So what I am thinking, now, is that I will continue to think of these "tiny haibun" as a distinct form, having certain limitations placed on them, as to an approximate size/length, controlled by syllabic count, but that I may not be so quick to give them a name. Of if a name is called for, to give them a name English in origin.

WR

Yes, as I've said, from time to time I feel like I am watching kind of a race between the members of so called poetry societies in an attempt to declare a certain way of writing a "new form". It's an uncomfortable feeling for me. What one writes is an offer, an offering of poetry. That's it, after that we calmly can wait for others who may like the work that much so that they decide to create a variation of a particular poem. Only after that may one conclude that in some ways the work done years ago was potentially close to a new form or not: was interesting, maybe a good poem but really not at all "a new form". It's five years ago when I amalgamated existing material for a poetical concept of mine. It didn't come to my mind to claim a new form.

LK

Still, I think there are times to name a form. Going back to this rather unpleasant broad-siding type term from the mainstream 'a dilettante's mania', I'm thinking, so what!? If a writer creates a structure, a form, that is useful to him and he gives it a name, that's his prerogative, and if someone else wants to take a pot-shot at it, fine, he's allowed. Whenever an artist creates something that steps away from the current status quo there will be name calling, it's the sort of thing that comes with the territory. If, however, this "new form" helps that particular artist to write in a fresh and effective way, it is of little importance what detractors have to say. If the "new form" catches the attention of other poets and they use it and it becomes useful to many, the detractors initial reaction falls by the way. Whenever there is new ground broken there will always be detractors around to try and tear down the new structure being built on this new ground. One can't really regard them much. In the time one takes to respond to their arguments one might better use the time and energy for a new poem.

You know, I'm beginning to think that our dialogue is becoming more and more a discussion of the short poem, rather than the mixing of forms. Short poems that have been informed, perhaps, from other short forms, but short poems, period. And in the writing of short poems, however influenced, I would agree, there is no need to be naming each poem as a new form. Harkening back to Celan, how could he have named his poems as individual forms? They are the voice of a unique artist, they are of a type, but they are each different in size and shape, so to speak, and do not denote a new form, but unique structures born out of the growth of singular thoughts. He could be said to have been working with new concepts in poetry, but not namable forms.

And further more, I think that we have gone not only into the area of the short poem, but within that area we are also speaking of two different things that are going in regard to the short poem. One, there

is the short poem that is organic in nature, however much it has been or has not been influenced by an already existing short form, say the haiku or tanka. And two, the short poem that has a specific structure that can be and is repeated. When a short poem always insists, say, are being six lines then you have a form. That is overly simplistic, I realize, but for the sake of argument it is a six line poem, albeit not much of a form, but it can be named. It might be called "the six-line poem." Obviously an unnecessary form to be named. But if the form becomes more complex, and carries with it certain expectations, one might want to name it. If for no other reason than that it can be quickly referred to and discussed.

Of course, if I am the only one using that form, why name it? It could be referred to as the short poems of Larry Kimmel. I'm thinking again of Berryman's "Dream Songs." I don't think he named the form. We speak of his "Dream Songs" but that is because that was the name of the collection when it first appeared. And I don't think that his eighteen lines have ever become a form emulated by other poets. Maybe by a few, but it is not part of the canon of forms, as is the sonnet in western poetry.

You were saying that if I am using 31 syllables or less in my prose text and not regarding the pivot line and its function to blend two different things, to disregard breaks in the tanka form, then what is it but a prose text followed by a haiku, in short, a short haibun. This is true. And many of the tanbun that I've written are in fact, simply short, let's say 'tiny', haibun. BUT, even then, I feel, that these "tiny haibun" are something not quite a haibun at all.

They become lyric poems. Part of it formatted as a prose text with a leap into a second, lineated poem, that at its best, resonates with the first prose formatted poem, forming one unit, a nameable form. There is something about the controlling of the size that takes it out of the arena of the traditional haibun. It is no longer a prose text "capped" by a haiku, but a two part poem (which admittedly could be all lineated), but still a two part poem, originally inspired by the complex of haikai techniques as understood in the west.

In practice this could still break down into being nothing more than a "tiny haibun", but it has a potential worth exploring as a form. What I am looking at now, and what I quoted as a tanbun above, is just a hint and a suggestion of something to explore. It grew out of an extension of the tanka, but it is no longer tanka or haibun. What is it? Perhaps only a structure that helps me create within certain limitations. (And all art, all poems, have certain limitations placed on them or they would not exist except as a gas ever dispersing.) Well, whatever it is, it is for me a useful blueprint for a certain type of short poem and it is nameable. Though I do wish I had given it a less questionable name. That much I give you.

WR

Larry, I feel good watching you work at the Japanese haibun. One day, after the influence of the Japanese form on western literature is clearly seen, the term itself probably has to go. Why? The haibun- not even written in Japan anymore- was somehow 'a journal of a journey'. With the exception of Shikibu Murasaki's *The Tale of Genji*, there have been little literary requirements for the educated reader. For us Americans planning to go on using prose and verse together I think we are in agreement that there can be no limitations to subject matter, content or composition.

LK

I might add here, that I do not consider syllabic count to be a strong poetic technique in English. It has little meaning in English, as we all know, beyond the fact that it may help me, or some poets, some of the time, to create a resistance; a form, or a structure, in which to hone their ideas. This is useful to me

some of the time, at other times it is meaningless and inappropriate. This is experimenting, I think, with form, but it has not much to do with mixing form. For example, one could say, well with syllabic count you are mixing a Japanese practice into your English practice, but I don't think this has much of a reality. As we have found, a strict adherence to syllable count in the English-language haiku and tanka is dubious and moot.

I would say that we have learned of an interesting form from the Japanese in the haiku and the tanka, but once applied to the English-language poetics, it does become something different. It cannot replicate the original, it can only suggest a new direction, or new form, in English, or whatever new language it is being used in. Although, I do believe that the underlying structure, Jane Reichhold's fragment and phrase theory again, is a fundamental structure that exists in the cosmos, as surely as, say, the blues form or the AABA form of the swing era does in music. And as a universal form it belongs to all. The Japanese first discovered it and developed it according to the structure of their language. We have learned of it from the Japanese, but must develop it according to the structure of our language.

But I have somewhat gotten away from the main point of our dialogue here, which is the mixing of forms.

WR

I believe our readers will be tolerant and glad to watch us reaching out into areas of widespread interest.

LK

Another reason for mixing genres is this "harkening back to a wistful past" that we are seeing so much of in English-language haiku and which is destroying a good thing. Have you noticed how many magazines are publishing formulaic material? Even to the point of naming, and not very originally, a season, then making a flat prose statement. Like "winter/ the cat curled/ in the window." By simply naming the season, right away a precious syllable (and the whole fragment) has been wasted. A more skilled approach could have been to integrate the season into the phrase of the haiku directly and by suggestion preferably, leaving room for yet another contrasting image. So rather than concerning ourselves overly much with a season word, we should seek ways of indicating the season directly into the very meat of the poem. If, in fact, the season needs mentioned.

Scholarship has its place and I am always appreciative of scholarship and good translation of traditional material, that keeps alive what was once a great concept and practice, but this is a touchstone from which to create anew. While I am all for experimentation with the mixing of genres (and I think here we are talking to a great extent of mixing Japanese traditional forms with western poetics), while I am all for experimentation, I will admit that there is the HAIKU, in capital letters, which is a form and a certain content and an aesthetic tradition, and that it can be truly great when it works. But to try to hold it there is to limit.

And limitation, of this sort, limitation not of form but of the evolutionary processes of the universe, is futile and has been the cause of a great many woes in this world. In the political and governmental areas it is easy to see how limitation leads to punitive governments. How can it be any different with poetry? Limitation of this sort is to stifle creativity.

WR

The Japanese haiku, a shortened form resulting out of the waka or tanka, holds as you said certain contents and aesthetic traditions in the country from which it is handed over to us in the West. This is

the reason why we can, after intense studies, admire and learn from haiku. It sure tells us a lot about Japanese history and environment, religions, Zen and cultural developments. This is exactly why, appropriate to background and expectations, our own three-liner needed a different technique to be built and another poetical strategy to reach out for people searching to find their own identity in the mirrors of poetry. The American three-liner is a new kind of western poetry, standing by itself or integrated into bigger concepts.

LK

True. The American three-liner is a new kind of poem peculiar to western poetry. I think, Werner, that I've said about what I have to say for the moment. You asked, "What as a writer would I like to state and discuss?" Simply this, creative work by its very nature and definition is evolutionary and that I am opposed to all attempts to stifle this natural process. In regards to our discussion here, lets take a traditional form, or forms, the haiku and the tanka and the haibun, and see what we can do in regards to experimenting with its evolution. Not for experimentation's sake alone, but to increase the potential of these forms. Because I don't care how much claim is made as to how much can be done, say, in the haiku form, it is not possible to do everything. I've heard that there is a famous statement that whole novels can be contained in one haiku. I take the point. But the way these things get brandished around it becomes total nonsense. There is no handmaiden to all poetic needs. Believe me, I know. I've looked for it. So we try new things. We expand. We mix genres. We create new forms out of old forms. We let happen what will happen without trying to stop the endless creative churning of the universe. In short, we wave it on change with flags and banners. I think that about sums up my answer to your opening question.

WR

Thank you, Larry, for sharing your thoughts in regards to my opening question and for the dialogue that followed.

LK

It's been a pleasure, Werner, and thank you for asking me.

April 2002

SOLO WORKS

GHAZAL

WHERE WATER BEGINS

Khizra Aslam

As she basks sun-soaked where water begins,
Such illusions spark; bare daughter begins.

On that altar I see silhouettes move slow.
Can you hear sheep bleat as slaughter begins?

How propped puppets swing on delicate strings,
On a stage well-lit such slaughter begins.

Never mind if you spilt that blue-black ink;
Remains of stains! Where no blotter begins.

Go, pack up, khizar, and find a new way,
Why, you wish to stay where laughter begins.

LAYERS

Khizra Aslam

I hear empty voices, light shimmer on that mountain,
What seek humans from this deep? Glimmer on that mountain.

There must be some enclosure in a tightly pegged tent,
Who dwells among the dry cracks? Dimmer on that mountain.

The tip of tops is burning, no rain can numb them still,
What calm, what balm you hold, what whimper on that mountain!

He brings news of green grocery and concerts from tabloids
But what of those white yetis? Go slimmer on that mountain.

What spirits of lovers flit here, why you run astray, khizar?
See sparks of burnt ashes shine. Shimmer on that mountain.

NIMBUS

Khizra Aslam

Upon this small stage whose song will be sung?
When golden lights lit you dream dancers' flight.

White ray will beam right from wrong will be wrung.
In circus on this stage some tongues are strung,

Few hang a little loose. Like, prancers' tight.
Upon this small stage whose song will be sung?
He's frightened so runs but will soon be hung
From, bamboo ladder rung. What, answers right?

White ray will beam, right from wrong will be wrung.
He takes off his jacket. Her jeans are flung.
For nonchalance to her enhancers' height.
Upon this small stage whose song will be sung?

Come, look into his eyes. A serpent is stung.
It coils round and tight. An advancer's plight!
White ray will beam, right from wrong will be wrung.
What jingles, khizar, how those bells are rung?

You almost sleep. See spreading cancer's might.
Upon this small stage whose song will be sung?
White ray will beam, right from wrong will be wrung.

SUGAR

Gene Doty

The world in itself spins out fine filaments of sugar
laced with pain and fear - the most unpalatable kind of sugar.

We who walk upon dirt and stone cannot resolve our pains
or release our fears without the tender kisses of sugar.

I find my house crumpling around me, joists splintering,
walls collapsing under the weight of a steady fall of sugar.

In the night, the goddess walks upon my sleeping corpse,
her eyes aflame with the crunchy embers of sugar.

Oh Mother, oh Father, the many mouthfuls of life I chew,
mixing them with saliva, turn to crystallized grains of sugar.

When ice-pellets blow across the streets and sting our skin,
we can't believe these white crystals are nothing like sugar.

Gino, this poem really isn't that sweet; you know nothing
of the dulcet, the refined. You know only coarse, gritty sugar.

GAME GHAZAL

Ruth Holzer

Slugged fair or foul, it's only a game,
what counts is how you play the game.

After many a summer dies the winning streak,
champions are booed when they lose their game.

The outs, the innings proceed in sheer waiting
for that walkoff run to break your tie-game.

One bad call on a split-fingered spitball:
the balance shifts in a crucial game.

Babe Ruth, Bambino, drown that piano;
point again to the bleachers, stay alive in the game.

HAIBUN

FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2002: POLICE REPORT

Debra Woolard Bender

11: 30 pm: after a smoke, husband leaves the attached tool shed

11: 35 pm: husband re-opens back door – face-to-face with a stranger in dark clothing

11:35.5 pm: thief walks off with another haul: 1 air compressor power-washer, retail price, \$300

going down
with this neighborhood

drug traffic
a trail of wild grapevine ends
at the street-corner

THE MOON THAT BELIES ITS NAME*

Debra Woolard Bender

Destiny is written on the face of a child, what he will be or what she is meant to be. What she is and what he is not. Even a child may grow into his birthright, while another is buried before allowed to live, yet live she must.

Forbidden colors
in a sea of fertility...

Wave upon wave
is falling from grace;
the pull of the moon.

And going on, an actor on a stage, performing the expected parts. The rites of love and death are blurred. Desires, tears and the inconsistencies of mind – light and shadow play like sun on steel.

Blinding,
the blade saves life or kills...
Autumn loneliness;

the mask reconfesses
his womanhood.

* (references and allusions are from several book titles of novelist Yukio Mishima 1925-1970)

THE DREAM OF A SWIMMER

Marjorie A Buettner

If we could learn how to breathe, we could learn how to live without the mind remembering itself. We could smell the sun through glass windows. We could taste the air the way the tongue tastes itself. If we could learn how to breathe, we could feel our fates balance without counting swallows or sticks. We could live out of the body without promises or lies. If you see me walking down the street without turning back to see myself in the eyes of those behind, you will see me without secrets, learning how to breathe. And if we learned how to breathe we could share our breaths and rescue each other, nightly, from drowning in ourselves.

the way we mold
into each other's arms
this spring morning
the curve of your body
melding into my own

SARCOPHAGUS

Gary LeBel

He lays in the stifled hush of the large display room. Experts say his name was Djebhor* and that he was a priest.

Words that once fell from his parted lips are bitten into stillness by the one remaining tooth. Though he's submerged in the solace of his rags, he can't hide his face from yet another thief who comes to rob him.

I once saw an Egyptian film called "The Night of the Counting of Years". The main character, a teenage boy who is part of a grave-robbing family tradition, becomes conscious of the fact that he's actually looting his ancestors' tombs. A tragic coming-of-age. The secondary idea in the film underscores the insatiable hunger and greed on the part of western museums and private collectors for the plundered artifacts, the only motive for the tomb theft at all. I thought of the boy in the film as I looked down at Djebhor, caught squarely as he was between two worlds.

One might argue that a mummy is just a thing (which is how we treat it no matter how carefully it is handled), inanimate and spiritless. But can you say as you look down on his face that there is not something morbid in putting the dead on display? To what finer purpose do we unravel a sacredness which has been so carefully shrouded in another time, another world? Why do we lust for the embalmer's secret if not out of the most flagrant vanity?

How many suns must have framed your shadow in doorways that faced only sand and burning heat! Did Anubis** on a night like this, fly up from the In-Between and whisper "Sand is the measure; sand is the measure of all" ?

Bending my knees slightly I look closer at the face of one who was once someone's son, another's friend, a lover perhaps. He will survive our unintended erasure just as he survived the thieves of the last millennia. Encased in glass above the cold wooden floor, he may already know that the ears of those who surround him will soon have been burned away by the passage of their time.

the mummy's lips
seem to open for a question
that has no answer:
why his faith has left him
in two different worlds

*"DJEHBHOR" is the name of the mummy on display. I really did feel a bit ashamed of myself for looking on his face so long. There are so many things in one's life that need a periodic re-examining, don't you think?

**ANUBIS was the god of the dead and the inventor of embalming, but most importantly he was their judge, "weighing the heart of the dead against the feather of truth." He is depicted with a jackal's head in art and many believe this deity is related to the Hermes of the Greeks.

BREAKFAST AT CE CE'S CAFE

Larry Kimmel

Clatter of spoons. Close, woolly-damp heat. Through the steamed window and across the Common, the red door of the Anglican church. It takes a second to recognize her. Whatever the mystique five years ago, it's gone. She's lost her face to flesh and an old infatuation gutters.

I watch my hand
pour cream, stir coffee –
weary,
so weary, of this habit
that goes by my name

ON THE LITTLE FLAT

Melissa Montimurro

Where the road begins to curve down to the "Little Flat," I found a dead painted turtle. The Little Flat is a tributary of the Big Flatbrook, the mother-water that curls like an unanswerable question under and beside and through this town. The Little Flat is no mere finger. It is not less than hipbone and border country. Vein, artery, city of breathers and bubblers.

Death had not come gently to the turtle; it had been crushed by a car or a truck or something with wheels, and its scarlet-lacquered scutes unhinged, and the stars of its feet splayed, and the humble nugget of its head.

in death too
a small turtle paints the world
as if its colors do not know –
this wrist of river
flicks and bends without pause

On the Little Flat I have seen the lung of life empty and fill. I have heard the slap and chuckle of the muskrat swimming, and seen that wild scarf the mink run down a rabbit. I've felt the furnace of my soul flame watching the lethal courtship of the lampreys, whose tooth-ringed mouths open like treacherous blossoms. I watched them twist and vibrate up from the water, girdled together soft-boned and grave. After, they drifted downstream into death's eager ripples.

Merciless, thundering life! Furling, plunging, gleaming, throbbing, carrying on before me, whose job it is to admire, to be awed, to keen and praise and answer.

the brook continues
over the black stones
eccentric as life and death
tonight it will gather the stars
send them – small boats – back to sky

PINA BAUSCH - A Portrait of the Choreographer

Werner Reichhold

Act I

Open scissors and you the wide-winged

The studio is filled with actors / dancers learning from each other's daily life rhythm. Then acting about it and getting criticized:

Pina:

- How long do you think a gesture can hold on to you? Whose entertaining wit can say the most of what is lost and yet remembered?

Act out: "I am a landmark." No, no concessions, only you yourself being
The Landmark. You may try it out doing it in three steps

unframed the view ignited glass

Pina:

- Thanks Aviva and Elias, you're doing it right. The audience is moved, sweats and starts thinking.

Each of you develops and removes a singular distinguished presence. Yes, today we are exercising a calendar of herded motions. Turn one of your inner pages - read the image, look at it - give it a pause in time, see - that's you: sleep as a preparation for those preparing change. Invent the sign language for it -

each shows Pina how how shows Pina each each Pina Bausch shows

a kite

no visible pull

I the end of a string

(curtain)

Act II

The actors / dancers in a state of mind agreeing with their own movements, though at the same time introducing a secret strategy of disagreement, a persiflage that's aimed at the viewers' ability to learn how to be disconnected from former concepts. Training the body a new language asks for patience. We're watching the performers' visible efforts. Everything that happens afterwards is part of the audience's fantasy transforming Pina's energies.

The players joining their mimics. As time goes by, each comedian / dramatist is trying not to interfere with each other's expression of pain.

Here is Pina's niche, asking:

should I

not correct you?

One actress starts spelling the word 'leg' with only her hands. Laughing, the rest of the group gets into a sportive mood.

netball
if I could I wouldn't
turn to either side

slow motion
a call to ebb and flow
naked on the ground

through masks
the sweat of faces
blown apart

Dimmed lights. The younger performers arranging " Questions for the Sun", reflecting individual answers, transmitting calmed and heated action as signals for dimmed hope.

the costumes
adapted jokes made up
during long try-outs
Pina's last rehearsal
is the first public performance

As the stage becomes constantly more lighted again, the group is drowned unrecognizably into flags and flames.

(curtain)

Act III

The whole scenery is in turmoil. Seventeen actors are seen simultaneously preparing different meals in one and the same kitchen, then boys clean the bathroom floor, girls the bedroom. Song and anti-song, a film about life on a nude beach is displayed on walls and ceiling, a cloned transvestite offers service for half the price, seasonal colored gases, here autumnal, find their way down to the spectators.

Pina

- Stop Tamina, stop right here: now you look like you are representing 'the veiled woman of the West' hiding behind cosmetic surgery

the pain
the plastic
when breasts move
mother of pearl buttons
the thread in it

Tamina

- Even Cindy, my old lady dog, gives me a jealous look.

Pina

- May you blend your face with hers? Please materialize the differences.

In a darkening olive green the stage revitalizes an interlaced emptiness. Invisible strings reach out to link. Only a want-to-be couple is trying hard not to look back into the audience

with a rope
over the river
the quiet

A reasonable feeling occurs of really not being invited to a show. Instead, the longer you keep watching the scenery the more you're guided into the house of your own past and ahead into the cities' trenches of future events.

(curtain)

With this 'Portrait of an Artist' comes Pina Bausch's composition split right through with action and discourse: The halves, porous and organized, not to unite are circulating processes between performers and an imagined audience. Appearing paralleled, erotically justified, conflict is the substance in search of its identity.

COMPETENCY

Linda Jeannette Ward

The mental health clinic that serves this small community still relies on the charity of its populace to provide needed space for the occasional evaluation I'm asked to do: In an 1890s church cradled in a curve of live oaks even older we sit in a borrowed room, a scarred card table between us. The court report says she's become paranoid, phoning up deputies into the night with tales of prowlers that never materialize...but I wonder -isn't her four-room ramshackle dwelling a remnant of time before development crowded in? I know the place, seen it squeezed in over the years by McDonald's, gas stations, quick stop shops and groups of bored teens who might find it thrilling to spook the old black lady whose hand-lettered NO TRESPASSING sign sits slantwise by the front door as she can sometimes be seen from the buzzing highway that was an unpaved road in her youth. Now, in this place where hymns still drift through Sunday windows, I'm asked by the court to judge her competency...

octogenarian's hand
crossing paper
pauses to touch mine...
a spring breeze whispers
through Spanish moss

SEDOKA

A STILL BIRTH

hortensia anderson

the news of the birth -
my thoughts flash from the mayfly
to lightning in the darkness
soon becoming death -
one more handful of fresh snow
that melts and dries to nothing

my heart feels like rain
as the coffin leaves the hearse
at Saint John's cemetery
an endless blue sky
carries the sweet songs of birds
asserting life over death.

don't try to tell me
you know of my loneliness –
from dusk i remained outside
while in your window
the shining moon spent the night
and didn't leave until dawn

as they lift their heads
their helmets look like turtles –
young soldiers in camouflage
how slowly they creep
through the lush tangled greenness
of a last late afternoon

~!~

each night
her prayers murmur
in a slow dance
before her bed
where she neither sleeps
nor dreams

Giovanni Malito

Proud Father
Giovanni Malito

does the sun
have a shadow
she asks

and I tell her
please always ask
questions like this

SIJO

UNTITLED SIJO
Debra Woolard Bender

my old husband
 you smile my smile
 as the lake wears the sky

your old wife
 I laugh your laugh
 the echo of a waterfall

old husband old wife
 death might part us
 when a knife cuts water

UNTITLED SIJO
Debra Woolard Bender

Glass of wine, why are you weeping?
Ah, I should be crying, too.

Clear white gold, sweet to the taste;
How my head spins – like I'm in love!

Soon as we're one I'll be sleeping
and you will be long gone.

KROGER

Gino Peregrini

supermarket checkout line: two aged friends check their receipt
behind them a fat man eyes the candy bars and swallows
gusts of wind drive plastic sacks across the street, against the wall

TANKA

meditation fountain
the sound of water
through the bamboo pipe
my mantra rises like
burning incense

Pamela A. Babusci

moon
you are beautiful
whether crescent or full
whether gazing upon you
with empty hands or embraced

Pamela A. Babusci

thinking life
had cheated me
somehow...
i pass a blind child
on the street

Pamela A. Babusci

LOVE TANKA

Debra Woolard Bender

Rising early
I've left our blanket's warmth
for this cool dawn;
a taste of evening wine
lingers in spring mists.

While I waited
camellias kept their promise,
but where is he
who pressed so urgently
with some unspoken need?

Should I even say
what drew me to you,
moon, swollen with spring?
Though you were brilliant tonight
oh, your blue, deep blue bed!

Again waking me
a solitary wood dove
lest I forget you
in the brevity of sleep,
the silence between each call.

Though my eyes
were opened, how I tried
to reenter a dream,
jasmine falling, falling,
in a white spring rain.

~!~

under Stone-Arch bridge
a deep river turns to ice

winter setting in
slowly the daylight descends
wedded to darkness at last

crow-scattered skies
and the scent of coming rain
this early April
feeling the earth churn beneath
as wild stars circle above

the curve of starlight
that bends all the way down
has nothing to hide
it carries its own dead weight
wrapped in the mystery of time

a cloud-dusted moon
this early morning hour
and the scent of grass
fifty springs have come and gone
how could I not wish for more

Marjorie Buettner

hitch-hiking, stoned driver –
his partner asks:
aren't you afraid
to take rides
from just anyone?

finally
at the beach,
perched on a log,
we face
away from each other

having all the
technicalities explained
in Dvorak's symphony,
new tears
still come to my eyes

Owen Bullock

those two birds flying
so close together
swiftly across the twilight sky –
a certain happy sad witness
i provide for them

out the car window
through a snow flurry
she studies the sun -
 my wife warns her
 not to look too close

the sweeps and swoops
of swallows
all manner of lovely curves
and you in jeans bent over
just to pick up a stick

my daughter shrill
and bumping into me
until i tell her to stop –
 how hollow knowing
 she was just glad to see me

before our marriage
my mother told my wife
that it was her married years
that were the loneliest
in her life...

she must read my mind
this fancy i have
for her –
how beautifully she blushed
the time she saw me peek

how old it becomes
but no denying
the appeal of this quest
for what is new
and turned out latest...

Tom Clausen

NARA IN THE WIND AND WATER

Nara Jidai - period: to AD 794

Jamie Edgecombe

to Captain Narihara, on seeing a half glimpse of a pretty girl in a railway carriage

tree in a forest
a fine archer you may be,
but here surrounded
you will soon find your arrows
as echoes within your heart

for the Frontier Guards

weeping at your oars
for the wife that fasts in vain:
the order has come;
her hair bands beside this sink
warm silent running water

the picture the frontier guard never drew

your summons triggers
the reality of dreams
that forms within tears,
even on the telephone
voiceless
 "mother, I love you!"

the Frontier Guard pining for his daughters

bare scalp hidden by
a bandanna shouting-out
chemotherapy!
envious of the sea's waves
while I should drown in her smile

BEDROOM WHISPERS

Jamie Edgecombe

to Ono no Komachi

the heat from the moon
invites us to shed our clothes
and dance like children,
your poems like lovers' sighs
exhale your loveliness

to the Chinese poetess Chu Shu Chen

before your curtains
beside your folded blanket
you watch bamboo sob,
your hair's autumn plum blossoms
scented with dreams of me

for the Lady in the West Apartments in former times of murky solitude

your beautiful face
shone like the moon and shines still
ever renewing
fluid arch of history
and this imagination

to the Chinese poetess Li Ch'ng Chao

your autumn waters
and mountains still touch this heart,
with the gulls I hide
these eyes so as not to see
the years pass on your river

to Yosano Akiko

there you write, waiting
to bloom like thirsty flowers
vibrant in his gaze,
but a black and white picture
bleeds all your petals' colour

to Kuirhara Sadako

what goes before?
the wind carrying the fight
of beautiful hands?
your neighbour's child, Sachiko,
still dead, all these years later

to Machi Tawara

finding your bookmark
your smile permeates the page
i have not read,
next line: if only I had
as many lovers as petals

~!~

a winding back road
leads us beside the tallest pine
where his coffin will rest . . .
flags across the snowy graves
wave and wave and wave

we stand and hold hands
as we sing
Amazing Grace
a stranger's strong hands
warm mine

on fertile ground
the sparkling undersides
of undiscovered rocks . . .
our hearts
silently sing

Liz Fenn

NEVER ENDING SONG

W. Flohr

scanning the horizon
on the ancient fortress walls

waiting anxiously
for the ship of my beloved
to unite our immortal souls

deep silence -
after the quarrel
no chime
strange how the garden
seems to hide its charm

the one chord
with which I could sublimate
my guitar playing
did you easily find by
strumming my inner strings

winter daydreaming
one languid summer's day
out somewhere
switching patches of sunlight
tell fairy tales in your eyes

full moon
a cold winter wind
sweeps the sky
your loving words will keep me
warm for the rest of my life

MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING Mrinalini Gadkari

as we were parting
i saw a rainbow
through welled up eyes
the prism of marriage scattered her
to add colors in 'his' life

~!~

Sweetgum leaves
Fallen to the earth
Resemble stars,
Especially, when you take
My hand into yours

I take the conch
From the mantel
And press it to my ear:
I hear her laughter once more
Distinct from the ocean's roar

A woman
Emerges from red roses
With a newborn,
My heart gives birth
Without knowing it

Jack Galmitz

it was not the milk
of paradise I drank –
no, the food of paradise:
tonight's lotus root
burnished in hot oil

snow
huge blossoms
on pine –
was there ever such magic
in my humdrum life?

shallow
as slippery dreams
on spring nights,
the transitory,
the ephemeral

eyes a blur
under my reading lamp,
I struggle
with tricky strokes
of Japanese meaning

I grow old
the poet once said,
and I want to echo

those words that assailed my youth
when all was poetry, was line

Sanford Goldstein

ENDURANCE

Ruth Holzer

cedar chest -
bitter smell of winters past
I lift and shake
wool mufflers, sweaters
will I see spring again?

nagged by gravity
members of my body
drifting apart
whether I run five miles
tonight or not

this is
as good as it gets
between us:
seeing you once a year
carrying bearable news

fiery fox
trotting over ice fields
nails clicking
clear in the brittle air
so long ago I saw him

MOMENTS OF MEDITATION

Elizabeth Howard

moments of meditation
along the maze of paths
in the wildflower garden –
tin on the neighbor's barn
flapping fitfully

startled blue heron

flaps about the lake,
giant shadows blotting
the light in dainty sedges –
primal fears resurface

a restless night
the ghostly moon glowing
through the fog –
I dream of grandmother's opal
nestled in white satin

mountains looming
where no mountains were before
a ridge of dark clouds
backdrop to winter trees –
that old sorrow keening anew

after chemo,
those infusion that cast down
mind and body,
an infusion of joy –
the bowl of irises you bring

in the midst
of a sleepless night,
the stalled poem,
a lone whippoorwill's
lyric of joy

the hill blackened
from autumn wildfires
pink lady's slippers,
fit for fairies, spring up –
ballet shoes on black velvet

boisterous children
toss crumbs into the froth
gulls squabbling –
in the distance the white skulls
skim across blue waters

~!~

NEW SKY
Courtney Johnson

On Boulder Mountain

ponderosas, gold aspens
end of track, a lake
we lay down our bikes
joy of the first raindrop

new lover's stomach
smooth in the apricot moon
a cave of chalk
have your way with me, he said
a kiss to still his lips

Christmas morning
We opened the tailgate
Squinted at new snow
free bundle of firewood
and our warmth, a gift

in the clearing
motionless flock of turkeys
setting up camp
brittle kindling, searing words
vanished apparitions

I map your scars
and trace your clavicle
my fingers clasp
swollen knuckles of your hand
a ring could never fit

mountain cumulus
in a fiery embrace
two souls collide
after hail has melted
sky of Steller's jay blue

~!~

preserves set out
to cool on a porch ledge
grandma's youthful smile
as she takes off her kerchief
just so she can feel the wind

at sunset
teenage girl and her father
stroll along the beach
now and then they give each other

bits of seashells . . . perfect stones

new husband and wife
embrace after their vows
forgotten
on this day of all days . . .
mud on her wedding gown

only she hears
the music of the harp
the chimes
voices of the lonely house
never so clear as now

feeling such closeness
to my husband as we drive
to the haiku workshop
on the teahouse floor
unyielding tatami mats

Jean Jorgensen

THREE SPRING TANKA

Kirsty Karkow

new warmth
from the northbound sun
a quickening
in winter's quiet womb
with newborn thoughts of life

forsythia
branches in a vase
yellow blossoms
as faint warmth touches
long frozen heartlands

each day brings
fresh discoveries
of springtime
green leaves, a robin's song
a lightness on my heart

WHATEVER MY SINS

Larry Kimmel

magnolia petals
cluttered around the ruins
of a sundial
my helplessness
before a woman in tears

at the window,
after our long night, raindrops dripping
through copper leaves –
 say what you like,
there's no one truth in such matters

the dawn's gray effusion grieves
for lack of color,
lack of warmth –
 all I know of love
 wouldn't fill a sonnet

day of drizzle
marigolds dead on the stalk
whatever my sins
i am a artist
 i stand facing the wind

~!~

sharing this spring rain
waiting on this corner
for the same late bus
can we still consider
each other a stranger?

let me tell you
about snow, vast sheets of white
that lay one upon the other
and about the cold
that can preserve your angels

her smile
spreading out

wider than
a fisherman's arms
I hesitate stop

Giovanni Malito

GARDEN OF ROCKS

Thelma Mariano

we pick up
rocks for our garden
from a nearby field
how solid they seem –
all the dreams we share

spun finer
than his gift of gold
around my neck
is the purity of my love –
the chains I cannot break

on weekends
the house becomes a desert
where I wander alone
will he ever be content
just staying here with me?

counting hours
and minutes past midnight
I wonder
what lures him out there
week after week

not a word
about where he's been
yet in our bed
he speaks in three languages
in his sleep!

his family and mine
property and routines
bind us tighter
every year as misery roots
beneath the fabric of my life

oh, the passion between us
all the secret rendezvous
before the vows we said
now only ashes from the fire
swept from our marriage bed

funny how
a perfect life became
the perfect trap
I watch from every window
wishing for an easy way out

the same words
he uses to stifle my pleas
give me the answer
"if you don't like it -
you can leave!"

~!~

only then
when we said goodbye
did night descend
I remember your kiss
and for me there is no sleep

so deliberately
she chops the onions
for the salad
while she tells me
about her divorce

moonless night
each star so brilliant
no self
just this
 just this

the silence
between you and me
caught
in this air
of almost rain

so you're a runner
it's hot here in Florida
She says

as with every snip
my hair grows shorter

this stray too
on love and scraps
has grown thin
a look in the mirror
shows she's not alone

Keith McMahan

~!~

in the yard
this first morning without him
I wonder why a spiderweb
woven between swing chains
doesn't break

his weekend with the boys –
cleaning, I find a baseball card
caught in their bedroom door;
outside
the lost gulls squeak like hinges

Melissa Montimurro

The summer night
must be dreaming . . .
Look at all those white
butterflies swarming
around the moon.

June Moreau

~!~

How many syllables
Have you repeated
To reform
Their meaning
For another

Mimetic shadows
Lean into the past
Tense softer
Now that morning
Ventures home

Sheila Murphy

on the couch
with the dog and cat
moments ago
I didn't know I needed
to slow down

the flock took flight
and flew as if one bird
was changing shape
our feelings depend so much
on each other's mood

if I could accept
that longing is endless
and the ladder will never
reach the moon
I'd eagerly keep climbing

David Rice

gentle cascades
patter on my
shoulders, trickle
down my back-
yellow strands of willow

near the waterfall
my mind wanders -
brought back
by the cold
of this stone

Tim W. Younce

WITHOUT GENRES

MIRROR
June Moreau

A mirror
is a naked house.
All its windows
have melted into one
perpetual window,
more silvery than silver.
It has no doors.
You can only enter it
with your eyes,
the liquidity of seeing.

~!~

Homework dries
In mind under the light
Wind surfaces against
A vanishing exterior
This conversation brings on
Softened shoulders and
Eventually sleep

Sheila Murphy

Tomorrow needs no blueprint
I have lived today as if
Heaven and all future tense
Were equal in and out of time

Sheila Murphy

One hinges on
The capture of
A fleck of pond
To recreate
The moment
Of a fish

Sheila Murphy

Green tea softened
By milk at evening
Spine of the novel brushing
My long robe, the 5/8 moon
A while ago shone
On the sidewalk
As I left the door
Open while taking out
The trash, my neighbor's door
A sliver open,
The pool water
Moved a lilt
And blossoms
Turned perfume

Sheila Murphy

Secret scent
Remains after the petals
One by one
Drift out of focus

Sheila Murphy

Paint this octave
Corn silk young
As music letting go
A pulse before
Driving the modest
Rain in mind

Sheila Murphy

She preferred the monarch butterflies
That afternoon to yellow
On the flowers
Teeming in mid-air
With sacramental admissible
And accidental breath
Between that I can live
On now
And shelter what I felt
From thought
And what I feel
From present danger

Sheila Murphy

Dawn endears its way
To heaven in the branches
Caught and crafted
Splitting atmosphere
From tame light
One breathes in and out

Sheila Murphy

BOOK REVIEWS

Jane Reichhold

On Tsukuba Peak by Hatsue Kawamura. Translated by Amelia Fielden. Perfect bound, 8.5 x 5.5, 100 pages, kanji and English, US\$19.95. Australia: Five Islands Press, 2002. Order from Five Island Press Pty Ltd., PO Box U34, Wollongong University, 2500, Australia.

Tanka writers are familiar with the name of Hatsue Kawamura as the editor of *The Tanka Journal* in Tokyo, Japan. And the readers of *Lynx* know of her translations of the tanka of Fumi Saito Akiko Baba and Kyoko Inaba, but her own works, in four books, have until now, remained hidden from us. Amelia Fielden, who has won many prizes for her own tanka and translation works, has now given us a book of translation of Hatsue Kawamura's own tanka – *On Tsukuba Peak*.

From her home in Ibaraki Prefecture, where Hatsue has lived since she was born in 1931, she can see Tsukuba Mountain in the distance – a center of her life's compass. Here she married and became the mother of two sons who are now grown, taught literature and tanka in several universities until her retirement this past March.

The book, by presenting the poems in series much in the order in which they were written, becomes a diary of a five-year period: 1994 – 1999. This leads the reader through the times Hatsue's husband, Yasuhiro, spent a sabbatical year in USA, his return, their life together and then his bout with cancer. With five poems on each left-hand page, and the kanji on the right, readers of both languages receive a generous offering of her life and her poetry.

These examples, taken from the series "Riding the Globe" show how she makes connections between the tanka as well as within the poems in typical tanka techniques.

at night,
while a fax comes
billowing out
the moon shines
in the same old way

the yamaboshi flowers
have all dropped, and
the spirit of cancer
shrouds my husband
in dense gloom

I keep sticking with
my English translations
as the seasons change –
beyond the green-leafed forest
a rainbow rises

Not only does the above demonstrate Hatsue's style of writing, it also shows her indomitable spirit – a quality I value greatly in her. Perhaps these tanka mean more to me since they were written during this time that we were working together – faxing our translations back and forth over the Pacific Ocean.

I have only highest praise for the work of Amelia Fielden and am very grateful for her opening our eyes to the marvels of Hatsue Kawamura's work. Both of these women understand the importance of keeping, as much as possible, the same word order in English as in the Japanese originals so that even in translations, the poem still function as tanka. In addition, the poems are presented as fragments, which they are in Japanese, and not as sentences as is too often the case by uninformed. The tanka in *On Tsukuba Peak*, even in translation, are worthy of acting as models for our own English tanka.

One often reads a collection of poetry for glimpses within a person's life to see how it is lived and how one's fate is viewed. Thus, reading *On Tsukuba Peak* offers an intimate glimpse into the days of a very special tanka writer as well as showing English readers how to write tanka.

Memories of A Woman by Harue Aoki. Mure Literature Society, 3-24-4 Inokashira, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo, 181-0001 Japan. Perfect bound, 206 pages, 8.5 x 5.5, ¥1800.

Harue Aoki is a writer and Japanese language teacher who has also lived in Germany. Thus, the two hundred tanka in the book have been selected from her years as a teen-ager herself to being the mother of two teen-aged sons. These poems should offer minute glimpses into a woman's life, as the title indicates, and yet I, as reader, got the feeling that I was being shown a side of herself that she presented only to impress the reader with a supposed ideal of poetry and not her real life or feelings. It seemed she had the idea that a cultured woman, as she is – she teaches the Sougetsu School of flower arranging, who attends concerts and art exhibits must always be lamenting her loneliness, her unhappiness with her husband and sons, and illustrating how unfulfilled she is. A little of these feelings every woman experiences at least once a month, but to have the largest majority of the poems concerned with whether to get her hair cut or leave it long, the application of a bright red lipstick because she is no longer young, and the search for unhappiness even on a sunny New Year's Day irritated this reader greatly.

Harue Aoki is well versed in tanka writing and in addition, her language skills are such that she has given her readers very credible translations. For her many writing talents we can be very grateful. Each page contains the kanji in a long line on the outside margin with the five-line romaji version at the bottom of the page. Thus, it is very easy for English readers to move from poem to poem – surely one of her goals. A sample of her tanka:

Hearing the sound
of wind rustling
in the bamboo grove
I'm unable to calm
my restless mind

The New Year sunlight
shines brightly and amply
on the surface of the sea
and fills my hands, too
Yet I'm so full of suffering

At the beach
the New Year's light
is peaceful
But I'm tired of
my simple and honest nature

Yes, there are times, and even persons whose emotional equipment fail to bear up to the load of their lives, and I am glad to give them a chance to express themselves about the burden they bear. I hate to see people suffer and I like to think of myself as a sympathetic listener who would do anything to help if I could. But when the unhappiness about life is projected as an admirable poetic stance (it has been done!) it rings as untrue. There could be other persons who share Harue Aoki's perspectives and would welcome her expression of feelings they also have. If so, then they may find her voice more welcomed than I did. I will admit that her tanka are excellently constructed and valuable as examples of the art of tanka writing in both languages.

Tongue by Margaret S. Burns. Illustrated with watercolors by Carolyn M. Schneider. Hand-tied art papers, 32 pages, 4.25 x 5.5, \$12. each. Order from Ladies Bench Press, 28500 Alta Vista Drive, Winters, CA 95694.

The tanka in *Tongue* are written in 31 English syllables and broken into the five lines. Due to the rigid counting, the line endings often have nothing to do with the syntax or phrasing, but everything to do with the unyielding dominance of a meaningless rule. Thus, one ends up with such lines as:

THE ASPARAGUS

Ejects itself from
moist black loam into spring air
green as life, dusted
with yellow yolk's sun chopped fine
feathery fronds still in prayer.

The poems, each facing a realistic watercolor by Carolyn M. Schneider, are like a trip by the grocer's produce bins – it's all about vegetables. As great as it is to see people being inspired to write tanka, and taking their inspiration from things at hand, it is discouraging to see the results come out like one long run-on sentence with no understanding of the parts of a tanka or how one is constructed. I would hate to be hard on a charmingly handmade book but these little poems are not tanka.

Tangled Hair #3. Edited by John Barlow. Snapshots Press, PO Box 132, Crosby, Liverpool, L23 8XS, United Kingdom. Perfect bound, full color cover, 60 pages, 4 x 4, US\$11.00 ppd.

John Barlow has produced his third issue of *Tangled Hair* and somehow the craft and beauty of this finely-made bound volume is more like a book and has little to do with a magazine. Everything this man sets out to do is done with ultimate skill and taste. Even the advertising for his press and his haiku books and magazines is a cut above the ordinary. No wonder everyone is flocking to him to have their book done by Snapshots Press. Do visit his website to see if you are as impressed as I am.

After rereading this, the third collection of tanka from well-known writers in both England and North America which he has chosen for this release, I see how far tanka writing in English has come in the last ten years. Again and again, as the pages fanned through the air, I heard myself saying "Yes.", "Yes!" to his impeccable taste and the rich array of English tanka. On facing pages in the very beginning are these poems:

clear night, owl night
through the tissue of darkness
an exchange
their grip of honed surfaces
my sinew and bone

Cherie Hunter Day

spring rain
the scent of these ink-black streets
washed clean
is there time enough ever
to start over once again

Marjorie Buettner

In the past couple of centuries in Japan there was a method of firing tea bowls called raku which was also the honored name of the family who discovered and maintained the process. Basically, the trick was to pull a glowing red-hot pot out of the kiln and plunge it into either cold water or straw and grasses. After the Second World War this process was re-discovered by North Americans – the Englishman Bernard Leach first tried it and then it was forgotten as being too exotic and expensive as many pieces shattered under the stress. Typical American, they were unable to simply follow patterns, methods and instructions, so that in the hands of various potters massive experimentation began. Later, when some Americans went to Japan to demonstrate their "raku" to the Raku family of Japan, the shocked men in kimono thought the process should have a new name because so many changes had been made. Instead of some smoky streaks and foggy blotches, the Americans had discovered iridescent colors, glowing fire patterns and previously unobtainable glosses. Something like this is happening in the art of tanka also. Subscribing to John Barlow's series of mini-anthologies Tangled Hair is one the best ways I know to keep an eye on what is happening with tanka in English.

mother nature's heat / a desert snake by Marlene Mountain and Jean Jorgensen. Saddle-stapled, 8.5 x5.5, 44 pages. Order from Four Seasons Corner, 9633-68 A Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 1V3, Canada for \$10 plus s&h – \$1.50 USA & Canada; \$3.50 elsewhere or from Marlene Mountain, 711 Simerly Creek Road, Hampton, TN 37658 for \$8.00 plus s&h – \$1.50 USA & Canada; \$3.50 elsewhere.

The best and most succinct explanation of this book comes from the beginning of the Introduction written by Carlos Colón: "This collection of linked one-line haiku by Jean Jorgensen and Marlene Mountain begins in July, 1993 and continues through August, 2001. . . these 16 poems are more of a haiku diary than the formalized renga some writers compose which moves, sometimes ploddingly,

through the seasons in a structured, often straitjacketed way. Jean and Marlene alternate short and long links and double their links at stanzas 6 / 7, 18 / 19 and 30 / 31; otherwise, they free themselves to write about anything they wish."

This pair had started writing together in 1993, but it was not until they both had email in January, 2001, that their collaboration speeded up to the velocity of their two minds. Marlene Mountain, with her demands that all the renga she participates in be done in her style and format – one-liners in all lower case letters on current events and personal commentary, and her righteous anger that out-leaps almost any linkage, puts quite a burden on her partners to retain their individuality and personal outlook. Jean Jorgensen, with her wry humor and her excellent ability to link responses holds the poems together with her work. With their backtalk and commentary to the images on the TV screens, these renga present licitly-split machine gun mouths in today's world. The renga world is richer for the work of Jean Jorgensen with Marlene Mountain.

For a sample of the work in the book, mother nature's heat / a desert snake – the title of their first renga, here are the last six links from "just the odd flake" done during April 8 – 28, 2001. Jean's lines are in roman font and Marlene's in italic.

case of the 'black widow millionaire' to the jury I hope she goes free

just enough money to pay for the parcel

gifts for her hillside we dig irises and primroses and daylilies

despite all his efforts . . . grass brown and dry

just to be around the sudden wiggle of a tadpole & know my place

all day in a haiku workshop my numb bum

zen poems edited by Manu Bazzano. MQ Publications Ltd., 12 The Ivories, 6 – 8 Northampton Street, London, N1 2HY, England. Hardcover with dust jacket, 260 pages, illustrated with sumi-e artwork. £6.99.

Editor Manu Bazzano has put together a charming mix of poets writing in short forms. Here you'll find poems by Emily Dickinson next to Basho's haiku along with the best from contemporary Japanese and English authors. Without designating that this is a haiku and that is a tanka and here is short free verse, the reader is offered an interesting combination of forms – all of which are still poetry.

The sections are divided in the Japanese style – according to the seasons beginning traditionally with spring. The sumi-e artwork of old masters continues the oriental feel of the book in spite of containing the poems of René Char, e.e. cummings, Friedrich Hölderlin, Denise Levertov, Garcia Lorca and William Shakespeare. It is refreshing to see English language poetry being reorganized and presented in a new and exciting manner.

While most editors of such anthologies in North America would have shied away from adding to such illustrious names, those of authors from the current haiku scene, Manu Bazzano trusted his own good

taste enough to not only make a who's who of current writers, but also to pick excellent work from each of them. The tanka in zen poems are all translations from the Japanese, with no examples of English language tanka – as if they did not exist.

When the east wind blows,
Send me your perfume,
Blossoms of the plum:
Though your lord be absent.
Forget not the spring

- Sugawara Michizane
trs. G. Bownas – A. Thwaite

By keeping the poetry uppermost in his mind, and following the seasons, the works flow from one to another with just enough dissonance to make the reading lively while avoiding monotony. The various translators of the Japanese are also taken from old and new collections so the step between English poetry to translation has leaps of various magnitudes and styles. Under the guise of putting together a collection of zen poetry, the editor has successfully crossed the artificial boundaries between Occidental and Oriental literature. In case you have an irrational fear of religious poetry, here is a sample of the haiku:

Bed too short
but long enough
for making love

- ken jones

This is a great gift book for yourself or that friend who wonders why you write haiku. It is not often in these paperback days that one finds haiku being given such lavish graphic treatments as in this beautifully made book. Here is one book which will become well-thumbed as it enjoys a long shelf-life.

Tsuru by Yoshiko Yoshino. Translated by Lee Gurga and Emiko Miyashita. Evanston, IL:Deep North Press, 2001. Hardcover with dust jacket, 116 pages, 8.5 x 5.5, bilingual, \$20.00.

Tsuru, the crane of Japan, a signature of nobility, long life and family devotion is a most-apt title for this book by a woman who was adopted when she was two months old, taken to Matsuyama (the native place of Shiki) to be raised as the pampered daughter of a physician. Given in marriage to a student doctor her own education was interrupted by her pregnancy with her first daughter. While she gave birth to two more daughters and a son, she stubbornly continued her studies of English by reading cookbooks and books on child care. As her children grew older she began to write free verse, but when she discovered a used book of the haiku of Rinka Ôno (1904 – 1982) she became convinced that this was the only form for her. Over the years - she is now an active 87 - her poems and her place as a teacher - she is head of the group Hoshi (Star) have made her a star. As an advocate for the understanding and acceptance of international haiku, she also brings to the genre the sometimes-lost concept that love should be the basis of all of one's work. Oh, her haiku read as if cool and calm and collected, but deeper down is the vitality and the reality of her true feelings.

Planting a pearl seed
into a helpless she-oyster
early autumn chill

As woman she has felt very keenly and often the discrimination of her patriarchal society and yet she has never allowed herself to become strident, hostile or aggressive. The love she brings in her haiku she also gives openly to the writers and readers of haiku as she continues to advise and instruct new generations of haiku writers.

The translations of the haiku of Yoshiko Yoshino in Tsuru is doubly welcomed. First of all, English readers are given a selection of excellent haiku – each one polished and honed to its highest brilliance. And secondly it is a chance for us to get to know more about the country of her birth. Deeply indebted to the culture, Yoshino's poems are filled with references to the things Japanese. It is not easy to translate such poems which depend so much on aspects which are foreign to English readers. Yet in these translations there is never a false step, never the kind of curve that can come when poetry goes from one language to another. The many footnotes act not only as education of a far-off culture but enlarge the scope of the poems as well. Much credit goes to the team of Lee Gurga and Emiko Miyashita for a difficult job well-done.

But there is a third reason for gratitude for the haiku of Yoshiko Yoshino. These haiku are the words of a woman who lives her beliefs, who backs up her ideals with action and who is tireless in the avocation of haiku as a vehicle for international peace and understanding. In her talk "Haiku Mind" given in April 2000, she said:

"Haiku is like a nuclear explosion. When the three elements of haiku – time (eternity symbolized in a moment), space (earth and the universe), and love (eternal life symbolized by the cycle of the seasons) – are properly combined, they produce an explosive power like that of a nuclear fusion in the mind of every reader. Since the essence of haiku is love of nature – of the whole of creation – I sincerely hope this explosion of love will occur in the minds of millions of people and will be passed on and one until cover the whole earth and enables the earth to fulfill its natural life span."

Hooray for Yoshiko Yoshino – may many follow in her footsteps!

LETTERS to LYNX

. . . I am glad to have your message. I have read some of your poems and articles on poetry forms, including ghazals in LYNX and THE GHAZAL PAGE (Gene Doty's). I greatly appreciate your poetry and efforts on the different forms.

Ghazanelle, is a new form of poetry. I developed this from Ghazal and Villanelle, which are two of the most lyrical of the structured forms, the former being an Asian, and the latter, a European. As we know, a ghazal is a combination of independent poems in the form of couplets, with rhymes and refrains. The villanelle is a poem of nineteen lines with five tercets and a quatrain. The tercets are not independent poems. The connection in the poem is the continuing thought. It is helped throughout with two end rhymes and two refrain lines from the first tercet.

I took a few rules from both the ghazal and the villanelle, and brought them together, thinking that the new form from these would be a pleasant amalgam, with particular attributes of both. A pleasure to write. A bit of a challenge. And not too foreign to follow. In either language, European or Oriental; mainly English and Urdu. I wrote my first ghazanelle last month. This is "Nimbus".

Rules of a ghazanelle:

- A ghazanelle is a poem of nineteen lines.
- It has six stanzas i.e., five three-line stanzas and one quatrain.
- Each stanza is an independent poem.
- It has two rhymes: aba in all tercets and abaa in the quatrain.
- It has a Kaafiya, rhyme before the end word or phrase in the second line of every stanza.
- There are two refrain lines. In the stanzas following the first, the first and the third lines of the first stanza are repeated alternately as refrains. They are the final two lines of the concluding quatrain.
- A ghazanelle has the poet's pen-name in the first two lines of the quatrain .
- The beher is either metrical or syllabic as in a ghazal. Khizra Aslam

. . . I have enjoyed reading Lynx – there's a particularly generous selection. I especially liked John Stevenson's tanka in the latest issue – very different somehow, very personal - and Larry Kimmel's in the previous one. So I'd like to submit some work for you to consider. Owen Bullock

. . . please find below the tanka i said i would send to your for consideration. As i mentioned before, they were all written individually, so if you think one is disruptive and if only one or two stand out on their own, please feel free to use them how as you see fit. personally i like the way they resonate together, and the flow in terms of periodical order (so that old and new stand side by side in order to be appreciated; showing how their effects are equal and not dulled by time). One last thing, an addition to the "brief bio" i sent you: this month i published two haibun in Bliethe Spirit (UK). Thank you for your very quick response, your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you shortly. Jamie Edgcombe - Sapporo, Board of Education, Hokkaido, Japan

. . . I hope Werner got my last e-mail of the dialogue we are working on, sent last week. I've really enjoyed it and as I told Werner in my last e-mail it has been a pleasure to disagree (and agree) so agreeably in the dialogue. I really had a hard time sticking to my point, at times, because I was inclined to agree with much that Werner was saying. But all told, I think we both got to say a lot that we wanted to say and I hope it will be stimulating to readers. Whatever, I want to thank you folks for asking me. Larry Kimmel

. . . Thank you! These collaborations are fun. You always think of more stuff than you would writing by yourself, because you are also bouncing off the other person's thoughts. Cindy Guentherman

. . . How are you keeping. I am holding my own and enjoying life. Just finishing up another tanka collection, this one to be called Trout Evenings - isn't that a swell title? Jane, I have just found out that I won a tanka contest for the hoshi-t-mori company. As you know, I am quite frail in health and do not know if I could stand such a trip, but long to go. I long to go. What do you think? Much love, dear sister in the love of poetry, Marianne Bluger

. . . Sorry for the delay in responding but a move happened in between and I'm now in Florida. I went out to the site and I didn't see how many tanka you accepted for consideration at a time so I'm sending 11. Forgive me if I exceeded the limit. I know editors are very busy and so consider the following request only that. If you are too busy (after all I'm sure you receive hundreds of poems) then no problem just forgive my chutzpah. Anyway I'm relatively new at writing tanka (I just got my first one published in American Tanka) though I've been reading (both translations and various email lists) for a while. I have the opportunity to speak to my daughters high school creative writing class on haiku and tanka. I have a number of friends who are published haikai and have received help on the haiku side but I'm looking for help on the tanka part. There are a number in the class (beside the usual slackers who consider it the least objectionable or the easiest of the options they had to pick from) who are serious about writing and publishing. My daughter (who is in the 10th grade though most are juniors and seniors) has found my submissions and the response to be interesting. If you would like to comment on any of the poems feel free to do so. You don't have to be gentle either! I want to talk about the process and how it is rare that a finished tanka (or haiku for that matter) doesn't just drop into your lap. How it can go through revisions and how comments are not to be taken as the last word but rather as advice that can help you make it better. If you have any other advice about writing tanka (for example how do you approach it) it would not only be very interesting but very much appreciated. feel free to write as little or as much or not at all. I myself am in love with tanka in particular and wish to share that joy and hopefully encourage others to try (and hopefully submit). Thanks for listening. Forgive my chutzpah. Thanks, Keith McMahan

. . . Since my wife is deep into finishing a manuscript she asked me to answer your letter. I hope you don't mind. You asked Jane for comment on your tanka and so I would like to say first that you are doing well. Those five poems we have chosen for publication in LYNX, June 2002, do indeed keep the main 'tanka rules' in place, blending two different things/images and using the third line as the pivot line. Great!

First lines:
so deliberately
the silence
so you are a runner
this stray too

Some of the other tanka repeat in one way or the other images used before in Japan or here in English language poems. We are trying to avoid publishing work too close to what we studied and enjoyed. After twelve years of publishing tanka first in the magazine Mirrors and later in Lynx and elsewhere on the web, we are out to serve our well informed readers with truly new work, offering images not connected necessarily with 'love'.

We also like to express that most readers are a little tired of reading single tanka. We Westerners are used to longer poems, to concepts at least building a series or better a sequence, including well planned shifts or leaps. The at least five or more tanka should have a title enlarging the perspectives. Since authors begin to enjoy the unexplored possibilities composing longer poems we are watching a lot more interest for tanka. Again, thank you for submitting. Best for your work, Jane says Hello! Werner Reichhold

. . . In the body of this e-mail, please find five tanka and one haibun submitted for your consideration. I live in rural northwestern New Jersey, where I teach poetry workshops in the schools, and in private and group homes. Although I have been writing and publishing verse and prose poems for a number of years now, I am relatively new to writing tanka. I find I very much like writing in this form, however, as it is almost gem-like in its small beauty. My work has appeared or is forthcoming in a number of journals, both in print and on the Web, including American Tanka, Tundra, Old Red Kimono, Kalliope, Literal Latte, The Comstock Review, Clay Palm Review, Midday Moon, Snowy Egret, and others. My chapbook of poems and prose poems, Onion Festival Seeks Queen, is due out this spring from Pudding House Publications. I am enjoying my copy of Wind Five-Folded, which I recently received from you. Melissa Montimurro

PARTICIPATION RENGA

AT THE BEACH

Rule: 3 – 2 lines alternating

Ends with 12 links

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
tourists wading in surf eyes open for sharks GD
from afar calling her through both hands white teeth WR
bright green thong between pale cheeks GD

playing frisbee
a mouth full of sand
hair too JAJ

~*~

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
in rain the rocks find their colors cg
drilling three holes - the rose quartz bowling trophy CC
in the pub end of September most darts missing the target WR

bull's eye
on a hefty
little heifer CC

getting the point
everyone laughs at his joke
at the wrong time JR

~*~

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
in rain the rocks find their colors cg
deep in the wave just as it breaks light glints GD
I twinkle and I shut my eyes for in the dark appearing stars WR

wearing sunglasses
the Hollywood wantabee
stumbles JR

~*~

fulfilling a last request
gray north wind
pummels with heavy drops Robert Flannery
in rain the rocks find their colors cg
missing the obvious he slashes his foot on a mussel-covered rock JAJ
coming home quietly broken shells and I WR

her new treasure
a wagon full
of driftwood JAJ

growing older
yet the comfort of seeing
Grandmother Ocean JR

GENTLY WIPING DUST

Alternate 3-line and 2-line links for 100 lines
Theme: impermanence, transitoriness

gently wiping dust from grandmother's photograph october windsong TW
warm fall days chill at sunset BJ
last rush of color outdoing itself virginia creeper PC
nights behind closed eyes images in red float by JR
taps at sunrise opening daylilies on their graves PC
flowers of our youth gone – everyone MM
mind wasting memories disappear one by one JAJ
haiku eagle gliding in a sea of chance LCG

meteorite streaks across the night sky sudden cool breeze MWM
morning sun on a bayou mist KCL
first snow already melting dancing barefoot JAJ
thinking of Tundra buying new shoes TLG
breath suspended overhead, the northern lights in slow dance JAJ
father and son pause for a long moment RF
breeze changing course weeds in the dark field bend again GR
up ahead another hidden curve ESJ
SOFT SHOULDERS warning he glances at his wife their 50th year GR
finishing the school of hard knocks YH
digital display counting the failing heart GD
she tries to add up all the good times YH
battery low the calculator reads "ERROR" GD
the new player late for the first game RF
dealing cards to an empty chair careless of how they land GD
face-down \$10,000 poorer CC
richer for the experience bottoms up YH
"How do you stop a wino from charging?" CC
at the end of that rainbow no credit card cg
back to the diner waiting tables JSJ
old woman slips jelly packets into her purse cg
mistaking a condom / for a condiment GD
runs her tongue / over red lips, / snaps her purse shut cg
Quiet out at sea the boat sinks JMB
hot songs melt the wax from sailors' ears GD
listening to a star leaving the lake WR
heaving light beneath the wave JMB
fingerprint in the pink birthday frosting cg

watching a cow's spittle
only eating grass WR

map
a face stick JMB

bubblegum
smack across her face JAJ

~*~

gently wiping dust from grandmother's photograph october windsong TW
warm fall days chill at sunset BJ
last rush of color outdoing itself virginia creeper PC
nights behind closed eyes images in red float by JR
taps at sunrise opening daylilies on their graves PC
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breath suspended overhead, the northern lights in slow dance JAJ
father and son pause for a long moment RF
breeze changing course weeds in the dark field bend again GR
up ahead another hidden curve ESJ
SOFT SHOULDERS warning he glances at his wife their 50th year GR
finishing the school of hard knocks YH
digital display counting down the failing heart GD
she tries to add up all the good times YH
was never very good at math MHH
one more short story attempt into the waste basket GR
sharp edges cutting through the trash bag shadows leaking out GD
thickening juice from the black beans can JMB
long time on shelf honey crystallizes sticky jar JSJ
mustard seeds pop in hot oil GD
it will be a cold day in July when I cook again YH
even the firecrackers refuse to light – a rainy fourth! dht
indoors all afternoon two boys play Civil War one gray; one blue RF
refugee children / strangers to laughter PGC
stray sniffing / stranded starfish – / gray sky's cold FPA
mackerel clouds reach every horizon piling the sea JR
broken thermometer poisonous mercury scatters everywhere JAJ
driving through a school zone spray of sparrows RF
waiting at the end of the block police speed trap JAJ
she remembers when fast was dad's Model T cg
man on the running board the answering machine gun CC

two Firestone front tires flat
my personal "axis of evil" WR

~*~

gently wiping dust from grandmother's photograph october windsong TW
warm fall days chill at sunset BJ
last rush of color outdoing itself virginia creeper PC
nights behind closed eyes images in red float by JR
taps at sunrise opening daylilies on their graves PC
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the new player late for the first game RF
dealing cards to an empty chair careless of how they land GD
face-down \$10,000 poorer CC
richer for the experience bottoms up YH
"How do you stop a wino from charging?" CC
at the end of that rainbow no credit card cg
back to the diner waiting tables JSJ
old woman slips jelly packets into her purse cg
mistaking a condom / for a condiment GD
runs her tongue / over red lips, / snaps her purse shut cg
Quiet out at sea the boat sinks JMB
hot songs melt the wax from sailors' ears GD
The Great Lost Kinks Album needle stuck in the last groove CC
"Just a little prick" nurse with a syringe GD
suddenly all the puppies' eyes open cg

trying to make sense
of all that blue JAJ

~*~

gently wiping dust from grandmother's photograph october windsong TW
warm fall days chill at sunset BJ
last rush of color outdoing itself virginia creeper PC
nights behind closed eyes images in red float by JR
taps at sunrise opening daylilies on their graves PC
flowers of our youth gone – everyone MM
mind wasting memories disappear one by one JAJ
haiku eagle gliding in a sea of chance LCG
meteorite streaks across the night sky sudden cool breeze MWM
morning sun on a bayou mist KCL
first snow already melting dancing barefoot JAJ
thinking of Tundra buying new shoes TLG
breath suspended overhead, the northern lights in slow dance JAJ
father and son pause for a long moment RF
breeze changing course weeds in the dark field bend again GR
up ahead another hidden curve ESJ
SOFT SHOULDERS warning he glances at his wife their 50th year GR
finishing the school of hard knocks YH
digital display counting down the failing heart GD
she tries to add up all the good times YH
was never very good at math MHH
one more short story attempt into the waste basket GR

sharp edges cutting through the trash bag shadows leaking out GD
thickening juice from the black beans can JMB
long time on shelf honey crystallizes sticky jar JSJ
mustard seeds pop in hot oil GD
it will be a cold day in July when I cook again YH
even the firecrackers refuse to light – a rainy fourth! dht
indoors all afternoon two boys play Civil War one gray; one blue RF
refugee children / strangers to laughter PGC
stray sniffing / stranded starfish – / gray sky's cold FPA
mackerel clouds reach every horizon piling the sea JR
broken thermometer poisonous mercury scatters everywhere JAJ
driving through a school zone spray of sparrows RF
waiting at the end of the block police speed trap JAJ
another hole in the cheese CC
small tear in the yellowed love letter folded, refolded cg

anthrax scare
the office smart-aleck CC

~*~

gently wiping dust from grandmother's photograph october windsong TW
warm fall days chill at sunset BJ
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broken thermometer poisonous mercury scatters everywhere JAJ
driving through a school zone spray of sparrows RF
brownian motion: grandchildren zooming around the room GD
radio signal the break-up song breaking up CC
September news I listen but there is no melody WR

ticking me off
the toll bridge
metrognome CC

JUST DAUGHTERS

12 links

theme: family relationships

In the graveyard a carved stone angel with my daughter's face GM
grandma in her rocker turning clouds into faces cg
"get water from the well" she said, wanting me out of the kitchen GM
mother and son discuss making pickles JAJ
sex education must, say the educators begin at home JR
old uncle's eyes slowly derobe his niece ESJ
out of the closet so many cases of family incest JAJ
his face cut out of every photo – family album GD

bickering siblings
dys-ing each other CC

~*~

In the graveyard a carved stone angel with my daughter's face GM
grandma in her rocker turning clouds into faces cg
"get water from the well" she said, wanting me out of the kitchen GM
mother and son discuss making pickles JAJ
sex education must, say the educators begin at home JR
old uncle's eyes slowly derobe his niece ESJ
out of the closet so many cases of family incest JAJ
vodka or gin? or just male sin? JR

no anesthetic
mothers hold down daughters
for cliterectomy JAJ

~*~

In the graveyard a carved stone angel with my
daughter's face GM
grandma in her rocker turning clouds into faces cg
after thirty years I still miss her my dead sister JAJ
in a dream again back to playing hide and seek WR
absent father only a ghost in attic shadows GD
grandmother's teakettle still sings on the stove cg
laughing over e-mail from our daughter's daughter GD
catsup on fried eggs just like dad's cg

bread pudding
handed down from grandma JAJ

~*~

In the graveyard a carved stone angel with my daughter's face GM
grandma in her rocker turning clouds into faces cg
"get water from the well" she said, wanting me out of the kitchen GM
mother and son discuss making pickles JAJ
sex education must, say the educators begin at home JR
up on the armoire kids find the porno mag JAJ
sticky wings a moth JMB
first time for lipstick, her mouth wider than her lips GD

after plucking
just a line for eyebrows JAJ

whispering "no"
she turns a little more red WR

LA RENGA LOCA

Rules: This is an acrostic renga. Subsequent links must spell out some haikai-related word by reading the first letter of each word down the lines. Finish with 12 links.

La Renga Loca
Your muses lock horns with
Night Blooming Jazzman

X-treme Poetry – Carlos Colón

How easy it is
Always writing verbs that end
In ing
Keep it to a minimum and
Use the present tense without JAJ

talking
willingly
in the manner of
stereotypes used for a
thousand times WR

Seven between five & five
You require seventeen total
Lovingly
Layered
Any nonconformist had
Better
Look
Elsewhere CC

~*~

La Renga Loca
Your muses lock horns with
Night Blooming Jazzman
X-treme Poetry – Carlos Colón

She wouldn't be as
Holy
I
F
The neighbor's boy wasn't that shy WR

Kiss
Incenses
Grizzled
Opponent CC

Soon
Even the birds won't
Nest
Right by
Your home you
Ungrateful slingshot wretch JAJ

~*~

La Renga Loca
Your muses lock horns with
Night Blooming Jazzman
X-treme Poetry – Carlos Colón

How easy it is
Always writing verbs that end
In ing
Keep it to a minimum and
Use the present tense without JAJ

talking
willingly
in the manner of
stereotypes used for a
thousand times WR

Proper feelings
Offer
Edges
Thrust into a
Reactive
You JR

MOST BEAUTIFUL GAME

7 Links (now extended to 12)
Rule: each link is a question; no answers!

What are the rules / for the most beautiful game, / and who can play? RF
What are you seeking / when you smile / at strangers? JSJ
Where do we come from / Why are we going? GM
what's the joke about navel seamen? JR
how many syllables does it take to screw up a haiku? CC
does it come from your head or your gut? cg
How can rain fall from empty sky? RF
Will that be a C cup or a D? JAJ

or a U between? JMB

Wasn't this supposed to stop at 7? CC

~*~

What are the rules / for the most beautiful game, / and who can play? RF
What are you seeking / when you smile / at strangers? JSJ
Where do we come from / Why are we going? GM

Do you see that very bright star? JAJ
How about in five hundred years? RF
Can I buy shares in stockings interneted WR
what is the price of peers' pears palliated on a pair of piers? JR
where did your charm bracelet go? JAJ

Can there be love stored in a bank safe? WR

SWARMING

6-word links on the

Theme: swarming

Storm a hand, shape of wind - John M. Bennett
just as the sunflower opens – bees! cg
wind - did I ever run faster? WR

bees smell an intruder JAJ

~*~

Storm a hand, shape of wind - John M. Bennett
carrying the birds' idea of food JR
news of doughnuts in the break room cg

children flipping raisins at the wall WR

the case of the pedophile priest CC

~*~

Storm a hand, shape of wind - John M. Bennett
The pounding footsteps blue-light special CC
fluorescent bulbs on sale so cheap JR

facial pale you move like morto JMB

TIME

with 3, 2 liners up to 12 links

Theme: time's length and limits

birds winging south / no speed limit / only time JSJ
for how long / this dream? RF
clocks changed again - / spring ahead / fall back GM
Nasira waiting for us at the edge of eternity CC
oh to sit forever in the warm cradle of the moon ESJ

even now we walk through the breath of angels cg
spinning from the top of a wave my next shape JR
45 rpms unturned for years GD

aging hippie –
rolling stoned
and gathering moss CC

how long it takes
before she offers you a cookie
granno-second CC

~*~

birds winging south / no speed limit / only time JSJ
for how long / this dream? RF
clocks changed again - / spring ahead / fall back GM
Nasira waiting for us at the edge of eternity CC
oh to sit forever in the warm cradle of the moon ESJ
the thinnest sickle of light beyond clouds GD
sun rise the curve of a hill spreads the glow JR
her breasts' curve slopes lower GD

softer now
like water:
swimming JMB

~*~

birds winging south / no speed limit / only time JSJ
for how long / this dream? RF
clocks changed again - / spring ahead / fall back GM
patches of snow mound of primulas in bloom JAJ
the tension gone from his strings Howdy Doody CC
falling apart as she is carted away old mannequin ESJ
carrot and coal in a pool of snow CC
nobody remembers whose baby in grandma's album cg

yellowed tape holding
his head on his neck CC

~*~

birds winging south / no speed limit / only time JSJ
for how long / this dream? RF
clocks changed again - / spring ahead / fall back GM
Nasira waiting for us at the edge of eternity CC

oh to sit forever in the warm cradle of the moon ESJ
the thinnest sickle of light beyond clouds GD
and opposite the northern lights begin their dance JAJ
the end of a night fluidly colored WR

the pregnancy began
the moment she knew it
was over JR

~*~

birds winging south / no speed limit / only time JSJ
for how long / this dream? RF
clocks changed again - / spring ahead / fall back GM
patches of snow mound of primulas in bloom JAJ
the tension gone from his strings Howdy Doody CC
how many neighbors don't "Make Room for Daddy" ? cg
behind the screen on Sullivan's stage Elvis writhes GD
Bob Dylan still waiting in the wings CC

"A Hard Rain . . ."
how time changed when
the towers fell JR

WITHIN/WITHOUT

Alternate 3-line and 2-line links for 12 links
Theme: interconnectedness

sliding open this bathroom window startling Orion -Robert Flannery
with jeans a belt of stars the radiance of a daughter JR
tied shoelaces tug of war between two teams of Barbies CC

in mirror: the
head upside down JMB

~*~

sliding open this bathroom window startling Orion -Robert Flannery
left the hair combed my hand JMB
fair grounds the bearded lady dunks the clown CC

he reaches down
to help him up a step JAJ

~*~

sliding open this bathroom window startling Orion -Robert Flannery

left the hair combed my hand JMB
he stops reaching out for the one reaching out for him WR

life
a glint of light
in her glass eye JR

FINIS