

BECAUSE OF A SEAGULL

Gilles Fabre



The Fishing Cat Press

BECAUSE OF A SEAGULL
Texts and Illustrations
© Copyright, 2005, by Gilles Fabre

Seagull inspired by Hugo Pratt

All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be reproduced in any form
without permission in writing from the author.

gillesfabre@hotmail.com

Published by
THE FISHING CAT PRESS
www.haikuspirit.org

ISBN 0-9551071-0-5
First Printing, 2005

BECAUSE OF A SEAGULL

Haiku by Gilles Fabre

The Fishing Cat Press

Dear Reader,

Haiku – this objective sketching of a special moment – is more than a literary or poetic genre: the Way of Haiku is a way of life.

A haiku, in its essence and spirit, unveils something we had not noticed or felt, points at a moment we failed or did not bother to experience or simply reveals, under a different angle or a new perspective, a truth we've known from the start. Haiku is a delicate shortcut to the heart of Nature and our everyday life.

Following the Way of Haiku brings awareness and respect for the fragile and transient world we live in and may also bring enlightenment and fulfillment to others as it is a personal search and sometimes a spiritual quest to live a fuller life in a better world and to acknowledge that every moment and experience we go through in our life is meaningful and that every living being that may cross our path is important and worthy of our compassionate care and humble empathy.

I hope you will enjoy reading this collection and travelling along my haiku road as much as I am grateful our paths have crossed.

Gilles Fabre

The Way of Haiku is first of all a way of life

Alain Kervern

I don't dip my quill into an inkpot but into life.

L'Homme Foudroyé

Blaise Cendrars



Even in my pocket —
it is everywhere
this morning's spring wind

Somehow, this morning
on top of the school cross
there is no seagull

Old wooden park bench
flaked and broken down:
here's spring's first day

My favourite book —
I'll go and read it
under these cherry blossoms

First to blossom
this crooked tree
in my street!

Cherry blossoms
all over the road:
here comes the sweeper!

Searching for change
this old man
his shirt inside out

How to tell all these buds?
a late frost forecast

Beyond this blossom
entrapped by snow:
a world of sound and fury

Evening shower —
in the pub,
I find an umbrella

Upside down
filled with spring dew:
empty shell of a snail

Storing winter blankets away
I disturb
a skinny spider

In the sun
the fishmonger helps to push
the butcher's van

Second to none —
Clearblue® blue line
against the blue sky

Spring evening shower —
back from the maternity
I wash one dinner set

Lawnmower
in a steep field
almost covered by grass

After mass
the priest kneels again
to lock the church door

Take care, fat fly,
this reading room
has carnivorous plants

Basket's last apple —
you may be off and all wrinkled
but I'll eat you!

Nearly all in bloom
the poppies my neighbour planted
before she died

Power's back —
I switch the lamp off
and read by candlelight

With a big smile on his face
the undertaker's man
washes the hearse

Off each wave crashing,
brought out by the sunrise,
the might of the ocean

On a sunny afternoon
a kitten has discovered
how to hunt a fly

End of the day —
old barber, shaving
an old man



Pub's round toilet window
just big enough —
the summer full moon

Just when I thought
today would be forgotten —
ladybird on my guitar

Terraced houses in the sun —
each front door's
a different colour

It had only one leg
the seagull
that woke me up

Look, cat —
your new neighbours:
they have a dog!

An old lady
washing her windows
with a man's shirt

Summer shower in the park —
I happen to be
under the oldest tree

In the old iron pot
morning tea
reheated by midday sun

Deckchair reading —
come on, blue butterfly,
land again on my hand

As this perfect blue sky
won't give anything away
I blow on the wind chimes

Sing, little bird, sing —
help us find
a name for the baby

Where to now?
at the centre of the room
a bug pauses

Phone ringing —
if I move, gone
this white butterfly

Even whiter
than the summer clouds:
this seagull's belly

Perfect present
for my fortieth —
grey heron's flight over the river

On such a day, big dandelions
my grandfather
would have put you in his salad!

Watering the plants
on the balcony
and my legs too

On the ice, near
the farmed ones, salmon
that have swam the ocean

Mountain sunset —
among pines
one red-leafed tree

Let's knock
at every front door!
such a glorious day

Open and stretched up
for the late summer sun —
one potted sunflower

Another scorcher —
and no tee-shirt
to take off anymore

Those books
I read years ago:
they're bending the shelves

I dozed off
against this tree
planted for my birth

Glorious sky —
to each of your stars I want to say
“I’m going to be a dad!”



The first leaves —
before raking
I look at the blue sky

Sheep in the rain —
what on Earth can make you
stop chewing grass?

At the source
I cup my hand in pure water
and drink

Impossible
to tell the sky from the ocean —
this autumn's first dusk

In this world
where people kill people
for the first time I kiss my son

Willow tree leaves falling —
never
where expected

My son, fallen asleep in my arms —
on the fireplace
a rose petal has fallen

W COME TO VERMONT
on the border sign
a farmer's coat

Seagulls on a beached trawler —
all but one
turned to the sea

Back from mass
five old ladies
sharing two umbrellas

Morning shave —
more and more like my dad:
grin at the mirror

The stranger
who raised his hat to me:
bald as an egg

Pond's baby ducks —
the smallest beak's
got the biggest breadcrumb

Laughing with my mother —
I hold the hands
of her terminally ill body

In the October sun
I walk to the place where
my mother is to be buried

The sound of my mother's coffin
being lowered in the grave —
like a knock on a door

My mother's coffin —
now a few inches
beside her father's

Under a bending tree
a tombstone
leaning contrary

Flying back after the funeral —
I find myself
looking closely at the sky

Midnight sleet —
a black cat
is following me home

Morning wind
shaking
the tree's last leaf

This black and white cat
running across the frozen rugby pitch —
my childhood spirit?

Ocean breeze —
easing three or four seagulls
through the goal posts

Packed rugby ground —
seagulls
on the crossbars

All eyes on the ball
kicked up in the air —
have they noticed the rainbow?

So heavy
to carry home
this year's first bag of coal

Not yet
good old Aran jumper
not time to wear you yet

Who was most startled
meeting in the lane:
I or the midnight fox?

Harbour's rough sea —
old fishing boat rocking
against a millionaire's yacht



Winter dusk —
limping, an old man
walks a limping dog

This fire
is like other fires —
but this winter's first

Birds' weak chirps —
I stop reading
to poke the fire

A perfect bookmark,
if it was longer,
this grey hair of mine

Show me
skinny bird in the gales
how to face winter

Morning
through frosty fields:
not a thing moves

With these white clouds
rushing to the snowy peaks
my anger's gone

First frost of the year —
in my tea
pouring some honey

Chilly dawn —
on top of a bin
a brush full of grey hair

“So cold this morning”
all people talk about —
this cold morning

A chestnut, frozen —
what ever was it
made me kick it?

Back home —
at the front door
again, I avoid this snail

Darkening sky —
on a white counter
I'm cutting squids

Softened by the snow,
falling and falling,
this crow's croaks

It says "I" now,
my widowed dad's
answer phone message

This street cat
I feed sometimes —
a baby bird in his mouth

Let me pick you off
the middle of the road
wandering snail

Christmas or not:
on and on, seagulls
diving into the sea

Christmas rain —
two kids
under a bat cape

Derelict house
in the midnight snow — how you must
long for a family

Christmas wrapping papers
burning in the fireplace —
New Year's Day

First full moon of the year —
and it's trapped
in a bare tree!

Taking the mouse
off the trap —
how am I to die?

Through the bus window
opened to hail a friend:
first snow

Two swans took off
over the frosty canal — again:
no sign of life



Some of these haiku have been published in the following journals:

Haiku Spirit (Ireland);
Presence (UK);
Blithe Spirit (UK);
Mushimegane (Japan);

and in the following anthologies:

HAIKU Sans Frontières (Editions David, 1998. Canada);
The New Haiku (Snapshot Press, 2002. UK);
Anthologie du Haïku en France (Aléas Editeur, 2003. France);
World Haiku 2005 No. 1 (Edited by World Haiku Association, Nishida-shoten inc. Publisher, 2004. Japan).

'... A haijin of keen sensibility, blessed by compassion.'
James W. Hackett

'... When reading these haiku, one realises haiku is more than poetry as it is simply stated in the introduction. Haiku is a wake-up call to live a more intense life with an open spirit and mind.'
'... The atmosphere in these haiku, together with a certain lightness and discreet sense of humour, slowly reveal the true identity of haiku: the continuous encounter between Man and Nature.'
'...After reading this collection, an emotional scent of a destiny lingers on... The success of this collection also lies in the Universe's great cosmic forces that manifest themselves behind the small details, banal scenes these haiku capture.'
Alain Kervern

'... Nowadays, haiku is imaginary as well as realistic. We often find something fresh, something mysterious and something important in our ordinary life. Gilles Fabre sincerely catches this something in his haiku.'
'... A moment including or suggesting other moments is indispensable for an excellent haiku as:
In this world / where people kill people / for the first time I kiss my son
'... Gilles Fabre silently shows us a realistic and contemporary truth of life.'
Ban'ya Natsuishi *Co-founder & Director of World Haiku Association*

'... He has admirably cultivated his own distinct style – deceptively easy language, good flow with every word familiar in separation but all words combined and arranged, a magic.'
'... It is the first line and the fact that it is there that makes it at once original and universal:
Even in my pocket / it is everywhere / this morning's spring wind (Museum of Haiku Literature Award, Blithe Spirit, Journal of The British Haiku Society, Volume 7, Number 4).'
Susumu Takiguchi *Chairman and Founder of the World Haiku Club*

'... These haiku are rich in content and mood as well as angles of perception. His haiku also possess undertones of robust sensuality that are sometimes difficult to detect and explain, but are felt afterwards with a rush of joy.'
George Swede

'The strength of this collection is its unadorned innocence and the honesty with which it shares moments that are treasures of (some would say) inconsequence. There is sometimes irony too, but it is always very delicately handled. Like Issa, Gilles Fabre talks to sheep and butterflies, dandelions and snails, even apples and his Arran jumper, and constantly finds a kind of joie de vivre in the 'ordinariness' of life. It takes great humility of spirit to celebrate life like this.'
David Cobb *Former President of the British Haiku Society*

'... I live in Romania on the Black Sea coast where the sound of the seagull is omnipresent during the daytime. Reading these fine poems I have the impression that all the moments are happening in my area and the author had the opportunity to see all the landscape from the bird's eyes. The accompanying bird - the seagull - gives rhythm to these real, wonderful haiku by its presence. Highly recommended.'
Ion Codrescu *Editor of Hermitage international haiku journal*

ISBN 0-9551071-0-5
Published by
Fishing Cat Press