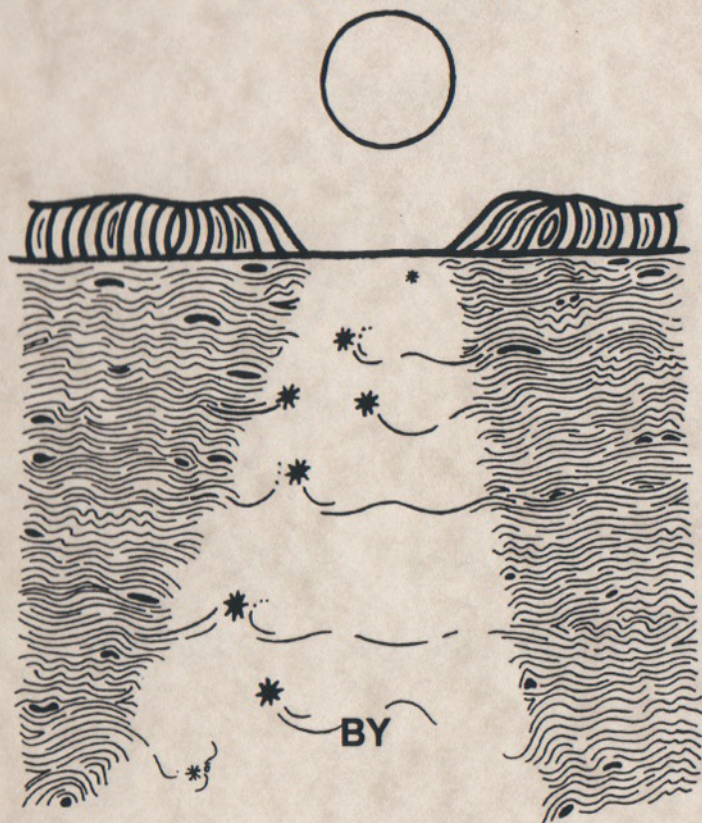


# BELLS ARE CALLING

HAIKU & SENYRU



JACK DE VIDAS

EDITED BY

JANICE M. BOSTOK





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by

JACK DE VIDAS

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

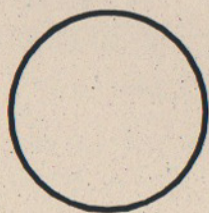
The work in this book has been published in numerous journals, including:

Hobo  
Micropress  
paper wasp  
Scope  
Social Alternatives

Jack de Vidas was born in Broken Hill in 1914 and educated in Adelaide. After serving with the RAAF in WW II, he became a "flying doctor", based at Alice Springs. Before his retirement in 1993, he worked as a specialist physician in Brisbane and tutored medical students at the University of Queensland.

Jack is a member of the Brisbane-based Paper Wasp Haiku group. In 1994, with Jacqui Murray, Ross Clark and John Knight, he was a co-author of Wattle Winds: An Australian Haiku Sequence. Although Jack has been writing poetry for many years, Bells Are Calling is his first collection of haiku.

Special thanks to Janice Bostok, who is herself a world-class haijin, for editing and illustrating the haiku in this edition; Cindy Chow-Squire, who desk-topped and prepared the work for publication; Val Oertel, who collated the haiku across the years; and members of the paper wasp group, especially John Knight, whose influence and encouragement were invaluable.





Now that you have gone  
I add another blanket.  
Summer is over.

The bells are calling  
the faithful to prayer,  
and unbelievers too.

They exchange vows  
in the green pavilion.  
Soldiers are coming.

She waits.  
After midnight  
it grows too cold.

Moon  
in a bucket of water  
breaks up on touching it.

Winter  
shades of Autumn  
bleached out.

Sun and sounds  
filter through mist.  
Listen to the bells.

Rising early  
I catch the tide.  
Fish for breakfast.

Winter  
with you in bed,  
how comfortable.

My voice  
losing its melody.  
Growing old.



Reading by lamplight  
my cup of tea is ruined  
by a drowned moth.

Its so lonely here,  
the only house on the hill  
netted by spiders.

Drinking in the park  
a gust of wind —  
gum leaves in my tea.

Salt water creeping  
into the River Murray.  
A dying landscape

Shots split the silence.  
Wood ducks fly up.  
Gone like my lost thoughts.







Moonlight on water  
makes a pathway to the stars  
crossed by my canoe

I wear round my neck  
a rainbow coloured scarf .  
to keep away floods.

Daylight hits the sky.  
A bird flies above the clouds  
leaving its song.

Conversing.  
No melody. No rhythm.  
Stone the crows!

Gambit and end-game  
young, old make similar moves —  
blowing out bubbles.

Water buffalo  
standing knee deep in paddy fields —  
so firmly planted.

Pictures on the wall.  
Landscapes, still life and people  
gathering dust.

Headstones in graveyards  
light up under a full moon.  
The still dark ground.

My hand springs away  
in the moment of cut.  
Pain comes after.

Milking cows at dawn  
how cosy it all smells  
earth, dung and damp hay.



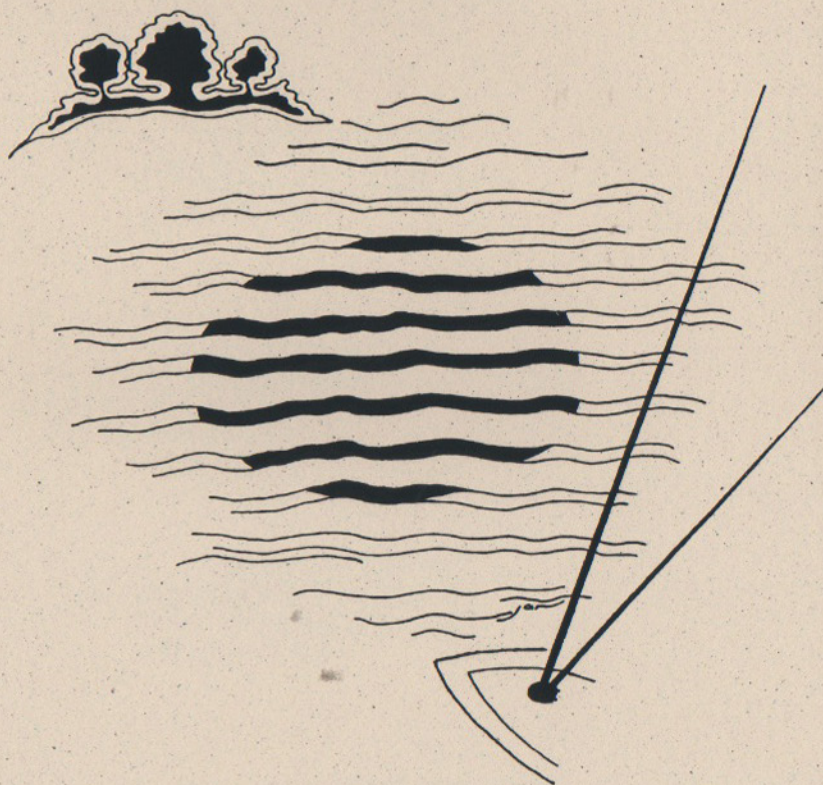
Rain  
peppers our faces and cheeks,  
a hundred prickles.

Waking me from sleep  
filled with sabre-tooth tigers  
my cat keeps purring.

Silver flutes play  
ancient airs and dances.  
Echoes replying.

The bells are ringing  
'Peace on Earth, goodwill to men'.  
Buddha is smiling.

When I went to war  
you cried and said, 'Come back soon'.  
Who sleeps with you now?





A shiver of wind  
ruffles the water,  
corrugates the moon.

Summer in Darwin  
clouds coming in from the sea.  
Quick close the windows.

Iced tea in summer  
laced with the B minor mass  
is out of this world.

A hot day, I hose  
the steps, climb to my attic,  
cooling my feet.

Night breeze wipes off  
the sweat of a long hot day.  
Now we can sleep.

Blossoms ripen.  
We paint them on rice paper  
and wait for the plums.

Rain keeps drumming down.  
I turn over  
snug inside my bed.

Watching the ripples  
on the surface of the pond  
I can see the wind.

I have pondered life  
beyond man's fear of death.  
Time for coffee.

Day fades. Pause between  
evening and night.  
Violet stillness.



Afternoon wraps silence  
round tired bush walkers.  
Cascades crash in pools.

Stirred by the south wind  
clusters of jade-green leaves  
make a cool reply.

The harpist plays on  
after the song has ended,  
scatter of jewels.

Poinsettia leaves  
pushed by a gust of wind.  
Back to sleep again.

I keep on writing  
haiku. Hooked on them  
and sugared almonds.





Sounds and movements mesh  
inside the banksia trees  
silver-eyes feeding.

Afternoon shower  
umbrellas opening up.  
Silk hatted mushrooms.

Two girls cast in bronze  
posing naked by a pool  
come alive in dreams.

## NIGHTMARE II

Fanfares and trumpets  
rip the air with cries of war.  
Crows flying overhead.

A humid day  
cools into  
a thunder storm.

Geese flying  
in formation.  
A hawk breaks it up.

Hot cross buns  
I crucify them  
with my teeth.

Television news  
passes through many hands ...  
ceases to be news.

Distant  
chimes of temple bells.  
Echoes in between.

Nearer,  
the blue hills  
are green.



Skylark  
climbs higher and higher  
leaving its song.

Mosquito's buzz  
wakes me in the hot night.  
A loud slap, then peace.

A sudden squall.  
We row quickly to the shore.  
Cups of tea waiting.

Dawn filters  
through rain forest tallow-gums.  
Dark green moss below.

A duet.  
The lover and the nightingale  
sing to the moon.





The setting sun's rays  
bloody the sea's horizon.  
White flash of a gull!

The wind dies down  
leaving  
a roar of waves.

Rowing on the lake  
under the full moon  
in the full-moon-light.

Standing tall  
the rest of my body  
straightens out.

I bite  
an unripe avocado.  
My mouth dries up.

Low tide  
a harvest of sea worms  
left behind.

No running water.  
I stay  
thirsty.

What to do  
waiting  
for Godot?

One limb shorter,  
my right trouser leg  
is baggy.

In the running water  
I can hear  
Buddha.



Kicking the football  
you hear the thud  
afterwards.

A gust of wind  
almond blossoms  
float on the lake.

Forest murmurs.  
Day  
is here.

Asleep  
in the afternoon:  
a little death.

She grows old  
the face of her doll  
still unwrinkled.





After the storm  
puddles and sparrows  
dry out.

Cat and lizard  
afraid of each other  
rear up and hiss.

Easter, I forget  
the yeast.  
Passover bread.

Dying,  
his today and yesterdays  
are nothing.

A mile away  
buffalo  
shake the ground.

Now you are gone  
my heart  
changes its beat.

His cello  
sings  
his love for her.

A dry storm  
drops  
only thunder.

A fragrant breeze  
happy  
to live or die.

My heart is full.  
Red waves  
coming and going.



The backward boy  
who sells flowers  
so proud of his beard.

Full moons  
come and go.  
What month is this?

The temple bells  
replying  
to the wind.

Church bells and bird calls ...  
Messiaen's music  
takes over.

Belly not yet full  
the crow  
keeps stabbing.

The murray magpie  
bends the branch.  
Off it goes.

A spring day.  
Sparrows  
taking a sand bath.

At the graveside  
the warbler sings away  
my grief.

Deep breaths  
in and out.  
Change to song.

They are singing  
'Dona nobis pacem'.  
The war goes on.



A shot  
of morphia  
Shantih

Shantih

*paper*  *wasp*

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