

JUXTAONE

Research and Scholarship in Haiku
2015

THE *Haiku* FOUNDATION

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EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to *JUXTAONE: Research and Scholarship in Haiku* 2015. We hope you are as excited as we are to see the launch of this important scholarly outlet for haiku research. Such a journal comes at an opportune time in the evolution of haiku from a literary niche in the West through much of the 20th century, to a worldwide form of sophisticated poetic expression with an increasingly diverse and deep body of scholarship and research. Yet to date, no publication has dedicated itself solely to the exploration of haiku as a form worthy of formal scholarly investigation. *Juxtapositions* fills this lacunae.

Since the seminal work of R. H. Blyth appeared in the 1950s and set a benchmark on scholarly investigations of the form in the West, many haiku journals have published essays of exegesis on the Japanese masters or explored emerging efforts of Western poets to find their haiku voice. *Juxtapositions* for the first time provides a single scholarly outlet for these investigations in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

We sincerely hope university faculty, haiku essayists, poets and reviewers from across the spectrum regardless of background or national origin see fit to submit their prose work in English to *Juxtapositions*. I am very pleased by the quality of our strong editorial board. They are each accomplished and knowledgeable haiku researchers in their own right who, together, seek to ground haiku studies in the literary mainstream of academic scholarship in the West.

There is fertile ground for diverse explorations and research in this publication. Among the articles included in this first issue is a study on the haiku of the late Nobel Laureate Tomas Tranströmer, "Aesthetics of Discipline: Tranströmer's Prison Haiku." Another explores a Lacanian approach to haiku. Still another the work of poet and philosopher

James W. Hackett. And much more. Of particular interest to haiku scholars will doubtless be the authoritative bibliography we've titled "A Scholar's Library of Haiku in English" covering the seminal research on the form, and its practitioners, published in English in monograph over the last century. It is very much a living document and the editors would welcome added entries.

As senior editor, I wish to thank each of our editors who have worked so hard to bring this first issue together, and to Jim Kacian and The Haiku Foundation (THF) for serving as our publisher. The journal is formatted for indexing in the major online abstracting services, and will eventually be fully searchable via library databases and the web. For now the journal is free. A subscription model remains under discussion.

Please send us your feedback and thoughts. We welcome inquiries from anyone interested in writing articles or book reviews for the journal. Our submission criteria is on the THF website. Once again, we thank you for your readership and interest. We hope you will spread the word of this seminal endeavor and become a part of future issues.

Warm regards,

Peter McDonald
Senior Editor
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Jouissance among the *Kire*:

A Lacanian Approach to Haiku

IAN MARSHALL

ABSTRACT: Applying psychoanalytic theory to haiku, this article explores how haiku might be seen as an attempt to return to the preverbal state of oneness with the world in what Jacques Lacan called the Imaginary Order—doing so with the mechanism of language, which Lacan says begins our entry into the Symbolic Order, where we begin to recognize the separation of self from the world—and while living in Lacan’s Real Order, where objects outside the self are seen as symbols of lack. Ultimately, haiku place us in the fraught position of being caught between possibilities—between lack and oneness, separation and unity. A good haiku, despite the fragmentary syntax often used to present juxtaposed images, offers us the possibility of *jouissance*, that momentary return to the Imaginary Order and the breakthrough into oneness with the world associated with the haiku moment. At the same time, a good haiku also reminds us that things outside the self, like the images in a haiku, are just as likely to be symbols of lack.

For those of us who are interested in seeing the study of haiku make its way into the broader literary canon—and into college literature classrooms—one way of achieving that goal is to demonstrate how fruitfully contemporary literary theory can be applied to haiku. What I propose to undertake here is a reading of haiku using Lacanian psychoanalytic literary theory. To sum up the basics, Jacques Lacan traces human development through three stages. First there is the Imaginary Order, the pre-verbal world of the infant where all needs are met, mostly by the mother, and there is no recognition of any division between self and not-self. Since this is a pre-verbal state, we know the world in the Imaginary Order only as a series of undifferentiated images that are not seen as discrete from the self.

As we grow we enter the Symbolic Order, where we begin to learn language. For Lacan, this is a powerful experience, for, as linguist Ferdinand de Saussure had argued, rather than *reflecting* our experience of the world, or even our consciousness, language *structures* our experience of the world and our consciousness. Learning language is the beginning of recognizing that the things outside the self are not the self. Each thing out there is labeled with a word that identifies it as not-me. But of course a word is not the thing itself—and even more distressing, it may well be an indication of the absence of a thing, for we can say the word in the absence of the thing; in fact, that's usually why we need to use the word in the first place, because the thing is not present. It is in the Symbolic Order that we realize where the self ends and other people—and objects—begin, and it is at this point that we realize all these things are separate from the self. This is the beginning of our fall into the Real Order, the real world of things. But those objects outside the self are known only through language, and every one becomes a symbol of lack. It is not one with us, and since we still yearn for the sense of oneness of self and world that we experienced in the Imaginary Order, those objects out there become objects of desire. But it is unfulfilled desire, so each is a symbol of lack. Occasionally, though, we experience moments of intense feeling called *jouissance* that take us somewhere beyond

language to the oneness with the “all” that we experienced in the Imaginary Order. Literally, *jouissance* means “enjoyment,” but the term also evokes suggestions of orgasm and, for Lacan, it can be a kind of pleasure that goes beyond joy into pain or suffering. But regardless of whether they are pleasurable, the intensity of these moments is significant for allowing us to momentarily experience again what it is to live in the Imaginary Order.

Applying Lacanian theory at a basic level is simple enough: you look at the objects in a poem (or story) and recognize them as objects of desire and symbols of some sort of lack that has led to a fragmented self.¹ We might also look for those moments of *jouissance* that take us out of the Real Order and return us (only for a brief moment) to the preverbal state of the Imaginary Order, where we have no sense of a self that is separate from the world around us. Haiku practitioners might recognize that moment as the much-vaunted “oneness” that many associate with haiku. R. H. Blyth, in his influential four-volume study *Haiku* published in the 1950s, called it “selflessness,” one of thirteen traits he considered the necessary states of mind to create and appreciate haiku. By selflessness Blyth meant “self-identification with nature,” or with all of life (168–69). A few other Blythian principles of haiku may also come to mind in thinking about Lacan’s emphasis on both objects and the pre-verbal state of the Imaginary Order. I’m thinking, for example, of haiku’s “materiality” — what has often been called the “suchness of things” — which is associated with what Blyth

1. I should point out that Lacanian theory gets a lot more complicated than the stripped-down version of it that I am working with here. This is out of a desire to keep things clear and simple for readers who may have little or no familiarity with Lacan’s complex ideas. For a further introduction to Lacanian theory, see Elizabeth Wright’s “Modern Psychoanalytic Theory” or the chapter on “Psychoanalytic Criticism” in Charles E. Bressler’s *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (123–42). For deeper discussions of Lacan’s ideas, see Ben Stoltzfus’s *Lacan and Literature: Purloined Pretexts*, Jane Gallop’s *Reading Lacan* or her essay “Lacan and Literature: A Case for Transference,” or Santanu Biswas’s edited collection *The Literary Lacan: From Literature to Lituraterre and Beyond*.

called “non-intellectuality.” Blyth says that with “intellect alone we arrive nowhere,” for it can lead to a “divorce from the suchness, the wholeness of that thing” (197–98). Finally, there is the haiku ideal of “wordlessness.”² Haiku strives for a presentation of things in such unprepossessing, simple, and sense-appealing language that it is as if we see the thing itself, and not words representing the thing.

In its emphasis on pure image, and on the perception of things in their thinginess without a lot of abstract intellectualizing about it, haiku is the closest we get in poetry to a representation of the pre-verbal (and wordless) state of the Imaginary Order. Perhaps the ultimate expression of this tendency is Cor van den Heuvel’s one word haiku “tundra”—a single word on an otherwise blank page. It is a representation of a tundra landscape, yes, but in such a way that the picture of that landscape is not contained wholly in the meaning of the word on the page, but on the picture—the visual image—it makes of sparseness of objects amid the flat, snowy barrens of a tundra landscape. Often in haiku these moments of imagistic perception evoke the intensity of a moment of *jouissance*. Consider, for example, Gary Hotham’s “letting / the dog out / the stars out” (87).³ Hotham captures that moment—perhaps a speechless moment, potentially one where we may feel overwhelmed by the senses, such that words can not suffice to express our awe—when we open the front door

2. For Blyth these states of mind compatible with haiku are associated with Zen philosophy and practice, which made for part of the appeal of haiku for Beat poets like Gary Snyder and Jack Kerouac. The association of haiku with Zen has been critiqued in recent years, especially since the publication of Haruo Shirane’s *Traces of Dreams*. Shirane in particular objects that Blyth overstated the “spiritual subject-object fusion”—the ideal of oneness or selflessness—and the view in American haiku of haiku as “the poetry of the object (particularly small things), of ‘sensation,’ and of the moment” (45, 47). Nevertheless, Blyth’s listing of the states of mind characteristic of haiku remains influential. As Lee Gurga says, “it is useful and instructive to revisit Blyth’s Zen-based aesthetic principles” (128).

3. Unless otherwise attributed, quoted haiku are from Cor van den Heuvel’s *Haiku Anthology*.

to let the dog out, and, wow, just look at that sky full of stars. Or consider Issa's "Naked/ on a naked horse / in pouring rain!" (Hass 159). There is something almost orgasmic about the expression of ecstasy here—perhaps because of the repetition of the word "naked"—but even if you don't perceive this as a moment of sexual joy, we can't help but get the sense that this is someone reveling in pure physical, sensory experience. There is no commentary on or analysis of the experience—just the gush of sensation. This is the stuff of the Imaginary Order, where we are one with the world, achieved through a moment of *jouissance*.

Perhaps one more example will suffice to suggest the ways in which Lacan's descriptions of the Imaginary Order—and our momentary re-entry into the Imaginary Order during moments of *jouissance*—seems pertinent to a reading of so many haiku. Let's choose the most famous haiku of all, Bashō's "old pond / a frog jumps into / the sound of water" (Reichhold 59). Again, this is a poem made up of just images—both visual (the old pond, the frog jumping) and aural (the sound of water). But notice how, especially in Reichhold's translation, there is a neat ambiguity that defies language's attempt to express causality. We could read this haiku in a couple of ways. First, we could read the first two lines with inverted syntax, so that the reference is to the "old pond" that a frog jumps into, followed by "the sound of water." Or we could read the first line as a scene-setter, and then the frog is jumping into "the sound of water"—which is also unusual phrasing, since we would expect the frog to jump into the water, and then the frog and the water together would make the sound. It is precisely in the syntactic ambiguity of the poem that we enter a state of perception that is not governed (yet) by language. Despite the potential for confusion deriving from the syntactic ambiguities, somehow the poem makes sense. Whatever it is that the frog is jumping into and whatever it is that is making the sound involving the water, we get the picture. Clearly. But we are getting the picture, or picturing the scene that resolves the ambiguities, in a way that language does not quite do for us. It is in this sense that we

are in a realm akin to the pre-verbal realm of the Imaginary Order.

For the reader, then, the poem evokes *jouissance*. And for that matter, it evidently did for Bashō as well. As the story goes, it is with this poem that Bashō's practice of haiku changed, as he realized that haiku could (and should) be crafted from ordinary life—and ordinary language. It is these ordinary moments, best captured perhaps in language that does not overtly call a great deal of attention to itself (at least not at first reading), that are the moments of deepest intensity, where we perceive the suchness of things and can feel ourselves at one with them. But of course Lacan also talks about the rarity of such moments; more often he emphasizes that once we are in the Real Order objects of the world serve as symbols of lack. If haiku specializes in the “suchness” of things, presenting pure image, we may find that all too often these images become reminders of all sorts of losses and unfulfilled desires.

A classic example is Nicholas Virgilio's “the autumn wind / has torn the telegram and more / from mother's hands” (261). The most prominent physical object here—Lacan called these symbols of lack *objet petit a*—is the telegram, and in the context of the sequence of poems from which this is drawn we know what it says: Virgilio's brother has died in Viet Nam. The telegram is a stand-in for the brother in the poem, its presence a reminder of his absence, and of the sudden lack being experienced by the poet-observer and his mother. Talk about a fall from the Imaginary Order where the mother is undifferentiated from the infant and fulfills all the infant's needs. Here the mother is separated from her son by an ocean and a continent, powerless to do anything to help even if it were not already too late. The other prominent object in the poem is the “autumn wind,” which we can perceive as all the forces bigger than ourselves and seemingly antagonistic to us—or at least indifferent to our needs and desires. The autumn wind is symbolic of not only the fall (the season) but the fall into the Real Order, into a world of loss and separation.

Not all haiku that express something about the nature of lack in the Real Order need be so dark or so explicitly about loss. Consider J. W. Hackett's "half of the minnows / within this sunlit shallow / are not really there" (61). The object here is the minnows, and it turns out that only half of the ones we see are really there. The others, of course, are shadows indistinguishable from the actual minnows. While that seems to speak of a lack of sorts (of half the minnows), one way to read this poem is as a moment of *jouissance*. It's about a moment of recognition—that the world of shadows, the unspoken symbols of lack here, is tied to the world of physical objects, and the shadows are the products of the objects of the world brought to light. Of course, another way to read the poem is that the poem remains primarily a portrayal of lack. It captures the operations of a logical mind that has entered into the scene here, separating the minnows into real versus not-real (the shadows). That rationality is the work of the Real Order, and in this case it very clearly serves to sever images into real and imaginary. There is no oneness here, but a clear separation of things that seem to be one into two. And where does that leave us? Not so caught up in the scene that we see all things merging into one; rather, we are the coolly detached observers, making distinctions between what's real and what's not, and so all things are seen as separate and discrete entities—and that would include we observers ourselves.

Given how Hackett's minnow haiku lends itself to balanced and opposite readings that can suggest either *jouissance* or the operations of the intellect in the Real Order, perhaps it's worth returning to a poem I cited earlier as an example of *jouissance*. If it is possible to read van den Heuvel's relatively wordless poem "tundra" as a return to the preverbal state of the Imaginary Order, we might also recognize that it is only "relatively" wordless. There's still a word there. Is that word really an image of tundra, or is it a word whose presence might also serve as a reminder of the absence of tundra? It sort of makes a picture of tundra on the page—but it's still a word, a symbolic representation of a thing, in this case a landscape, and not the thing itself. The word *tundra*, then, rather than placing us directly on or

in the tundra, might also be seen as reminding us of the absence of the tundra. Which is the opposite of what I suggested earlier that the poem might do. To reconcile these apparently opposite readings, we could see haiku as placing us in a position caught between possibilities—of oneness with the world of images on the one hand, or on the other hand of awareness of our lack of unity with that world and our desire to somehow bridge that gulf. Language then becomes the means of attempting to reconcile our separation from the world—even as it is in large part responsible for creating that separation. This would explain the centrality of haiku’s impossible goal of “wordlessness”—it is a literary form built (as all literary arts are) out of words that paradoxically aspire to take us beyond words to the world itself.

Most haiku, it seems to me, place us in the fraught position of being caught between lack and oneness, separation and unity. It is another form of haiku’s characteristic aesthetic of *ma*, or “betweenness,” which Richard Gilbert has identified as the “crucial effect” of haiku (78). A good haiku presents us with the possibility of *jouissance* and of achieving that oneness with the world that is so often associated with haiku—but always with a reminder that all those things outside the self, like the images in a haiku, are just as likely to be symbols of lack.

For another example, consider Wally Swist’s “walking into and out of / the sound / of the brook” (220). While we could read this literally as a description of a trail that comes close to a stream and then veers away from it, we could also read it as a commentary on perception: it’s about *noticing* the sound of the brook and then not noticing it. This reminds me of a state I sometimes find myself in while backpacking—noticing for the first couple of days not much more than the weight of my pack, and my mind preoccupied with questions about how much further I have to go. But there comes a moment when I get caught up in the rhythm of the walk, and I’m not thinking about the destination or the weight of the pack,

and I'm just noticing things, taking in sensory information—the pattern of bark on a tree, the colors of a wildflower, the movement of a cloud—without ever consciously processing that sensory information in the form of an actual thought. It's what psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (which is fun to say: “me-hi-yee chick-sent-me-high-ye) called “flow,” when you are caught up in the flow of a moment without intellectualizing. Think of a basketball player caught up in the flow of a game and reacting without thinking, or a musician playing a song. Then when you step out of the moment and realize that for a minute or so there you forgot about the weight on your back, then you are back to reality (Lacan's Real Order). And now you are outside the moment, thinking about yourself perceiving the color of the flower or the movement of the cloud—and no longer one with it all. In Swist's poem, one of those moments is hearing the sound of the brook while walking, and the other moment is not hearing it. The question is, which is the moment of oneness? Is it when you are noticing the sound of the brook (which, by the way, ought to remind us of Bashō's experience with the sound of water)? Or is it when you are not noticing it, because that is when you are not consciously processing the perception with thought and language but are simply immersed in it? We talk about being “lost” in such moments, and what is lost is the sense of self, because in those moments there is no longer a sense of self separate from the world. And then you are in Lacan's Imaginary Order, and you got there in a moment of *jouissance*.

The very style of haiku, particularly its reliance on syntactic fragments and its reliance on juxtaposition of images, also reinforces the tension between the recognition of lack and a fragmented self on the one hand and the possibility of reconciliation and oneness on the other. The syntactic fragments and grammatical incompleteness of a haiku both suggest the fragmented self. In Swist's haiku, for instance, there is no mention of a subject who is doing the walking into and out of the sound of the brook, and no helper verb to complete the action, and no mention of what resulted from the walking in and out of

earshot of the stream. And yet, from these fragments, meaning is somehow created, and a oneness achieved—a oneness where the lack of a subject works to reinforce the meaning, since the point may be to suggest that there is no sense of a self separate from the stream and its sound. From the fragmented syntax and grammatical incompleteness, then, somehow a unity manages to be suggested. But the fragmented pieces are still there, to suggest the illusion of the breakthrough moment.

Similarly, the disjunctive effects of haiku's reliance on cutting, or *kire*, which Gilbert calls "a haiku fundament," would appear to suggest the fragmented self that we experience when we no longer dwell in the Imaginary Order. But as Gilbert points out, "It is the semantic act of cutting which paradoxically forges the sense of non-duality, that is, a reader-sense of coherence arising from the fragmentary aspects (*katakoto*) of haiku. If coherence did not occur, we would not have a poem, but merely a grouping of linguistic fragments" (41). In Bashō's "old pond," there are disparate elements perceived and presented separately—an old pond, a young frog, the stillness of the pond, the action of the frog's jump, the sound of water that is in fact the sound of water when it accepts the presence of a leaping frog—it is out of these disparate perceptions that a moment of intense oneness occurs. On the other hand, maybe too in that moment of perception we are reminded of all other poems that are about the sounds that frogs make, which takes us back to the world of texts and language and the Symbolic Order. A haiku places us in the ambivalent position between possibilities: of oneness and fragmentation. And there are elements of the haiku present that take us in both directions at once.

This state of Lacanian "betweenness" that is evoked by haiku might also be relevant to Koji Kawamoto's discussion of the heteroglossic nature of haiku (at least in the Japanese tradition), its blend of the different language registers of *ga* and *zoku*. The language of *ga* appears in what Kawamoto calls the "superposed" section, the part of the haiku that points toward or hints at meaning. It is here that we

may find seasonal references, more generalized images, and the more elegant and formal and consciously poetic language of the *renga* tradition. *Zoku*, featuring colloquial diction and simpler language, appears in the “base” section that presents the haiku’s main image. Between base and superposed sections, of course, appears the *kire*, or cut. For example, in Bashō’s “Stillness— / the cicada’s cry / drills into the rocks,” lines two and three are the base section, composed of aural imagery (Hass 40). The opening line, “Stillness,” gives a pretty broad hint about what to think of the effect of the cicada’s cry—the sound of the busy cicadas paradoxically evokes stillness—and it invokes the haiku and *renga* traditions by putting the poem in the context of all other poems about stillness. In Lacanian terms, we might think of the image-focused, colloquial language of *zoku* in the base section as evocative of the Imaginary Order—pure image and simple diction that does not call attention to itself. The first line we might think of as evocative of the Symbolic Order, sending us into the realm of language—where the poem brings other poems to bear on this one in order to suggest context, theme, meaning. The superposed section, then, directs our attention to language, while the base section directs our attention to the world of images, and the result is a tension that makes a haiku worth returning to. At each reading there is the possibility of breaking through the Real Order to return to the Imaginary Order—and there is the alternate possibility of being reminded that language always stands between us and the world, constructing the world for us.

That tension is highlighted in a whole subcategory of haiku that explicitly takes language and poetry as its subject. We think of haiku as being predominantly about the natural world or the seasons, but you don’t have to look far to find plenty of haiku that are about books, other writers, the haiku tradition, or the nature-writing tradition. To cite a few quick examples from van den Heuvel’s *Haiku Anthology*: Rod Willmot’s “A page of Shelley / brightens and dims / with passing clouds” (281); Ebba Story’s “lighting the path / to Walden Pond— / my bedside lamp” (207); and Bruce Ross’s “Thoreau’s gravesite: / the

smell of woodsmoke / on the cold spring air” (167). I imagine that you could build a pretty good anthology out of haiku that mention or were inspired by Thoreau alone (poems from Vincent Tripi’s collection *Haiku Pond: A Trace of the Trail and Thoreau* would make a good starting point). We should recall that Bashō’s classic *Narrow Road to the Deep North* was a journey not just to wild places but to wild places that had been commemorated in poetry by his literary hero Saigyō. And of course Bashō’s poems are full of literary allusions (or, in the haiku tradition, *honkadori*, allusion with a difference, as a phrase is lifted and then twisted placed in a new context). Poems like these are, at least by implication, as much about language and literature as they are about the world. Or more to the point, poems like these remind us of how language and literature are invariably implicated in how we perceive the world.

At the same time, these poems still raise the possibility of moments of *jouissance*, where somehow language permits the magic trick of getting past language. But if that’s all we ever expected or hoped for from a haiku, why foreground language in the first place, whether it be via pun, allusion, sound devices, or all the other technical elements of haiku that make us admire its language as poetry and not just snapshot? Perhaps it is precisely in order to highlight the inherent (and interesting) tension between language and reality—or in Lacanian terms, between our desire to re-enter the Imaginary Order (if only for an epiphanic moment) or to recognize the role that language plays in constructing our reality.

One poem that highlights this tension is Vincent Tripi’s “Left open wide / at the centre / the butterfly book” (226). This is not a poem that is likely to spur much sense of a *jouissance* moment of wonderment, though perhaps we might appreciate how our manufactured objects so often mimic the shapes of nature. A more common reaction to this poem might involve recognition of the ironic humor—the butterfly book in the shape of a butterfly (in that the two leaves of the open book, left page and right page, resemble spread wings). But there is

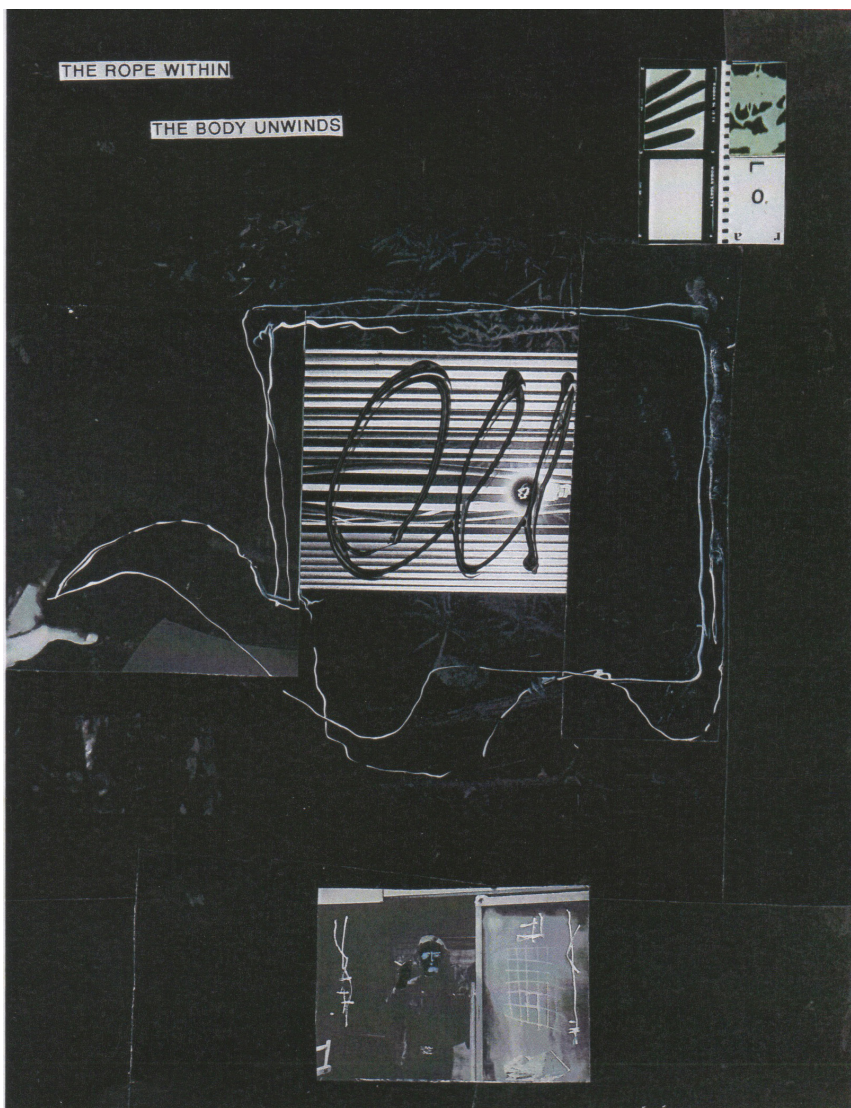
some interesting depth here as well that might make us ponder the ways in which our perceptions of nature are mediated by language. The *objet petit a*, the symbol of lack, is the butterfly book, where we go to identify a species of *lepidoptera*, maybe learn a thing or two about its habitat and adaptive features. But what we're looking at is a book, not a butterfly. And in a sense the more we look at the book, the less we are looking at the butterfly. For all its mimicry of the butterfly shape, the field guide is a poor substitute for the actual butterfly, and the poem comments wryly on our attempt to know the natural world by looking not at the natural world itself but at a book about the natural world. What's missing here—what is absent—is the butterfly. Looking at the poem through a Lacanian lens, it's not too far-fetched to see the poem as engaging with the way in which language invariably constructs our perceptions of the world—and in the process may actually distance us from it.

I hope it is clear that I am not in any way suggesting that a haiku that grapples with issues of language and representation is somehow inferior to one that manages to give us the moment of oneness we might experience through an experience of *jouissance*. What I am suggesting is that these basic concepts from Lacanian psychoanalytic literary theory highlight a central tension in haiku. It is this tension that might account for the richness of a successful haiku, one that rewards rereading and reconsideration of just what it is that it evokes. It is why we can admire a haiku that gives us that ah!-inspiring moment of recognition, or satisfaction, or connection with the world—and at the same time it is why we can admire a haiku that so cleverly plays with the sounds and rhythms of words or achieves depth with reference to other poems that we know and love. There is even more to cherish and admire when the same haiku manages to do both.



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“The Rope”

Guy Beining

Aesthetics of Discipline

Tranströmer's Prison Haiku

ALEXANDER B. JOY

ABSTRACT: Tomas Tranströmer's earliest forays into haiku appear in his nine-poem sequence from 1959, *Fangelse (Prison)*. In these brief poems, Tranströmer observes the inmates of the Hällby Youth Custody Center, writing about daily life in the reformation facility. At the same time, Tranströmer uses these intimate glimpses into the quotidian aspects of incarceration to level a trenchant critique of the Swedish prison system. Tapping into the haiku form, and the beneficial discipline it connotes, Tranströmer throws the ultimately damaging discipline of the prison apparatus into harsh contrast, impugning the prison system's role in contemporary society. Situating Tranströmer's approach beside Foucault's assessment of the modern prison, this essay explicates the poems in *Fangelse*, illuminating the critiques hidden in each, and highlighting the haiku aesthetics that enable Tranströmer's critiques to function.

Surely it bodes well for the academic and poetic standing of haiku that the Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer, recipient of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Literature, and the most recent poet to receive the prestigious literary award, made several forays into haiku. Tranströmer explores the brief poetic form in his collections *Sorgegondolen* (*The Sad Gondola*, 1996) and *Den Stora Gåtan* (*The Great Enigma*, 2004), nestling strings of the short poems among the longer works for which he is arguably better known. In addition, Tranströmer produced one volume comprising exclusively haiku: the nine-poem sequence *Fängelse* (*Prison*), which, although published in 2011, was written in 1959 during a visit with a friend and fellow psychologist employed at the Hällby Youth Custody Center.¹ The haiku in this latter sequence are the subject of my present inquiry. I argue that Tranströmer's *Prison* haiku encapsulate powerful critiques of the prison system, and that the efficacy of those critiques is tied to the aesthetic and philosophical roots of the haiku form. The haiku aesthetic is one of discipline, and when it is used to scrutinize another form of discipline, it exposes the faults of its target.

Appropriately enough for a poet whose collected works are titled *The Great Enigma*, the critical approach to Tranströmer's haiku has been one of bafflement or neglect. Joanna Bankier's entry on Tranströmer in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (2002) mentions his haiku only once, and even then, it is to note the increasing brevity of Tranströmer's poetry following a stroke in 1990 (289). Anatoly Kudryavitsky, in "Tranströmer and his haikudikter" (2007), deems Tranströmer's works to be "an experiment in haiku"—meaning that, despite a mostly charitable reading of Tranströmer's short poems in his essay, Kudryavitsky relegates them to the status of something not quite haiku. Robin Fulton, Tranströmer's English translator, approaches the haiku with a similarly cautious bent in his introduction to Tranströmer's collected poems. "Whether a Japanese

1. Tranströmer himself also worked with troubled youth, taking a position as psychologist-in-residence at Roxtuna, a youth detention center, in 1960 (Bankier 281).

haiku master would feel on common ground with the mentality behind these Swedish examples of the form,” Fulton writes, “I have no idea. I prefer to regard them simply as a set of syllabic poems (whose syllabic count I have matched) with an ability to surprise and puzzle that far exceeds what we might expect from their miniature dimensions” (xxii). Again, there seems to be a critical attitude toward Tranströmer’s three-line poems that bristles at labeling them haiku. How, then, should we go about reading them? Are they really haiku in the traditionalist Zen aesthetic sense, or are they something different?

I propose to read Tranströmer’s haiku as being faithful to the Zen roots of the poetic genre, to a certain point. He tinges his haiku with potent psychological dimensions that may at first seem antithetical to the Zen consciousness haiku are supposed to cultivate. I contend, however, that Tranströmer’s psychological approach to haiku functions precisely because of an awareness and deployment of traditional haiku techniques, capitalizing on the disciplined metric limitations the genre imposes. Tranströmer’s method is perhaps most apparent in his *Prison* haiku, where he productively contrasts two types of discipline: the rigorous routines of Zen meditation, and the confining practices of the modern prison system. Tranströmer uses the haiku form ironically, using the aesthetic of Zen discipline to construct a profile of the prison apparatus, and highlighting how the prison system seems to warp the meditative mindset the Zen aesthetic typically promotes. As such, Tranströmer’s *Prison* sequence adopts a critical stance, chastising a prison apparatus that seems more deleterious than beneficial.

Before delving into Tranströmer’s critique of the prison, it is important to note that the Swedish penitentiary system is markedly different from the system cultivated in the United States or the United Kingdom—as well as the image of prison dramatized in programs such as *Oz* or *Orange Is the New Black*. Where prisons Stateside suffer from overcrowding, and new facilities seem to be built every day, Swedish prisons are actually shrinking. Richard Orange reports in a

2013 article for *The Guardian* that Sweden's overall prison population declined 6% between 2011 and 2012, with a similar decrease anticipated in the coming years; as a result, Sweden plans to close, or has already closed, four of its prisons. This dramatic reduction in the number of incarcerations in Sweden likely has something to do with the culture surrounding the prison system. To put it bluntly, the Swedes have a different—and far more moderate – attitude toward prisons and prisoners than the Americans or the British. Doran Larson sums up the Swedish policy regarding crime and punishment effectively in a 2013 piece for *The Atlantic*:

[T]hroughout Scandinavia, criminal justice policy rarely enters political debate. Decisions about best practices are left to professionals in the field, who are often published criminologists and consult closely with academics. Sustaining the barrier between populist politics and results-based prison policy are media that don't sensationalize crime—if they report it at all. And all of this takes place in nations with established histories of consensual politics, relatively small and homogenous populations, and the best social service networks in the world, including the best public education.

Where criminal justice is subject to the whims of politicians and their constituents in the United States, questions of detention and correction are left up to more qualified people in Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries. Indeed, the culture in Sweden does not provide politicians the opportunity to capitalize on issues of crime and punishment, because it is a much smaller part of the public consciousness—a non-sensationalist media keeps criminals from becoming the celebrities or bogeymen we might find Stateside, thereby reducing the political expediency of advocating for harsher criminal penalties. It helps, too, that Sweden does not have the same histories of racial tension, institutionalized inequality, and extreme political bifurcation that we encounter in the United States. It is a bit easier to construct a functional justice system when daily systemic injustices have mostly been ironed out of your national fabric.

For all of its advances, however, the Swedish prison system still has its dark side. For one, as Larson observes, questions of criminal justice are not part of public debate. While the result is a less capricious criminal justice system, it comes at the expense of subjecting the system to popular discourse. Prisons are not talked about except by those who are qualified to do so. That qualification is often determined by holding a degree conferred by a state-approved institution—never mind that the same state also controls the prisons! Whether this relationship constitutes a real conflict of interest is well beyond the scope of my essay.

Even assuming that the self-actualizing system like the one in Sweden always operates under ideal conditions, where benevolent motives are joined to legislative, administrative, and executive competence, there remains something troubling at the heart of the prison apparatus itself—in both its ideal form and its overall goal. Michel Foucault has observed in his groundbreaking *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (first published in French in 1975) that the notion of what a prison is supposed to do, or the societal function it serves, has shifted gradually throughout history. Foucault charts a movement in punitive and disciplinary practices: away from inflicting pain on the body of a purported wrongdoer in an effort to dissuade the offender (or any would-be offenders) from repeating a trespass against the state, toward targeting the mind of the criminal via incarceration or other isolating techniques in hopes of reforming him or her. It is a shift from punishment toward discipline; a motion away from eradicating offenders outright, and toward refashioning them into acceptable societal subjects. While this movement seems to reflect a humanitarian bent at first glance—for surely it appears more humane to incarcerate offenders than to lash or torture or execute them—Foucault notes that the newer approach has an unsettling totalitarian flavor. Examining two of the progenitors of the modern prison, Foucault remarks upon the tendencies they have contributed to the prison system of the present day:

There are two images, then, of discipline. At one extreme, the discipline-blockade, the enclosed institution, established on the edges of society, turned inwards toward negative functions: arresting evil, breaking communications, suspending time. At the other extreme, with panopticism, is the discipline-mechanism: a functional mechanism that must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society to come. (209)

Emerging from the union of facilities for quarantining disease and Jeremy Bentham's plans for the all-seeing Panopticon correctional facility, the modern prison performs a slew of mind-altering operations upon the offending subject that carry far-reaching societal implications. First, the prison is designed to halt the spread of "evil" — to inhibit behaviors that the state finds objectionable by isolating the wrongdoer as though s/he carries some kind of illness, separating him/her from society, and removing him/her from the flow of time. Time and society will progress, but the prisoner will not play a part in it. Similarly, the offending subject will not be returned into time and society until s/he has abandoned whatever objectionable tendency led to the incarceration. Until his/her way of behaving, thinking, and being is reconfigured to match state-dictated societal norms, the prisoner is forbidden from participating in society and its development.² The prison, then, is an apparatus for reducing variation among a society's subjects. It plucks subjects who do not conform to a standardized way of being out of the fabric of society; it does not return them until they are sculpted to fit the standard. If the prison's objective is to reform, to turn criminals into upstanding citizens, its unspoken goal is to limit what constitutes citizenship, to flatten plurality among subjects in the name of a homogeneous future society. Foucault also notices that this tendency toward reducing plurality recurs in many of the state's normality-defining apparatuses, including institutions of health and education:

2. Consider, for example, how the practice of felony disenfranchisement in the United States adheres to and extends the reach of this pattern.

Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labor, its authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts on normality, who continue and multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penalty? Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons? (227–8)

Wherever the purpose of a given institution is to introduce homogeneity—be it to establish a baseline for health like a hospital, or a minimum of education like a school, or a consistent model for a product like a factory—the image of the prison will recur, for the machinery behind all such homogeneity-promoting institutions is inevitably the same.

Given Tranströmer's training in psychology and social work, it seems reasonable to think that questions of mental health, normality, and the sometimes slippery definitions of each would cross his mind at some point. The challenge, though, is where—and how—to discuss such matters. If criminal justice is not an issue of public concern in Sweden, in what kind of forum could one launch a critique of the justice system? Similarly, if one is a part of that self-same system, working as one of the agents of mental conformity, how could one begin to make a valid critique? The usual channels of discourse for criminal justice issues are themselves part of the system under scrutiny, so a critique made in that context would be participating in the system under the system's terms, and therefore might see its force diminished. What, then, to do? In Tranströmer's *Prison* haiku sequence, I see the beginnings of an answer: confront the prison system through a poetic lens. Tranströmer calls upon the time-honored, minimalist aesthetic of haiku, and the poetic discipline that the form's limited syllables demand, and pits them against a different form of discipline. Through the harsh contrast between form and content, Tranströmer's *Prison* haiku impugn the efficacy, and perhaps the legitimacy, of the prison system.

Tranströmer's approach, however, does raise one pressing question. Why haiku? Prior to the *Prison* sequence, Tranströmer had not dabbled in haiku; his previous two volumes of poetry do not feature any. Furthermore, after *Prison*, Tranströmer did not revisit haiku until *The Sad Gondola* in 1996—some 37 years later. Consequently, haiku does not seem to be the form with which Tranströmer is most comfortable. At the least, his publication record suggests he is not as practiced in it as he is with other poetic forms. Why not write longer poems about the prison system instead, like the kind he has written throughout most of his poetic career? For one, haiku has a rich history, and any poet who invokes the form channels its history at the same time. I suspect, therefore, that Tranströmer's choice has something to do with the origins of the haiku aesthetic, and its links with Zen thought. Further, the choice of observational style that accompanies haiku enacts an uncomfortable recognition of Tranströmer's complicity with the prison apparatus.

Faubion Bowers notes in his introduction to *The Classic Tradition of Haiku* (1996) that haiku evolved from *haikai-no-renga*, a form of linked poetry that joined *haikai*, verses of 5-7-5 syllables, to *renga*, linking verses of 7-7 syllables (vii). The form was a fad among Japanese commoners in the 16th century (Bowers vii). Yet the haiku as we know it comes to us from Matsuo Bashō, who took the *haikai* out of *haikai-no-renga*, and made it a standalone verse called *hokku*—the same word used to describe the opening verse of a *haikai-no-renga* sequence (Bowers vii). Significantly, besides being a poet, Bashō was also a Zen Buddhist priest. In his hands, haiku became an expression of Zen consciousness, focusing on moments of intense meaning where infinity and transience coincide, resulting in a flash of wisdom – or even total enlightenment. Several of Bashō's most noteworthy haiku are celebrated precisely because of their Zen aspects: his legendary frog pond haiku, *furuike ya / kawazu tobikomu / mizu no oto*, where the sound of water follows a frog's leap into a pond, supposedly symbolizes an awakening unto higher consciousness. The haiku that we inherit, then, comes tinged with Zen philosophy, presenting

itself as an aesthetic expression of Zen ideals and practices. It is no coincidence that some of the most exalted haiku poets, including Issa and Chiyo-ni, have doubled as priests and priestesses. The writing of haiku is thus an exercise in Zen philosophy, and mimics the ritual of meditation. Like meditating, writing haiku involves the paring away of extraneous thoughts and details, the suppression of individual consciousness, the search for the eternal without its active pursuit, the freedom found within self-imposed constraint. Meditation and haiku are both forms of discipline for the soul, aiming to push one toward becoming a better or wiser person. Between its history and its brevity, then, the haiku connotes an aesthetic of discipline—making it the ideal form for Tranströmer’s examination of the systematized discipline of the prison. The haiku form itself suggests what a healthy ritual of discipline might look like, whereas the subject matter Tranströmer depicts is a far less salubrious kind of discipline, whose shortcomings are thrown into focus by their haiku packaging.

At the same time, Tranströmer’s use of haiku carries some worrisome ideological assumptions, of which Tranströmer himself seems aware. By monitoring the inmates, and trying to show glimpses of their inner mental lives by presenting observable external details, Tranströmer adopts an approach that has its roots in—and owes its effectiveness to—the same system against which he inveighs. In linking the spread of prison-like structures to all other normativity-enforcing areas of society, Foucault remarks that the resultant society has a “carceral texture” (304), in which the regulation of its citizens is pervasive enough to appear normal. Its ubiquity, furthermore, “assures both the real capture of the body and its perpetual observation” (304). In other words, at no point is the citizen in a carceral society outside of a literal or metaphorical cell—if the citizen is not in prison, s/he is still subject to all kinds of observation similar to it, be it in terms of medical documenting, tracking educational prowess, monitoring job performance, or the like. For all its invasive prying, Foucault notes that the system has produced a mainstay of modern thought: the idea of an understandable human being. For better or

for worse, Foucault writes, the idea that we might comprehend other people via the observation of their external characteristics emerges from the carceral system: “Knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of this analytical investment, of this domination observation” (305). As such, Tranströmer runs into yet another difficulty. Not only is he implicated in the carceral system by virtue of being a psychologist—an enforcer of the norms of mental health—but also, the core assumptions that enable his haiku to function are themselves implicated. If Tranströmer is going to reveal to his readers the inner lives of the imprisoned boys through the haiku form, he must resort to depicting them from the outside, and show how their mannerisms and actions demonstrate what is going on inside. However, matters grow more complicated if he is going to use this approach to launch a critique of the prison apparatus. His approach only works in the first place because the carceral system built the infrastructure that powers it—so how can he attack the system when he and his weapons are part of it? This anxiety lingers in the poems of the *Prison* sequence, and I suspect that it informs Tranströmer’s choice of the haiku form. Perhaps the haiku’s ties to meditation, and the purging of self-consciousness that attends it, could sidestep the carceral-inflected psychological machinery that Tranströmer brings to bear. Bashō’s concept of *karumi*, roughly translated as “lightness,” offers a solution to Tranströmer’s problem. The British Haiku Society, in “English Haiku: A Composite View” (2002), offers a working definition of “lightness” that helps explain why haiku are so appealing for Tranströmer’s project: “[Lightness] does not mean that haiku aspires to be ‘light verse’, flippant; rather, that the haiku poet should be able to present all aspects of life, both joyous and tragic (even his own death!), in a sober, interesting, but disinterested way.” With this principle in mind, an effective haiku is one that looks at things without bringing along additional philosophical or methodological machinery—such as the psychologist’s modes of viewing human behavior. Writing haiku, then, indicates a step away from the

problematic associations of psychology. The use of haiku quite possibly bespeaks skepticism or hostility toward a psychologically-governed poetry, as well. Regardless, the haiku form, between its aesthetics and its ideology, seems to be Tranströmer's most powerful poetic ally in his confrontation with the carceral system, and the haiku in *Prison* all fix a critical gaze upon the titular institution.

The sequence opens with an image of a cherished childhood ritual made oppressive and disappointing by the prison's impermeable barriers:

Eleven-a-side
sudden dismay—the ball's gone
right over the wall. (45)³

In the first line, the mention of eleven players on each side suggests a soccer game, perhaps like the kind one would see in a schoolyard at recess. Besides simply being a popular diversion among children and adults alike in Europe, the selection of this sport is especially relevant because of how the game makes use of boundary lines. When the ball is kicked out of bounds in a soccer match, it is not the same kind of letdown one finds in sports like gridiron football or baseball, where play is halted and the game's action must restart. In soccer, the ball's escape from bounds signifies a far more climactic moment, depending upon who was the last person to touch the ball. It presages a shift in momentum, stalling one side's offense and giving a spark to the other; or else it might indicate an oncoming corner kick. (To add a bit of anecdotal evidence, too, I do not think I have ever watched a soccer match where a ball kicked out of bounds did not cause the audience to cheer.) Yet the moment that Tranströmer captures dispels any expectation of joy. The positioning of "sudden dismay" makes it refer to both teams, even though one side would have cause to rejoice under normal circumstances. The rest of the haiku explains why everybody is downhearted: "the ball's gone / right over the wall."

3. All the English translations of Tranströmer's prison haiku are by Robin Fulton, from *The Great Enigma: New Collected Poems* (2006).

Not only has the ball exited the bounds of play, but it has also left the bounds of the prison. We can infer that the game has effectively been concluded, and what begins as a momentary distraction from imprisonment comes to a grinding halt as the oppressive prison environment re-asserts itself. The haiku's final image is the wall, playing on the concept of boundaries. The wall here is the boundary that cannot be crossed; the marker of a milieu that cannot be escaped, either physically or mentally. The emergence of the prison setting shatters the image of innocent childhood fun that the first line suggests, and yet its sudden appearance does not exactly impugn the innocence of the youngsters. The phrasing of the haiku does little to suggest they are hardened criminals; if anything, the interruption of their game makes them seem more childlike, more sympathetic.

Tranströmer's strategy of rendering the inmates in all their childishness recurs in the second haiku, as well, depicting a decidedly juvenile response to boredom. If the first haiku is meant to show one pastime available to the young prisoners, the second haiku shows the sad lack of alternative distractions:

More noise than need be
just to startle time into
getting a move on. (45)

Here we have the eternal complaint of parents, teachers, and all those who share spaces with people far younger than themselves: the incessant, excessive noise. Tranströmer begins the haiku as if he is about to admonish the young inmates to quiet down, much like the stereotypical study hall monitor. Yet Tranströmer abruptly reverses the expected disciplinarian attitude in the second and third lines, providing an understandable motive for the obstreperous behavior. The noise is made in hopes of "startling time" as if it were some kind of animal, making it take flight and "get a move on." In other words, the inmates are bored in their current confines. The noise they produce is a survival strategy—perhaps to speed the passing of

a single day, perhaps to speed the arrival of their release date. In either case, the haiku suggests that not enough is being done to keep the youths in a healthy mindset. Furthermore, it hints that the inmates' misbehavior, inside the prison or out of it, might be for want of mental stimulation. It seems like a knock against the structure of the prison in either instance, for incarcerating and inflicting boredom upon a young offender is hardly a viable reformation strategy when boredom is the primary motive behind their transgressions in the first place. Of course, the prospect of "motive" implies that there is some volition behind every action. Tranströmer complicates that causal notion in his next haiku, questioning how much free will the inmates had in the first place:

Wrongly spelled, those lives—
loveliness remains, the way
tattoo-marks remain. (45)

The first line seems to introduce the question of fate, suggesting that the inmates are the victims of some larger scheme over which they have no control. If every action has been written, theirs were "wrongly spelled," consigning them to an undesirable destiny. Whatever happiness they still enjoy, whatever "loveliness remains," nonetheless seems contaminated by their unfortunate fates. Its comparison to "tattoo-marks" in the third line likens their former joy to a stain on the skin that can be spotted from afar, emphasizing their current misfortunes.

Tranströmer continues his strategy of humanizing the inmates, portraying them in a similarly sympathetic light in the rest of the poems. In another haiku, Tranströmer plays upon prejudices his readers might have toward the inmates, foiling their expectations of criminal intent. With an opening line that seems to promise a sensational, climactic confrontation later on, Tranströmer turns the tables on the reader by presenting a docile, subdued youth whose actual delinquency is called into question:

When the runaway
 was caught he'd gathered pockets—
 full of chanterelles. (45)

The opening line introduces us to our main character, an escapee. Immediately, Tranströmer channels the fear inherent in all reports of prison breaks: that the runaway will return immediately to his criminal ways. The second line uses that assumption to build tension. The runaway has “gathered pockets,” so perhaps he has gone on a spree of thievery? The third line, however, complicates the image of the hardened criminal, and indeed makes it ridiculous. The seeming pickpocket has not stolen anything; he has only filled his pockets with edible mushrooms. Chanterelles, mushrooms of vibrant color and flavor, can be gathered in many Scandinavian forests, making it unlikely that the runaway has pilfered them from a market. The question is why he has collected so many of them. Maybe he has been on the run for days, and needs a source of nutrients to survive. Maybe he is simply tired of prison fare, and the want of better food has driven him to break out and scavenge in the forest. Either way, he hardly comes across as the dangerous criminal Tranströmer’s audience expects, and his capture further downplays any threat he might have posed. The reader is invited to wonder why they looked upon the runaway as a pariah in the first place—especially if his motives are as innocuous as looking for something to eat. The doubt that this haiku instills in the reader casts some aspersions on the conduct of the prison.

The portrait of the prison apparatus grows a bit more pointed in the next three haiku in the sequence, where a series of laconic, measured observations portray the prison as some kind of otherworldly blight. As if in answer to Bashō’s water sounds, Tranströmer brings us the far less serene sounds of the prison:

Din from the workshops
 and the watchtower’s heavy steps
 perplexed the forest. (45)

The image seems fairly value-neutral until Tranströmer drops the word “perplexed” in the final line. The verb tells us that the forest—and the natural world it symbolizes – does not know what to make of the prison’s noises. By extension, it also suggests that the natural world cannot fathom the prison, either. The prison appears here as something unnatural; not solely artificial, but rather, something against nature altogether. Tranströmer pulls the prison even farther away from nature in a clever distortion of the *kigo* in his next poem:

The tall doors swing back.
We’re inside the prison yard
in a new season. (46)

The *kigo*, or “seasonal word,” is something of a poetic fiat in haiku (Bowers vii), for it is a marker of time that helps establish the setting for the poem, conveying the season in which the haiku takes place without having to resort to additional syllables. Tranströmer’s poem taps into the idea of seasons in its third line, but conscientiously avoids any specific seasonal marker, thwarting the typical time-measuring function of the *kigo*. The prison in this haiku becomes a chamber isolated from the flow of time, revealing the change of season only when it opens its doors. As a result, the prison is detrimental to the inmates’ experience of time. All seasons seem the same in prison, eliminating the pleasure to be found in the change of season, and piling on the monotony that Tranströmer has already shown to be harmful earlier in the haiku sequence. Similarly, without seasons to help measure the passage of time, the inmates appear trapped in an eternal present, unable to determine how much longer they must serve their sentences. In the next haiku, the prison’s nightmarish divorce from the world becomes so obvious that it can be observed from a distance:

The wall lamps are lit—
the night-flier sees a smudge
of unreal brightness. (46)

After dark, when the lights must be turned on, somebody flying overhead with a bird's-eye view of the prison sees a "smudge" on the landscape—a word connoting an imperfection, a stain, a blight. Despite being a source of light—which is conventionally associated with beneficial ideas like guidance, knowledge, or hope—the prison receives a negative treatment. Furthermore, it is described as being a blight "of unreal brightness," again emphasizing the prison's unnatural aspects. The fantastic appearance Tranströmer ascribes to the prison in these three haiku makes for a pointed critique. If the prison is supposed to reform, and better equip its inmates for interacting with the "real world" outside, how helpful can its approach truly be when the prison itself is so unlike that world?

In this vein, concerns about the inmates' futures—or their lack of futures—permeate the final two haiku of *Prison*, where Tranströmer turns moments of great vulnerability into genuine questions about what the future might hold. The penultimate poem affords us a glimpse into the minds of sleeping prisoners during a brief night scene:

An enormous truck
rumbles past at night. The dreams
of inmates tremble. (46)⁴

At first glance, the haiku is an image of transferred kinetic energy, where the seismic passing of a large truck rattles the dreams of sleeping inmates like plates in a cupboard. It borders on playful, toying with the impossibility of an immaterial dream being shaken by a change in the material world. Yet the ambiguous word choices in this poem complicate an otherwise straightforward interpretation. "Dreams" in this instance could mean the visions that surface during sleep, but the word could as easily indicate the hopes and aspirations for the future that sustain one's spirits in the present. Whatever these

4. Probably a reference to Buson's poem "The heavy wagon / rumbles by; / The peony quivers." (translation by R. H. Blyth.

“dreams” are, they have an air of fragility about them: they “tremble,” as if they are something that could fall and shatter, or as if they are timid creatures that quake with fear as the mammoth truck passes. Tranströmer thus delivers an image of enervated hope, where the inmates’ momentary escapes from prison life—in sleep or in looking toward the future—are shown to be fragile and weak. The final haiku in the sequence pins the blame for this tenuous situation on the prison itself, ending with a tableau with warped parental undertones:

The boy drinks milk and
sleeps securely in his cell,
a mother of stone. (46)

From the outset, the poem forces us to forget labels like “inmate” or “prisoner” or “runaway” – here we have only a “boy,” as juvenile and innocent a moniker as possible. His youthful vulnerability is made all the more apparent when we catch him drinking milk before bed, an old home remedy for sleepless children. The second line of the poem puts the boy to sleep in his cell, but raises a few questions with its adverbial use of “securely.” For whom is the situation secure? Is the outside world made secure by the boy’s seclusion in his cell, or is he the one who feels secure inside the cell? The final line suggests that the latter is the case, for describing the cell as “a mother of stone” hints that the prison has taken on a motherly role for the boy. The prison has become his home, and is the place where he feels most secure. Even so, it is a cold mother, since stone hardly connotes the warmth and support typically associated with the maternal. If the prison has assumed a parental role for him, the mention of the stone mother suggests something unnatural about what has transpired. Whatever relationship exists between the boy and the prison, it does not seem like a healthy one. In this regard, some further remarks from Foucault are instructive:

[T]he delinquent is not outside the law; he is, from the very outset, in the law, at the very heart of the law, or at least in the midst of those mechanisms that transfer the individual imperceptibly from discipline to the law, from deviation to offence . . . The delinquent is an institutional product. (301)

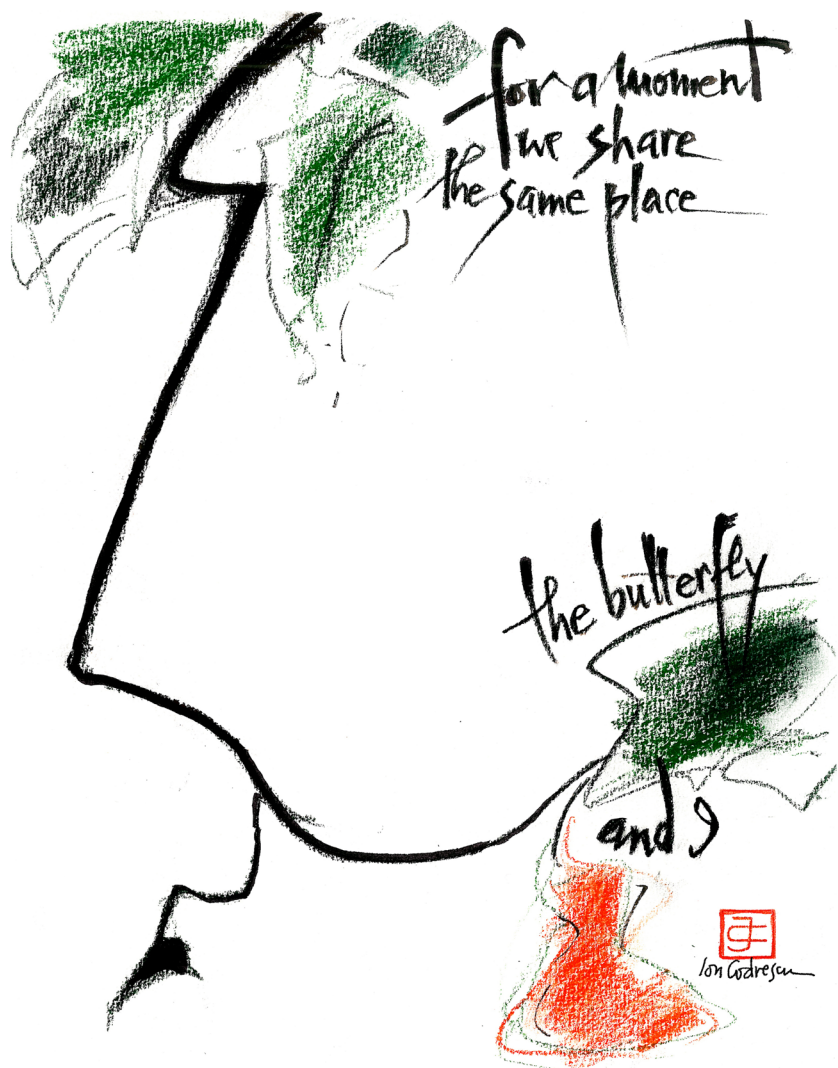
For Foucault, there really is no such thing as an “outlaw,” because that label only arises as a consequence of there being a law declaring that person has done something illegal. In other words, nobody is a criminal until a law exists to criminalize their actions. Consequently, the notion of a “delinquent”—a youth whose behaviors point toward a tendency to commit minor crimes—is a product of a particular disciplinary system. No wonder, then, that the boy in Tranströmer’s final haiku thinks of the prison as his home and the cell as his mother. They are physical manifestations of the institution that brought him into being; they are thus the only home he truly knows.

In the end, Tranströmer’s *Prison* haiku may not function precisely like conventional haiku, but this does not reduce their haiku quality. They certainly seem less interested in the world beyond our own, and more focused on interpreting the world as it is. Yet the concise interpretations that Tranströmer’s haiku offer contain the same piercing insight as the haiku moment, and they arrive with a similar flash. After all, an instant of expertly-delivered social critique that awakens the reader unto a greater social problem is, in its way, comparable to the moment of awakening that accompanies the best haiku. Tranströmer’s haiku, then, are poems with an agenda, using an aesthetic of discipline to show us what discipline ought to be.



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"for a moment"

Ion Codrescu

Shangri-La

James W. Hackett's Life in Haiku

CHARLES TRUMBULL

ABSTRACT: James W. Hackett catapulted to international fame in 1964 when he took top honors in the first Japan Air Lines haiku competition. Taken under the wing of R. H. Blyth, he shared the conviction that Zen and haiku are inseparable. A collection of Hackett's haiku was included in Blyth's *History of Haiku*, and a major edition of Hackett's haiku was published in 1968, but then he retreated from the limelight for fifteen years. He surfaced only briefly when his corpus of haiku was republished in 1993, but he generally remained aloof from the American haiku community. Hackett was unquestionably a pioneer of American haiku. In the mid-1960s, his haiku were among the best being written, but over time they became marginalized. Most Western haiku poets now reject his central tenet of an ineluctable Zen-haiku relationship. In this essay I present Hackett's biography and bibliography, discuss his haiku aesthetic as laid out in his *ars poetica* essay "That Art Thou," and explore his haiku poetics and diction.

An abandoned board —
 shaping, sunning, becoming
 a Shangri-la¹ for bugs.

[Hackett, *Bug Haiku*]

INTRODUCTION

Among the more problematic poets associated with the beginnings of the American haiku movement is James W. Hackett. He catapulted to international fame in 1964 when a haiku of his took top honors among thousands submitted in the first Japan Air Lines haiku competition. Hackett, a keen student of Zen, learned of haiku from a book of R.H. Blyth's given to him by a friend.² Hackett sent his work to Blyth, with whom he had begun a correspondence grounded in both men's conviction that Zen and haiku are inseparable. Blyth was impressed and included a selection of Hackett's work in his 1964

1. Shangri-La is a utopia featured in British author James Hilton's bestselling novel, *Lost Horizon* (London: Macmillan, 1933; New York: Morrow, 1936). According to *Wikipedia*, for example, "In the book, 'Shangri-La' is a mystical, harmonious valley, gently guided from a lamasery, enclosed in the western end of the Kunlun Mountains. Shangri-La has become synonymous with any earthly paradise but particularly a mythical Himalayan utopia—a permanently happy land, isolated from the outside world. In the novel *Lost Horizon*, the people who live at Shangri-La are almost immortal, living years beyond the normal lifespan. The word also evokes the imagery of exoticism of the Orient. The story of Shangri-La is based on the concept of Shambhala, a mystical city in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition." Accessed Dec. 1, 2009.

A version of this essay was presented at the Haiku Society of America Quarterly Meeting in Eugene, Ore., March 7, 2009. The paper, minus the sections "Hackett on Zen and Haiku" and "Hackett on Writing Haiku," was published in *Frogpond* 33:1 (2010), 80–92 and 33:2 (2010), 88–102, and later, with some edits, in *evolution: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku* 2010. Corrections and comments are welcomed by the author at trumbullc@comcast.net.

2. John Budan. "That Art Thou: An Interview with James W. Hackett." *Woodnotes* 30 (autumn 2006), 34–39.

two-volume *History of Haiku*. Four years later a major collection of Hackett's work was published in Japan. At this point, however, Hackett virtually disappeared, apparently publishing nothing and making no public appearances for fifteen years. He surfaced briefly in 1993 at the time his collection of haiku was republished in America, then submerged again for another ten years until he began to become moderately active in non-American haiku circles. In fact, Hackett early on was aloof from the American haiku community. He was never a member of the Haiku Society of America or any local California haiku group and has not published a single new haiku in any American haiku journal since the early 1970s.

What are we to make of such an enigmatic figure? Hackett was clearly one of the founding fathers of English-language haiku and was recognized as a pioneer of American haiku by figures as august as R. H. Blyth and Harold G. Henderson. At the time of his greatest fame, in the mid-1960s, his haiku were unquestionably among the best being written outside Japan. Over the years, bits and pieces of Hackett's haiku aesthetic became known, and they have since been gathered into an essay entitled "That Art Thou," which was published on Hackett's website in recent years. He never aggressively promoted his Zen-infused view of what true haiku poetry should be, and because of his long, largely self-imposed isolation, Hackett's own haiku were marginalized. In the meantime most Western haiku poets rejected the notion of an ineluctable relationship between Zen and haiku.

In this essay I would like to bring out the high points in Hackett's biography and bibliography, discuss his haiku aesthetic, and indicate some of the salient characteristics of his haiku poetics and diction. I should stress at the outset that I have never met Hackett nor have I corresponded with him. This assessment of his life and works is based on the public record—his books, journal publications, and his website—augmented by secondary sources and observations from haiku poets who have known him personally or worked with him on haiku projects.

BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY³

James William Hackett was born August 6, 1929, in Seattle, Washington. He attended the University of Washington, where, as he says, he earned an “honors degree in history and philosophy.”⁴ He later obtained a graduate degree in art history from the University of Michigan.

A serious accident in his youth resulted in a redirection of Hackett’s life. Details are fuzzy, and Hackett’s own descriptions move quickly from sparse facts to mysticism and even melodrama, as in this excerpt from a 2002 speech:

[A]t this time, I suffered a life-threatening injury that profoundly changed my values and direction. This trauma was an apocalyptic experience in which I met death with each breath, and every live moment was an epiphany. In a baptism of blood I became directly aware that the Way of Zen and Tao was ever present, in a NOW that is Eternal. Having survived, I sought redemption for taking life for granted. I resolved to somehow express my new-found love of life, and to honor the omnipresent miracle of Creation.⁵

3. Details of Hackett’s life are based on various published biographical materials, notably the author blurbs on the covers of his books; biosketches in anthologies, including Cor van den Heuvel, ed., *The Haiku Anthology: English Language Haiku by Contemporary American and Canadian Poets* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1974); and Jerry Ball, Garry Gay, and Tom Tico, eds., *The San Francisco Haiku Anthology* (Windsor, Calif.: Smythe-Waithe Press, 1992); the biographical article by Debra Woolard Bender, “James W. Hackett (1929–).” *World Haiku Review* 2:2 (2002), republished on *The Haiku and Zen World of J. W. Hackett* [hereinafter Hackett website]; and conversations and correspondence with friends and professional associates of Hackett’s, including Christopher Herold, Michael Dylan Welch, Gayle Bull, William J. Higginson, Cor van den Heuvel, Origa (Olga Hooper), Ikuyo Yoshimura, and David Cobb.

4. James W. Hackett, *A Traveler’s Haiku: Original Poems in English* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 2004).

5. James W. Hackett, “R. H. Blyth and J. W. Hackett,” keynote speech, World Haiku Festival, Akita, September 20–22, 2002, on the Hackett

Or again:

Spiritually reborn after a serious accident in the 1950s, my reverence for the reality of this eternal NOW led me to a Tao-Zen way of life. Finding Japanese haiku could best express my new-found love of this moment—directly perceived—I began to adapt it to English. For me, haiku has always been more than a poetic form, or even a literary pursuit, but rather a Way of living awareness—an art of Zen.⁶

It seems most likely that shortly after he graduated from college, Hackett cut himself, possibly intentionally. Severe lacerations developed sepsis and caused him to be hospitalized for a lengthy period and restricted in motor skills thereafter. In any event, this event marked his turn toward the Tao, Zen, and, later, haiku.

Hackett married in 1953. His wife Patricia was a music teacher with interests in musical anthropology. She taught music at all levels, elementary through university, until her retirement as professor of music at San Francisco State University.⁷ They had one daughter, and Hackett was always surrounded by numerous pets—dogs, cats, birds, fish—that became frequent subjects for his haiku. I have found no evidence that Hackett ever held a full-time job, possibly because of disability; he seems to have been largely supported by his wife. Patricia Hackett died in August 2014.

Hackett's residence was usually given as San Francisco in the 1950s and '60s. Later he and Patricia lived in what he dubbed a "garden house" he named "Zen View" at La Honda, California, in the Santa Cruz Mountains midway between San Jose and the Pacific. Nearby lived three other poets, Christopher Thorsen, David LeCount, and Christopher Herold. Herold worked in Hackett's garden for a period of time. After Patricia's retirement in 1998, the Hacketts moved

website.

6. "James W. Hackett," in *San Francisco Haiku Anthology*, 185.

7. A short sketch about Patricia Hackett appears on the web page for her book *The Musical Classroom* on the Barnes & Noble website.

to Maui, Hawaii, settling—where else?—in the village of Haiku. Among their neighbors was poet W. S. Merwin.

EARLY WORK

Hackett was encouraged along his path into Zen and haiku by two of the founding fathers of English-language haiku, R. H. Blyth and Harold G. Henderson. Blyth especially was a strong proponent of a close connection between haiku and Zen. In the biographical sketch he provided for the first edition of *The Haiku Anthology*,⁸ Hackett wrote that he discovered haiku in 1954 through the writings of Blyth and Alan Watts. Apparently by the late 1950s Hackett had written a number of haiku and began to look for opportunities to publish them. Most likely through an announcement in the *Saturday Review*, Hackett learned of plans to publish a new journal, to be called *American Haiku* and be the first publication outside Japan devoted to haiku.⁹ Hackett's work was very much in evidence in the first issues of *American Haiku*: 11 of his haiku were published in the first issue and 8 more in the second (both dated 1963). These included (in issue 1:1) these now-classic haiku that appeared in print for the first time:

The fleeing sandpipers
turn about suddenly
and chase back the sea!

Bitter morning:
sparrows sitting
without necks.

and this one, which was awarded First Prize in the maiden issue:

8. Van den Heuvel, ed., *The Haiku Anthology* (1974).

9. *American Haiku* was published in Platteville, Wis., from 1963 to 1968, with various issues edited by James and Gayle Bull, Don Eulert, Clement Hoyt, and others.

Searching on the wind,
 the hawk's cry
 is the shape of its beak.

RELATIONS WITH R. H. BLYTH

Without question, Hackett's relationship with R. H. Blyth was the defining influence in his writing and haiku aesthetic. Hackett began to read Blyth's books in 1954, during his early studies of Zen, and at a certain point, probably in 1959 (Hackett writes that he was "not yet thirty"), he sent a letter to Blyth in Japan inviting a critique of his work. According to Hackett, he corresponded with Blyth for five years, until the spring of 1964.

Five letters from Blyth to Hackett are posted on Hackett's website.¹⁰ The one identified as "First Letter" is dated simply "late 1950's," and the "Final Letter" is dated "[April? 1964]." Blyth usually addressed him formally as "Mr. Hackett" and signed his own letters "RHB." To my knowledge Hackett has not made public any of his letters to Blyth. In one place he says that according to the family, Blyth did not retain his correspondence, so if Hackett did not keep copies himself, which seems likely, they may be lost. It is not clear how many letters the two men exchanged in these five years or with what regularity or frequency.

Hackett explains why he wrote to Blyth:

Significantly, it was not Blyth's awesome erudition or his intellectual genius that caused me to contact him. I did so out of respect for his spiritual-aesthetic approach to the haiku experience. Blyth possessed an acuity and spiritual understanding I found in no other translator. . . .

After some six months of writing, I sent a collection of my haiku poems in English to Dr. Blyth, and in a cover letter told him that an unusual, Zen-revealing sentence in one of his books caused me to seek his counsel. His sentence read:

There's more significance in the sound of the nib I'm now writing with than anything I could say.

10. Hackett website.

Already in the “First Letter,” however, Blyth refers to “the volume you sent,” suggesting that Hackett actually sent his manuscript at the very outset. In any event, in that letter Blyth proceeds to offer a rather stout critique of some of Hackett’s haiku:

I feel that (the) one fault of your verses is that they contain too much material, that is, you must make them more simple. From this point of view, the following is excessively complicated and intellectual.

A bright quiet night;
Blown by the moon, a pine branch
Rests against the wall.

The first line is unnecessary. In the following there are too many epithets

The blocked line of ants
Broadened to brief chaos . . . then
Smoothly went round.

Later, Blyth comments on

The wise child brought me
Such a precious birthday gift . . .
This old withered orange

“Wise,” “Such,” and “precious,” and “old” are all worse than unnecessary.

Blyth plunged directly in to the 5–7–5 discussion, observing to the young poet, “The only thing to do, it seems to me, is something revolutionary for you, — either to forget the 5, 7, 5 in English, or do what the Japanese does, pad out the verse with meaningless syllables.” In signing off, Blyth writes, “I suppose you are going to publish your verses. If so, I will be glad to go over them one by one, mutilating and disinfecting and extirpating them.”

The second of the Blyth letters, dated February 15, 1960, that Hackett includes on his website suggests that Hackett had been

circulating his haiku manuscript to publishers, but without success. “I too feel troubled at the fact that your works cannot be published at present. I myself believe in you and your haiku. As I have said before, I think your verses as good as, and sometimes better than those of the higher ranks of haiku poets in the past.” The last sentence of this paragraph certainly cheered Hackett. He used it in a composite of extracts from Blyth’s letters as endorsements for his later books. In this letter, moreover, Blyth wrote that he was “going to put the best of the verses . . . at the end of my 5th volume of *Haiku* which I am working on now.” This became his two-volume *History of Haiku*.¹¹

A letter dated May 31 has “1964” in square brackets, apparently added by Hackett, but it must have been written a year or two earlier than 1964, if only because the “Last letter”—see below—was tentatively dated “[April? 1964].” This letter was sent to cover a collection, which Hackett says has not survived, of his haiku that Blyth had marked with symbols to indicate his reactions. Blyth’s intention to publish a selection of Hackett’s work in his *History of Haiku* was again mentioned, and an inkling was given as to why he was doing so:

I want to show people, I mean Japanese people, that there are Americans who can out-do them in their own field, when they have been shown how to play the game. . . . Or to put it another way, I would like to get rid of nationalism in culture as well as other things, and have Esquimaux play Othello and Hottentots excel in the organ fugues of Bach.

In Blyth’s last letter, tentatively dated by Hackett “April? 1964,” he wrote, “Your letter fortunately arrived in time to do what I suggested before, introduce your work in Volume II of *The History of Haiku*. This is all set in type, but after telephoning about it to Mr. Nakatsuchi [of Hokuseido Press], he was more than willing to have an appendix

11. R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku. Volume 1: From the Beginnings up to Issa. Volume 2: From Issa up to the Present* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1963–64). Hackett’s haiku appear on pages 352–61.

added. . . .” The chronology of publication would suggest that Hackett’s final communication to Blyth was written within a few months before April 1964.

Hackett’s haiku, together with Blyth’s consideration of haiku and Zen in English-language poetry, appear in the last chapter of his *History of Haiku* (II:351–63). Blyth explained: “The following thirty [actually thirty-one] verses are chosen, not altogether at random, from a forthcoming book of haiku by J. W. Hackett of San Francisco. They are in no way imitations of Japanese haiku, nor literary diversions. They are (aimed at) the Zen experience, the realising, the making real in oneself of the thing-in-itself, impossible to rational thought, but possible, ‘all poets believe’ in experience.” Curiously, the format Blyth used for Hackett’s work was different from that for the Japanese haiku in the *History*. Hackett’s were set in all small caps. Why? Perhaps to call attention to these verses or differentiate them from “real” haiku? Four of the haiku selected by Blyth were among those that had been published in *American Haiku* 1:1 and 1:2, though this was not acknowledged in Blyth’s book.

The “forthcoming book of haiku” that Blyth had referred to saw print as Hackett’s *Haiku Poetry*,¹² a 5” x 7” paperback containing 150 haiku, including all but one of those that had appeared in the Blyth appendix. The book was published in 1964 by Hokuseido Press—Blyth’s publisher in Japan—and, as made clear in Blyth’s final letter to Hackett, Blyth had clearly used his influence to gain publication, a mark of his esteem for Hackett. There was some delay in the publication (as noted in *American Haiku* 2:1), as it was advertised and reviewed in *American Haiku* 2 as to be published in 1963. The brief review said in part: “[Hackett’s] wide representation in [*American Haiku* 1] established him as one of the foremost practitioner-authorities on haiku in English.” and went on to say that book was “necessary reading to anyone seriously interested in haiku in English.” The book was to be distributed by *American Haiku*.

12. J. W. Hackett, *Haiku Poetry* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1964).

I have dwelled at length on the chronology of the first publication of Hackett's haiku because the events of 1963–64 caused a major rift with the editors of *American Haiku*, James Bull and Clement Hoyt, and probably the fledgling American haiku movement in general. In Blyth's final letter to Hackett he consoled the young poet,

As for the foreword to your book itself, I am very willing to write one, but after reading Mr. XXX's shocking letter, I feel that we should be imitating him if I scratch your back in public. I think your book should stand by itself, and would be only weakened if the Archangel Michael wrote a foreword.

After I read XXX's letter, I felt miserable all day, not that I felt sorry for you, but for the fact that such a person exists. But still we know that all Kings and Emperors and Presidents and Prime Ministers and Heads of Universities and Companies and Popes and bishops and priests and even editors are liars and hypocrites and robbers, and, as Christ said, not one of these "rich" men shall set a foot into Heaven—so why feel miserable? You may say, "They all stand (or fall) together, so why should not we?" That's just the point, and just the difference between us and them. We stand each many by himself, in the style of Thoreau. (But I will write the foreword if you like, just as I sign my books for people as they like.)

The person designated as "XXX" was Clement Hoyt, who had taken over the editorship of *American Haiku* for the two 1964 issues. The recipient of Hoyt's letter is not entirely clear, but it seems that it went to Hackett, who sent a copy to Blyth. The letter may no longer exist (especially if the original was sent to Blyth), but certainly had to do with Hoyt's reaction to the news that Hackett had completed the deal to publish his book *Haiku Poetry* with Hokuseido. The manuscript had been developed in part with the help of the *American Haiku* editors, and they had agreed to publish this volume—it would have been their first book of haiku (as well as Hackett's, of course). *American Haiku* editor James Bull was deeply saddened by the experience, but Hoyt, a man known for his strong opinions and lack of reticence in expressing them, was furious at what he considered

Hackett's double-dealing. Original haiku by Hackett were never again published in *American Haiku*—in fact, only one or twice were his haiku even used as examples in essays in the journal. Sportingly, Hackett's *Haiku Poetry* was mentioned among the recommended books of haiku through the 1964 issues (but as being published in 1963 by Hokuseido), and for one or two issues thereafter as being available from Japan Publications, Inc. or from the author directly.

Not only did Hackett no longer publish in *American Haiku*, with two small exceptions (17 poems that were included among a collection of 28 haiku in Leroy Kanterman's *Haiku West* issues 1:1, 2:1, and 2:1 (1967–69) and three haiku that accompanied an interview with Hackett in *Woodnotes* 30 [1996]), no new haiku of Hackett's appeared in any American haiku journal from 1964 on. He did start to publish again in non-American journals in the 1990s, but only after 25 years of silence.

A brief but balanced review by Gustave Keyser of Hackett's book *Haiku Poetry* appeared in *American Haiku* 3:1 (1965, 37). Keyser wrote, "Mr. Hackett successfully demonstrates that true haiku can be produced in English," and later, "For the most part, Hackett adheres to the objectivity, clarity, and simplicity he advocates; but sometimes his immersion in Zen mysticism leads him astray into statements marked by cultist subjectivity."

It was this devotion of Hackett's to Zen over haiku that was the crux of the argument between him and the *American Haiku* editors. Hoyt—himself a haiku and senryu poet and student of Zen under master Nyogen Senzaki since 1937—struck the next blow with a long essay in *American Haiku* 4:1 (1966, 20–28) titled "Zen in Haiku," which, without mentioning Hackett, was clearly aimed at him; rather the direct attack was targeted at Blyth. Hoyt warned against the fallacy that "weighty" scholarship had come to be understood as "profound" or "authoritative" and pointed out that of the ten books of haiku scholarship that had been published in English by that time, six fat tomes were by Blyth. Blyth's volumes were heavy with discussions

of Zen in haiku, whereas the other scholars—Henderson (two books), Kenneth Yasuda, and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science—devoted a few pages at most to the issue and generally took a measured view of the influence of Zen on haiku and vice versa. Even Japanese Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki, a mentor of Blyth's and the person most credited with exposing the link between Zen and haiku, was not as extreme as Blyth in linking the two. Hoyt went on to detail some of the confusing discrepancies between various of Blyth's explanations of the relationship between Zen and haiku, such as these, which he singled out from the Preface to the first volume of Blyth's *Haiku*, with page numbers in parentheses:

- “Haiku are to be understood from the Zen point of view” (iii)
- “the word ‘Zen’ is used in two different ways and the reader must decide for himself which is intended” (iii)
- “I understand Zen and poetry to be practically synonyms” (v)
- “haiku is haiku” (iv)
- “[Haiku] has little or nothing to do with poetry, so-called, or Zen, or anything else” (iv)
- “If we say then that haiku is a form of Zen, we must not assert that haiku belongs to Zen, but that Zen belongs to haiku. In other words, our notions of Zen must be changed to fit haiku, not vice-versa.” (v)
- “if there is ever imagined to be any conflict between Zen and the poetry of haiku, the Zen goes overboard” (v)
- haiku “is a way of life”; “it is a religion” (iv)
- “Haiku is a kind of satori” (vii)

Hoyt ends his essay as follows:

It is apparent that Blyth's theories about Zen in haiku do not stand up. By their very nature, they cannot endure, except as others make him the High Hierophant of yet another sect of Zen (there are already several sects), the Patriarch of a new haiku-religion. Blyth's monumental

six-volume encyclopedia of haiku is invaluable—but only if the reader runs a mental blue pencil through every line about Zen, except when the word is used in a historical sense.

To the Zen masters for Zen; to the haiku authorities for haiku: by “weight,” by authority, by plain common sense, each separate study will lead to an inescapable conclusion—forget Zen in haiku.

This essay probably followed the general outlines of the letter two years earlier that had upset Hackett and Blyth so much. Hoyt’s attack on Blyth, a man whom Hackett idolized, was surely deeply distressing for the young American.

JAL CONTEST 1964

James Hackett was captured in the spotlight in 1964 and suddenly became the top haiku poet in America. In that year, in connection with the 1964 Olympics, Japan Air Lines organized a haiku contest in the United States. Seventeen radio stations in different parts of the country received a total of some 41,000 haiku entries from which the five best in each region were selected and submitted for a final judging. The contest was judged by Alan Watts, the preeminent Zen teacher and expert in America in the 1950s and ’60s. Watts wrote in an introduction to *Haiku ’64*, the JAL contest compendium that contained the 85 semifinal haiku, “Haiku represents the ultimate refinement of a long tradition in Far Eastern literature which derived its inspiration from Zen Buddhism.” Clearly Watts and Hackett were on the same wavelength in terms of haiku aesthetics.

Hackett first read Watts in the mid-1950s, and the two men were acquainted through correspondence at least as early as 1963. Hackett writes that he learned of Watts from the latter’s broadcasts on Pacifica radio and revealed in an interview that

[Watts] was always very kind to my work. Back in the 1960s, he read some of my haiku on his radio broadcast in San Francisco. He then suggested that haiku in English should make full use of poetic

figures of speech, as is common in poetry. After the broadcast, I wrote Alan a respectful but critical letter explaining that the haiku moment, like Zen, is not a symbol of anything else, and should never be treated metaphorically or allegorically.¹³

Mention of Watts raises a larger question too: in what way was Hackett involved in the “San Francisco Renaissance,” one of the most important crucibles of American haiku? One would assume that a young man vitally interested in Zen and living in San Francisco in the years after World War II would have been deeply immersed in the group of seekers and poets that was exploring Oriental culture and religion at the time. I can find no indication, however, that Hackett participated actively in the San Francisco Zen Center or other aspects of the Bay Area intellectual scene.¹⁴ Watts certainly knew Hackett’s work, and Watts’s endorsement appears on the back cover of several of Hackett’s books. In the biographical sketch that he provided to *The San Francisco Haiku Anthology*¹⁵ Hackett dubbed Watts (and Henderson) “friends of my work,” but it is unlikely that the two men were ever close. Thomas Merton, Aldous Huxley, and Jack Kerouac are among other literary and spiritual figures active in the period whose blurbs were used on Hackett’s books but who similarly seem not to have enjoyed a personal relationship with him.

In any event, prompted by a desire to travel to Japan and meet Blyth, Hackett entered the JAL contest. The now-iconic haiku that was the National Winner was one he had not originally intended to submit, but was suggested by his wife:¹⁶

13. Budan.

14. It is difficult to prove a negative proposition. Hackett was certainly not a leader of the San Francisco Zen students. He is not mentioned in Monica Furlong’s biography, *Zen Effects: The Life of Alan Watts* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1986), in Watts’s autobiography *In My Own Way* (New York: Pantheon, 1965), or in Jack Foley’s detailed “A California Timeline 1940–1999” in his *O Powerful Western Star: Poetry & Art in California* (Oakland, Calif.: Pantograph Press, 2000).

15. *San Francisco Haiku Anthology*.

16. James W. Hackett, “Why I Entered the 1964 Japan Airlines Contest”

A bitter morning:
 Sparrows sitting together
 Without any necks.

As we noted, this haiku had been published a year earlier in *American Haiku* 1:1 (1963) in a more succinct (and arguably superior) version:

Bitter morning
 sparrows sitting
 without necks.

It also appeared in Blyth's book in this version, but printed in small caps. Curiously, the text of this haiku that was included in Hackett's collection *Haiku Poetry* (1964) was the prizewinning version but with the Blyth-style indentations and small caps. Over the years at least seven versions, mostly with slight formatting or punctuation changes, have appeared.

The prize for winning the JAL contest was a trip to Japan, but this proved to be bittersweet compensation for Hackett. He later wrote, "I had been planning to pay my respects to Dr. Blyth in Japan. The ticket awarded by Japan Airlines in their first USA haiku contest was in my hand, and I eagerly looked forward to sharing silent tea with Blyth in his Oiso home. However, Dr. Blyth died on October 28, 1964, the same year in which I entered the JAL Haiku Contest primarily to visit him."¹⁷ According to the very laudatory biographical sketch of Hackett published by D. W. Bender in the online *World Haiku Review* (and included on Hackett's website),¹⁸ on his 1965 trip he also visited "Zen monasteries and temples, and their roshi and priests. Among them were Soen Nakagawa of Mishima City, and Sohaku Ogata of Kyoto who both felt that Hackett's 'way of haiku' was one of the best means for the true spirit of Zen to reach America."

Kō, autumn–winter 1992, 20.

17. Hackett, "Why I Entered."

18. Bender.

Second only to his correspondence with Blyth, Hackett valued his relations with Harold G. Henderson, from whom he received some 85 letters from 1960 to 1974. Bender writes, “Hackett also corresponded with American haiku scholar, translator and author, Harold Gould Henderson for almost eleven years and together with Blyth, these three pioneering men interacted and inspired one another through their common interests,” but she surely overstates their comity, as Henderson and Blyth’s relationship cooled in later years, probably precisely because of disagreements over the importance of Zen in Japanese haiku. Nonetheless, Henderson clearly thought that Hackett’s haiku were among the best being written. (This was not unqualified praise, however, as Henderson found most of the thousands of English-language haiku he had been sent “hopeless junk.”¹⁹) Henderson included for discussion three of Hackett’s signature haiku, as well as his twenty “Suggestions for Beginners and Others” in the 1965 booklet *Haiku in English*. In a letter reacting to the news of Blyth’s death at the end of 1964 Henderson also made clear that he thought Hackett to be Blyth’s heir-apparent. He wrote, “Willy-nilly—his mantle seems to have fallen on you. Not that you can be the form [firm?] prop that he was. But I hope that you will be willing to try to be.”²⁰ Willy-nilly, however, by the end of 1964, while Hackett’s star was nearing its apogee, his influence on the direction of English-language haiku was already diminishing.

THE BOOKS

J. W. Hackett’s first book, titled *Haiku Poetry* and published in Japan in 1964, contained 150 of his verses in the format Blyth had used in the *History*. As appendices Hackett included his twenty “Suggestions for the Writing of English Haiku” and a long spiritual poem, “Way Beyond Reason.” The entire body of his haiku, and the appendices, next appeared in four volumes (to suggest the four volumes of

19. *American Haiku* 1 (1963).

20. Harold G. Henderson to James W. Hackett, December 25, 1964, on Hackett website.

Blyth's *Haiku*?), also called *Haiku Poetry*.²¹ Volumes One and Three were printed in June 1968, Volume Two in July, and Volume Four in November, not by Hokuseido but by a new publisher, Japan Publications, Inc. Volume One contains the same 150 haiku as *Haiku Poetry* but formatted without the small caps and stair-stepped with initial capitals and terminal periods. Volumes Two, Three, and Four each have 198 new haiku in the same format, a few of which had appeared in *American Haiku* and one of which had been among the Blyth collection. These books are subtitled "Original Verse [or Poems] in English," a point he underscored in his Preface: "The poems in this series are original creations in English and are not translations of Japanese haiku," as books of English-language haiku were still quite rare.

A notice on the back cover of his 1968 books indicated that a compilation of all four volumes of *Haiku Poetry* was to be published in June 1969. The individual volumes underwent several printings at least through October 1969, when the promised compendium, titled *The Way of Haiku: An Anthology of Haiku Poems*, was issued.²² This volume contains all 744 haiku in the four-volume set.

Hackett's next three books were revisions and reworking of this basic corpus of work. In 1968 he selected 135 haiku, all but one published in his earlier books, and packaged them in a large-format book for children with two-color illustrations titled *Bug Haiku: Original Poems in English by J. W. Hackett*.²³ This is a charming book and in many ways Hackett's best because it has a unifying theme and an integrity that his other books lack.

With the publication of *Bug Haiku* and *The Way of Haiku*, Hackett slipped almost entirely out of the public eye. He apparently received

21. J. W. Hackett, *Haiku Poetry: Original Verse in English. Volumes One–Four* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1968).

22. James W. Hackett, *The Way of Haiku: An Anthology of Haiku Poetry* (San Francisco: Japan Publications, Inc., 1969).

23. J. W. Hackett, *Bug Haiku: Original Poems in English* (Tokyo: Japan Publications, Inc., 1968).

visitors at his garden home, including Kiyoshi and Kiyoko Tokutomi, the founders of the California-based Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, an event that was documented by Teruo Yamagata, now president of the Yukuharu Haiku Society in Japan, in *Haiku Journal*, volume 3 (1979);²⁴ however I am unable to document any other public activity or publication of new work for 15 years, although it is possible that during this time he was judging American entries in some of the JAL contests which had become international, biennial, and involving only children. Twelve of Hackett's earliest haiku were included by Cor van den Heuvel in the first edition of *The Haiku Anthology* in 1974 and were continued through the following two editions in 1986 and 1999.

Hackett's next blip on the radar came in 1983 with the publication of *The Zen Haiku and Other Zen Poems of J. W. Hackett*,²⁵ again by Japan Publications. This is one of only a few books I know that uses "Zen" twice in the title (Blyth did so too in his collection *Zen and Zen Classics*), underlining that Hackett considers his haiku to be "Zen haiku," something to be differentiated from haiku at large. This book contains 775 haiku, only 50 of which are previously unpublished. A few of the older haiku were revised, however, some of them quite extensively; for example, this one, which had appeared in *Way*:

Each rippling wind
 reflects upon the streambed
 its pattern of light. [*Way*, 192]

Winds play on the stream,
 designing the bed below
 with patterns of light . . . [*Zen Haiku*, 120]

[“Reflects” is an apparent typo in the original and I am not sure whether “reflects” or “refracts” is intended.] Most revisions are minor, however, and tend to improve the haiku:

24. Not seen.

25. J. W. Hackett, *The Zen Haiku and Other Zen Poems of J.W. Hackett* (Tokyo: Japan Publications, Inc., 1983).

Mountain meadow now
 is so full of spring wonders
 hawk eyes turn to rocks. [*Way*, 192]

Mountain meadow now
 is so tall with spring wonders,
 hawk eyes turn to rocks. [*Zen Haiku*, 165]

The cantankerous crow
 sleeps in a nest that's made
 of broken branches. [*HP3*, 6; *Way*, 122]

The cantankerous crow
 sleeps in a nest that's nothing
 but broken branches. [*Zen Haiku*, 120]

The front cover flap of the book sheds some light on Hackett's long silence and the rationale for bringing out a new book of old haiku: "For the past decade he has been writing longer forms of poetry: some mystical, some idyllic, and some similar to the nature poems of the Chinese." A large sampling of these longer poems is included in the book, and he appends as well his "Suggestions for Writing Haiku in English," now reduced to eighteen in number. In addition to a preface by Abbot Eido Tai Shimano of the Dai Bosatsu Zendo in New York state and Hackett's own "Author's Introduction" and "Acknowledgments," the book carries a "Foreword and Comments," the same text as appeared as a foreword in *The Way of Haiku*, plus some praiseful excerpts from letters by Blyth, who at this point is almost twenty years in his grave. Herewith, Hackett again retreated into his privacy and isolation for another nine years.

Seventeen of Hackett's haiku were included in the 1992 *San Francisco Haiku Anthology*. Hackett read from his *Zen Haiku and Other Zen Poems* and signed copies at the Kinokuniya Bookstore in San Francisco, on March 21, 1992. Garry Gay's review of the event seemed to praise but faintly: "The event was especially exciting as he

read many well-known and favorite haiku that are often talked about in haiku circles.”²⁶ Reportedly, Hackett is a strong reader and cuts an authoritative figure at the lectern. Audio samples of Hackett reading some of his longer poems are available on his website. Hackett was also in attendance at the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society’s Asilomar retreat September 9–12, 1993, where he gave a talk and slide show about his visits to Japan.

Other activities in the U.S. in the 1990s included judging the Timepieces haiku contests organized by Rengé /David Priebe in Los Angeles from at least 1993 through at least 1997 and several of the JAL children’s haiku contests. In the summer of 1993 he delivered the keynote address at the second Haiku North America conference in Livermore, Calif. On September 16, 1995, according to a note about the occasion in *Woodnotes* 26, Hackett read some of his published Zen haiku, plus 21 new haiku, as one of the features at the second reading in the Haiku City series, at Borders Books in San Francisco. In 1995 he also gave an interview to John Budan that was published in *Woodnotes* 30 (1996) and is cited here in several places. Ten of Hackett’s haiku, all published, were anthologized in André Duhaime’s *Haïku sans frontières* website in 1998.

TRAVELS AND FOREIGN CONNECTIONS

The past ten years have seen the re-emergence of Hackett as a grand old man of haiku—but now in an international context. In the 1990s and 2000s the Hacketts did a fair amount of traveling. In the Author’s Note to his most recent book, *A Traveler’s Haiku* (2004), Hackett includes a remarkably ironic rendering of the platitude “travel is so broadening”: “At its best, travel helps us transcend the insularity and hubris which can distort and limit our understanding of the world.” Apart from his visit to Japan in 1965, Hackett visited China and Japan in 1993, Romania in 1994, Western Europe in 1996, and Japan again in 2002. Places mentioned in his book also include India and Nepal, Egypt and North Africa, Canada, and 26. *Woodnotes* 12 (spring 1992) and 13 (summer 1992).

Mexico. He delivered keynote addresses—both of which excerpted material from his essay “That Art Thou”—at the International Haiku Festival—Romania in Constanța in September 1994²⁷ and the World Haiku Festival in Akita, Japan, in 2002. As he had done on earlier visits, in 2002 Hackett spent about three months in Japan mostly visiting temples. He also went to Blyth’s home in Oiso, met with members of Blyth’s family, and paid his respects at the graves of Blyth and Suzuki at Tōkeiji in Kita Kamakura.²⁸

Over Blyth’s grave:
an offering of spring rain,
muddy knees, and brow.²⁹

One might observe that from the beginning the style and diction of Hackett’s haiku in many ways seemed as British as they were American, so it is not surprising that he hit it off well with the top British haiku poets. In about 1990 Hackett made the acquaintance of James Kirkup and David Cobb of the British Haiku Society, and that year he was invited to lend his name and judging skills to a new BHS haiku contest, the first of which took place the following year. In 1994 he was in London in connection with the British Haiku Society’s publication of a book of readings from Blyth, *The Genius of Haiku*.³⁰ The BHS journal *Blithe Spirit* also published a short essay of Hackett’s, “Bashō and Nature,” in 1998.³¹ At his

27. “Resumé of THAT ART THOU: MY WAY OF HAIKU,” in *Albatros/Albatross* 4:1/2 (spring–summer / autumn–winter 1995), 5–9/9–13. See also the note of thanks from Patricia and James Hackett to the conference organizers in the same issue, 130 and 135.

28. See description and photos, James W. Hackett and Patricia Hackett, “Journey to Oiso and the Home of R. H. Blyth” on the *World Haiku Review* website, and “Visiting R. H. Blyth’s Home” on the Hackett website.

29. Budan, 36.

30. British Haiku Society, ed., *The Genius of Haiku: Readings from R.H. Blyth on Poetry, Life, and Zen*. Introduction by James Kirkup (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1995).

31. James W. Hackett, “Bashō and Nature.” *Blithe Spirit* 8:1 (1998),

time he also met Susumu Takiguchi, former vice-president of the BHS, who had recently founded the World Haiku Club in Oxford. The WHC organ, the online omnibus journal *World Haiku Review*, published “A Personal Conclusion” from “That Art Thou: A Way of Haiku” in its first issue (May 2001)³²; an essay, “Reflections,” a haiku he had selected for commentary, and one of his haiku sent to UNESCO in celebration of World Poetry Day in volume 2, issue 1;³³ and Bender’s long biography of him in the second 2002 issue.³⁴ Hackett was named honorary chairman of the World Haiku Club and contributed a foreword to Takiguchi’s 2000 book *The Twaddle of an Oxonian*.³⁵

Possibly owing to Kirkup’s key editorial role in the Japanese biannual journal *Kō*, Hackett’s haiku, longer poems, and essays began to appear there in 1992 and were much in evidence though the autumn-winter 2000 issue. In 1995 a Japanese crew came to Hackett’s home and recorded an interview with him about haiku in America for broadcast on Japanese TV.³⁶ Likewise, thanks to his acquaintances in Ireland and France, two books of translations of Hackett’s works appeared in the mid-1990s: *Le Cri du faucon, haïkus et autres poèmes zen* (1996),³⁷ in French translations by Patrick Blanche, and *30 Zen-Haiku (Cló Iar-Chonnachta, 1995)*³⁸ in English with Irish translations by Gabriel Rosenstock.

34–35. The essay had appeared previously in Ion Codrescu, ed., *Ocolind iazul/Round the Pond: A Romanian/English Anthology*. Translations by Mihaela Codrescu (Constanța, Romania: Editura Muntenia, 1994) in Romanian and English, and in French in Patrick Blanche, *Le Cri du faucon* (Nyons, France: Voix d’Encre, 1996).

32. “A Personal Conclusion” from “That Art Thou: A Way of Haiku,” *World Haiku Review* (May 2001).

33. James W. Hackett, “Reflections,” *World Haiku Review* 2:1 (March 2002).

34. Bender.

35. Susumu Takiguchi, *The Twaddle of an Oxonian: Haiku Poems and Essays* (Oxford, England: Ami-Net International Press, 2000).

36. Budan, 36.

37. Blanche.

38. J. W. Hackett, *30 Zen-Haiku of J. W. Hackett*. Trans. into Gaelic by Gabriel Rosenstock (Indreabhán, Conamara, Ireland: *Cló Iar-Chonnachta*, 1994).

In 1992 *Kō* included Hackett's essay "Why I Entered the 1964 Japan Airlines Contest"³⁹ in which he confirmed that his motivation was indeed to meet Blyth, his "mentor and friend . . . , with whom I wished more than anything to simply share tea and silence. (A rare spiritual affinity made our relationship one that could dispense with words.)" —a rather remarkable statement considering the fact that the two had never met. The autumn–winter 1993 issue of *Kō* (11) printed three of Hackett's previously published haiku in holographic form under the heading "Zen View" and dedicated to Kōko Katō, *Kō*'s editor. A photo of the two of them at Nagoya station appeared too. An essay entitled "Haiku: Another Endangered Species," which was later published in Ion Codrescu's international journal *Albatros/Albatross*,⁴⁰ is also included. Three of Hackett's long poems appeared in spring–summer 1994 (26), autumn–winter 1995 (3), and autumn–winter 1997 (2) issues. *Kō* published several of Hackett's haiku, some of them new, in its issues in 1996, 1997, and 2002, the latter issue featuring 38 haiku.

Following his participation in the Constanța haiku conference, Hackett became a regular contributor of haiku and short essays to *Albatros/Albatross*, beginning with volume 3 (1994), and in Codrescu's later enterprise, the journal *Hermitage*. A number of Hackett's haiku from this period were published virtually simultaneously in *Kō* and *Albatross*.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

In 2004 a book of new haiku — new at least from his basic collection from the 1960s — was published by Hokuseido Press.⁴¹ *A Traveler's Haiku: Original Poems in English* presents 191 of Hackett's verses written on his world travels over several decades. They were new verses, except for 24 that were published in *Kō* from 1995 to 2000, 2 that had been included with the 1996 interview in *Woodnotes*, 2

39. Hackett, "Why I Entered."

40. *Albatros/Albatross* 3:1/2 (spring–summer/autumn–winter 1994), 89–93.

41. Hackett, *Traveler's Haiku*.

from *Blithe Spirit* in 1998, and 5 that appeared in *Hermitage* in 2004. Inexplicably, this book was not reviewed in *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, or *Blithe Spirit*. Respected critic Michael McClintock, however, writing a very positive review for *Hermitage*,⁴² compares it to “a long, chatty letter from a favorite uncle.” He goes on to write:

The remarkable instrument that Hackett invented for himself way back then, to express his special haiku vision and consciousness, remains intact today and is as flexible and wide-ranging as ever. The poems unfold, phrase by phrase, like bubbling creek water, with good humor, calmness, and unhurried pleasure. The language is rich in sound and variously modulated to carry its freights of mood and tone; the imagery is full of tactile cues and physical presence: Hackett’s style reaches out and touches his subject matter but never pokes or jabs at it.

McClintock explains, “I infer that this collection has been cumulated from mostly unpublished, travel-themed haiku Hackett has written over the past thirty years. They will be new poems to his readers, but they are not necessarily newly written.” He finds many of Hackett’s haiku significant and memorable:

Poems like the following exert an iconic power, giving memorable expression to some of the deep problems of our time in history, and asking questions that have adhering to their substance issues that are both spiritual and practical. . . .

High rise construction . . .
cut and roped into riggings,
the Pandas’ forest

In the case of this haiku one can agree with McClintock, but others that he singles out in this passage are subverted by melodrama, cliché, and mannered diction:

42. Michael McClintock, “Hackett on the Road and Still Longing for the Wild,” *Hermitage* 2:1/2 (2005), 184–87.

Building a campfire . . .
 suddenly sent straight to hell
 by front page news [*Traveler*, 1]

Mid manicured shrubs
 and designed gravel, my spirit's
 longing for the wild [*Traveler*, 29]

Apart from *A Traveler's Haiku*, since 2002 little of Hackett's work has appeared in ink on paper. Four of his older haiku were recycled in the *Mainichi Daily News* online haiku column in 2003, 2004, and 2008, and three others were published in *Hermitage* 3 (2006). According to Bender, "He has at least 1,000 unpublished haiku and other Zen-influenced poems," but it is not known whether he has any plans to publish them. Mostly Hackett continues to work on his long poetry, "That Art Thou," and his website.

HACKETT ON ZEN AND HAIKU: "THAT ART THOU"—PART ONE

James Hackett has only gradually revealed his views of haiku and Zen and his own path in haiku. The main statement is a long essay entitled "That Art Thou: A Spiritual Way of Haiku," of which bits and pieces have appeared in various non-American journals.⁴³ Several sources

43. "Haiku: Another Endangered Species," *Kō*, autumn–winter 1993, 29–30; John Budan, "That Art Thou: An Interview with James W. Hackett," *Woodnotes* 30 (autumn 1996), 34–39; "Haiku and Spiritual Penetration" in *Albatross* 5:1/2 and 6:1/2 (1996–97), 45–49; "Bashō and Nature," *Blithe Spirit* 8:1, March 1998, 34–35; "Haiku and Spiritual Interpenetration" in Patricia J. Machmiller and June Hopper Hymas, eds., *Young Leaves: An Old Way of Seeing New: Writings on Haiku in English* (San Jose, Calif.: Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, 2000), 105–10; "A Personal Conclusion" and "The Haiku Moment," *World Haiku Review* 1:1 (March 2001); "R. H. Blyth and J. W. Hackett" (Address to the World Haiku Festival, Yuwa-town, Akita, Japan, September 20–22, 2002), *World Haiku Review* 2:2 (2002); "On the Veranda," *Hermitage* 2:1/2 (spring–summer/autumn–winter 2005, 74–77—an abridged version of "That Art Thou"; "'Haiku' and 'Haiku Poetry,'" *Hermitage* 3:1/2, 2006, 65–67; and "Reflections," *World Haiku*

suggest that Hackett was intending to put out the essay in book form in the mid-to-late 1990s, but it seems likely that publication on the Web has proven a better choice for him. The version of this essay on Hackett's website—dated “Maui 2006”—seems to be the most recent statement of his haiku aesthetic, so we will use it for a more detailed examination.⁴⁴

“That Art Thou” is organized in a rather complicated manner, divided into two parts—the first an explication of Hackett's Zen haiku aesthetic and the second dedicated more directly to the composition of haiku—and several sections and subsections.

Preface

Hackett defines haiku as a way and cites his letter to Blyth in 1953 that was picked up and put in Blyth's *History of Haiku*, vol. 2:

For haiku is ultimately more than a form or even a kind of poetry: it is a Way—one of living awareness. This, together with its rendering of the Suchness of things gives haiku a supra-literary mission, One of movement.

Hackett continues:

The *raison d'être* of traditional haiku poetry is distinctly beyond humanistic anthropocentrism, wit, didacticism, or conventional “poetics.” The haiku poet seeks rather to share (through suggestion) those special experiential moments in which we see into, and emotively relate with, the world of nature.

Review 2:1 (2002). I have seen a reference to a printed version of this essay—J. W. Hackett, *That Art Thou: A Zen Way of Haiku* (Dayton, Ohio: Mead Corporation, 1992)—but have been unable to verify its existence.

44. James W. Hackett, “That Art Thou: A Spiritual Way of Haiku.” Hackett website. Available December 13, 2009. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations in this section are from this version of the essay.

and goes on to say that haiku for him has never been merely a form of poetry nor has it been primarily literary. In these words, Hackett lays down a basic definition of what he calls “haiku poetry” or, later, “‘That Art Thou’ haiku,” and begins to draw the line between his definition of haiku and other common understandings in which “certain existential qualities (and even metaphysical aspects)” are overlooked. The further discussion is divided into six points having to do with Zen and the creation of Zen arts and writing: This Eternal Now, Greater Nature, Thusness, Suchness, Centering Contemplation, and Spiritual Interpenetration.

1. This Eternal Now

Key to Hackett’s Zen/haiku aesthetic is the idea of the moment, or “This Eternal Now.” For a Zen practitioner each moment is precious, and the poet “endeavors to suggest this ‘lifelike moment’ in a haiku poem.”

Hackett cites Blyth citing Bashō, who responds to his Zen teacher Butcho: “Haikai is simply what is happening in this place at this moment.” (Blyth, *Haiku*, vol. 4) and similarly, from Senzaki and McCandless’s book *Buddhism and Zen*, “Zen is the actual business of the present moment.”

In one confusing passage of his essay, however, Hackett seems to turn volte face and underplay the role of Zen in haiku:

While the spirit of Zen has influenced many haiku poets in the West, Zen spirit would seem not to play any explicit role in Japanese haiku composition—this despite Bashō’s admonition regarding interpenetration between poet and subject in haiku creation. . . . Or perhaps Zen’s spirit may be so embedded in Japanese culture that its influence on haiku’s creation is evident, though perhaps not explicit or intentional.

2. *Greater Nature*

Hackett begins this chapter as follows:

For centuries haiku poetry has been known as a unique form of nature poetry—one wherein humans, if present at all, are suffused with “Greater Nature.” That haiku’s dedication to the natural world has been one of the most distinctive characteristics is largely due to the compassionate, universal spirit of Buddhism together with Shinto’s animistic ken.

Hackett does not directly define “Greater Nature,” but it seems safe to assume it is what we would normally call Nature with a capital N, that is, all of Creation, including humans only as one of thousands or millions of equally important and integral species and objects—certainly not something superior to the rest of Nature.

Hackett sets up a straw man here. What he really is getting at is the perversion of “true haiku” by poets who pay insufficient attention to Greater Nature and unduly concentrate on human beings and their unnatural works:

When compared to the depth and breadth of this all-encompassing spiritual vision, . . . attempts to create an urban or anthropocentric haiku seem myopic. And for the sake of clarity, I believe such quasi-haiku should be classified as something other than just ‘haiku.’ perhaps quasi-, urban-, or neo-haiku might be considered.

Hackett is being rather polite; in other places he waxes vitriolic in his condemnation of haiku that does not square with his definition, as in a brief article from *Blithe Spirit* in 1998,⁴⁵

[T]oday Bashō’s Way of Haiku is scarcely taken, or even understood. What a sorry devolution of a great art if modern writers ignore haiku’s spiritual and aesthetic heritage. The aesthetic anarchy of modern haiku has even resulted in modern writers divorcing haiku from nature. Today “haiku” is written about everything from elevators

45. “Bashō and Nature,” in *Blithe Spirit* 8:1 (March 1998), 34.

to computers—a dire fate for such a rare poetry. . . . Sadly enough, urbanisation is making haiku itself an endangered species.

His sweeping vision of “Greater Nature” notwithstanding, Hackett actually views nature narrowly. Others argue that all of human nature is part of Nature, and that for the purposes of haiku it is a key part. Even Master Bashō peopled his haiku with travelers, rice farmers, partygoers, revelers, drunks, prostitutes, warriors, and many others; wrote about human industry and ideas such as cormorant fishing, market scenes, temples and bells, paintings and poems. Furthermore, one could also argue that haiku is not so much about nature as it is about season. William J. Higginson has pointed out that human-related seasonal topics make up a substantial percentage of the *kigo* in Japanese *saijiki*.

American poet Gary Hotham responded to Hackett’s essay in the following issue of *Blithe Spirit*⁴⁶ and argued in favor of keeping humans in a prominent place in haiku. He invoked Henderson’s words,⁴⁷

It may be noted in passing that the use of *ki* is probably the base of a charge that has been advanced that haiku are more concerned with nature than with human affairs. Such a statement is ridiculous. Haiku are more concerned with human emotions than with human acts, the natural phenomena are used to reflect human emotions, but that is all.

Hotham also drafts a pair of unlikely allies: poet T. S. Eliot, who maintained that “the possible interests of the poet are unlimited,” and quantum physicist Werner Heisenberg, who, in his book *Physics and Philosophy*, made the point that natural science is part of the interplay between nature and human beings. Hackett too appeals to quantum physics in support of his position:

46. Gary Hotham, “The Elevator Door Statement: Haiku and Nature: A Response to James W. Hackett,” *Blithe Spirit* 8:2 (June 1998), 25–27.

47. Harold G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets From Bashō to Shiki* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), 5.

Today, subatomic [quantum] physics and ecological science agree that the anthropocentric hubris of the West (that has dominated Occidental culture for millennia) is only a verisimilitude: a dangerously limited view of reality, that human consciousness needs to transcend into Oneness—if life on Earth is to survive.

To be fair, in “That Art Thou” Hackett does admit that the urban landscape can be the setting for some haiku, and he supplies several examples from his own work. Note that all of these, however, juxtapose an image from “Greater Nature” with an urban image, to the distinct disadvantage of the latter:

Breaking gray pavement
in a barren world of words:
a flowering weed⁴⁸

City loneliness . . .
dancing with a gusty wind:
yesterday’s news⁴⁹

Flying back and forth
through the supermarket
a ranting sparrow⁵⁰

48. This text from the Hackett website. Earlier versions include:

Breaking the pavement
in a world of men and words:
a flowering weed. [*HP2*, 47]

Breaking the pavement
in a gray world, full of words:
a flowering weed. [*Way*, 97]

Breaking gray pavement
in a hard world, full of words:
a flowering weed. [*Zen Haiku*, 63]

49. *AH* 1.

50. From the Hackett website. An earlier version (in *HP3*, 24; *Way*, 140; and *Zen Haiku*, 132) is:

Too cold for snow;
the loneliness standing within
each flop house doorway⁵¹

In this same series Hackett includes one haiku that is a bit more positive toward city life:

Flashing neon light
blurred through a steamy window:
a concert of colors!⁵²

Hackett has always been a student and devotee of Nature, but in the Japanese sense (Hackett terms it “a unique ethos”⁵³) that a well-tended garden, an ikebana arrangement, and zoo animals represent Nature—that is, nature as it should be rather than nature as it is, well, naturally. In later years his concern with nature and the incursions of urban life upon it became significant concerns for the poet—to the brink of polemic. Hackett ends the nature section of his essay with this incantation:

May “That Art Thou” haiku’s devotion to Greater Nature (and to spiritual Oneness) help focus our consciousness and concern upon Earth’s precious biosphere—which every day is further endangered by nationalistic and corporate greed that places life on Earth in greater jeopardy—so insidious is the morphing of ‘democracy’ into what is now an unfettered and ruthless plutocracy created by corporate fascism. Might that we learn from history previous periods of unfettered capitalism the evils that result from ungoverned greed.

Flying back and forth
through the supermarket—
a frantic sparrow.

51. *HP*, 16; *HP1*, 16; *Way*, 16; *Zen Haiku*, 103.

52. *HP*, 37; *HP1*, 37; *Way*, 37; *Zen Haiku*, 51.

53. “That Art Thou,” part 2, section 4.

Such avid advocacy seeps though into Hackett's haiku and often gives them a lecturing tone.

Buildings hide the sky
and pavement the earth, and yet
this weed grew to seed.⁵⁴

Crumbling with rust
upon a deserted shore . . .
the weight of war.⁵⁵

One final point of interest: Hackett suggests that because it is firmly rooted in General Nature, which is shared by everyone everywhere, haiku poetry can serve as a cultural bridge among people. More than commentary on the universal nature of haiku and the Zen that underlies it, this could be read as a call for "international haiku."

3. *Thusness*

"That Art Thou" haiku exhibit "thusness," immediacy or directness of each haiku moment, the importance of confronting and being aware of each thing directly. The value for the haiku poet, Hackett asserts, is as a centering device. Again, this discussion veers off into polemics as Hackett uses it to thrash people who cannot think for themselves: "Among the most egregious impositions perpetrated in our modern life is that so many persons become routinized and blindly led by abstract conditioned notions and abstract concepts." Then, quoting Adolf Hitler, "How fortunate for leaders that men do not think."

54. *Way*, 142; *Zen Haiku*, 86.

55. *HP3*, 20; *Way*, 136; *Zen Haiku*, 158.

4. *Suchness*

Having confronted a moment directly, the haiku poet attends to its essence, the “‘is-ness’ of things as they are,” or “Suchness.” Hackett here counterpoises the spirit of a thing, whether it be animate or inanimate, and the ideas or words used to describe it. Metaphors and symbols are inadequate descriptions of the essence of a thing. “That haiku poems seem so real and lifelike stems directly from their Suchness: the direct presentation of things just as they are.” This suggests Shiki’s concept of sketching from nature, though *shasei* is not mentioned in Hackett’s essay.

Hackett presents a useful quote from Blyth (*Zen and Zen Classics* 1): “The great mistake of life and poetry is the desire to get away from things instead of getting into them, escaping from the [material] world into a dream world [of words].” He also makes the point that “particularity in haiku may best be achieved through the use of singular rather than plural subjects (though at least one of Hackett’s signature haiku unnecessarily uses a plural subject):

Deep within the stream
the huge fish lie motionless
facing the current⁵⁶

5. *Centering Contemplation*

Writing haiku poetry demands that the poet focus his attention on the object, deeply penetrating with his mind into the essence of the object. He mentions the insufficiency of “snapshot haiku” and the “importance for the poet and the subject to spiritually interpenetrate (to become one) in existential identification: a numinous (spiritual) union that contemplation and communion alone can reveal.”

56. Blyth, *History*, and reused in many other places.

6. *Spiritual Interpenetration*

This is the subject of the last and by far the longest chapter of Hackett's essay. "That Art Thou," *tat tvam asi*, a concept from the *Upanishads*, is the essence of Hackett's Zen haiku practice:

From [Blyth's] insight into the interpenetrative spirit present in my haiku, I came to the conviction that "Zen haiku" be a veritable window of That Art Thou spiritual union. And that Zen haiku itself could provide ". . . the only possible answer to the question 'What am I?' must be "That Art Thou." (Ananda Coomaraswamy)

It is difficult to argue with a Zen adept, but much of Hackett's "Spiritual Interpenetration," especially as seen in his haiku, seems to this reader to slip into anthropomorphism and the pathetic fallacy, or at least a strong projection of Hackett's ideas and emotions onto non-human beings and non-sentient objects. Hackett is aware of the problem. He quotes Nobuyuki Yuasa's interpretation of Bashō's lesson:

Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine, or the bamboo if you want to learn about the bamboo. And in doing so, you must leave your subjective preoccupation with yourself. Your poetry issues of its own accord when you and the object have become one—when you have plunged deep enough into the object to see something like a hidden glimmering there. However well-phrased your poetry may be, if the object and yourself are separate then your poetry is not true poetry but a semblance of the real thing.

and adds his own contention:

Despite Bashō's admonition, some Rationalists peremptorily dismiss spiritual interpenetration as a mere projection of human feelings. Given the sanctity that Rationalism accords itself, it is not surprising that those bereft of intuitive experience, and ignorant of (or indifferent to) Bashō's teaching, misconstrue and ignore what they cannot experience or understand.

Count me among the bereft, ignorant Rationalists, but I cannot help but question whether Hackett's spiritual unity with the eagle, the spider, the scow, the frogs, and a speck on a page in the following haiku is not more a projection of his own feelings and emotions than those of the creatures and things allegedly expressing themselves in the poet's voice:⁵⁷

Never more alone
the eagle, than now surrounded
by screaming crows

A spider crouches
at the center of his empty web,
trusting his design

The derelict scow
answering the mocking frogs
with timbers of bloom!

This speck on the page
that blowing doesn't remove
has a mind of its own!

Hackett continues the argument that "Spiritual interpenetration is not anthropomorphism," asserting that "the latter term stems from self-centered hubris." One might suggest that Hackett's belief that he is able to interpenetrate spiritually with things is itself an instance of "self-centered hubris," but no matter. The facility to get into an object at a deep spiritual level is one thing; to represent it in a haiku without seeming to speak on behalf of that object is another.

57. "Never"—*HP3*, 4; *Way*, 120; *Zen Haiku*, 94, *Hermitage* 2:1/2. "A spider"—*HP2*, 18; *Bug*, 11; *Way*, 68; *Zen Haiku*, 150. "The derelict" from the Hackett website; slightly different versions in *HP4*, 64; *Way*, 226; *Zen Haiku*, 56. "This speck"—*Zen Haiku*, 18.

Summation

“That Art Thou” ends with reprise about the verity of Hackett’s approach to haiku poetry and the fate awaiting the Fallen:

If spiritual interpenetration and Bashō’s advice were utilized in haiku creation, I believe there would be fewer “snapshot” and “so what?” verses to sully the name and spirit of haiku poetry. But a major reason for writing this “That Art Thou” essay is to renew and reassert the neglected Tao/Zen aspects of haiku. Any by so doing, raise and return haiku’s status to that of poetry, and beyond—to the spiritual Way I know Zen haiku can be. . . .

Greater Nature remains a wondrous world—though one made hellishly divisive by our species’ hubris and damning reverence for words and concepts.

Such is the dichotomous and abstract (a priori) world of ideologies before which we genuflect—conditioned by inculcated, sacrosanct notions of nation, “race,” and faith, many of which we reverence unto bloody human sacrifice.

Though relativistic, these divisive, jingoistic, racial, and sectarian prejudices have for millennia damned countless generations of Eden Now . . . by abstracted “walls of mind” that confine us within a living hell—one of hate and divisiveness, that metaphorically seems to make our world a sinecure of Satan.

As a discussion of haiku, “That Art Thou” is remarkable for the topics it does not cover. There is no word about the importance of “image,” which most haiku poets today consider central to the understanding and practice of haiku. Hackett says nothing about the haiku being a medium of communication between people; only in one place, Part 1, does he even mention sharing a haiku poem with others. For him, the purpose of writing haiku is very personal, even egocentric: to express his own intuition of the great here and now. This essay reveals a man who studied first Zen then haiku in the 1950s and 1960s, made up his mind about where he stood, and has not budged a whit ever since.

The first hundred years of haiku study in English-speaking lands focused on the Japanese classics, especially the “four pillars” and specifically Bashō, and it is not too fanciful to say that in both form and content English and American haiku for decades were simple imitations of classical Japanese haiku. Hackett exemplifies this situation. Throughout “That Art Thou,” besides his own haiku, only Bashō’s work comes in for positive comment.⁵⁸ For interpretation and theory of haiku, Hackett’s reliance on Blyth is near-total, with occasional uses of others’ translations (Henderson, Asatarō Miyamori, and Ichikawa Sanki, et al.) that appeared before 1960 (he also uses Yuasa’s translations from 1977). Although excoriating writers of so-called haiku generally, he never mentions any names or gives any specific examples of what he finds wrong with what is being written by others. Hackett’s reading of scholars and teachers of Zen is more catholic, though still focused on the period fifty or more years ago: the works of Suzuki primarily, as well as the teachings of Nyogen Senzaki Roshi and Ogata Sohaku Roshi, and his personal relationship with Nakagawa Soen Roshi. He also mentions Ananda Coomaraswamy, Alan Watts, Aldous Huxley, and a few others as influences.

HACKETT ON WRITING HAIKU: “THAT ART THOU”—PART TWO

Creating Haiku Poetry

In the second part of “That Art Thou,” titled “The Haiku Poem,” Hackett moves from his haiku aesthetics to a discussion of poetics—the mechanics of the genre. He begins with a definition that draws a line between “haiku,” a term that Hackett views as now corrupt, and “haiku poetry,” his suggested replacement. The word “haiku,” he avers, has “virtually subsumed the use of haiku’s traditional designation as poetry.” [One might desire more information about what “traditions” Hackett has in mind here—certainly not Japanese traditions.] Some

58. After the present essay was published, Hackett added poems by a series of “Guest Poets” to his website, including David E. LeCount, Tim Hornyak, Patrick Blanche, Tom Clausen, Christopher Thorsen, Jerry Dreesen, Kōko Katō, Ion Codrescu, Origa (Olga Hooper), and Sam Cannarozzi.

lamentable characteristics of contemporary “haiku” include “so-what verses,” “obscure word puzzles,” “cyber-concoctions” [?], “salacious puns,” and “crass commercial ploys.” Unfortunately, Hackett does not go much beyond this sticks-and-stones critique, so it is hard to know which poets and editors are responsible for this “aesthetic anarchy.” He does, however, identify some of the “characteristics that have traditionally distinguished haiku as “poetry,” some of which we have seen before: focus upon Greater Nature, the suchness of nature, and selflessness (in Zen called *muga*) or seeing things through God’s identifying eye. To these he adds “a measured use of English syntax, wherein discretion, clarity and naturalness should govern any use of ellipsis” and “some emotive quality.” He later states flatly, “The sanctity of haiku’s intuitive emotive experience should, I believe, take precedence over theoretical considerations of form, syntax, and style.” (Hackett singles out James Kirkup as a poet skilled in making 5–7–5 haiku, and, in a later discussion of writing haiku in quasi-normal English syntax, puts in a plug for the journal *Kō* and its editor Kōko Katō, who encourage this.) “Quasi-normal,” the term Hackett tortures out from haiku practice, apparently represents something of a compromise between his agreement with Wordsworth that “poets should employ a selection of language really used by men and women” and the imperative to include “some emotive quality” in one’s haiku.

Early on, Hackett developed his “Suggestions for Creating Haiku Poetry” that range from the philosophical to the practical. Like his other writings, these Suggestions have been tinkered with and revised over the years. The version here is the one published in *World Haiku Review* and dated 2002. Hackett introduces them as follows:

My first books, *Haiku Poetry*, Volumes I–IV, published in 1968, included some carefully considered suggestions for creating haiku poems in English. These have proved of value to many poets. And after almost half a century these suggestions still remain fundamental to my poetry, and to my mind and spirit. Following is an update of these suggestions for WHC’s worldwide community. I encourage

readers to decide for themselves which of these suggestions might prove helpful in their own writing:

SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING HAIKU POETRY IN ENGLISH

BY JAMES W. HACKETT © 1968 Revision © 2002

1. NOW is the touchstone of the haiku experience, so remain centered in this eternal present of life.
2. Remember that Greater Nature—not human nature—is the province of haiku.
3. Contemplate natural objects closely: unseen wonders (and dramas) will reveal themselves.
4. Carry a notebook to jot down subtle haiku moments, for these intuitive experiences may be easily forgotten.
5. Spiritually interpenetrate and empathize with nature. Become One with ‘things,’ for ultimately, “That art Thou.”
6. Reflect upon your notes of nature in solitude and silence. Allow these recollected feelings be the basis of your haiku poem.
7. Write about Nature just as it is. Haiku are neither word games nor puzzles. Bashō brought haiku poetry back to life and nature; let us emulate his noble mission.
8. Choose every word very carefully. Use words that best suggest the moment of haiku experience you wish to share.
9. Use verbs in present tense, and singular subjects whenever possible.
10. To add aesthetic dimension, choose modifying words that vivify, including those that suggest the season, location, or time of day.

11. A haiku poem can be more than a verbal snapshot. Avoid such “So what?” haiku by suggesting your emotional reaction during the haiku moment.
12. Use common language in a syntax natural to English! Don’t attempt ‘minimalistic’ copies of Japanese usage. Haiku composed in English must seem ‘natural’ and uncontrived.
13. Write in three lines using approximately 17 syllables. (Forego the traditional Japanese line arrangement of 5–7–5 syllables, as this practice can invite contrivance in English.)
14. Read each verse aloud to make sure it sounds natural. (Avoid end rhyme.) Make use of articles and punctuation common to English.
15. Remember that lifefulness, not beauty, is the essence of haiku.
16. Never use obscure allusions: true haiku are intuitive and direct, not abstract, symbolic, or intellectual. Include humor, but omit mere wit.
17. Avoid poeticism. The haiku poem should be direct, sensuous, and metaphysically ‘real.’
18. Work on each poem until it suggests exactly what you want others to see and feel. Remain true to your initial experience and the feelings elicited.
19. Remember that haiku is ‘a finger pointing at the moon,’ and if the hand is bejeweled, we no longer see that to which it points.
20. Honor your senses with awareness, and your Spirit with zazen or other centering meditation. The ‘haiku mind’ should be reflective as a clear mountain pond: reflective not of thought, but of the moon and every flight beyond.

The first several of these, with the exception of number 4, are the points Hackett makes more than once in “That Art Thou,” discussed earlier: the Eternal NOW, Greater Nature, close contemplation, spiritual interpenetration, reflection in solitude and silence, and writing about what is. Suggestions 19 and 20, also, have to do with the poet’s focusing on the object and his or her own Centeredness. No. 8, choose every word carefully and make it suggestive, seems sound advice for any kind of composition. Suggestion 4, “carry a notebook,” is just common sense.

Suggestions 9 through 13 have to do with craft, specifically the form of the haiku and the choice of appropriate language. No. 9 advises using the present tense and singular subjects. Hackett practices both of these for the most part. In Suggestion 13 Hackett settles on the sensible compromise of approximately 17 syllables and urges poets to “Forego the traditional Japanese line arrangement of 5–7–5 syllables, as this practice can invite contrivance in English.” In the second part of “That Art Thou,” he observes that 5–7–5 in English “is frequently too rigid a structure for natural expression,” but he cautions that “haiku in English does need a moderate, loose norm of syllables—not only to garner literary respect, but more importantly, to discourage the ‘anything goes’ anarchy that too often now seems to characterize haiku in English.” This seems a bit of a pronouncement from Parnassus, but in fact in his own work Hackett hews closely to 17 syllables and almost always writes in three lines clearly tending toward a 5–7–5 structure—but he is not enslaved by the “rule.”

Suggestions 10, 11, and 12 deal with the quality of words used, the poetics of haiku, and the permissibility of poetic language in haiku. In this area Hackett’s work is significantly different from that of other haiku poets. Part of Suggestion 10 calls for poets to use words suggestive of the season, location, or time of day, the closest he comes to specifying the need for a season word. The *kigo*, of course, is traditionally a major requirement of haiku in Japanese, but Hackett is passive about the use of such a convention in English-

language practice. He follows Blyth's advice that "A season word is not necessary, or even a season, but is greatly advantageous." Hackett seems to have sidelined seasonal words, sanctioning their use, along with location or temporal words, only to add specificity to a haiku.

In the first part of Suggestion 10 and in Suggestion 11, Hackett urges poets to vivify their language and suggest their "emotional reactions during the haiku moment." This reads like an open invitation to introduce Western-style poetics into haiku—a practice that Hackett certainly adheres to himself. Before returning to the twenty Suggestions, let's look more closely at Hackett's use of devices such as rhyme, synesthesia, unusual turns of phrase and unique words, and other ways in which he vivifies his haiku language and records his emotional reactions.

Rhyme

Hackett is at heart a rhymer. In Suggestion 14, he admonishes haiku poets to "avoid end rhyme" and cautions against excessive ornamentation of the "bejeweled finger pointing at the moon" variety. In Part 2 of "That Art Thou," however, he writes, "the use of inner rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia can be very effective in haiku creation." In practice he cannot resist incorporating rhyme of various kinds (we won't go into slant rhyme, etc. here) in his works. Hackett generally does avoid end rhyme but is masterful in his use of internal rhyme. For example, these two haiku have rhyming lines 1 and 3:

Sunrise . . . unseen till now,
the strands of web that unite
each flower and bough.⁵⁹

59. *HP*, 2. Sources listed in this section are only place of first publication for this version.

Nasturtiums flower
 one nectar . . . in some it's sweet,
 in others, sour.⁶⁰

these two rhyme adjacent lines:

Clouted by a dew,
 the horn of this snail withdrew
 and just disappeared!⁶¹

The beak of the hawk,
 rounds all the way down to where
 it can tear the air!⁶²

and a few haiku even feature three-line rhyme!

Rubble everywhere . . .
 except for a flight of stairs
 ending in the air.⁶³

Hackett frequently uses internal rhyme and consonance:

Night shades disappear,
 and within each dew begins
 a play of hues . . .⁶⁴

Bitten, the thread now
 is refusing to let go
 of the kitten's tongue!⁶⁵

60. *HP4*, 34.

61. *HP3*, 31.

62. *HP3*, 8.

63. *HP2*, 47.

64. *HP*, 50.

65. *HP3*, 35.

It can be difficult to pry internal rhyme and end-rhyme apart, however. The first haiku is written with a forced break after a five-syllable first line but which, thanks to the internal rhyme, separates into an end-rhymed 6–7–6-syllable haiku. The second resolves into a rhymed tetrameter couplet

Let's also give Faust
his due: from Corinth's bauxite mounds
to this stratospheric view.⁶⁶

On wiping up wet
puppy shit: the gagging smell . . .
right now, this is it.⁶⁷

Other Poetic Devices

Hackett uses the full panoply of poetic devices. The first two of these verses feature consonance and alliteration (with rhyme too!); the third has alliteration.

Free at last, the fly
flew out the window—and then
right back in again.⁶⁸

Bumblebee bumping
against the window . . . something
you want me to see?⁶⁹

Still going strong
after blocks and blocks of stops:
my doling dog.⁷⁰

66. *Traveler*, 44.

67. *HP4*, 58.

68. *HP2*, 41.

69. *HP4*, 33.

70. *HP3*, 26.

Synesthesia

Synesthesia is another favorite poetic tool of Hackett's. His corpus includes phrases such as these:

Searching on the wind,
the hawk's cry
is the shape of its beak.⁷¹

At one with the silt
the crawdad, but on each claw
there's a shout of white.⁷²

Huge trumpet flowers
heralded by bumblebees,
whitely scent this tree.⁷³

These barnacled rocks
just uncovered by the tide . . .
how busy they sound!⁷⁴

A single cricket
warms the quiet
of this lonely night.⁷⁵

With every gust of sun,
a halo of golden down
surrounds the hawk.⁷⁶

71. *AH* 1:1.

72. *HP*4, 7.

73. *HP*3, 50.

74. Blyth, *History* II:359.

75. *AH* 1.

76. *HP*, 1.

Startled garter snake
 defends himself with a tongue
 that's rapidly red.⁷⁷

The nameless flower
 climbing this trail with me
 is a yellow you can taste!⁷⁸

Japanese Poetics

Hackett believes haiku to be a form of poetry, and it is probably for this reason that he speaks of haiku in terms of Western aesthetics and poetics and tends to shortchange the Japanese equivalents, at least those that do not pertain to Zen. *Kigo*, as we have seen, is held by Hackett to be appropriate for classical Japanese haiku but is not necessary in English haiku. Of other Japanese aesthetic devices or principles that most American haiku poets strive for in their work, Hackett writes, "By the way, there are some Japanese spiritual/aesthetic qualities (such as *sabi*, *wabi*, *shibui*, *yugen*, *muga*) that I believe spontaneously accrue from the 'That Art Thou' Way of haiku."

Punctuation

One whole section of Part II of "That Art Thou" is devoted to punctuation. Here Hackett's main intention seems to be to flog other haiku poets who have abandoned normal punctuation in their work, if not doing without colons and commas completely. Hackett sees this as an illiterate attempt to imitate the Japanese language and a succumbing to "today's expediency in personal and business matters, and in business usage." He argues for "the discretionary use of punctuation." Included in this section is a list of punctuation marks appropriate for haiku, but it is not very useful, unfortunately: we are told that the question mark suggests "quizzical or wondering," while the dash can be used for almost anything else: introduction; focus and

77. HP2, 25.

78. *Zen Haiku*, 192.

emphasis; important pauses; contrasts, comparisons, introducing a series; ironic suggestion, or a break in thought; and strong emotional feeling, or surprise.

Unusual Words and Expressions

Hackett's oeuvre is speckled with words that only he has used in haiku, for example:

The wakeless way
of the Jesus bug is revealed
by lunging minnows.⁷⁹

Consolingly white,
the knees that the mosquito
must bend with his thirst.⁸⁰

Noisy woodpecker
is gummed-up by the old pine,
to stropping silence.⁸¹

Still going strong
after blocks and blocks of stops:
my doling dog.⁸²

No longer a kitten,
the cat now pounces on my hand
clawlessly . . .⁸³

Puppy lies wag-end up,
barking at the bumblebee
too busy to play.⁸⁴

79. *HP3*, 56.

80. *HP4*, 48.

81. *HP3*, 66.

82. *HP3*, 26.

83. *HP3*, 30.

84. *HP3*, 36.

My mouser cat, though
merciless with flies, just sits
and blinks at the bee.⁸⁵

Pampas grass offers
such strokeable plumes, to hands
that will dare its leaves.⁸⁶

The cantankerous crow
sleeps in a nest that's made
of broken branches.⁸⁷

Resplendent peacock
flappingly guards his throne—
a mound of manure.⁸⁸

For poetic meaning Hackett invents locutions, twisting intransitive verbs into transitive and turning nouns into verbs that are not recognized as such by Mr. Webster, e.g.

As Nile dusk deepens
egrets blizzard to the same
solitary isle.⁸⁹

Come! The mountains
have hazed into a painting
and tea is served . . .⁹⁰

Swords of the iris:
all so alike, yet some bend,
talling the others.⁹¹

85. *HP4*, 59.

86. *HP3*, 39.

87. *HP3*, 6.

88. *HP3*, 27.

89. *Kō*, spring–summer 2000, 3.

90. *Hermitage* 1:1/2 (2004), 31.

91. *HP3*, 32.

Hackett is fond of all sorts of poetic diction, some of which seem British, or mustily antique, or both, in their inspiration; for example:

Rare wine for the eye:
the bougainvillea, flowering
this ancient mission.⁹²

Gulls heavy with sun
swoop down over breaking waves
and wing through the spray.⁹³

Broken last winter,
this branch dangling by a strand
is full of blossom!⁹⁴

Mid manicured shrubs
and designed gravel, my spirit's
longing for the wild.⁹⁵

The pauses within
robin's song to the dawn
are long draughts of dew.⁹⁶

Minimalism and Tontoism

Hackett's drive to put poetry into his haiku can go a bit too far on occasion. As we have noted, "minimalism" is one of Hackett's big bugaboos. His discussion in "That Art Thou" suggests that attempts to emulate Japanese usage in English is the main culprit: "The hard fact is that the great differences between the Japanese and English languages are virtually unbridgeable. In Japanese, the absence of articles, pronouns, tense, and the comparative lack of modifiers

92. *Zen Haiku*, 41.

93. *HP*, 34.

94. *HP3*, 26.

95. *Traveler*, 29.

96. *Zen Haiku*, 30.

make bare-boned minimalist attempts in English seem fatuous and spectacularly inept.” Moreover, “[minimalism’s] advocacy by some, whiffs of what possibly may be an ethnocentric bias.” I’m not sure what that means, but clearly Hackett prefers “quasi-natural” diction.

But he is not immune to dropping articles and lapsing into a kind of tontoism that makes haiku like this one, for example, sound like a Native American legend with overtones of dark doings among Goldfinch, Thistledown, and Breeze:

As goldfinch gathers
a beak full of thistledown,
the seeds freed to breeze!⁹⁷

Hackett is probably trying to increase the specificity of his referents — a recurring theme of his — but in the process he seems to violate part of his Suggestion 14, “Make use of articles and punctuation common to English.”

We observed earlier that Hackett does not shrink from having his haiku be full clauses or even full sentences:

While peace plies the Nile
and awe tours the tombs, fear
rides our guarded coach⁹⁸

It is not the case in this haiku, which enjoys an abundance of images — or rather, abstractions — but in other cases, writing a haiku as a sentence or continuous phrase eliminates the break, kire, and thus the juxtaposition between two images that is the main engine of the haiku. Here is one example, which also demonstrates the tontoism problem:

97. *HP4*, 16.

98. *Traveler*, 59.

Time after time
 caterpillar climbs this broken stem,
 then probes beyond.⁹⁹

Clearly, Hackett has difficulty with his Suggestion 17: “Avoid poeticism. The haiku poem should be direct, sensuous, and metaphysically ‘real.’” There is a dissonance in his work between that advice and his Suggestion 18, which emphasizes that the poet should suggest exactly what he or she wants others to feel. In many cases above we have felt the tension between the stenographic description of objects or events and the poet’s need to express his feelings about them.

Humor

For the most part Hackett is consistent with his advice in Suggestion 16 to employ humor but avoid pure wit. His humor is typically genial, low-key, and tasteful. The very many haiku about his dogs and cats certainly fall in the humorous category, but this pet owner is certainly not above a good pun . . .

When finally caught,
 the kitten’s tail is given
 a real good licking.¹⁰⁰

Sometimes Hackett grasps for humor in his work by an exaggerated delicacy of expression:

The sleeping dog’s wind
 first awakens him . . . and then
 drives him from the room.¹⁰¹

99. *HP*, 43.

100. *HP2*, 40.

101. *HP2*, 42. One of Randy Brooks’s students in his Global Haiku Tradition class at Millikin University in spring 2005 was assigned to study Hackett’s haiku and noticed another aspect of his word choice that is of some interest. Sarah Bassill writes: “One unusual topic that I discovered

Writing and Revision

A close study of Hackett's publications reveals a constant tinkering and rewriting. One of the most celebrated and dramatic example of this is one we have seen before, the early classic that was first published in *American Haiku* [1:1 (1963)] as

Bitter morning:
sparrows sitting
without necks.

By 1964 the haiku existed in two variants, the first published in Blyth's *History of Haiku* (II:235) the second in Hackett's *Haiku Poetry* (12)

BITTER MORNING:
SPARROWS SITTING
WITHOUT NECKS.

BITTER MORNING
SPARROWS SITTING TOGETHER
WITHOUT ANY NECKS.

while reading the entire *Haiku Poetry* collection was that James liked to talk about poop. I thought this topic was bizarre to mention more than once in over four volumes of haiku, but it does truly capture nature in the simplest way; which was what Hackett's style of haiku is aiming for. For example: "Ceasing his sweet song, / the woodpecker takes a poop, / and then sings again." [HP 26] (See Sarah Bassill. "James Hackett's Haiku; A Mirror Held Up to Nature." Global Haiku Tradition class, Millikin University, Decatur, Ill., 2005). In fact, Hackett has published a little over 1,000 haiku, and the word "poop" is used in 6 of them. For those interested in bodily functions, "shit" appears in 2 others, "fart" in one; "piss" in two; and "pee" in three—plus a few other, more oblique references to, usually (as the case of his dog passing wind) the accidents of his puppies. Whether such language is an exercise of Suggestion 16 on the use of humor in haiku poetry or Suggestion 15, that life/fulness, not beauty, is the essence of haiku, we'll leave the reader to decide.

Then the haiku won immortality in *Haiku* '64 as

A bitter morning:
Sparrows sitting together
Without any necks.

The poet has padded up a very fine haiku, adding three words that are not at all necessary, in order to bring it to 5–7–5, probably a requirement (or a perceived requirement) of the 1964 Japan Air Lines contest. This version became the standard, and in dozens of repetitions after 1964 it was this version, with minor changes in punctuation and formatting, that was used.

Even Hackett's recent haiku bear the marks of revision and re-revision. This one appeared in *Blithe Spirit* (6:2, August 1996) in the first version, but had morphed into the second version by the time it was included in *A Traveler's Haiku* (2004):

Shrill heat: a beetle
runs over furrows of sand
to the temple's shadow

Shrill heat . . .
beetle runs over waves of sand
to the temple's shadow

Second-guessing Hackett's composition and revision process, it appears that he thought up the unusual synesthetic formulation "shrill heat" and wanted to pair it with "to the temple's shadow," then equivocated as to whether it was preferable to have the first line be five syllables or the second line seven. Though "furrows" implies the action of a human hand, the use of this word rather than "waves" better calls to mind the image of a Zen rock garden. In the second version, line two becomes hypersyllabic, but changing from "furrows" to "waves" keeps the count to eight syllables. A further weakness is introduced in version two by dropping the article before "beetle"; as

we pointed out earlier, this makes the subject of the haiku sound like “Beetle,” perhaps a character in an aboriginal folk tale. There is more than an echo of Bashō’s “cicada cry piercing the rock” haiku.

From the same two publications here is another pair of Hackett’s recent haiku that shows his compulsion to tinker:

At Omaha Beach:
from bunkers of Nazi gall,
the stench of relief

At Omaha Beach . . .
from old bunkers of Nazi gall
the stench of piss

We could quibble about the punctuation. More important, though, is the insertion in line 2 of “old,” a cliché and unnecessary because we understand “Nazi” to include a more specific time reference. Stranger is the fact that “old” brings the syllable count of line 2 up to eight. The change of the last word is most interesting of all: Hackett forgoes the multiple pun of “relief” (meaning the provision—or lack of—additional Wehrmacht troops to defend the bunkers over Omaha Beach, the feelings of the French citizenry that the Allies had finally invaded, and the physiological reaction of troops faced with a massive attack, and the urination of tourists at the site) for the specific term with the foot-soldier specificity and resonance of “piss.” (We should also note the brilliant punning with “gall,” which can mean many bad things: impudent behavior, annoyance, something bitter or cruel, a sore on the skin of an animal, and a canker on a plant—as well as, homophonically, Gaul.) Also note this haiku’s single-phrase/single image character: it stretches to make a political-historical point and says, when all the telling and all the decoration is stripped away, only “the stench from the bunkers.”

AN ASSESSMENT

So what should we make of James W. Hackett, his Zen life, and his haiku poetry? He was clearly a pioneer of American haiku, probably the first to devote so much of his life and study to the writing of haiku. After 1964, the magical year in which he won the JAL contest and had a collection of his work published with the blessing of R. H. Blyth, and for at least a decade thereafter, Hackett was also the most widely known and heralded haiku poet in the nation. The reaction of the British haikuist Stephen Henry Gill is not atypical: “James Hackett was the only American haiku poet I had heard of until late in the eighties.”¹⁰²

Whether to admire Hackett for his decades-long singularity of purpose and dedication to the pre-eminence of Zen in haiku or to find his brand of mysticism and deliberate self-isolation from other poets and spiritual thinkers adequate cause to dismiss him as quaint, peripheral figure we each will have to decide for ourselves. In the 1960s, in very short order, other North American haiku poets outstripped Hackett in prominence and quality of work. Ironically, these other pioneers were quite mindful of the relationship between Zen and haiku and were themselves literary and spiritual children of R. H. Blyth. All, however, took a broader view of haiku than as an art bound hand and foot to Zen, and they looked for inspiration to Japanese haijin other than Bashō. Hackett, meanwhile, was tending his garden of 750 haiku poems, absenting himself from the tempestuous public discussions of haiku craft and practice, and grumpily complaining about the direction that English haiku, as well as humankind, was taking. Hackett concludes “That Art Thou” with “A Personal Testimony,” which includes this remarkable paragraph:

Naturally, some writers would be followers and even participate in the intellectual maelstrom if they so choose. But others would courageously follow their own star—solitary or unconventional though their way may be. Then, steeled with resolve, endeavor to take the way—come

102. *Blithe Spirit* 10:4 (December 2000), 54.

Hell (the maverick's aloneness) or high water (the high dudgeon of critics).

Early on James Hackett earned his niche in the pantheon of haiku, partly because he was there “firstest with the mostest,” and partly because a few of his early haiku are true classics—sparrows sitting without any necks, the fish motionless in the stream, the shape of the hawk’s cry, and my personal favorite, which I haven’t yet cited,

Half of the minnows
 within this sunlit shallow
 are not really there.¹⁰³

Like the minnows, however, perhaps the other half of Hackett’s presence is now not really there.



103. Blyth, *History* II:360.



“honeybee alchemy”

Annette Makino

Forgive, But Do Not Forget:

Modern Haiku and Totalitarianism¹

UDO WENZEL Interviews ITÔ YŪKI

ABSTRACT: In 1940s Japan, haiku poets were persecuted, arrested, tortured and their journals annihilated by the ultranationalist Tennō regime. All victims were advocates of free-verse haiku poetry, which had turned away from the “traditional” stylism of haiku composition. After the war, Takahama Kyoshi (1874–1959) became chief editor of the haiku journal *Hototogisu*, and propagated a return to “tradition,” against the innovative reform efforts of other haiku poets and groups. The persecutions of haiku poets took place during Kyoshi’s presidency of the Haiku branch of the “The Japanese Literary Patriotic Organization” (*Nihon bungaku hōkoku kai*), a culture-control/propaganda organization. After the war, Kyoshi did not distance himself from his attitudes or apologize for his wartime activities. From 1946, a movement began, whose aim was to bring charges of haiku war crimes to Kyoshi and others.

1. This interview was first published by *Haiku heute* 15 December 2007.

Itō Yūki was, at the time of this interview, a Ph.D. candidate at Kumamoto University, Graduate School of Cultural and Social Sciences. He has since that time completed his doctorate, and is currently an editor at an academic publishing house in Tokyo. He is the author of *New Rising Haiku: The Evolution of Modern Japanese Haiku and the Haiku Persecution Incident*,² among other works. Udo Wenzel was then editor of *Haiku heute*, a journal dedicated to haiku and haiku studies in German.



UDO WENZEL: You wrote and published the historical work, *New Rising Haiku: The Evolution of Modern Japanese Haiku and the Haiku Persecution Incident*, about the incidents of haiku persecutions during the age of Japanese imperialism. With this work you reveal aspects of Japanese history which are mostly unknown in the Western haiku world. What was your motivation in writing this monograph? What inspired you to undertake this project?

ITŌ YŪKI: From the starting point of my haiku career, I have had great respect for the mastery demonstrated by many haiku poets, and have read many books of haiku poetry and criticism, from the classics like Bashō to the contemporary, such as Kaneko Tōta, one of the key figures of modern haiku. However, I did not learn much of the deeper history of haiku until recent years. This project first began when Prof. Richard Gilbert, who teaches in my department at Kumamoto University, requested whether I might write something

2. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2007 (ISBN 978-1-893959-64-4). In German: „Das Neue Haiku. Die Entwicklung des modernen japanischen Haiku und das Phänomen der Haiku-Verfolgungen,” *Haiku heute* December 2007, translated by Udo Wenzel.

in English describing the history of gendai (modern Japanese) haiku. In our discussions which followed I was surprised to learn that there was almost nothing published in English on this topic.

When I began to study the history of haiku in depth, some of the first books I read were Kaneko Tōta's *Kon nichi no haiku* [*Today's Haiku* (1965)], and his *Waga sengo haiku shi* [*My postwar haiku history* (1985)]. In the latter book, Kaneko mentions that in order to understand *gendai* haiku history, a study of the wartime period is of great importance. He further states that without such an understanding any historical study would remain stereotypical and implicitly superficial. This was the process which led me to pursue the topic, and particularly, to write in English to an international audience. So it was that I learned of the Haiku Persecution Incident(s), and I want to say that I became quite shocked. I realized that in order to discuss the history of haiku, this wartime history should and in fact must be mentioned.

I became quite upset and had many sleepless nights. What I am saying here is literally true, without exaggeration. I felt the bitter sting of conscience, and nearly cursed myself as a haiku poet of Japan. At first I felt it was not my place to criticize those haiku poets who had collaborated with the totalitarian government; that is, from a perspective of safety and distance, concerning these events. I felt some repentance with regard to the wartime period events. However, repentance alone was not a good solution.

My next step was to gather as many primary-source materials on the subject as possible to obtain, and read them. For instance, I obtained many facsimiles of original documents, such as the records of the Japanese Secret Police (*tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu* or *tokkō*). After some difficulties, I was able to first locate and obtain some of the *Holy War Haiku* books, most of which had been gathered and burned by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP). As well, I obtained banned books, such as *Seisen haiku-sen* [*The Holy War haiku selection*]. These original documents clearly reveal and document

historical attitudes and facts. Nevertheless, if no one writes about these historical facts, they will likely be forgotten.

There is an Asian proverb, “Forgive, but do not forget.” Forgetting is not a good attitude towards, nor treatment of, history, in my opinion. Furthermore, I wanted to express, through my research, a sense of warning in light of recent inclinations in contemporary Japan toward right-wing ideology. Some conservative groups tend to forget or negate historical facts. In consideration of these various social, cultural, personal, and historical perspectives, I wrote the monograph on the Haiku Persecution Incident(s) in relation to the evolution of modern Japanese haiku, so that these facts and histories would be preserved for the future.

UW: You wrote of Takahama Kyoshi’s (1874–1959) long period of editorship of *Hototogisu*, and of his extended rule of the haiku world, before, during, and after the war. You also quoted briefly from his “The Commandment,” an authoritarian essay, as you state. Later in your monograph you also indicate the strict hierarchy of the master-disciple system of haiku. Can it be said that *kachōfūei* [haiku about nature] was mainly Kyoshi’s development—and that this aesthetic was strictly enforced in *Hototogisu*? To comment further, Hachirō Sakanishi published *Treibeis*³ (in German; *Drift Ice* in English). In “Remark 19” (p. 31) Sakanishi states that Kyoshi visited Asahikawa (in Hokkaidō) in 1933, where there was a main meeting of the Hototogisu group. In his lecture, he documented the strict discipline of the group related to the aesthetic. He stated that *kigo* must be oriented to the climate of Kyōto or Tōkyō,⁴ and that haiku should be composed solely about nature (*kachōfūei*). “Heresy should be strictly proscribed.” (p. 34) Can you support this statement? It seems from this quote that, in terms of Kyoshi, *kachōfūei* might be viewed not only as an artistic

3. Hachirō Sakanishi (ed.) *Treibeis*. Haiku. Seibunsha, Tōkyō 1986, Adonia-Verlag Thalwil 1990.

4. For example, the climate in Tōkyō or Kyōto is very different from the northern island of Hokkaidō.

aesthetic, but also as a means of social rule or even control, as well as intellectual control.

As well, the German author Annika Reich, in *Was ist Haiku?* (in German, *What is Haiku?* in English)⁵ quotes from her personal communication with Kaneko Tōta: “Takahama Kyoshi said *kigo* must be a rule, Bashō wrote seasonless poems. Before Kyoshi *kigo* was only a promise not a rule.”⁶ This also suggests the dictatorial attitude of Kyoshi.

IY: To answer your questions sufficiently, I would have to write more than one additional essay. And in fact, your question has motivated me to do this.⁷ Here, I will answer with only a few remarks.

That *kigo* before Kyoshi was not a rule but a “promise,” is a statement Tōta Kaneko has made, in various places and texts. If you look at the history of *haikai* literature, it is clear. There were no authorized “rulebooks” at Bashō’s time and only a few compilations of keywords; in fact, there was only a single case of a limited season-keyword compilation, from the unique *haikai* poet Kitamura Kigin (1625–1705) of the Teimon school. Bashō himself recommended a different *haikai* “rulebook” to his disciples, the *Haikai mugonshō* [*Haikai book without words*] published in 1676, which presented the techniques and philosophy of *haikai*, rather than being a dictionary of keywords. And Bashō included haiku without *kigo* in his haiku philosophy. Even the founder of modern haiku, Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902), accepted haiku without *kigo* and wrote such haiku himself. Shiki’s treatment of non-*kigo* haiku follows the example of Bashō, and other haiku poets of the Edo period. In the last years of Shiki’s life Kyoshi, one of his main disciples, became de facto chief editor of *Hototogisu*. Following Shiki’s death, the conflict between Kyoshi and Shiki’s other important disciple, Kawahigashi Hekigotō

5. Annika Reich, *Was ist Haiku? Zur Konstruktion der japanischen Nation zwischen Orient und Okzident*. Lit-Verlag Hamburg, 2000.

6. Reich, p. 34.

7. Subsequent articles were later published in the pages of *Haiku heute*.

(1873–1937), who wanted to promote also haiku in the free-verse style, became serious and intense. Kyoshi criticized Hekigotō several times in *Hototogisu*. Hekigotō then met with Ogiwara Seisensui (1884–1976), and they founded the free-verse haiku journal *Sōun* [*Layered clouds*] in 1911, and later Hekigotō left the *Hototogisu* journal.

It is important to consider the socio-political and economic realities as well: with his haiku style Kyoshi met the expectations of a new audience, the new *bourgeoisie*, who mostly had only little literary skill and knowledge. He provided haiku composition with religious connotations, and enunciates the truth that, for all those who write haiku, even bad poets who write haiku as a hobby can become enlightened. The true way to such salvation, we find, obtains in Kyoshi's haiku style. Kyoshi calls his haiku style the “literature of heaven” [*gokuraku no bungaku*], while other styles are deemed the “literature(s) of hell” [*jigoku no bungaku*].

And Kyoshi floated with the current of the already existing nationalism, as the following example from 1928 reveals. It was written after an attack by the Japanese Imperial Army against a Manchurian warlord, which was a prelude to the Manchurian Incident, thus bringing about the Fifteen Years War (1931–1945). Kyoshi reflects in this lecture about the development of his haiku style, of *kachōfūei*:

Especially, the *hokku* of *haikai*, today's haiku, became a completely specialized literature of *kachō* [nature]. . . . We ourselves are those who do not serve the nation well, but succeeding to and following the tradition of our ancestors' taste, we cherish *ka-chō-fū-getsu* [natural scenery]. Thus, in order to gather together the power of you men of culture, at a time when the Japanese nation stands in the world with its glorious power rising, Japanese literature must also rise within world literature. Then, when the time comes that the Japanese nation gains a strong footing in the world as the greatest nation, all peoples of other nations will without doubt pay close attention to the unique character of the literature of Japan. At that time, from among the crowds of plays

and novels, there can be seen the face of a haiku poet, and he will say, “Here: this is the literature of *kachōfūei*. That is, haiku.” I expect such a time to come.⁸

Kyoshi’s editorship of *Hototogisu* ran in parallel with the development of military expansionism. At the time, Kyoshi was the most powerful authority in the haiku world. In opposition to Kyoshi’s dictatorial attitude, Mizuhara Shūōshi (1892–1981) and Yamaguchi Seishi (1901–1994) left *Hototogisu*. And as for Kyoshi, in 1936 he banished Hino Sōjō (1901–1956), Yoshioka Zenjidō (1889–1961), and Sugita Hisajo (1890–1946) from *Hototogisu*. All of these events reflect Kyoshi’s dictatorial attitude, and there are numerous Kyoshi writings and lectures that could be quoted to further document the consistency of his character and attitude.

UW: The “war crimes” of which Kyoshi is accused have an ideological nature (censorship, the publication of war-glorifying scriptures or lectures, propagandistic actions, etc.). After reading your monograph, it seems that Ono Bushi is more directly responsible for arresting poets or initiating torture or deportation to the front-lines of the war. You also write that the nationalism of Shūōshi was much more obvious than that of Kyoshi. How could it happen that Kyoshi is in the main focus of the accusation: that he was put on the top of the list of “haiku war criminals,” but Bushi or Shūōshi beneath?

IY: This order of the haiku poets’ names which I presented in my monograph follows the order of the original document published by the “Prosecution for Haiku War Criminals” movement (*haidan senpan saiban undō*), and I have quoted from that section. In the writings of the movement, the name of Kyoshi is listed first.⁹ This listing, with Kyoshi first, reflects Kyoshi’s position during the wartime period. His title during this period was president of the Haiku Branch of the

8. *Teihon Takahama Kyoshi zenshū* [Collected works of Takahama Kyoshi] vol 11, 179-81. Tōkyō: Mainichi shinbunsha, 1974.

9. Cf. Ōno, Rinka. (ed.) *Haiku-nenkan: Shōwa 22*. [Haiku Almanac: 1947], Tōkyō: Tōryō Shobō, 1943. pp. 304-18.

fascist government culture-control/propaganda group, “The Japanese Literary Patriotic Organization” (*nihon bungaku hōkoku kai*; JLPO). The titles of Ono Bushi and Shūōshi were, in both cases, director-trustee. After the war, in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tōkyō Trial), the general president of the JLPO Tokutomi Sohō was listed as a Class A War Criminal. Kyoshi’s position as president of the Haiku Branch of the JLPO is quite similar to his. As well, after the war, Shūōshi presented an apology for his actions, and Ono Bushi had died before the end of the war. Kyoshi, however, never apologized for his actions. I think these facts help explain the reason for Kyoshi being listed first in the quoted “Prosecution for Haiku War Criminals” document.

UW: Nowadays the term “war crimes” is commonly used to signify offences against Public International Law which are closely connected to warfare. In which sense do you use the term “war crime,” or how was it used in the historical (immediate postwar) period you are discussing? What was the basis for the accusation of being a “haiku war criminal”? What was the ambition of the “Prosecution for Haiku War Criminals” movement (*haidan senpan saiban undō*), and what did it concretely try to achieve?

IY: The “Prosecution for Haiku War Criminals” movement (*haidan senpan saiban undō*) began in 1946. This was the same year as the beginning of “The Tōkyō War Crimes Trials” (The International Military Tribunal for the Far East), according to the 10th article of the Potsdam Declaration. So this movement, which developed along with The Tōkyō War Crimes Trials, had a particular emphasis. As a consequence of the defeat of Japan, the Tōkyō War Crimes Trials proceeded, naturally enough, from the perspective of “judgments by the winner” (of the war), so to say. In witnessing this process, some felt that trials by Japanese citizens themselves should supplement The Tōkyō War Crimes Trials—that such activity was necessary and important. The “Prosecution for Haiku War Criminals” movement began exactly in this spirit; that Japanese people themselves should

fully and honestly judge the wartime actions of those most responsible for atrocities, persecution, and other war crimes. Concerning the “Prosecution for Haiku War Criminals” movement, in my monograph, I wrote:

Its advocates were Higashi Kyōzō (Akimoto Fujio), Furuya Kayao, several other haiku poets, and the lawyer, Minato Yōichiro (1900–2002). The movement’s aim was not to imprison those who had either instituted persecutions or collaborated with the Secret Police, but to justly and publicly cause those guilty parties to recognize the weight of their guilt and feel the sting of conscience. It was not a witch hunt. If it had been, the movement would have become a reverse mirror image of the Haiku Persecution Incident(s) itself. By contrast, the aim of the movement was “to resolve all the issues of the past in order to together hold hands for the progress of haiku.”¹⁰

Such was their intention and aim. I hope this answers your question.

UW: How wide is the influence of the Hototogisu school today?

IY: Even today, the influence of the Hototogisu school is very strong, and this influence is widespread. The term *kachōfūei* is applied by many haiku groups, and forms a major part of the Japanese haiku world.

UW: In your monograph one can find several times in the critical writings of the New Rising Haiku poets a reproach, that traditional haiku is not serious literature but instead a kind of hobby-literature. What is the reason for this allegation, and how do you assess it?

IY: The phrase “season-hobby literature” is not my coinage, but rather a term first used by Yamaguchi Seishi in 1935. He stated that the aim of the New Rising Haiku movement was to “overthrow the conservative haiku as season-hobby literature, and to create *gendai* haiku as season-feeling literature in the spirit of Bashō, and as true

10. Minato Yōichirō. “*Haidan senpan saiban no koto* [On “the prosecution for haiku war criminals” movement],” in *Haikujin*, January 1947. Minpōsha, 1947. p, 34.

poetry.”¹¹ Seishi criticized the Hototogisu school because the school had an inclination to narrow and stagnated clichéd expressions. Seishi’s critique was similar in intent to the manner in which Masaoka Shiki had earlier criticized the traditional *haikai* of the Meiji era, as “*tsukinami* [hackneyed, formulaic].” Bashō said, “Do not follow the trace of the old masters. Rather follow what the old masters wanted to seek out” (*kojin no ato wo motomezu, kozjin no motometaru tokoro wo motomeyo*). Seishi thought that the Hototogisu school had strayed far from this intention and motivation, and he was not the only one who felt this way. I agree, by the way, with Yamaguchi Seishi’s opinion.

UW: Are some of the persecuted poets or any close disciples still alive today? Were you able to get in touch with any of them personally? If so, how do they assess your monograph? Is there still bad blood because of these past incidents?

IY: As far as I know, all of the arrested haiku poets have passed away. Recently, I met the haiku poet Yagi Mikajo (1924–), whose haiku teachers were the three arrested haiku poets of the Kyōdai Haiku group: Saitō Sanki (1900–1962), Hirahata Seitō (1905–1997), and Hashi Kageo (1910–1985). Her *haigō* [pen-name] was given to her by Saitō Sanki and Hirahata Seitō. She writes that Hirahata Seitō never, in any fulsome way, elucidated the story and historical details of the haiku persecution incident(s).

And yes, these incidents indeed are “bad blood” among the different groups of haiku poets. It is certainly “bad blood” concerning the Hototogisu haiku poets. Even for myself, it is very, very disturbing “bad blood,” because these incidents are undeniable facts in haiku history of Japan.

UW: You presented the historical background of the divisiveness and division of the haiku movement. After Shiki’s death the traditional haiku school led by Kyoshi gained in importance and became more popular than the opposing movement of Shiki’s other main disciple,

11. Komuro Zenkō. *Haijin tachi no kindai* [The early-modern era and the haiku poets]. Tōkyō: Hon’ami shoten, 2002. p. 48.

Kawahigashi Hekigotō. Later the “rebels” Shūōshi and Seishi departed from the *Hototogisu* school and founded their own groups. How do you see the different approaches and methods of composition of haiku, within the haiku movements of the non-Japanese-speaking world related to subjects such as form, *kigo*, *kireji*, etc.?

IY: I think it is good to study as many works of haiku poets as possible. It is unfortunate that many historical studies of haiku in the 20th century outside of Japan stop at Kyoshi or Shūōshi. Although some of the works of Kyoshi and Shūōshi are admirable, to neglect *gendai* haiku is a terrible loss for Western haiku, as well as a diminution or reduction of both of historic struggles and genius. *Gendai* haiku continues to develop in various ways. Also, it must be said that *gendai* haiku does not negate traditional haiku or haiku tradition. In fact, the *gendai* haiku poet Hasegawa Kai attains his mastery through the application of classical haiku techniques. A contrastive example is Tsubouchi Nenten, who attains his mastery via fragmentary and playful language, at times lacking *kigo* and *kireji*. He writes that *katakoto* (fragmentary language) is a *sine qua non* of haiku, and of traditional Japanese culture. There are many more examples which reveal that, while incorporating national and international modern/contemporary art theories and techniques, *gendai* haiku flows within the ancient river of Japanese haiku, literature, and culture.

In my opinion, haiku in the non-Japanese-speaking world does not have to use *kigo* because climate and cultural traditions are different, etc. And as well, from a linguistic point of view, *kireji* (“cutting words”) have their origin in the modal verbs existing in the ancient Japanese language. However, we haiku poets should know that *kire* (cutting) is not created merely through the use of special words, but rather that *kire* creates *ma* (the subtle empty room or “psychological space” of time, space, and mind) among words and senses, exhibited as disjunction, juxtaposition, etc. On *kire*, *kireji*, and *ma*, Hasagawa Kai has much to offer, and hopefully his haiku criticism will be translated into various languages in the future. I feel that, wherever

they are in the world, haiku poets should not limit the possibilities of the poetry, haiku, in any sense.

UW: In your monograph you called the master-disciple system feudalistic. And, in your acknowledgments you expressed gratitude to your haiku teachers. What is the difference between a teacher and a master? Is this master-disciple system still alive today?

IY: Kuwabara Takeo called haiku's master-disciple system feudalistic, in his essay, "A Second Class Art: The Case of *Gendai* Haiku" (*daini geijutsu ron: gendai haiku ni tsuite*). I partly agree with him. I think that the master-disciple system of Japanese haiku has a feudalistic aspect, but I do not completely deny its value. Japanese haiku has had a long history as a literature of the party (*kukai*)—a social gathering—and is not limited to (the more contemporary stylism of) individualistic literature. In terms of *kukai*, the master-disciple system of haiku seems to work well.

In Japan, many master-disciple systems exist, not only in haiku, but also within many "traditional" arts. In the Japanese haiku world, *kessha* systems ("one's own literary association") are quite strong. To be recognized as a leading haiku poet, typically one must found a *kessha* as a magazine group, and become its chief editor, hold one's own *kukai* (haiku meeting or party), etc. Certainly, most Japanese haiku poets belong to several *kessha*, whether as members or leaders.

As a "traditional" art, each *kessha* and its haiku poets are placed in a *shikei* (the genealogical tree of haiku schools). However, some *kessha* and haiku poets reject this system. In my case, one of my main haiku teachers, Morisu Ran, said to me some time ago, "Do not call me *sensei*!" As a result, I do not use or apply the term "master" to my haiku teachers.

UW: What reputation has the haiku within contemporary Japanese society? Is it regarded as politically neutral, as progressive, conservative, or even unprogressive?

IY: Today, in Japanese society, haiku is regarded as a common “traditional” literature, which is politically neutral. Some poets are progressive, but it has to be said that conservative attitudes occupy a major part of the genre here. In fact there are strongly nationalist haiku groups which act politically in various ways, including the creation of, or joining with, coalitions of certain political parties. I would like to express some sense of warning concerning this situation.

UW: Was your monograph published in Japan (in Japanese) too?

IY: Although I have published various poetic works in Japan, I have not published the monograph on the Haiku Persecution Incident(s) in Japanese. The reason may be obvious, when you examine the bibliography appended to my work. Many books exist in Japanese, and I would especially recommend the following:

Kosakai Shouzou. *Mikoku: Showa haiku danatsu jiken* [Betrayal/Informer: Showa era haiku persecution]. Tōkyō: Daimondo, 1979.

Furukawa Katsumi. *Taikenteki sinkou haikushi*. [A history of New Rising Haiku, in my own experience] Tōkyō: Orienta, 2000.

Tajima Kazuo. *Shinkō hijin no gunzō: “Kyōdai Haiku” no hikari to kage* [The figures of the New Rising Haiku Poets: Light and shadow of Kyōdai Haiku] Shibunkaku: Tōkyō, 2005.

Kosakai’s book represents a landmark study of the Haiku Persecution Incident(s). Unfortunately however, Kosakai adopted the theory that Saitō Sanki acted as a spy. Therefore, in 1978, Sanki’s disciples (especially Suzuki Murio (1919–2004)) accused Kosakai, and sued both Kosakai and the publisher in court. The upshot of all this was that in 1983 the court pronounced Sanki innocent on all counts. Other descriptions within the book were corroborated, and the discussion of the Haiku Persecution Incident(s) took on a new life. In 2005, Tajima’s book won the Haiku Poets Association Research Award.

On the other hand, there is not enough work on the haiku persecution incident(s) in Western languages. It remains my wish that this history be conveyed to the Western world, as there are so few published studies.





*black tulip
even before
the dusk*

“black tulip”

Ron C. Moss

Beyond the Haiku Moment:

Bashō, Buson, and Modern Haiku Myths

HARUO SHIRANE

ABSTRACT: Haiku has migrated from the country of its origin, and to languages and cultures that seemingly share nothing with Japan, yet the genre is thriving. The most energetic and thriving haiku culture resides in North America. Haruo Shirane, an authority on classical Japanese literature and a provocative writer on the legacy of haiku in the contemporary world, examines some of the changes which haiku has undergone in its travels, and evaluates them in relationship to the standard they might find in today's Japan. Among the issues he considers are the place of metaphor and other poetic tools in haiku; the necessity of season words and seasonality in contemporary practice; the awareness and inclusion of "self" in English-language haiku; and the need for a "vertical axis" of reference and allusion to create depth. He also considers the broadly different approaches to *senryū* to be found between cultures.

What does North American haiku look like when observed from Japan? What kind of advice might haiku masters such as Bashō and Buson give to English haiku poets? What would Bashō and Buson say if they were alive today and could read English and could read haiku written by North American poets?

I think that they would be delighted to find that haiku had managed to cross the Pacific and thrive so far from its place of origin. They would be impressed with the wide variety of haiku composed by North American haiku poets and find their work most innovative. At the same time, however, they would also be struck, as I have been, by the narrow definitions of haiku found in haiku handbooks, magazines, and anthologies. I was once told that Ezra Pound's famous metro poem first published in 1913, was not haiku.

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough .

If I remember correctly, the reason for disqualification was that the metro poem was not about nature as we know it and that the poem was fictional or imaginary. Pound's poem may also have been ruled out since it uses an obvious metaphor: the petals are a metaphor for the apparition of the faces, or vice versa. This view of the metro poem was based on the three key definitions of haiku — haiku is about direct observation, haiku eschews metaphor, and haiku is about nature—which poets such as Bashō and Buson would have seriously disputed.

HAIKU AS DIRECT PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OR OBSERVATION

One of the widespread beliefs in North America is that haiku should be based upon one's own direct experience, that it must derive from one's own observations, particularly of nature. But it is important to remember that this is basically a modern view of haiku, the result, in part, of nineteenth century European realism, which had an impact on modern Japanese haiku and then was re-imported to the West as something very Japanese. Bashō, who wrote in the seventeenth

century, would have not made such a distinction between direct personal experience and the imaginary, nor would he have placed higher value on fact over fiction.

Bashō was first and foremost a master of *haikai*, or comic linked poetry. In *haikai* linked verse, the seventeen syllable *hokku*, or opening verse, is followed by a 14-syllable *wakiku*, or added verse, which in turn is followed by the 17-syllable third verse, and so forth. Except for the first verse, which stood alone, each additional verse was read together with the previous verse and pushed away from the penultimate verse, or the verse prior to the previous verse. Thus, the first and second verse, the second and third verse, third and fourth verse formed independent units, each of which pushed off from the previous unit.

The joy and pleasure of *haikai* was that it was imaginary literature, that the poets who participated in linked verse moved from one world to the next, across time, and across space. The basic idea of linked verse was to create a new and unexpected world out of the world of the previous verse. One could compose about one's daily life, about being an official in China, about being a warrior in the medieval period, or an aristocrat in the ancient period. The other participants in the *haikai* sequence joined you in that imaginary world or took you to places that you could reach on with your imagination.

One of the reasons that linked verse became so popular in the late medieval period, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when it first blossomed as a genre, was because it was a form of escape from the terrible wars that ravaged the country at the time. For samurai in the era of constant war, linked verse was like the tea ceremony; it allowed one to escape, if only for a brief time, from the world at large, from all the bloodshed. The joy of it was that one could do that in the close company of friends and companions. When the verse sequence was over, one came back to Earth, to reality. The same occurred in the tea ceremony as developed by Sen no Rikyū. The tea hut took one away from the cares of this world, together with one's friends and companions.

In short, linked verse, both orthodox linked verse (*renga*) and its comic or casual version (*haikai*), was fundamentally imaginary. The *hokku*, or opening verse of the *haikai* sequence, which later became haiku, required a seasonal word, which marked the time and place of the gathering, but it too had no restrictions with regard to the question of fiction. Indeed, poets often composed on fixed topics (*dai*), which were established in advance. Buson, one of the great poets of haiku of the late eighteenth century, was in fact very much a studio or desk poet. He composed his poetry at home, in his study, and he often wrote about other worlds, particularly the tenth and eleventh century Heian aristocratic world and the subsequent medieval period. One of his most famous historical poems is *Tobadono e gorokki isogu nowaki kana*, probably composed in 1776. (All translations are my own.)

To Toba palace
5 or 6 horsemen hurry
autumn tempest

Toba palace, which immediately sets this in the Heian or early medieval period, was an imperial villa that the Cloistered Emperor Shirakawa (1053–1129) constructed near Kyoto in the eleventh century and that subsequently became the location of a number of political and military conspiracies. The galloping horsemen are probably warriors on some emergency mission — a sense of turmoil and urgency embodied in the season word of autumn tempest (*nowaki*). An American equivalent might be something like the Confederate cavalry at Gettysburg during the Civil War or the militia at Lexington during the American revolution. The *hokku* creates a powerful atmosphere and a larger sense of narrative, like a scene from a medieval military epic or from a picture scroll.

Another noted historical poem by Buson is *Komabune no yorade sugiyuku kasumi kana*, composed in 1777.

the Korean ship
not stopping passes back
into the mist

Komabune were the large Korean ships that sailed to Japan during the ancient period, bringing cargo and precious goods from the continent, a practice that had long since been discontinued by Buson's time. The Korean ship, which is offshore, appears to be heading for port but then gradually disappears into the mist (*kasumi*), a seasonal word for spring and one associated with dream-like atmosphere. The Korean ship passing into the spring mist creates a sense of mystery, of a romantic other, making the viewer wonder if this scene is nothing but a dream.

Another example from Buson is *inazuma ya name moteyueru akitsushima*, composed in 1776.

lightning —
girdled by waves
islands of Japan

In this *hokku*, the light from the lightning (*inazuma*), a seasonal word for autumn associated in the ancient period with the rice harvest (*ina*), enables the viewer to see the waves surrounding all the islands of Akitsushima (an ancient name for Japan that originally meant the islands where rice grows richly). This is not the result of direct experience. It is a spectacular aerial view — a kind of paean to the fertility and beauty of the country — that would only be possible from far above the Earth.

Even the personal poems can be imaginary.

piercingly cold
stepping on my dead wife's comb
in the bedroom

The opening phrase, *mini ni shimu* (literally, to penetrate the body), is an autumn phrase that suggests the chill and sense of loneliness that sinks into the body with the arrival of the autumn cold and that here also functions as a metaphor of the poet's feelings following the death of his wife. The poem generates a novelistic scene of the widower, some time after his wife's funeral, accidentally stepping on a comb in the autumn dark, as he is about to go to bed alone.

The standard interpretation is that the snapping of the comb in the bedroom brings back memories of their relationship and has erotic overtones. But this is not about direct or personal experience. The fact is that Buson (1706–83) composed this while his wife was alive. Indeed Buson's wife Tomo outlived him by 31 years.

Why then the constant emphasis by North American haiku poets on direct personal experience? The answer to this is historically complex, but it should be noted that the *haikai* that preceded Bashō was almost entirely imaginary or fictional *haikai*.

Much of it was so imaginary that it was absurd, and as a result it was criticized by some as “nonsense” *haikai*. A typical example is the following *hokku* found in *Indoshu* (*Teaching collection*, 1684), a Danrin school *haikai* handbook: *mine no hana no nami ni ashika kujira o oyogase*.

making sea lions and whales
swim in the cherry blossom waves
at the hill top

The *hokku* links cherry blossoms, which were closely associated with waves and hill tops in classical Japanese poetry, to sea lions and whales, two non-classical, vernacular words, thereby comically deconstructing the poetic cliché of “waves of cherry blossoms”. Bashō was one of the critics of this kind of “nonsense” *haikai*. He believed that *haikai* should describe the world “as it is.” He was in fact part of a larger movement that was a throwback to earlier orthodox linked verse or *renga*.

However, to describe the world as it is did not mean denying fiction. Fiction can be very realistic and even more real than life itself. For Bashō, it was necessary to experience everyday life, to travel, to expose oneself to the world as much as possible, so that the poet could reveal the world as it was. But it could also be fictional, something born of the imagination. In fact, you had to use your imagination to compose *haikai*, since it was very much about the ability to move from one world to another. Bashō himself often rewrote his poetry: he would change the gender, the place, the time, the situation. The only thing that mattered was the effectiveness of the poetry, not whether it was faithful to the original experience.

One of the chief reasons for the emphasis in modern Japan on direct personal observations was Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902), the late nineteenth century pioneer of modern haiku, who stressed the sketch (*shasei*) based on direct observation of the subject as the key to the composition of the modern haiku. This led to the *ginkō*, the trips to places to compose haiku. Shiki denounced linked verse as an intellectual game and saw the haiku as an expression of the individual.

In this regard Shiki was deeply influenced by Western notions of literature; first, that literature should be realistic, and second, that literature should be an expression of the individual. By contrast, *haikai* as Bashō had known it had been largely imaginary, and a communal activity, the product of group composition or exchange. Shiki condemned traditional *haikai* on both counts. Even if Shiki had not existed, the effect would have been similar since Western influence on Japan from the late 19th century has been massive. Early American and British pioneers of English-language haiku—such as Basil Chamberlain, Harold Henderson, R. H. Blyth—had limited interest in modern Japanese haiku, but shared many of Shiki's assumptions. The influence of Ezra Pound and the (Anglo-American) Modernist poetry movement was also significant in shaping modern notions of haiku. In short, what many North American haiku poets have thought to be uniquely Japanese had in fact its roots in Western literary thought.

We are often told, particularly by the pioneers of English language haiku (such as D. T. Suzuki, Alan Watts, and the Beats) who mistakenly emphasized Zen Buddhism in Japanese haiku, that haiku should be about the “here and now.” This is an extension of the notion that haiku must derive from direct observation and personal experience. Haiku is extremely short, and therefore it can concentrate on only a few details.

It is thus suitable for focusing on the here and now. But there is no reason why these moments have to be only in the present, contemporary world or why haiku can't deal with other kinds of time. This noted haiku appears in Bashō's *Narrow Road*:

samidare no furinokoshite ya hikarido.

Have the summer rains
come and gone, sparing
the Hall of Light

The summer rains (*samidare*) refers both to the rains falling now and to past summer rains, which have spared the Hall of Light over the centuries.

Perhaps Bashō's most famous poem in *Narrow Road* is *natsukusa ya tsuwamonodomo ga yume no ato* in which the “dreams” and the “summer grasses” are both those of the contemporary poet and of the warriors of the distant past.

Summer grasses—
traces of dreams
of ancient warriors

As we can see from these examples, haiku moments can occur in the distant past or in distant, imaginary places. In fact, one of Buson's great accomplishments was his ability to create other worlds. Bashō traveled to explore the present, the contemporary world, to

meet new poets, and to compose linked verse with them. Equally important, travel was a means of entering into the past, of meeting the spirits of the dead, of experiencing what his poetic and spiritual predecessors had experienced. In other words, there were two key axes: one horizontal, the present, the contemporary world; and the other vertical, leading back into the past, to history, to other poems. As I have shown in my book *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō*, Bashō believed that the poet had to work along both axes. To work only in the present would result in poetry that was fleeting. To work just in the past, on the other hand, would be to fall out of touch with the fundamental nature of *haikai*, which was rooted in the everyday world. *Haikai* was, by definition, anti-traditional, anti-classical, anti-establishment, but that did not mean that it rejected the past. Rather, it depended upon the past and on earlier texts and associations for its richness.

If Bashō and Buson were to look at North American haiku today, they would see the horizontal axis, the focus on the present, on the contemporary world, but they would probably feel that the vertical axis, the movement across time, was largely missing. There is no problem with the English-language haiku handbooks that stress personal experience. They should. This is a good way to practice, and it is an effective and simple way of getting many people involved in haiku. I believe, as Bashō did, that direct experience and direct observation is absolutely critical; it is the base from which we must work and which allows us to mature into interesting poets. However, as the examples of Bashō and Buson suggest, it should not dictate either the direction or value of haiku. It is the beginning, not the end. Those haiku that are fictional or imaginary are just as valid as those that are based on personal experience. I would in fact urge the composition of what might be called historical haiku or science fiction haiku.

HAIKU AS NON-METAPHORICAL

Another rule of North American haiku that Bashō would probably find discomfiting is the idea that haiku eschews metaphor and allegory. North American haiku handbooks and magazines stress that haiku should be concrete, that it should be about the thing itself. The poet does not use one object or idea to describe another, using A to understand B, as in simile or metaphor; instead the poet concentrates on the object itself. Allegory, in which a set of signs or symbols draw a parallel between one world and the next, is equally shunned. All three of these techniques — metaphor, simile, and allegory — are generally considered to be taboo in English-language haiku, and beginners are taught not to use them.

However, many of Bashō's haiku use metaphor and allegory, and in fact this is probably one of the most important aspects of his poetry. In Bashō's time, one of the most important functions of the *hokku*, or opening verse, which was customarily composed by the guest, was to greet the host of the session or party. The *hokku* had to include a seasonal word, to indicate the time, but it also had to compliment the host. This was often done allegorically or symbolically, by describing some aspect of nature, which implicitly resembled the host. A good example is:

shiragiku no me ni tatete miru chiri mo nashi

gazing intently
at the white chrysanthemums —
not a speck of dust

Here Bashō is complementing the host (Sonome), represented by the white chrysanthemums, by stressing the flower's and, by implication, Sonome's purity. Another example is *botan shibe fukaku wakeizuru hachi no nagori kana*, which appears in Bashō's travel diary *Skeleton in the Fields* (Nozarashi kiko).

Having stayed once more at the residence of Master Toyo, I was
about to leave for the Eastern Provinces.

from deep within
the peony pistils — withdrawing
regretfully the bee

In this parting poem the bee represents Bashō and the peony pistils the host (Master Toyo). The bee leaves the flower only with the greatest reluctance, thus expressing the visitor's deep gratitude to the host. This form of symbolism or simple allegory was standard for poets at this time, as it was for the entire poetic tradition. In classical Japanese poetry, object of nature inevitably serve as symbols or signs for specific individuals or situations in the human world, and Japanese *haikai* is no exception. Furthermore, poets like Bashō and Buson repeatedly used the same images (such as the rose for Buson or the beggar for Bashō) to create complex metaphors and symbols.

It is no doubt a good idea for the beginner to avoid overt metaphor or allegory or symbolism, but this should not be the rule for more advanced poets. In fact, I think this rule prevents many good poets from becoming great poets. Without the use of metaphor, allegory and symbolism, haiku will have a hard time achieving the complexity and depth necessary to become the object of serious study and commentary.

The fundamental difference between the use of metaphor in haiku and that in other poetry is that in haiku it tends to be extremely subtle and indirect, to the point of not being readily apparent. The metaphor in good haiku is often buried deep within the poem. For example, the seasonal word in Japanese haiku tends often to be inherently metaphorical, since it bears very specific literary and cultural associations, but the first and foremost function of the seasonal word is descriptive, leaving the metaphorical dimension implied.

ALLUSION, POETRY ABOUT POETRY

The emphasis on the “haiku moment” in North American haiku has meant that most of the poetry does not have another major characteristic of Japanese *haikai* and haiku: its allusive character, the ability of the poem to speak to other literary or poetic texts.

I believe that it was Shelley who said that poetry is ultimately about poetry. Great poets are constantly in dialogue with each other. This was particularly true of *haikai*, which began as a parodic form, by twisting the associations and conventions of classical literature and poetry.

One of Bashō’s innovations was that he went beyond parody and used literary and historical allusions as a means of elevating *haikai*, which had hitherto been considered a low form of amusement. Many of Bashō and Buson’s *haikai* in fact depend for their depth on reference or allusion to earlier poetry, from either the Japanese tradition or the Chinese tradition. For example, one of Buson’s best known *hokku* (1742) is

yanagi chiri shimizu kare ishi tokoro dokoro

fallen willow leaves —
the clear stream gone dry,
stones here and there

The *hokku* is a description of a natural scene, of “here and now,” but it is simultaneously an allusion to and a *haikai* variation on a famous *waka*, or classical poem, by Saigyō (1118–1190), a 12th century poet:

*michinobe ni shimizu nagaruru yanagi kage shibashi tote koso
tachitomaritsure* (*Shinkokinshū*, Summer, No. 262).

by the side of the road
alongside a stream of clear water
in the shade of a willow tree
I paused for what I thought
would be just a moment

Bashō (1644–94) had earlier written the following poem (*ta ichimai uete tachisaru yanagi kana*) in *Narrow Road to the Interior* (*Oku no hosomichi*), in which the traveler (Bashō), having come to the place where Saigyō had written this poem, relives those emotions: Bashō pauses beneath the same willow tree and before he knows it, a whole field of rice has been planted.

a whole field of
rice seedlings planted — I part
from the willow

In contrast to Bashō's poem, which recaptures the past, Buson's poem is about loss and the irrevocable passage of time, about the contrast between the situation now, in autumn, when the stream has dried up and the willow leaves have fallen, and the past, in summer, when the clear stream beckoned to Saigyō and the willow tree gave him shelter from the hot summer sun. Like many of Bashō and Buson's poems, the poem is both about the present and the past, about the landscape and about other poems and poetic associations.

The point here is that much of Japanese poetry works off the vertical axis mentioned earlier. There are a few, rare examples of this in English haiku. I give one example, by Bernard Einbond, a New York City poet who recently passed away,¹ which alludes to Bashō's famous frog poem:

furuike ya kawaze tobikomu mozu no oto

(an old pond, a frog jumps in, the sound of water)

frog pond . . .
a leaf falls in
without a sound

1. Bernard Lionel Einbond (1937–1998).

This haiku deservedly won the Japan Airlines First Prize, in which there were something like 40,000 entries. This poem has a *haikai* quality that Bashō would have admired. In typical *haikai* fashion, it operates on two fundamental levels. On the scenic level, the horizontal axis, it is a description of a scene from nature, it captures the sense of quiet, eremitic loneliness that is characteristic of Bashō's poetry. On the vertical axis, it is an allusive variation, a *haikai* twist on Bashō's famous frog poem, wittily replacing the frog with the leaf and the sound of the frog jumping in with no sound. Einbond's haiku has a sense of immediacy, but at the same time it speaks to the past; it enters into dialogue with Bashō's poem. In other words, this haiku goes beyond "the haiku moment," beyond the here and now, to speak across time. To compose such haiku is difficult. But it is the kind of poetry that can break into the mainstream and can become part of a poetic heritage.

The vertical axis does not always have to be a connection to another poem. It can be what I call cultural memory, a larger body of associations that the larger community can identify with. It could be about a past crisis (such as the Vietnam War or the loss of a leader) that the poet of a community is trying to come to terms with. The key here is the larger frame, the larger body of associations that carries from one generation to the next and that goes beyond the here and now, beyond the so-called haiku moment. The key point is that for the horizontal (contemporary) axis to survive, to transcend time and place, it needs at some point to cross the vertical (historical) axis; the present moment has to engage with the past or with a broader sense of time and community (such as family, national or literary history).

NATURE AND SEASONAL WORDS

One of the major differences between English-language haiku and Japanese haiku is the use of the seasonal word (*kigo*). There are two formal requirements of the *hokku*, now called haiku: the cutting word, which cuts the 17-syllable *hokku* in two, and the seasonal word.

English-language haiku poets do not use cutting words per se, but they use the equivalent, either in the punctuation (such as a dash), with nouns, or syntax. The effect is very similar to the cutting word, and there have been many good poems that depend on the cutting. However, there is no equivalent to the seasonal word. In fact, the use of a seasonal word is not a formal requirement in English-language haiku, as it is for most of Japanese haiku.

In Japan, the seasonal word triggers a series of cultural associations which have been developed, refined and carefully transmitted for over a thousand years and which are preserved, transformed and passed on from generation to generation through seasonal handbooks, which remain in wide use today.

In Bashō's day, seasonal words stood in the shape of a huge pyramid. At the top were the big five, which had been at the core of classical poetry (the 31-syllable *waka*): the cuckoo (*hototogisu*) for summer, the cherry blossoms for spring, the snow for winter, the bright autumn leaves and the moon for autumn. Spreading out from this narrow peak were the other topics from classical poetry — spring rain (*harusame*), orange blossoms (*hanatachibana*), bush warbler (*uguisu*), willow tree (*yanagi*), etc. Occupying the base and the widest area were the vernacular seasonal words that had been added recently by *haikai* poets. In contrast to the elegant images at the top of the pyramid, the seasonal words at the bottom were taken from everyday, contemporary, commoner life.

Examples from spring include dandelion (*tanpopo*), garlic (*ninniku*), horseradish (*wasabi*) and cat's love (*neko no koi*).

From as early as the 11th century, the poet of classical poetry was expected to compose on the poetic essence (*honi*) of a set topic. The poetic essence was the established associations at the core of the seasonal word. In the case of the warbler (*uguisu*), for example, the poet had to compose on the warbler in regard to the arrival and departure of spring, about the emergence of the warbler from the mountain glen, or about the relationship of the warbler to the plum

blossoms. This poetic essence, the cluster of associations at the core of the seasonal topic, was thought to represent the culmination and experience of generations of poets over many years. By composing on the poetic essence, the poet could partake of this communal experience, inherit it, and carry it on. (This phenomenon is true of most of the traditional arts. The beginner must first learn the fundamental forms, or *kata*, which represent the accumulated experience of generations of previous masters.) Poets studied Japanese classics such as *The Tale of Genji* and the *Kokinshu*, the first imperial anthology of Japanese *waka* poetry, because these texts were thought to preserve the poetic essence of nature and the seasons, as well as of famous places.

Famous places (*meisho*) in Japanese poetry have a function similar to the seasonal word. Each famous place in Japanese poetry had a core of poetic associations on which the poet was obliged to compose. Tatsutagawa (Tatsuta River), for example, meant *momiji*, or bright autumn leaves. Poets such as Saigyō and Bashō traveled to famous poetic places — such as Tatsutagawa, Yoshino, Matsushima, Shirakawa — in order to partake of this communal experience, to be inspired by poetic places that had been the fountainhead of the great poems of the past.

These famous poetic places provided an opportunity to commune across time with earlier poets. Like seasonal words, famous places functioned as a direct pipeline to the communal poetic body. By contrast, there are very few, if any places, in North America that have a core of established poetic associations of the kind found in famous places in Japan. And accordingly there are relatively few English haiku on noted places.

The point here is that the seasonal word, like the famous place name in Japanese poetry, anchors the poem in not only some aspect of nature but in the vertical axis, in a larger communal body of poetic and cultural associations. The seasonal word allows something that is small to gain a life of its own. The seasonal word, like the famous place name, also links the poem to other poems. In fact, each haiku is in effect part of one gigantic seasonal poem.

People have often wondered about the brevity of the Japanese poem. The seventeen syllable haiku is the shortest form in world literature, and the thirtyone syllable *waka* or *tanka*, as it is called today, is probably the second shortest. How then is it possible for poetry to be so short and yet still be poetry? How can there be complexity or high value in such a simple, brief form? First, the brevity and the overt simplicity allow everyone to participate, making it a communal, social medium. Second, the poem can be short and still complex since it is actually part of a larger, more complex poetic body. When the poet takes up one of the topics at the top of the seasonal pyramid or visits a famous place, he or she enters into an imaginary world that he or she shares with the audience and that connects to the dead, the ancients. To compose on the poetic essence of a topic is, as we saw, to participate in the larger accumulated experience of past poets. It is for this reason that the audience takes pleasure in very subtle variations on familiar themes.

This communal body, the vertical axis, however, is in constant need of infusion, of new life. The *haikai* poet needs the horizontal axis to seek out the new experience, new language, new topics, new poetic partners. The seasonal pyramid can be seen as concentric circles of a tree trunk, with the classical topics at the center, followed by classical linked verse topics, the *haikai* topics, and finally modern haiku words on the periphery. The innermost circles bear the longest history and are essentially fictional worlds and the least likely to change. The outer circles, by contrast, are rooted in everyday life and in the contemporary, ever-changing world. Many of those on the circumference will come and go, never to be seen again. Without the constant addition of new rings, however, the tree will die or turn into a fossil.

One of the ideals that Bashō espoused toward the end of his life was that of the “unchanging and the everchanging” (*fueki ryuko*). The “unchanging” implied the need to seek the “truth of poetic art” (*fuga no makoto*), particularly in the poetic and spiritual tradition,

to engage in the vertical axis, while the “ever changing” referred to the need for constant change and renewal, the source of which was ultimately to be found in everyday life, in the horizontal axis.

Significantly, the Haiku Society of America definition of haiku does not mention the seasonal word, which would be mandatory in Japan for most schools of haiku. Maybe half of existing English-language haiku have seasonal words or some sense of the season, and even when the haiku do have a seasonal word they usually do not serve the function that they do in Japanese haiku. The reason for this is that the connotations of seasonal words differ greatly from region to region in North America, not to mention other parts of the world, and generally are not tied to specific literary or cultural associations that would immediately be recognized by the reader. In Japan, by contrast, for hundreds of years, the seasonal words have served as a crucial bridge between the poem and the tradition. English-language haiku therefore has to depend on other dimensions of haiku for its life.

In short, while haiku in English is inspired by Japanese haiku, it can not and should not try to duplicate the rules of Japanese haiku because of significant differences in language, culture and history.

A definition of English-language haiku will thus, by nature, differ from that of Japanese haiku. If pressed to give a definition of English-language haiku that would encompass the points that I have made here, I would say, echoing the spirit of Bashō’s own poetry, that haiku in English is a short poem, usually written in one to three lines, that seeks out new and revealing perspectives on the human and physical condition, focusing on the immediate physical world around us, particularly that of nature, and on the workings of the human imagination, memory, literature and history.

There are already a number of fine North American haiku poets working within this frame so this definition is intended both to encourage an existing trend and to affirm new space that goes beyond existing definitions of haiku.

SENRYŪ AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE HAIKU

Maybe close to half of English-language haiku, including many of the best ones, are in fact a form of *senryū*, 17-syllable poems that do not require a seasonal word and that focus on human condition and social circumstances, often in a humorous or satirical fashion. I think that this is fine. English-language haiku should not try to imitate Japanese haiku, since it is working under very different circumstances. It must have a life and evolution of its own.

Senryū, as it evolved in Japan in the latter half of the 18th century, when it blossomed into an independent form, was heavily satirical, poking fun at contemporary manners and human foibles. English-language haiku magazines have established a distinction between the two forms, of haiku and *senryū*, in which those poems associated with nature are placed in the haiku category and those with non-natural subjects in the *senryū* category. According to the Haiku Society of America, haiku is the “essence of a movement keenly perceived in which nature is linked to human nature.” *Senryū*, by contrast, is “primarily concerned with human nature; often humorous or satiric.” While this definition of English-language *senryū* is appropriate, that for English-language haiku, which tends, by nature, to overlap with *senryū*, seems too limited.

One consequence of a narrower definition of haiku is that English-language anthologies of haiku are overwhelmingly set in country or natural settings even though 90 percent of the haiku poets actually live in urban environments. To exaggerate the situation, North American haiku poets are given the alternative of either writing serious poetry on nature (defined as haiku) or of writing humorous poetry on non-nature topics (defined as *senryū*). This would seem to discourage haiku poets from writing serious poetry on the immediate urban environment or broader social issues. Topics such as subways, commuter driving, movie theaters, shopping malls, etc., while falling outside of the traditional notion of nature, in fact provide some of the richest sources for modern haiku, as much recent English-language

haiku has revealed, and should be considered part of nature in the broadest sense.

For this reason I am now editing a volume of New York or urban haiku,² which, according to the narrow definition of haiku, would often be discouraged or disqualified, but which, in my mind, represents the original spirit of Japanese haikai in focusing on the immediate physical environment. Projects such as Dee Evett's "Haiku on 42nd Street," in which he presented urban haiku on empty movie theatre marquees in Times Square, are, in this regard, both innovative and inspiring.

CONCLUSION: SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF *HAIKAI*

The dilemma is this: on the one hand, the great attraction of haiku is its democracy, its ability to reach out, to be available to everyone. There is no poetry like haiku when it comes to this. Haiku has a special meaning and function for everyone. It can be a form of therapy. It can be a way to tap into one's psyche.

Haiku can do all these things. And it can do these things because it is short, because the rules are simple, because it can focus on the moment.

However, if haiku is to rise to the level of serious poetry, literature that is widely respected and admired, that is taught and studied, commented on, that can have impact on other non-haiku poets, then it must have a complexity that gives it depth and that allows it to both focus on and rise above the specific moment or time. Bashō, Buson and other masters achieved this through various forms of textual density, including metaphor, allegory, symbolism and allusion, as well as through the constant search for new topics. For North American poets, for whom the seasonal word cannot function in the fashion that it did for these Japanese masters, this becomes a more pressing issue, with the need to explore not only metaphorical and symbolic possibilities but new areas — such as history, urban

2. A project that never came to fruition.

life, social ills, death and war, cyberspace, Haiku need not and should not be confined to a narrow definition of nature poetry, particularly since the ground rules are completely different from those in Japan.

How then can haiku achieve that goal in the space of 17 syllables? The answer is that it does not necessarily have to. One of the assumptions that Bashō and others made about the *hokku* (haiku) was that it was unfinished. The *hokku* was only the beginning of a dialogue; it had to be answered by the reader or another poet or painter. *Haikai* in its most fundamental form, as linked verse, is about linking one verse to another, one person to another. *Haikai* is also about exchange, about sending and answering, greeting and bidding farewell, about celebrating and mourning.

Haikai was also about mutual composition, about completing or complementing the work of others, adding poetry and calligraphy to someone's printing, adding a prose passage to a friend's poem, etc.

One consequence is that *haikai* and the *hokku* in particular is often best appreciated and read as part of a sequence, as part of an essay, a poetry collection, a diary or travel narrative, all forms that reveal the process of exchange, linkage, and that give *haikai* and haiku a larger context. Bashō's best work was *Narrow Road to the Interior* (*Oku no hosomichi*), in which the haiku was embedded in a larger prose narrative and was part of a larger chain of texts.

In Bashō's day, *haikai* was two things: 1) performance and social act, and 2) literary text. As a social act, as an elegant form of conversation, *haikai* had to be easily accessible; it had to be spontaneous; it had to perform social and religious functions. Thus, half of Bashō's haiku were greetings, parting poems, poetic prayers. They served very specific functions and were anchored in a specific place and time, in a dialogic exchange with other individuals. For Bashō, however, *haikai* was also a literary text that had to transcend time and place, be understood by those who were not at the place of composition. To achieve this goal, Bashō repeatedly rewrote his poetry, made it fictional, gave it new settings, added layers of meaning, emphasized

the vertical axis (linking it to history and other literary texts), so that the poem would have an impact beyond its original circumstances. One hopes that more North American haiku poets can take inspiration from such complex work.





“chaos 2”

Marlene Mountain

Karumi

Matsuo Bashō's Ultimate Poetical Value, Or was it?

SUSUMU TAKIGUCHI

ABSTRACT: Bashō's aesthetic focus over the last fifteen years of his life may be reduced to two fundamental elements, *sabi* and *karumi*. The custom is to give *sabi* the predominant position. However, a complete understanding of his life and work will not be complete unless and until *karumi* is given proper status. *Sabi* represents the element which is characterised by the traditional, medieval poetic values based on aristocratic sensitivities, such as *mono no aware*, *yugen*, *u-shin* and *sabi* itself. *Karumi* represents the element of the common people whose plain speech and everyday activities provided an immensely rich source for humorous rendering and light-hearted diction of universal relevance.

In early May, 1694 (Genroku 7)¹ Matsuo Bashō set out westwards from his riverside hut in Fukagawa, Edo on a long journey whose destination is thought to have been Nagasaki. On his departure, one of his disciples, Yaha, asked the master what the New Year's poems² should be like. It was in Bashō's reply to this question that a very significant pointer could be found to his thinking at that time about the poetical style which he was developing. "For the time being," he said, "the present (*haikai*)³ style (of the Bashō School) will do. However, in about five or six years' time it will have changed completely and our style will turn ever lighter." This episode is recorded in Kyorai's *Tabineron*⁴ which by general consent is thought to be one of the more

1. Months given are based on the lunar calendar.

2. These poems are called *Saitan*. They were composed at *Saitanbiraki* (New Year's Poetry Meeting) on an auspicious day in January by a master such as Bashō himself and his top disciples. It was customary to have the poems printed on a single sheet or in a booklet, which was then given as a season's greeting or sold to the general public.

3. The word *haikai* is derived from *haikai no renga* (comic linked-verse) which was a form of *renga*. *Haikai* comprises *hokku* (opening stanza) and *tsukeku* (capping stanzas) forming *renku* (linked stanzas) but in a looser sense it can include such writings in prose as journals of journeys and diaries. *Hokku* was the most important as it set the tone and style of a particular *renku* sequence and was therefore usually composed by a master or a senior poet. So important was it that it came to be composed sometimes outside the *renku* session whenever a poet thought of a good idea for *hokku*, which he jotted down to be used in future *renku* sessions. This led to the situation where *hokku* was composed in its own right, thus paving the way for what we now know as haiku. The word haiku began to be used in this sense during the Meiji period (1868–1912), particularly by Masaoka Shiki although the earliest known usage of it (in the same sense as *hokku*) was during the Kambun period, i.e., in the 1660s.

4. Kyorai also records the same conversation of Noha with Bashō at the end of the *Kyoraisho* (*Conversations with Kyorai*). The wording, however, is slightly different and *karumi* is not referred to.

Kyorai records a similar episode in his *Rekidai Kokkeiden* (*Successive Comic Tales*), citing Bashō's poem in the anthology *Fukagawa* (1693). The

reliable documents about Bashō's ideas on poetics.

Exactly five months later, one of his most famous and also his last poem was composed in Osaka: *Tabi ni yande yume wa kareno wo kake meguru* (Taken ill on a journey, my dreams roam over a moor). Among various possible interpretations of this poem, one that is relevant to Bashō's unceasing search for an improved style is that the poem reflects a demonic power which had possessed Bashō and had driven him endlessly into writing poems. But looked at from the opposite point of view, the poem can be said to reflect the degree to which Bashō despaired that the death which he felt was rapidly approaching would terminate his endeavour to perpetuate the creation of a new style. Sadly, that actually came true four days later on 12 October 1694.

Bashō's same apprehension is attested by writings of his disciples, notably Toho's *Akazoshi*⁵ which is another important first-line

poem embodies the idea of *karumi* and Kyoriku comments, "My master said that his *haikai* would all be like this one in four or five years' time."

Kyoriku as quoted in *Rekidai Kokkeiden* refers to a passage of *Fukagawa* (Shado ed. published Genroku 6, 1693) showing the following *renku* by Ranran and Bashō.

Norikake no chochin shimesu asaoroshi [Ranran]

Shio sashikakaru hoshikawa no hashi [Bashō]

According to Kyoriku, Bashō said "All of my *haikai* will become like this in four or five year's time."

Kyorai records also that Bashō indicated to Izen on his last journey that the *haikai* style would become lighter and lighter from then on.

5. On his death-bed Bashō was asked by his pupils about the future of *haikai*. He mentions first that *haikai*, which originated from him, had undergone many a change, in his own words, "a hundred changes and a hundred transformations." However, he goes on to say that in spite of the changes the essence of *haikai* would still be contained in three principal elements called *shin*, *so* and *gyo*. What is significant and even surprising is that he then laments that he had not yet been able to achieve any one of these. Immediately after this sentence, Toho also records the fact that, jokingly, Bashō had often compared his *haikai* to *tawara*, a straw rice-bag,

document about Bashō. From these it is quite clear that in his last days, Bashō was proceeding in earnest with forming a new poetical ideal which he called *karumi*, or “lightness” and that he was not at all complacent about the progress he was making. On the contrary, in the end he came to an agonising realisation that this endeavour was not to be completed during his lifetime and that his only hope rested upon a number of chosen disciples who, by following his teaching, might be able to continue and finish the task where he had left off.⁶

Karumi, then, is a concept which needs to be fully investigated not only because it may provide a key to the true understanding of Bashō’s poetical theory in his last years but also, it may enable us to take a fresh look at the whole of his achievement and its meaning.

A HYPOTHESIS

First and foremost, let me put forward a somewhat ambitious working hypothesis plus a few auxiliary “mini” assumptions on *karumi*, a concept which is rather elusive and difficult to define. Bashō’s whole poetry during his last fifteen years may be reduced to two fundamental elements which exist side by side or in a mixed or compound state. One can be represented by that celebrated aesthetic term *sabi* and my hypothesis is that the other can and should be

saying he had not yet even opened it, which is to say that there was a long way to go before he could come to any attainment in his *haikai*.

6. *Karumi* occupies a very important position in the development of what is known as *Shofu*, or the style of the Bashō School. There is no doubt that Bashō took it very seriously and the importance he attached to it can be measured from the letter he wrote to Kyorai on 29 January 1694 (Genroku 7). Bashō had for some time been challenged by some of his followers, notably Kakei, over their differences about the style of poetry. Bashō tells Kyorai simply to ignore these dissenters and declares that “at the time when one is pursuing the task of constructing the one great way of *haikai* style (not just for our own time but) for all times, how could one be bothered with such trifles?” Here, Bashō was of course referring to the developing style of *karumi* as Imoto Noichi, a noted Bashō scholar, points out in his *Bashō* (Vol18, *Nihon Koten Kansho Koza* 1964, p27).

represented by *karumi*. That is to say, that the traditional custom of giving the former the *sabi* element, a predominant position in Bashō's poetical theory might be amended and that the understanding of his life and work will not be complete unless and until the latter, the *karumi* element, is given proper status. *Sabi* represents the element which is characterised by the traditional, medieval poetic values based on aristocratic sensitivities, such as *mono no aware*, *yugen*, *u-shin* and *sabi* itself.⁷

By contrast, *karumi* represents the element characterised by Bashō's contemporary world of the common people whose plain speech and everyday activities provided an immensely rich source for humorous rendering and light-hearted diction of universal relevance.

Of course, the relative importance of the *sabi* and *karumi* elements in Bashō's poetry varied according to different stages of his development. But towards the end of his life, the *karumi* element was markedly becoming more and more crucial to the perfection of the so-called *Shofu*, the style of the Bashō School. The full development of the concept *karumi* itself was terminated, as we have seen, by Bashō's death but the implication of my hypothesis is that *karumi* was to have been developed into an aesthetic key word equal in its importance to *sabi*.

The first of my "mini" assumptions is the possibility that one of the main objectives of Bashō's last journey might have been to disseminate the new style of *karumi* among his followers in the western regions, particularly Kamigata. The second assumption is that the urgency and enthusiasm with which Bashō was trying to develop *karumi* in his last years can be explained partly by the fact that some of his important disciples were falling away or even challenging the introduction of his new style and that he therefore had to try even harder to establish it. The third of my assumptions is an extension of the hypothesis described above. It is that the greatest of all Bashō's

7. Though these terms are untranslatable, best approximations may be given as gentle melancholy (*mono no aware*), mysterious depth (*yugen*), mind-possessing (*u-shin*) and patinated loneliness and desolation (*sabi*).

achievements is to be found in the creation of a new kind of poetry, born out of the marriage of the already existing two poetic worlds represented by *sabi* and *karumi*.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF *KARUMI*

For the investigation of the *Shofu* as a whole, any study should go at least as far back as 1680 (Empo 8), the year which marks the first of what I call “Bashō’s four turning points.” In that year he gave up his increasingly successful career as a *haikai* master and moved from the bustling hurly-burly of Nihonbashi to the picturesque tranquillity of the East Bank of the Sumida River, to start a new life as a poet recluse. Here he took up residence in a simple fisherman’s hut, later to be known as *Bashō-an* (*The Banana Hut*). He was beginning to take over the dominant role in *haikai* poetry from Nishiyama Soin (1605–82) master of the Danrin School, as his own style turned decisively towards a more earnest search for truth and beauty.

The second turning point came in 1684 (Jokyo 1) when he made the trip of *Nozarashi Kiko* (*The Journey of a Weather-beaten Skeleton*) which triggered off a series of similar trips of special importance to Bashō’s *Weltanschauung*, epitomised by his belief that “life itself is a journey.” During that trip of *Nozarashi Kiko*, he wrote the poem *Konoha chiru sakura wa karoshi hinokigasa* (Leaves of cherry trees, having turned colour, are falling lightly on my cypress hat). This is the first known instance of Bashō using the word *karoshi*, the adjective from *karumi*, in his poetry. Although we must refrain from speculating, as some do, that it was the point of departure for Bashō’s quest for *karumi*, it is significant that Bashō who was meticulous about terminology should have actually used the word.

Bashō’s journey of 1689 for *Oku no hosomichi* (*The Narrow Road to the Deep North*) was of the greatest importance, having far-reaching consequences in both his life and literature. This forms his third turning point, the effect of which on the subsequent development of Bashō’s *haikai* style was beyond measure. The same year saw the

publication of *Arano*, an anthology compiled by Kakei, which was later commented on by Morikawa Kyoriku (1656–1715) as already containing the characteristics of *karumi*. Kyoriku, a samurai of Hikone, had long adored Bashō but curiously did not become his disciple until 1692 (Genroku 5). But when he did, he helped Bashō's endeavour concerning *karumi* as an important disciple almost straight away.

It seems as if *karumi* as a poetic tenet can be traced in a tangible form as far back as the *Arano Anthology*. In the following year, Bashō composed a poem which he himself commented on as embodying the style of *karumi*: *Ko no moto ni shiru mo namasu mo sakura kana* (Under the trees/Soup, fish salad and all/In cherry blossoms - tr. Ueda⁸). His own letters as well as writings by the disciples suggest that he had now intensified his efforts to develop and to teach the new concept of *karumi*.

After that momentous journey to the north he continued to stay in his home town, Iga, and places he was fond of such as Zeze, near Lake Biwa, *Genju-an* (*The Hut of Unreal Dwelling*) in Ishiyama and *Rakushi-sha* (*The Hut of the Falling Persimmon*) in Saga in Kyoto until at last in the autumn he returned to Edo after two and a half years' absence. During the summer, that illustrious anthology, *Sarumino* (*The Monkey's Cloak*) had been published. This, of course, is the monument, the magnum opus, of the *Shofu haikai*. And its leading spirit is *sabi*, or put conversely *sabi* found its complete expression in this work. However, life in Edo did not prove uneventful for him, creating the last new phase of his life. Coming back to Edo thus turned out to be the fourth turning point. It was the period when Bashō began putting different aspects of *karumi* into full-scale practice, culminating in the year 1694, which brings us back to where we began.

8. Ueda Makoto, *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, p166.

THE OUTLINE OF BASHŌ'S IDEA ON POETRY

Bashō's choice of the word *karumi* was rather unfortunate. Almost all senses attached to the adjective *karoshi*, of which *karomi* or *karumi* is the noun derivative, are negative and pejorative: trivial, frivolous, insignificant, flippant, lowly, thoughtless, contemptible, worthless, etc, apart from its primary meaning of the "lightness of the weight of things."⁹ It sounds hardly appropriate to name something so significant as the final style of verse of a most outstanding Japanese poet. Not surprisingly, this seems to have led to various misunderstandings, even in Bashō's time, in that it was taken to mean no more than the usual frivolity of comic poems.¹⁰ There are instances which reflect these misunderstandings in the anthology *Sumidawara (A Sack of Charcoal)* which is regarded as the embodiment of the concept *karumi*.

What I propose to do is to think of all the possible connotations of *karumi* other than those mentioned above and narrow them down to what can reasonably be established as the sense in which Bashō must have used the term.

But before going into the details, let us first look briefly at Bashō's general idea about what the art of *haikai* should be like. First of all, Bashō believes in something which runs through all the best works of any branches of Japanese art. "Be it Saigyō's waka, Sōgi's *renga*, Sesshū's painting or Rikyū's tea-ceremony, what permeates them all is one and the same," says Bashō in a travel diary called *Oi no kobumi (The Records of a Travel-worn Satchel)*.¹¹ One may call it a fundamental principle or an ultimate aesthetic value or an artistic truth. But one should take heed not to define it because to do so is to restrict the scope which this common denominator possesses. Suffice it to say, that it is something which makes the best artists and authors

9. It is most probable that Bashō simply decided on the word *karumi* because it had been used as a technical term in theories of *renga* and other areas of art including tea ceremony, flower arrangement and calligraphy.

10. See Yamamoto Kenkichi, *Bashō*, Shincho-sha 1957, p425.

11. This is also pronounced *Oi no obumi*.

what they are and their works so meaningful to us.

Naaturally Bashō wanted to share this “something” with classical masters, particularly with those he admired,¹² and this became his driving force which was to find expression in its poetic application, *fuga no makoto*¹³ (poetic sincerity or truth). For Bashō, *fuga* means *haikai* in most cases. It follows that achieving *fuga no makoto* became the aim which pervaded all of Bashō’s tireless effort to realise better styles for *haikai*. In other words, *fuga no makoto* was the ultimate criterion to judge the value of *haikai* works, whether they were *hokku* or *renku*¹⁴ or even a complete anthology itself. Moreover, according to Toho what distinguished Bashō from previous *haikai* masters such as Matsunaga Teitoku (1571–1653) or Nishiyama Soin (1605–1682) was the fact that with him, *haikai* was transcended for the first time to a level of great literary merit and that it was the *makoto* that made it happen. Thus, Bashō aimed at *haikai no makoto* and achieved *makoto no haikai*.

Quite possibly, Bashō might not have been able to achieve this poetic spirit, *fuga no makoto*, had he not come up with the famous *modus operandi* called *fueki-ryuko*. Like all of Bashō’s *haikai* vocabulary this word was not new, nor was it Bashō’s invention. It was the meaning Bashō gave it that was new. We may perhaps be excused in calling it revolutionary even—judging from the consequences it created. It refers to the dual nature of good *haikai* poems having both “a perception of some eternal truth (*fueki*) and an element of contemporaneity (*ryuko*).”¹⁵ Ueda Makoto sums this up neatly in his *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*:¹⁶

12. Noin, Saigyō, Sōgi, etc.

13. *Fu* and *ga* were originally two of the *Rikugi* (six poetical forms) in classical Chinese poetry. As a compound word, *fuga* was used either broadly to mean the arts in general or more narrowly all kinds of poetry of which *haikai* was a part.

14. See note 3.

15. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 10-1070.

16. p. 147.

“ . . . According to Bashō, then, all the styles of the Haiku fall into two large categories: the one that has qualities transcending time and place, and the other that is rooted in the taste of the time. Both styles are good, the former because of its universal appeal, the latter because of its freshness in expression. Bashō, however, thinks that the two are ultimately one—the poetic spirit.”

Thus, *fueki-ryuko* made it possible for Bashō to solve the dilemma which had dogged earlier *haikai* masters. That is to say, that if they sought in *haikai* only the traditional canon of poetry such as *yugen*, *sabi* and *mono no aware* they would deprive *haikai* of its main characteristics, namely humour and jocularity. On the other hand, if they did not do so the *haikai* would quickly degenerate into a frivolous play of words, whimsical conceit or pedantic witticism, which was the cause of the decline of many schools or individual poets. *Waka* and *renga* may have belonged to the aristocratic world of court poetry and samurai culture but *haikai* should and can remain the poetry of men in the street. Bashō's solution is somewhat like the triadic movement of Hegel's dialectic where *fueki* (thesis) and *ryoko* (antithesis) are sublimated into *fuga no makoto* (synthesis) but retaining what Hegel called *aufgehobene Momente*, namely, synthesised characteristics of *fueki* and *ryuko* of the pre-synthesis stage. In this way, Bashō could continue to employ the so-called *zokudan-heiwa* (plain language) as well as subjects of the common people and still attain the depth and quality which is found in the best of Japanese art. Humour, pathos, sympathy with nature, understanding of humanity, beauty and truth—all are there in Bashō's best poems.

These two concepts, ie, *fuga no makoto* and *fueki-ryuko*, served as the foundation of Bashō's creative work and occupied the central position in his *haikai*. They are like the warp and the weft in weaving, determining the very fabric of poetry, while other poetical attributes such as *wabi*, *sabi*, *shiori*, *hosomi* and *karumi* can be likened to pattern books with different colours, patterns and motifs. Among the latter, *sabi* is perhaps the most well-known. This is a historical

extension of Fujiwara Shunzei's *yugen* and Fujiwara Teika's *u-shin* and subsequent aesthetic ideals of such diverse names as Shotetsu (1381–1459), Zeami (1363?–1443) and Shinkei (1406–1475). But Bashō's *haikai* represents *sabi* in such a powerful way that it has almost become synonymous with him. And yet, Bashō left no word about it. Those of his disciples are but fragmentary notes with little theoretical consistency.

“Patinated loneliness and desolation” seems to be the best English translation¹⁷ so far of the word *sabi*. Since *sabi* is one of those Japanese bywords pregnant with all shades of implication and ramification, one would try in vain to pin it down with a single interpretation. However, Bashō inherited the essential characteristics of *sabi* from earlier poets and we need only to check the deviation which Bashō made when applying the concept to his own poetry. Firstly, he seems to have rejected the idea of depicting the scene of *sabi* for the sake of doing so. Loneliness, for example, will not of itself constitute *sabi*. Technical skills such as clever use of terminology will not guarantee the presence of *sabi*. Rather, it comes from the heart of the poet and colours the poem he composes of its own accord. “The presence or absence of *sabi*,” says an authoritative commentator,¹⁸ “does not . . . depend upon choosing for one's theme, objects which possess or do not possess such qualities.” Secondly, Bashō tended to find the quality of *sabi* in the contrast of two opposite things like the aged watchmen with white heads against the young blossoms of cherry trees, or an old warrior in the battlefield. The whiteness of the old men is set against the gorgeous colours of the cherry blossoms, thus emphasising the feeling of *sabi* in the former ever more strongly. The old warrior in a state of decline and decay and soon dying is placed in the environment which symbolises vigour, energy and violent death. Thirdly, *sabi* is taken by Bashō to mean some “impersonal

17. Geoffrey Bownas, Introduction to *The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse*, p lxvii.

18. The *Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai* (Special Haiku Committee), *Haikai and Haiku*, Tokyo, 1958, Introduction xviii.

atmosphere” which has been transformed from naked sorrow, as Ueda emphasises in the book mentioned above.¹⁹ As an example of this, he cites Bashō’s *hokku* which talks about a lonely green cypress tree standing amid the cherry blossoms.

Bashō’s important contribution here is that:

- a) He enlarged the scope for *sabi* by liberating it from a narrow sense of sorrow; and
- b) He gave it more depth and vividness by introducing the technique of contrasting what might be construed as representing *sabi* with its opposite. Added to this should be Bashō’s other achievement of spreading *sabi*, a concept enjoyed by the upper class, among the populace, or conversely of elevating the popular literature to the higher level that had belonged to the intellectual few.

Apart from these specific points pertaining to Bashō’s own expansion of the word, *sabi* can be regarded as a manifestation of what Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) later called *mono no aware*²⁰ in its broadest sense. Are the next two concepts, then, basically *shiori* and *hosomi*? In fact, they are so similar that it seems to me to be more sensible to bundle them together in this paper to avoid unnecessary confusion.

It is enough for our purposes to note that *shiori* and *hosomi* also reflect a sense of loneliness, desolation and beauty, perceived in the decaying, wilting and withering of things.²¹ The rest of the poetical ideas used in Bashō’s *haikai* will be dealt with only when necessary in relation to the concept *karumi*.²²

19. pp. 149-150.

20. *Monono aware* refers to something sad and pathetic that can be perceived as inherent in human affairs and their natural environment by those sensitive to such perception. “Gentle melancholy” (above) is one standard English translation for the term, “sensitivity to the beautiful sadness of things” another.

21. For a concise account, see p xix, Introduction, The *Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai* (op cit.).

22. There is another set of concepts (*nioi*, *hibiki*, *omokage*, etc) in Basho's

To sum up the observation so far, Bashō's goal, *fuga no makoto* (poetic truth) was ultimately the same as was found in all the best works of any branch of Japanese art. He achieved it by means of *fueki-ryuko* (constancy and change) and the resulting works were very much of Bashō's unique style, characterised by such poetic values as *wabi*, *sabi*, *shiori* and *hosomi*. However, it has to be said that Bashō is a poet with whose unparalleled significance it is easier to agree than it is to understand those values which make him so significant.

FORCES THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR *KARUMI*

From the foregoing, it would look as if the concept of *karumi* is totally unconnected with the traditional poetic ideals we have been describing. The latter have the all-pervasive calm tones of resigned loneliness and muted acceptance of the sad reality of life, and furthermore, of the unquestioning longing to find solace in nature. By contrast, *karumi* seems at first to picture the opposite end of human perception: the light-hearted approach to the human predicament with a bit of fun in this wretched world, providing comedy rather than tragedy to a too-restrained and too-pessimistic an audience.

This, in fact, is not entirely mistaken but it is too superficial an analysis to reach the depths of Bashō's intentions. In order to understand the connection, we need to study the forces at work when *Shofu* was being constructed. First, there is a built-in force in Japanese literature which, like the swing of the pendulum, alternates between the serious (*yubi*) and humorous (*kokkei*). During the Heian period (794–1192), from *waka* there developed *renga* (linked-verse) whose characteristics were wit and humour. As a reaction to this, the so-called *u-shin renga*²³ of the *Kakinomoto-shu* emerged at the beginning of the Kamakura period (1192–1333) to follow the traditional "courtly elegance

haikai theory. They relate to the *tsukeai* (linking) of *renku* and will not detain us here.

23. Serious *renga*, characterised by *u-shin*, or 'having heart', namely understanding of the deepest of human feelings.

and decorous taste²⁴ of Shunzei and Teika, particularly the latter. This *u-shin renga* in turn was challenged by the *mushin renga*²⁵ of the Kurinomoto-shu whose interest lay in making unserious, jocular verses. In the Muromachi period (1333–1603) *renga* was once again dominated by the serious school of *waka* with all its principles and conventions, led by such brilliant figures as Nijo Yoshimoto, Shotetsu, Shinkei and Sogi (1421–1502). But towards the end of this period, with the rise and prosperity of local samurai and *chonin* (townsmen) of commercial towns such as Sakai, *u-shin renga* became too rigid and sterile to accommodate the freedom of the new style, themes and expressions demanded by these newcomers. The demand was all the more explosive because the orthodox *renga* had restricted its range, striking off the comic *renga* from the legitimate register. Thus, *haikai-no-renga* (literally, *comic renga*) was given its first real chance to come to the fore and dominate the scene, later developing into *haikai* and eventually haiku. Sokan (1465–1553)²⁶ and Moritake (1473–1549) are usually deemed the fathers of this new movement, again with *jeu d'esprit* and quip as its keynote. Then, in the early Edo period (1603–1867), Teitoku started a new school, Teimon, trying to swing back more towards the serious *renga* but his failure led to the rise of the Danrin School whose master, Soin, reversed the trend. And as we know, this degenerated into excessive jest and facetious word-play until at last Bashō took over the leadership to bring *haikai* back on the track of traditional *waka* values.

Within Bashō's own development itself, we see the same pendulum movement. As a young man, he started off by being initiated into the world of *waka* and *haikai* under the guidance of his master, Lord Yoshitada (*nom de plume*, Sengin) whose teacher was Kitamura Kigin (1624–1705), an influential disciple of Teitoku. But Bashō was not

24. Geoffrey Bownas, op. cit. p.lviii.

25. Comic *renga* characterised by *mu-shin*, or having no heart.

26. Little is known about Sokan's life and the dates given of his birth and death vary. Donald Keene cites "the commonly given dates for his life" being 1464–1552.

to be restricted to the serious and genteel style adhered to by the conservatives. His first and only publication, *Kai-oi*, which came out in Edo when he was twenty-eight provides us with his poems full of witticism, play upon words and even sensual teasing of amorous love. This was three years before Soin came down to Edo and spread the humorous style of the Danrin School. It was this school Bashō associated himself with until he had to abandon it because of its debasement into frivolity as we have seen. His dissatisfaction led him eventually to give up his career as a renowned *haikai* master and in the winter of 1680 he resigned from this world and moved to Bashō-an in Fukagawa, then still a scenic countryside, sparsely populated.

It was only natural that Bashō should have become more serious in his rendering of poetry, as well as his teaching. But in many instances of his *renku* he still continued to show wit and light-heartedness and within the serious overtones generally observed in his last ten years or so there was nevertheless a subtle oscillation between serious and light tones. *Nozarashi-Kiko* (*The Journal of a Weather-beaten Skeleton*) is perhaps the most serious of all the journals he wrote and *Sarumino* (*The Monkey's Cloak*) is regarded as the apex of the Bashō School. We then have *Sumidawara* (*A Sack of Charcoal*) and *Zoku Sarumino* (*The Sequel to The Monkey's Cloak*) which have much lighter and more humorous tones.

The oscillation and interaction between the serious and the humorous are a common feature of Japanese literature. It is therefore not surprising that such a concept as *karumi* should have emerged in Bashō's *haikai*. On the contrary, it would have been very odd if it had not. Of course, Bashō's world is tinged with serious and melancholic tones, reflecting his personality as well as the temperament inherent in his samurai background. But it was inevitable that something like *karumi* should become part and parcel of Bashō's *haikai* sooner or later and perhaps one can even argue that coming from such a stern person as Bashō, *karumi* is so much more significant and merits profound investigation.

Another important force which was seen in the formation of *Shofu* is *atarashimi* (newness). Bashō was a dynamic poet. He had an almost obsessional urge to seek new ideas and inspiration so that his poetry could remain unhackneyed. *Atarashimi* became particularly necessary after the publication of *Sarumino*. Some of his disciples felt that having reached the highest point there was no need to go any further but simply to preserve what was achieved. This led to the rise of sated conservatism which in Bashō's view would be the quickest way to the decline of *Shomon*. The worry added more urgency to the introduction and development of a new style based on *karumi*.

The third force at work was Bashō's desire to create an entirely new kind of *haikai* and to increase its literary merits to such an extent that it would be ranked not only as one of the highest forms of Japanese poetry but also as one of the most important branches of Japanese literature itself. I am not suggesting that Bashō worked every minute of the day with this task clearly in mind but the result of his passion is something we know only too well. This posed, however, an intractable problem when dealing with the dichotomy seen in *haikai* between the serious aspect and the comic one. The latter was the ultimate *raison d'être* of *haikai* and one which can only be derived from ordinary words and a mundane life. And as we shall see in more detail, *karumi* seems to have played a vital role in solving the problem.

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF *KARUMI*

Let us now turn to the salient characteristics of *karumi*. Since Bashō left no writing of his own, explaining what it was and since his disciples' fragmentary explanation of it does not provide any clear definition, we may as well begin by looking at what was not *karumi*. In other words, instead of being reduced to conjectures as to what *karumi* must have meant, we resort to an elimination method by investigating the known antitheses of *karumi*.

a) *Karumi* as the Antithesis of *Omomi*

The most obvious concept opposite to *karumi* is *omomi* or heaviness. The best document in which to see the relation between the two is *Fugyoku-Ate-Kyorai-Ronsho* which is a long letter Kyorai wrote to another disciple of Bashō's, Fugyoku, in which he discusses poetics. The word *omomi* used here has several different connotations. Firstly Bashō is quoted as saying, "Never let *haikai* stagnate, otherwise it will become heavy." In this instance, *omomi* relates to the stagnation of poetry, which from other evidence is to be interpreted as meaning the conservative attitude of a poet clinging to one style with the result that he loses fresh inspiration and innovation.

Another sense of *omomi* can be found in a word Kyorai uses: *omokuretaru*. This means oppressed, clumsy, awkward, tedious, leaden, ponderous, dull, etc. Kyorai cautions that it should not be confused with *genju* (strict, severe) or *jo no fukaki* (deep feelings). *Kori* (stiffness) and *nigori* (muddiness) are also words associated with *omomi*.

From these various shades of *omomi*'s implications, one can deduce that the quality of *karumi* seems to be obtained from the newness or freshness of that which does not stagnate or become stiff but constantly changes and flows, rather like a shallow mountain stream:²⁷ fresh, clear and light.

It is in this sense of *omomi* that Kyorai made the following famous statement:

"The reason why the Master's teaching centred at that time around *karumi* is that (the old concept of) *omomi* had to be destroyed. And how could anything else have destroyed this conventional concept (of *omomi*) except *karumi* itself?"

27. This analogy is not entirely the product of the present author. It is based on Bashō's own famous analogy, *asaki sunagawa*, or a shallow sandy stream, which can be found in the preface of *Betsu-zashiki* (Shisan ed. May Genroku 7, 1694).

b) *Karumi* as the Antithesis of *Furubi*

It should now be clear that *karumi* has antipodal characteristics to what is old-fashioned, repetitive and conventional, which is summed up in the word *furubi* (oldness). As Ogata Tsutomu points out in his “*Karumi eno Shiko*,”²⁸ what Bashō was referring to by this term is the tendency of some unimaginative and conservative poets to rely heavily on the conventional practice of *kanso*, which was the abuse of traditional poems about nature, distorting them to describe one’s views on life and the world. If this becomes the central feature of a stanza, it inhibits the natural flow of the poet’s feelings and thus causes stagnation in expression because the poem would be overloaded with irksome intellectualisation.

c) *Karumi* as the Antithesis of *Nebari* and *Shiburi*

These are normally expressed as *kokoro no nebari* or *kokoro no shiburi* or *kotoba no shiburi*. The former, *nebari*, means sticky and the latter, *shiburi*, signifies that something does not proceed smoothly. Therefore, both are similar to *omomi* which we saw above and may be regarded as an aspect of it. It refers to contrived artificiality, lacking in naturalness.

d) *Karumi* as the Antithesis of *Shi-i*

Shi-i means self-will and was strongly condemned by Bashō as a hindrance to true poetry. This has three dimensions. Firstly, it relates to individual subjectivity which in those days was regarded as being a barrier to reaching the truth of the outside world. Secondly, it relates to a lack of discipline or deviation from rules, particularly from the master’s teachings. Thirdly, it relates to a split between man and nature, which ought to coalesce in a true poem. None of these, in fact, is directly opposite to *karumi* but they are conducive to negative qualities such as forced conceptualisation, long-winded arbitrariness or lack of intuitive diction, which are contrary to *karumi*. The most

28. *Karumi eno Shiko* (*Towards Karumi*), in the *Bungaku*, Feb 1967.

famous of all Bashō's words in this connection are to be found in Toho's *Akazoshi*:²⁹

The master said: "Learn about a pine tree from a pine tree, and about a bamboo plant from a bamboo plant." What he meant was that the poet should detach the mind from his own self. Nevertheless, some people interpret the word "learn" in their own ways and never really "learn." "Learn" means to enter into the object, perceive its delicate life, and feel its feeling, whereupon a poem forms itself. Even a poem that lucidly describes an object could not attain a true poetic sentiment unless it contains the feelings that spontaneously emerged out of the object. In such a poem the object and the poet's self would remain forever separate, for it was composed by the poet's personal self.

The abandonment of self and the coalescence with the object are intrinsic qualities which permeate Japanese creative activities. Bashō was very stringent about this and it may be noted that Natsume Soseki's last ideal of *sokuten-kyoshi* has a ring curiously resembling Bashō's view.

e) *Karumi* as the Antithesis of *Amami*

Amami is probably the most ambiguous and misleading of all Bashō's terminology. None of the senses given to the word *amashi* in Kojien, for example, seem to apply to what Bashō was supposed to be saying. According to Ebara Taizo and Akahane Manabu,³⁰ *amami* is expressed by way of another word *noen*, whose literal meaning is luxuriant charm. But in the context of a reverse sense to *karumi* it is understood to mean the excessively extravagant poetic diction of the classicism that was elaborate, "rococo" and florid. Interestingly, this fashion seems to have been entertained particularly by the poets living in Kyoto. And nothing evokes it more effectively than love poems. For instance, Kyorai (a Kyoto poet) wrote a love poem to

29. The quotation is from the translation by Ueda, pp157–58 op cit.

30. Ebara Taizo, *Karumi no Shingi* in *Haikai Seishin no Tankyu* pp 100-102. Akahane Manabu, *Basho Haikai no Seishin*, pp831-884.

which Bashō added a *tsukeku* stanza.³¹ Afterwards, Bashō commented on this event in the letter he wrote from Kyoto to his Edo disciple, Yaha, saying “Authors around here have not yet managed to get rid of this business of *amami*. You, yourself should be very careful not to neglect *karumi*.”³²

It looks as though the term *amami* was introduced to highlight a requirement of *karumi* in that while the poet should be deeply moved and his perception profound, the actual poetic diction and imagery should not be artificially sought or contrived but be rendered in an easy and natural manner. It should not be “too heavily loaded with emotion,” as Ueda puts it.³³ Kyoriku, who wrote a great deal about *karumi*, comments in the same vein in his *Haikai Mondo*:

What is meant by *karumi*, whether it is *hokku* or *tsukeku*, is that it is composed as one sees, so to speak,³⁴ without reaching out for it. Using plain words does not mean that the sentiment expressed is slight. (On the contrary) it should come deep from the poet’s heart and the finished stanza should have perfect naturalness.

Immediately after this, Kyoriku gives three examples of *renku* which seem to him to embody *karumi*.

Butsudan no shoji ni tsuki no sashi kakari

The moon shines through the shoji sliding door of the Buddhist shrine within the household

Gyozui no senaka wo terasu natsu no tsuki

The back of a bathing lady is illuminated by the summer moon

Takaba no ue wo kari wataru nari

A flock of wild geese fly over the hawking ground

31. *Funbetsu nashi ni koi ni shikakaru* [Kyorai].

32. *Asajiu ni omoshirogezuku Fushimi waki* [Bashō]. *Kyorai-sho, Senshi-hyo*.

33. Ueda Makoto, op cit (*Theories*) pp167–168.

34. In *waka*, this is called *miruyotei*.

Indeed, each of these poems has such a striking vividness that the feeling is almost overpowering. It is as if we ourselves are seeing what the poet saw. Moreover, none of the words used is affected and none of the objects elaborate or florid and yet the poetic sentiment is one of a deeply-felt human experience.

f) *Karumi* as the Antithesis of *Umami*

There is another slightly puzzling term which was used to help explain *karumi*. And that is *umami*, which should perhaps be translated as “being delicious to taste” judging from Kyoriku’s explanation. In the anthology-cum-treatises called *Hentsuki* of which Kyoriku was a co-editor³⁵ he introduces a famous episode of Bashō’s life and then talks against *umami*:

The master said: you must know that (the life of) *haikai* poems lasts only while they are being composed on a *bundai* (writing desk). Once they are removed from it they are no more than old scraps of paper. These are precious words. Nevertheless, the *haikai* currently in fashion does not possess the quality of elegance or grace. Today’s *haikai* poets, if they happen to hit on an interesting idea, would bite at its *umami* (tasty, juicy bit) and cling to it without realising that there is poetry also to be found where there is no such “taste.” However, when I say that tastelessness is good, I don’t mean that the taste shouldn’t be there from the start. What I am saying is that we should extract *umami* from that taste and throw it away.

To my understanding, this seems to be saying that even a genuinely clever idea will become a cumbersome bore if it is repeated as gospel and that good poems may look plain at first sight because that cleverness is deliberately removed from them. And of course it is *karumi* that does the trick.

In order to see how much clearer the image of *karumi* has so far become to us, let me try here to say in one of the 20th century Western

35. *Hentsuki*, Kyoriku and Riyu (ed), published in Genroku 11, or 1698 by Izutsuya. The quotation is from a treatise entitled *Hokku Choren no Ben*.

languages, English, what Bashō tried to teach by *karumi*. A *haikai* poet should never cease to advance in his unrelenting search for new inspiration and style. A halt can mean stagnation which deprives his creative spirit of freshness, turning his poems into ponderous and jaded tedium. He should also guard against the ill-effects of dogmatic subjectivity and arbitrary self-centredness as they tend to push him further and further away from poetic truth. Instead, he should rid himself of self-assertiveness in order to attain spontaneous, objective and impersonal poetry. The poet must not indulge in imitating the old-fashioned features of classic time, or in too elaborate and florid a style as they are not compatible with *haikai*'s most fundamental prerequisite—plain language and humour. Over-ingenuity and gimmicks are also to be avoided. All these may be achieved by means of *karumi*, which is “counteractive” to the negative qualities mentioned.

CHARACTERISTICS OF *KARUMI*

Having seen various aspects of *karumi* in a ‘negative image’, as it were, let us now look at its ‘positive’ characteristics.

a) *Kogo-kizoku*

What helped prevent Bashō's *haikai* from becoming either an adulterated version of *waka* or yet another specimen of vulgar literature was his artistic frame of mind which Bashō scholars often refer to in an abbreviated form as *Kogo-kizoku*. This was derived from Bashō's own teaching, “*Takaku kokoro wo satorite zoku ni kaerubeshi*,” which can be freely rendered as, “a poet's mind should reach lofty enlightenment and then return to the popular” or better still, “the poet should mingle with the herd yet preserve a noble mind.”³⁶ The short sentence just quoted in Japanese is placed in Toho's *Akazoshi* in a humble and isolated sort of way, almost drowned by the sea of other impressive entries. And yet it represents a crucial breakthrough in Bashō's long-suffering reform of the art of *haikai*. *Kogo*, the noble mind, exemplifies the highest values in Japanese artistic creativity

36. This last translation is given in Bownas, op cit p.lxvi.

as well as aesthetic receptivity, while *kizoku* (returning to the herd) illustrates Bashō's bifocal undertaking of:

- i) popularising the traditionally aristocratic poetical forms; and
- ii) of elevating the popular literature to that traditional height.

The synthesis of these seemingly conflicting factors was made possible by the help of *karumi*. Ebara Taizo, one of the pioneers advocating the importance of *karumi* in Bashō's theory and practice, goes so far as to say that "the highest and deepest spirit in Bashō's *haikai* should be found not in *sabi* nor in *shiori* or *hosomi* but in *karumi*."³⁷ *Sabi*, *shiori* and *hosomi* may indeed represent traditional aesthetic values but even they on their own fail to create an advanced poetic dimension of *kogo-kizoku*. To see how *karumi* succeeded would be to see more of *karumi*'s own characteristics.

When the poet is well-versed in the traditional values mentioned, he then has to acquire additional elements which make up the principle of *karumi* in order to arrive at Bashō's last ideal, symbolised by *kogo-kizoku*. Simplicity, humour, detachment, plain language and mundane materials found in people's daily life are such elements. They helped the birth of an entirely new literary form from the union between the *waka* tradition and the *haikai* tradition. It was neither going back to the genre of *waka* nor coming down to the lower merit of the hitherto existing *haikai*, but a "creative evolution" into a synthesised new entity made possible by Bashō's genius and struggle. It is in this context that the true significance of *karumi* should be evaluated.

b) *Haikai-jiyu*

In a way, "freedom" may well be a better translation of *karumi*. After all, a function of *karumi* is to liberate *haikai* from the tedious fetters of rules and conventions of the past. The new poetic form thus

37. Ebara Taizo, *Haikai Seishin no Tankyu*, p 90. Yamamoto Kenkichi endorses Ebara's view quoted.

effected should be free from prolixity, cerebral conceptualisation, arbitrary subjectivity and over-elaborate poetic diction. This function has been traditionally called *haikai-jiyu* (the freedom of the *haikai*) as opposed to *waka-yubi* (the elegant beauty of *waka*). *Waka* and *renga* had long denied poets access to rich sources for poetical inspiration and expression, namely, the daily experience, language, perception and the way of life of the greatest part of the population. *Karumi* played a pivotal role in realising this liberation.

At the same time, *karumi* sets a limitation as to how popular a *haikai* poem is allowed to become. Some of Bashō's students on occasions went too far in applying *karumi* to their *haikai* composition, making their poetry simply banal and vulgar. For example, Boncho, a Kyoto disciple, had composed the last two lines only of a triplet: *yuki tsumu ue no yoru no ame* (the night rain falling on top of the settling snow), but was unable to write the beginning line. Bashō instructed that it should be *shimo-kyo ya* (in South Kyoto). According to *Kyorai-sho* Boncho fidgeted restlessly, apparently not very pleased with Bashō's idea. He wanted something plainer and more ordinary. But Bashō immediately put him in his place, saying, "you should be proud of having this first line to your stanza. But of course if you can come up with something better, I would at once abandon my *haikai* career."

The motto is that Bashō was teaching the importance of preserving the elegance of tranquil beauty (or *kanga*) even in a poem which may be the embodiment of *karumi*.

c) *Karumi* and Zen

The impact of Zen Buddhism on Bashō's *haikai* is a popular theme for Western writers. Bashō's encounter with his Zen teacher Butcho is estimated to have taken place around 1681 (Tenwa 1) a year after Bashō moved to Fukagawa. We may recall that just before the move he composed an important poem *kare eda ni karasu no tomaru taru ya aki no kure* (On the withered branch/A crow has alighted—/Nightfall in Autumn. Tr Donald Keene). This autumn poem is said to reflect the influence on Bashō of the monk-poets of the Gozan Zenrin. He

made the famous trip to Kashima, east of Edo, to visit Butcho, now an old friend, at the Nemoto-ji Temple in 1687 (Jokyo 4) and it was a year before this that he composed the verse *Furuike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto*.

During these eight years, a number of events took place which drew Bashō towards a serious religious quest, particularly that of Zen: the loss of *Bashō-an* by fire (thus homelessness), the death of his mother (thus the realisation of the ephemeral nature of our existence) and the journey of *Nozarashi Kiko* (thus the journey which had such vital significance for Bashō's philosophy). But all these events pre-date the time when the first hint of *karumi* is said to have emerged, ie, in 1689 (Genroku 2). However, judging from some of the features of *karumi*, there seems little doubt that Zen helped formulate this concept to a greater or lesser extent. The immediacy and directness of *karumi* as well as the intuitive grasp of the subject matter has obvious similarities to Zen practice. The enlightenment of *kogo-kizoku* and the freedom of the *haikai-jiyu* which we have seen, possess heavy undertones of Zen. The abandonment of *shi-i*, self-will, is a necessary condition for enlightenment in both cases. *Karumi*'s rejection of conceptualisation or intellectualisation of things is akin to the Zen approach. But above all, flashes of insight are strongly present both in *karumi* and Zen.

d) Humour

Humour plays a very important role in Bashō's *haikai* generally and this was especially so when the concept *karumi* was being implemented. *Karumi*'s characteristics are light-hearted, comic and humorous. If these characteristics are combined with the poet's detached, impersonal attitude towards his external world, a new frame of mind will be achieved, whereby he can face the world with equanimity, gently smiling away, whatever happens to him, without losing sincerity. If he furthermore attains *kogo-kizoku*, he will be like the poets Ueda describes:

“ . . . those who have returned to the earthly world after attaining a high stage of enlightenment can look at life with a smile, for they are part of that life and are not so. Knowing what life ultimately is, they can take suffering with a detached, light-hearted attitude—with lightness.”³⁸

In the West, joy and sorrow are separate, mutually-exclusive entities. But in the Japanese sentiment, they are often unarticulated or one surreptitiously turns into another. Bashō’s humour has such overtones and it is what Yamamoto Kenkichi calls the “sublimated *karumi*” that makes Bashō’s humour humane. With *karumi*, the contents of humour is expanded and enriched to include such things as affinity with nature, warmth towards one’s fellow human beings and acceptance of the idea that whatever is, is right, where the real question is not ‘to be or not to be’ but ‘to be and not to be’ as a Zen book puts it. Another study gives further evidence:

“*karumi* is often combined with *okashimi* (“the comic”) . . . It implies an attitude towards life in which the world is not taken too solemnly and sentimentally but looked at dispassionately and with detachment.”³⁹

e) *Karumi*’s Pictorial Qualities

Bashō had studied painting in the style of the Kano School before he met Kyoriku, a talented artist as well as a poet, who now gave lessons to Bashō. There are Bashō’s extant *haiga* (*haikai* paintings) which testify to a moderate degree of talent in this direction but more significantly, to the importance paintings generally had for Bashō’s literary endeavour. Those who are familiar with Bashō’s verses cannot help but see pictorial images emerge from the lines they are reading, although some verses are more evocative than others. *Karumi* actually had been an important factor in Japanese painting and a contemporary of Bashō’s, Tosa Mitsuoki, for instance declared in 1690 that what was required of paintings was none other than a single Chinese character *kei* (or “lightness”).

38. Ueda, op. cit. (*Theories*), p 169.

39. The *Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai*, op cit.

An example from *Sumidawara* may help illustrate this:

Kuratsubo ni kobozu noruya daikohiki

On a saddle, a little boy witnesses the pulling of Daikon radishes.

Kyorai's comment on this stanza indicates that what makes it an interesting poem is its quality to conjure up a vivid picture of the scene described. This poem is taken up as a typical manifestation of *karumi* by Yamamoto Kenkichi, who is one of the most powerful advocates of the concept. Another example, from *Oku no hosomichi*, has strong pictorial qualities:

Aka aka to hi wa tsurenaku mo aki no kaze

Red, Red is the sun

Heatlessly indifferent to time

The wind knows, however,

The promise of early chill . . . [Tr. Yuasa Nobuyuki]

Bashō composed this on his way from Kanazawa to Komatsu. There is a painting by Bashō based on this poem on which Sampo commented, “the painting, too, is executed in a ‘light’ way.” The feeling of lightness inherent in *haikai* paintings and the *karumi* of Bashō's *haikai* seem to have influenced each other in instances like this. By introducing pictorial qualities Bashō also hoped to emancipate his poetry both from the Danrin-type wordiness and from the rigid conceptualisation of *waka* tradition.

f) *Karumi* and Musical Qualities

Notwithstanding the validity of the generally-held view that Japanese poems usually lack the characteristics of Western prosody, musical qualities do play their part in them. In an extreme case, if a Japanese poem sounds monotonous to the Western ears, the Japanese hear ‘their’ music in that monotony. In this sense, Dorothy Britton's interpretation that “the *shichi-go-cho*, or the seven-five meter, is to Japanese poetry and drama what Shakespeare's iambic pentameter is to English” is a healthy one.

Bashō's early works, as seen in *Kai-oi* had taken plentifully, words and rhythm from *kouta*, popular songs of his time. They demonstrated a considerable musicality, even though they lacked the depth and literary merit of his later poems. This quality of musicality, though not apparent during much of his subsequent work, seems to have re-emerged towards the end of his life, possibly through the development of *karumi*.

The relation of *karumi* with music had been close. For instance, Zeami's textbook on *utai* called *Fushizukesho* talks about the importance of "lightness" over and over again. The *haikai* of the Danrin School is particularly noted for its musical bent; so much so that it is sometimes referred to as *hyoshi-no-haikai* (or rhythm-*haikai*). When young, Bashō was under the direct influence of this type of *haikai*, from which he subsequently disassociated himself.

Bashō's famous metaphor of *karumi*, "*sunagawa no asaku nagaruru*" (the flow of a sandy shallow) may first strike one as a vivid pictorial image but it also transmits the allegretto of the clear stream, the music and dance of glistening water and its light-hearted rhythmical play with the sand underneath. The musical characteristics of *karumi* are most manifest in poems using onomatopoeia. In Japanese, it would be *gitai-go* as well as *gisei-go*. Let us just listen to the sound only of these poems.

Horohoro to yamabuki chiruka taki no oto. (Arano)

Kariato ya wase katakata no shigi no koe. (Oinikki)

Hyorohyoro to nao tsuyukeshi ya ominaeshi. (Arano)

Hiyahiya to kabe wo fumaete hirune kana. (Oinikki)

Hirahira to aguru ogi ya kumo no mine. (ditto)

Mume ga ka ni notto hi no deru yamaji kana. (Sumidawara)

In my opinion these, though undoubtedly magnificent, are in a way an easy way out. Onomatopoeia, so rich in Japanese, has such great expediency that it can cheapen the poem. The more challenging and satisfying way is to achieve the same musically pleasing effect through the choice of words, refined contents and the so-called *yo-jo* (overflow of deep feelings). Here are a few successful examples.

Ariake mo misoka ni chikashi mochi no oto. (Shinseki Jigasan)

Sazanami ya kaze no kaori no aibyoshi. (Oinikki)

Kanbutsu ya shiwade awasuru juzu no oto. (Sanzoshi)

Kogakure te chatsumi mo kiku ya hototogisu. (Betsuzashiki)

Kari sawagu toba no tazura ya kan no ame. (Saikashu)

Zosui ni biwa kiku noki no arare kana. (Arisoumi)

We have been looking at different aspects of *karumi*. They are, however, only the most obvious issues. The question of *karumi* is not something that can be neatly explained away but has implications far more profound because it is not only a form of Bashō's *haikai* theory but an integral part of his way of life. Therefore, it should also be examined from a biographical viewpoint. As R H Blyth puts it, "What makes Bashō one of the greatest poets of the world is the fact that he lived the poetry he wrote, and wrote the poetry he lived."

By way of conclusion, I would propose that *karumi*, a preoccupation of Bashō's final years, was an extremely important vehicle by which he tried to merge the refined, traditional poetic style of aristocratic vein with the new, humorous and light-hearted style of the common herd, using ordinary words and everyday subjects thus, perpetuating the creation of the *Shofu*, which would be an entirely new Japanese poetic expression. How far he succeeded is open to discussion. All depends on how much of the hypothesis I have set out can be proved,

some of the groundwork for which, I hope, has been provided in this paper. Besides, the only ultimate recourse we can have to appreciate his poems is after all to his works themselves. At any rate, it is deeply regrettable that death overtook Bashō before he had been able to develop the concept of *karumi* to the point where it could unquestionably stand comparison with *mono no aware*, *yugen* and *sabi*. But let us listen to Bashō's own words so we may not make a culpable mistake:

Haikai wa tada fuga nari. Fuga ni ron wa sukoshi mo gazanaku soro.

Haikai is nothing but poetry. Poetry needs no theory.





"Drenched Ants"

Ellen Peckham

The Shape of Things to Come:

Haiku Form Past and Future

JIM KACIAN

ABSTRACT: Everyone knows what haiku look like: three lines of five, seven and five syllables. And so they are — except when they're not. In fact, haiku in English (more than any other language) has expressed itself in a wide variety of forms, ranging from one to four lines, myriad syllable counts, and a plethora of typographical and linear arrays. In this article, Jim Kacian, a poet known for his innovative approach to haiku form, explores the history of haiku as it has appeared over its first hundred years, and argues for one particular innovation as a viable "second norm."

I'm a strong believer that art gets you through periods of no money better than money gets you through periods of no art. It may seem a luxury to hold such an opinion, but many who have faced far greater adversity have spoken eloquently of how art in the face of privation and repression was a force that inspired them and helped them make it through. So it is not a small thing that we have all made some sacrifices to be here today, to support the poetry we love, and to allow it to nourish and encourage us as we move forward into an uncertain future.

That being said, I think it's probably safe to say that none of us has relied entirely on art for our personal economic security. Even I, who more than most have engaged haiku in economic as well as artistic terms, have kept my day job. As perhaps some of you know, I've been involved in tennis on a professional level, both as a player and teacher, for more than four decades now. Tennis has been "bervy bervy good" to me, and has supported all my artistic work, paying for the activities of Red Moon Press, for instance, and making travel in the name of haiku possible for me.

I mention this because I feel that I might draw a useful analogy from my forty years of tennis to our topic here today. When I first connected with tennis, one of the first things I remember learning was how to hold the racket: for the forehand, all the experts said, shake hands with the racket. How perfectly simple. And of course I did. This is what is called an Eastern forehand, the classic shot of the game. That's what all the forehands I saw looked like, and when I started teaching, it's what all the students wanted. And to this day, you still might hear parents telling their kids at the public courts at their first lesson, shake hands with the racket. Perfectly normal.

Except that now, almost no one who plays the game at a professional level uses the Eastern grip. Many factors have come to influence this: racket and string technologies have improved dramatically, and so more power and spin may be imparted to the ball, while courts have systematically been slowed down, favoring a style of play that features

long rallies from the baseline and few ventures to the net. All of these things make the Eastern forehand grip slightly less important. There are still some things best done with an Eastern grip, but they are not as often encountered in today's game, so it doesn't favor a player to use it, or a student to learn it. Today nearly everyone uses what is called the Western grip, which is about as unnatural a handling of the racket as could be imagined, but which makes better use of these changes in technology, strategy and style. Even I, when I need more topspin on a particular shot, will Westernize my grip. It's simply taking advantage of something you can't get with the old system.

Here comes that haiku analogy I warned you about. We might liken the old Eastern forehand to the classic model for haiku, the one everyone knows, the good old 5-7-5. Like the Eastern forehand, it's what we were taught at the beginning, and like the Eastern forehand, it might still be taught by parents on the equivalent of the public parks of haiku. Like the Eastern forehand, it has had its heyday, and was strong and serviceable, if a bit stiff and not always in tune with how the body, or the language, moves. It did some things particularly well, but gradually style and practice evolved away from these strengths. And now, the 5-7-5 is as rare as the Eastern forehand, except among amateurs. They are both classics of another era. And it proves so: seeing one in any of the better journals now is a remarkable thing.

What has replaced it? What has become the Western forehand of haiku? Well, it's so common now we hardly bother to think about it. Normative haiku today are three-liners, usually in a short-long-short pattern. It's what everybody plays now. It's a direct descendant of the 5-7-5, and it's our norm. It's what we do, what we think in. Certainly none of this is news to you.

But there's more. As important as grip changes to the forehand were to the game, an even more important development took place just as I was perfecting my game—that is, just a bit too late for me to take to it naturally. The most elegant and archetypal stroke in tennis, the one that raises tennis from a brutal power sport to an art of finesse and

cunning, is the one-handed backhand. Those very rare backhands that equal a player's forehand are things of sheer beauty, but they are extremely difficult to master. They require strength at maximal exertion from very small muscles—that is, they are at odds with the physiology of the human body. Some bright teachers and players recognized this and came up with a better idea: the two-handed backhand.

In the thirty-five years that have ensued, virtually every great player has used the two-handed backhand. There have been exceptions, but that's what they've been. A two-hander has a different, though not lesser, grace and line, and also more power and repeatability. This new shape of tennis suits how the body works, as well as the demands of the modern game.

So, does haiku have an analog to the two-handed backhand? What's the new shape of haiku?

Haiku, like tennis, has evolved beyond its early stages into something leaner, stronger, sharper. It requires a better poet to write good haiku today, and more often what a poet chooses to write is less likely to be normative. Or put another way, what was normative to the best poets of previous generations is no longer competitive for the best poets of the current generation. Journals and websites are gradually discovering this, and slowly accommodating the new practices. Increasingly we find more different kinds of haiku in these places, and readers are learning to parse them in new ways, just as poets are learning to exploit the new possibilities inherent in the new shapes. Not all will work—some will flare briefly and disappear forever. But by having a look at what's being tried, it may be possible to deduce what the new shape of haiku is likely to be.

The remainder of this presentation will be in two parts. To begin we'll consider a very brief history of haiku form. This will in no way be exhaustive, but suggestive as well as cumulative. We'll follow with a more detailed study of the form I feel is likeliest to be the shape of things to come.

Let's begin with the elephant in the room. It will be a long time, if ever, before the three-liner is displaced as the primary shape of haiku in English. There are many reasons for this: history, tradition, mimesis, not to mention the way the three-line haiku continues to supply a useful combination of technical opportunities for the poet to exploit. Haiku work well in three lines in English, and that first inspiration to render Japanese haiku in this fashion was a gift. The first three-liners in a Western language may date back to the 1600s, in Dutch, but we have no records to prove this. We do know that three-line translations were being made no later than the 1870s, and we must regard this as somewhat serendipitous, because it was no sure thing. The Japanese originals were, of course, single vertical lines, and if that verticality was certain to be adumbrated by our own horizontal writing process, the choice to mimic the tripartite internal organization in three lines was not so obvious. And, despite some other early contenders, the three-line model proved to be the most generally accepted, and so is the great-grandfather of contemporary haiku practice in the west.

Since the three-line haiku has become normative practice, any other form must be considered aberrant. The onus is on the outlier to prove the efficacy of its novelty: of course any variant form will provide a different experience. The question is, is it a better one? If any poem can be shown to work just well in the normative shape, then all the variant shape is doing is calling attention to itself, and to its author. Part of our consideration should always be, how does the shape chosen by the poet enhance the poem? And if it doesn't, we must consider this to be a decision error on the part of the poet. I urge you to experiment with all the poems that follow, to see if their success is dependent on the manner of presentation, or if they might have been just as well served to begin life as more normative poems.

We needn't reiterate the history of the three line form here, since it is primarily the history you already know: from Aston to Blyth to Hass, from Lowell to Hackett to Herold, up to and including the

current journals. So let's agree to simply use the three line form as the backdrop against which we might consider other shapes which have arisen.

Just as reasonable a choice in those first days of translation was a two-line, symmetrical or asymmetrical arrangement such as that employed by Basil Hall Chamberlain as early as the 1880s:

Haply the summer grasses are
A relic of the warriors' dream.¹

Another important Japanologist, editor and anthologist, Asataro Miyamori, also favored the two-line rendering of Japanese originals in the 1930s:

A fallen flower flew back to the branch!
Behold! it was a flitting butterfly.²

Two later Western poets and anthologists, Kenneth Rexroth and Harold Stewart, also adopted the two-line format. Where the former achieves a very sharp lucubration, as in

Summer grass
Where warriors dream.³

the latter chose to make something more appetizing to middlebrow taste, rhyming the poems and pulling the teeth of their observations:

Illusion:
The fallen blossoms which I saw arise,
Returning toward the bough, were butterflies.⁴

1. Bashō, tr. Chamberlain, "Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram" 46.

2. Moritake, tr. Miyamori, *Anthology of Haiku Ancient and Modern* 111.

3. Bashō, tr. Rexroth, *One Hundred Poems from the Japanese* (1955).

4. Moritake, tr. Stewart, *A Net of Fireflies*, 36.

In truth, the two-liner has never really caught on in the West, perhaps because it too much resembled the rhymed couplets of Augustinian poetry without its familiar philosophical trappings. We do find the occasional exception, such as work by John Gould Fletcher in the 1930s:

Snowflakes rise and fall on the wind:
Even Winter has her white flocks of silent birds.⁵

Robert Grenier, in his experiments with short lines which are not necessarily haiku, offered this poem in the 1970s:

PULSE
how big a gap can a line contain & go on⁶

He seems to be asking what exactly are the believable parameters for kire—how far afield can a poem go on the other side of the break? This is an age-old question in haiku, and the answer is always exactly what the poem supplies—in this case, all the way from the range of possibilities of “pulse” to a disquisition on the nature of . . . what? poetic practice? blood pressure? heredity? the universe? A most challenging poem.

Slightly less challenging but no less terse, and even tangier, is M. Kettner’s 1980s poem

your hair drawn back
the sharp taste of radishes⁷

Two lines seems exactly right for this: no three-line arrangement approaches its strident acerbity.

Karen Sohne penned this classic *senryū* in the 1990s:

5. Verse V, “From the Japanese,” *Visions of Evening* (London: MacDonald, 1913).

6. *Sentences*, Whale Cloth Press, Iowa City IA 1978.

7. *ant ant ant ant ant* 2002.

androgynous stranger
winks at me⁸

and Michael Facherty's terse

in the wood pile
the broken ax handle⁹

dates from the middle of that decade. And from this new decade we
have John Carley

sunlight spills along the canal
another breath of solvent¹⁰

and this from Jörgen Johansson

a ladybird
b5 to c4¹¹

The two-line poem derived from the essentially two-part (content-wise) Japanese haiku makes some sense, even if it hasn't enjoyed much popularity with poets in the West. The four-line version, however, doesn't have the same easy continuity, and we should perhaps view it as an idiosyncratic product of Western haiku practice. Not surprisingly, it also has not been much favored. A number of early American haikuists used four lines on occasion, notably Virginia Brady Young, whose first lines end in a colon and read like a title, L.A. Davidson, and Alvaro Cardona-Hine. Only one poet that I know of has made it his trademark form—Stephen Gill, who publishes under the name Tito:

8. Dee Evetts, ed., *Woodshavings*, Spring Street Haiku Group anthology, 1994.

9. *Black Bough* 8, 1996.

10. *Frogpond* 25:1, 11.

11. *A New Resonance* 6, 2009.

Further down the cobble beach
 the face of another
 sunwatcher
 loses its copper glow¹²

It is debatable what the four-line array accomplishes, beyond airing the poem out a bit. Tito's poems do tend towards a greater syllable count than the prevailing norms, and perhaps the fourth line helps make them feel less weighted, more free-flowing. In most instances, the four-line efforts we might find published are aberrations from usual practice by their authors, and the lineage employed seems directly aimed at arriving at specific sorts of timings for the readings of the poems. Here, for instance, is an early example (1970s) by Larry Eigner:

w i d e - r a n g i n g
 cloud over
 sunlit
 somewhere enough for a storm¹³

Eigner didn't call his poem a haiku, though it is clearly related. Virginia Brady Young's, also 1970s, was clearly in the genre:

at twilight
 hippo
 shedding
 the river¹⁴

There is certainly something gained with each line break, not to mention a slight suggestion of the hippo's shape, in this poem, so we might decide the four-line solution here seems aptly chosen for the content. Shape also seems to be central to Robert Spiess's poem (early '80s):

12. *Blithe Spirit* 7.4.

13. *Windows / Walls / Yard / Ways*, 1994, 163.

14. *Haiku West* 7:1, 24.

a square
 of water
 r e f l e c t s
 the moon¹⁵

LeRoy Gorman's self-deprecating four-liner from the same time also seems to use the form to advantage:

between
 Goethe & Graves
 summer
 shelfdust¹⁶

In Dee Evetts's haiku (late '80s), the motivation wasn't so much a four-line result, but a more organically pleasing presentation:

the river
 going over
 the afternoon
 going on¹⁷

And perhaps Martin Lucas's poem (2000s) is something of an anti-haiku, and so deviation from the norm feels appropriate:

somewhere
 between
 Giggleswick and Wigglesworth
 I am uninspired¹⁸

Perhaps the least-practiced shapes haiku have taken are specific to individual poems, shapes we might term "organic." A simple example is L. A. Davidson's

15. *Cicada* 3:3.

16. *Frogpond* 24:3, 12.

17. *Mill House*, Haiku Canada Sheet 1987–88.

18. Swede and Brooks, ed., *Global Haiku*, 2000.

ONE

beyond
stars beyond
star¹⁹

from the early 1970s. Another famous stellar poem, by Raymond Roseliep a couple of years later, approximates this same shape:

he removes his glove
to point out
Orion²⁰

This shape perhaps suggest vastness, the third line moving away from the rest of the poem, the rest of what is known. The delay of the third line increases tension, especially when read. A more complex sort of order, but even earlier (early 1970s) is called upon in William J. Higginson's

sky-black gull
 skims
 the wave inland
against the cliff
 whitens²¹

One could mention Nick Avis, who is perhaps the most careful of haiku poets in placing words on paper, and Marshall Hryciuk, who is about the least careful!

Organic shape is not easily discoverable, and even when a success doesn't automatically suggest "haiku" to a reader, particularly one not versed in the genre. Instead it conjures the realm of the short poem, and perhaps this is one argument that haiku is indeed simpatico with "mainstream" short-form poetry.

19. *Haiku Magazine* 5:3, 1972.

20. Roseliep, *Sailing Bones*, 24.

21. *Haiku Magazine* 4:4, 1971.

Probably the best-known advocate of this organic form is Marlene Mountain. In addition to her shape poems, for example the typographical exercise she employed around the word “labium,” and her process poems, such as the leaping frog, she has created what is perhaps the best and best-known organic haiku, from the mid-70s:

on this cold
 spring 1
 2 night 3 4
 kittens
 wet
 5 22

The felicity with which this shape causes the reader to re-enact the content of the poem is uncanny, and stands as a model for those seeking similar effects.

There are still occasional attempts at free-form haiku, as anyone who has had a look at the HaikuNow! Innovative category results from past years will note. But not many of them have been compelling in their execution. An interesting recent effort is Eve Luckring’s

c u m u l o
 n i m b u s
 d r i f t the
 d a y
 o f f
 s c h e d u l e²³

Another branch we might consider is concrete haiku. After a flurry of activity in the late 1970s to early 1980s, especially in Canada, concrete haiku have not been much practiced in English. The first efforts perhaps were by Paul Reys, whose earliest work dates from the 1930s, of which this is characteristic:

22. *Moment, Moment /Moments*, 1978.

23. *Modern Haiku* 41.2.

!
rain ²⁴

Two decades later the most famous concrete haiku was penned by Cor van den Heuvel:

tundra²⁵

There have been other one-word efforts, though none perhaps quite as successful, and certainly none so iconic.

The greatest early exponent of concrete haiku was Larry Gates. His series “Test Patterns” in the 1960s included such work as

GGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG
RRRRRRRESRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
AAAAAKSNAAAAAASNAAAA
SSNSKESKESSSSSSSNAKES
SSAKESSESNSSSSSSAKES
GGGGGGGGNAKGGAKEGGGGG
RRRRRRRRRKESRAKERRRRRR
AAAAAAAAAASNAKEAAAAA
SSSSSSSSSSSSSAKESSSSS
SSSSSSSSSSSSSKSSSSSSSS ²⁶

Then there are the oddities and the one-offs, most of which have had a single champion and no adherents. We can perhaps so consider this poem, considered the first successful haiku in English:

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
Petals on a wet, black bough . ²⁷

24. *Square Sun, Square Moon*, 1989.

25. *the window-washer's pail*, 1963.

26. *Haiku Magazine*, 1971.

27. Ezra Pound, “Contemporanea,” *Poetry* 2:1, April 1913, 6.

Ezra Pound published this in *Poetry* in 1913, and it's full of interesting quirks: a title, for instance, and is it meant to be counted as one of the lines? What of those spaces that separate the various phrases within the lines themselves: is this simply a guide to reading, a timing device, or is it following some supposed model? In the latter case, with its five sections, could it be—a tanka? But it has the unmistakable feel of haiku, whatever its vagaries.

The same can be said of Wallace Stevens's response to encountering haiku. What he wrote he would not have called such either, but it feels like a robust, aerated, Americanized version of it long before there was anything like a haiku community to say nay. Here's one section from "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackbird sat
In the cedar-limbs.²⁸

Elsewhere I have made the case that we might consider this poem the first sequence in English-language haiku.

Once journals and organizations had come to the West, and a normative practice began to be established, experimentation took more the shape of a response to the norm. Larry Gates, for instance, took the standard haiku model and rotated it ninety degrees, attempting to combine the three-line norm of the West with some feeling of the verticality of Japanese poems, as in this one from the 1960s:

28. *Harmonium* (1917), 135.

As a flashes
 the little white
 falls water-thrush
 darken²⁹

In this case, Gates actually had a follower, as the poet Evelyn Tooley Hunt, who often published under the name Tao-Li, employed this shape in many of her poems. More idiosyncratically, Martin Shea used spaces and lines to create quite different layouts—and consequent emotional responses—to what usually were three-line haiku, as in this one from the mid-70s:

bolted space
 the lights on the corners
 click and change³⁰

At about the same time Alan Pizzarelli was working with a flexible lineation that followed the flow of the idiom, resulting in a seemingly artless, colloquial effect:

a spark
 lights up
 darkens

 that's it³¹

At the opposite end of the theoretical, anne mckay was seeking anything but a casual effect on the reader, organizing her material for artistic impact, as in this poem from the late 1980s:

29. *Modern Haiku* 2:4, 22.

30. *New World Haiku* 1:3.

31. From the sequence "Tea Party," *Haiku Magazine*, 1974?

a clarity
 astonishing
 the night

 rising
 slow
 and
sweet
 suddenly

 her voice
 ... singing³²

Another Canadian with a penchant for formal experimentation is Michael Dudley. This poem from the 1990s is one of his most unusual:

a purple sky
 dim on the
 figures drive-in
 appear screen³³

The most recent attempt at fashioning a compelling new shape while keeping a traditional haiku feel and content has been made by Lee Gurga. The possibility his cruciform shapes contain is only beginning to be explored, but one of the more successful of his early efforts is the following, from 2010:

 not
 the
 whole
 story
 but probably enough
 fresh
 snow³⁴

32. *Frogpond* 12:2, 37.

33. Dorothy Howard and André Duhaime, eds., *Haiku: anthologie canadienne/Canadian Anthology*, 1985.

34 *Frogpond* 33:2, 16.

A final anomalous shape I'd like to mention is the overlap haiku, what Nick Virgilio named the "weird:"

fossilence³⁵

This technique has not been used very often to my knowledge: perhaps a couple of dozen poets have published them in the past 20 years. A related style overlaps words to create compression. One of the best is this one by John Stevenson:

jampackedelevatoreverybuttonpushed³⁶

The newest shape to make a bid for permanence in haiku practice is the vertical array. It's not exactly a new idea: besides being the usual shape for Japanese haiku, we can find it in English as early as the 1950s, being the regular shape employed by Michael McClure, as in this example:

NOTH
ING
NESS
 of
intelligence;
 silver
 sunlight
 through
 closed
 eyelids ³⁷

And the verticality of Japanese haiku certainly inspired this poem by John Tagliabue from the early '70s:

35. George Swede and Randy Brooks, editors, *Global Haiku: Twenty-five Poets World-wide*, (2000).

36. *Frogpond* 25:2, 32.

37. *The Unswept Path*, ed. Brandi/Maloney, White Pine Press, Buffalo NY 2005, p. 156.

Ancestral Portraits

the
mark
of
leaves
in
the
flying
air³⁸

Alan Pizzarelli in 1970 offered a chunkier version of this idea:

rain

floating down the gutter

a crimson leaf

a popcicle stick

a . . .³⁹

And Marlene Mountain in 1976 provided this version:

beneath
leaf mold
stone
cool
stone⁴⁰

But it wasn't until Robert Spiess that the vertical form was explored in depth:

38. *The Doorless Door*, Grossman, New York 1970.

39. *Karma Poems*, 1974.

40. *The Old Tin Roof*.

crescent
moon
a
bat
loops
and
twists
among
wild
plum⁴¹

One poet who picked up on the possibilities to be found in Spiess's work was vince tripi:

Looking
up
at
the
giant
sequoia
woodpecker
fledgling⁴²

With the regular publication of the poems of John Martone, beginning in the mid-'90s, the full range of possibilities of the vertical array began to come clear:

41. *The Cottage of Wild Plum* (1991).

42. *the path of the bird* (1996).

here-
there-
si-
lence
ap-
pro-
xi-
mate-
ly-
fern⁴³

Another poet quick to realize the potential of this shape was Scott Metz:

a
not
her
drop
&
it's
*raining*⁴⁴

All this by way of prelude: if something is to upend the hegemony of the three-line haiku, the clear favorite is the one-liner, which, if the pitch I'm about to make for it is true, is due for a term of its own. I would like to suggest: the *monoku*. What recommends it is its clarity: it says what it is. I also like its brevity, and the hybridity of its origins: a Greek prefix wedded to a Japanese suffix to create a new English term.

Haiku is not the sole province of one-liners in English poetry, but it is nearly so. Almost all examples of monostich are imported from other languages—the Russian of Bryusov, the French of Apollinaire. The practice of rendering links of renga in single lines (for space considerations, perhaps) may well have influenced poets writing haiku in English, especially those offering sequences, which have often had their individual elements arranged in single lines.

43. *Heart Wood* (1998).

44. *Modern Haiku* 38.3, 85.

Like all these alternative shapes, monoku must be considered against the success of the normative three-line haiku. While some of these alternative shapes have specific applications, others seem simply idiosyncratic. Monoku, however, have not arisen out of a need simply to be different: they actually offer a range of technical and stylistic opportunities that are not available to the three-line haiku, nor even, so far as I am able to ascertain, to the Japanese single vertical line form. It offers resources that one just can't find elsewhere in haiku, and where there is new territory, poets will colonize. I will detail some of these advantages as we proceed, but first I'd like to offer a brief history of the monoku.

Monoku have been offered as an alternative normative version of haiku from the beginning. One of the first translators of classical Japanese haiku, Lafcadio Hearn, working in the 1890s, proffered one-line versions such as:

The voice having been all consumed by crying, there remains
only the shell of the *sémi*⁴⁵

As we have observed, competing models were also offered, and of these, the three-line form gained the most traction early on, and this has affected practice ever since. But not everyone was entirely convinced. In his seminal volume *The Country of Eight Islands* (1968), Hiroaki Sato, in collaboration with Burton Watson, supplied single-line translations of haiku and tanka, arguing that such versions provided a closer experience to the Japanese originals. Though Sato is less prolix than Hearn, we can feel a certain kinship in poems such as this:

The sea darkens, and the voices of ducks faintly white⁴⁶

45. Bashō, tr. Lafcadio Hearn, *Shadowings*, 1900.

46. Bashō, tr. Hiroaki Sato and Burton Watson, eds. and trans., *From the Country of Eight Islands: An Anthology of Japanese Poetry*, 1981).

However, poets writing haiku in English were not quick to follow these examples: normative practice for haiku in English for the first half of the 20th century was decidedly three lines. Jack Kerouac, as was so often his wont, was the first to experiment with a single line format in the 1950s. His comrade-in-arms Allen Ginsberg, seeking to incorporate a Western attitude into an eastern genre, created what he called “American sentences,” 17 syllables punctuated as usual. This was as much an outgrowth of his own work with long flexible English poetic lines as any theoretical statement of what lay inherent in haiku itself. Here’s a typical example:

A dandelion seed floats above the marsh grass with the mosquitos.⁴⁷

This model was largely ignored by poets inside and out of the haiku community, which began organizing itself shortly thereafter. The first monoku to receive widespread acceptance was Michael Segers’s

in the eggshell after the chick has hatched⁴⁸

in 1971. What it chiefly is noticing, seemingly, is an absence, though one might argue for shadow or whiteness or some other characteristic. But the curiously truncated manner in which it presents itself, *in medias res*, is not to be found again until Robert Grenier:

except the swing bumped by the dog in passing⁴⁹

Once the idea of a single line containing the whole of a haiku came into consciousness in the haiku community, it spread quickly. George Swede took up the gauntlet, producing several monoku such as this, from 1978:

47. *White Shroud: Poems 1980–1985*, 1986.

48. *Haiku Magazine* 5:2, 12.

49. *Sentences* (1978).

at the edge of the precipice I become logical⁵⁰

An atypical poem by Lorraine Ellis Harr from around the same time:

an owl hoots darkness down from the hollow oak⁵¹

R. Clarence Matsuo-Allard was one of the first to go on record publicly espousing the single-line format, with poems such as this one, from 1979:

an icicle the moon drifting through it⁵²

The same year saw Marlene Mountain's paean to concision:

pig and i spring rain⁵³

More efforts found their way into print in 1980, such as this one by John Wills:

dusk from rock to rock a waterthrush⁵⁴

and this from Robert Boldman:

leaves blowing into a sentence⁵⁵

Nearly all the leading haiku poets of the day found the single-line form worth exploring. At about the same time one by Peggy Willis Lyles:

Before we knew its name the indigo bunting⁵⁶

50. *A Snowman, Headless*, 1978.

51. *Cicada* 2:3, 1978.

52. *Cicada* 3:2, 1979.

53. *Frogpond* 2:3–4, 25.

54. *Amoskeag* 1, 1980, 88.

55. *Cicada* 4:4, 1980.

56. *Brussels Sprout* 2:2, 1981.

This from James Kirkup also in 1981:

the blood of my shadow poured up the steps⁵⁷

Elizabeth Searle Lamb tried her hand:

cry of the peacock widens the crack in the adobe wall⁵⁸

and Ruby Spriggs as well:

my head in the clouds in the lake⁵⁹

And, a bit later, one from Hal Roth:

dove song shortens the lane where she waits⁶⁰

All this occurred within the confines of the haiku community. At the same time, however, a very surprising thing happened: one of the major contemporary American poets, John Ashbery, inspired by Hiroaki Sato's one-line translations from the Japanese, published thirty-seven haiku in his 1982 collection *The Wave*. These poems were quite different from the majority of poems being published in haiku journals, and indeed set a challenge to haiku poets to engage in a larger discourse with so-called mainstream poetry. Here's one example:

A blue anchor grains of grit in a tall sky sewing⁶¹

No one immediately took up this challenge, perhaps because it was so daunting, but more likely because haiku poets were not even aware of it. In the following decade a handful of poets published monoku, most of them only occasionally. Since the beginning of the

57. *Dengonban Messages*, 1981.

58. Harold G. Henderson Haiku Awards 1981, 2nd Prize.

59. *Frogpond* 6:2, 14.

60. *Her Daughter's Eyes*, 1990.

61. "37 Haiku," *Sulfur* 5, 1981.

new century, however, all that has changed. Most major haiku poets since 2000 have tried their hand at monoku, and while some have decided it doesn't suit them, most have included at least a few in their collections as well as in journals. In rough chronological order, the past decade has seen work by:

Chris Gordon:

a love letter to the butterfly gods with strategic misspellings⁶²

Dietmar Tauchner:

deep inside you no more war⁶³

vincent tripi (1996):

Ah water-strider never to have left a track!⁶⁴

Stuart Quine:

bolted and chained the way to the mountains⁶⁵

Allan Burns:

Kind of Blue the smell of rain⁶⁶

Jeff Stillman:

hazy moon hung over the new year⁶⁷

62. *Apparent Definition of Wavering*, 2005.

63. *Roadrunner* VI:4, 2006.

64. *Paperweight for Nothing*, 2006.

65. *Presence* 31, 2007.

66. *Acorn* 20, 2008.

67. *Blithe Spirit* 18:1, 2008.

Lorin Ford:

their wings like cellophane remember cellophane⁶⁸

Karma Tenzing Wangchuk:

stone before stone buddha⁶⁹

Charles Trumbull:

such innocent questions — sunflowers⁷⁰

Scott Metz:

only american deaths count the stars⁷¹

Martin Lucas:

the thyme-scented morning lizard's tongue flicking out⁷²

Giselle Maya:

the cuckoo's voice has opened a white iris⁷³

John Barlow:

the wind being farmed the wind that isn't⁷⁴

68. *Roadrunner* IX:2, 2009.

69. *Stone Buddha*, 2009, 54.

70. *Roadrunner* IX:1, 2009.

71. *Modern Haiku* 40.1, 2009, 49.

72. *Presence* 39, 2009.

73. *Modern Haiku* 41.3, 2010, 105.

74. *Presence* 41, 2010.

Eve Luckring:

cocktail party that one closed door⁷⁵

William Ramsey:

fate: a leaf falls but with improvisation⁷⁶

and Christopher Patchel:

we turn turn our clocks ahead⁷⁷

And of course I myself have found many resources in monoku, writing my first at the end of the century (though not published until 2004):

a W of geese not quite the end of summer⁷⁸

and scores more since. In 2010, at the request of the Dutch publisher 't Schrijverke, I wrote a monograph on the topic, entitled *where i leave off*, which seeks to identify several strategies that monoku employ, and provides examples from my work.

I would like to focus on three of the more interesting techniques readily available in monoku but only rarely, if at all, in normative haiku, or even in other formal schemes. Of course there are many more than three such techniques, and the use of one does not preclude the use of others in any given poem. Many of the poems above in fact employ more than a single technique to achieve their effects.

It's my contention that early monoku, up until at least the Segers poem, and many after as well, employed no technique that is unique to haiku presented as a single line. The one-line translations seek to render a more just experience of the Japanese original, not to expand

75. *A New Resonance* 6, 2009.

76. *More Wine*, 2010.

77. HaikuNow! Contest, The Haiku Foundation, 2011, 2nd Prize.

78. *Simply Haiku* 2.

the range of technical advantage the monoku might offer in English; while poets writing in English seemingly didn't discover these technical advantages until the form was much more established. If we consider the examples above by Hearn, Sato, and Ginsberg, we would probably agree that all might have been presented in three lines with little loss to the poem had the translator or poet chosen that form. And we might say the same of the original poems of Matsuo-Allard and Bostok.

But in the Segers poem, and many of those that follow, something else is happening: re-presenting in three lines becomes more problematical, and the results lose something of the effect of the original poem. Segers truncates the poem in such a way that we actually omit the fragment part of the usual fragment/phrase layout. The poem might have been more traditionally written with a first line of, say, "in the henhouse," if aiming for one kind of effect, or perhaps "darkness" if aiming for another. But by dispensing with it altogether the poet forces the reader to do more work, more imagining, and this serves to open the poem to all sorts of interesting results. Rather than a piling up of images upon the imagination, what Pound called "phanopoeia," a single image is extended or elaborated into a second context, often implied. This omission of fragment comes to be one of the most commonly utilized techniques in the toolbox of the emerging monoku. Other examples of it from our list include the poems by Boldman, Spriggs, Gordon, Lucas, and Ford.

The second technique we find commonly in monoku that differs from normative haiku form is sheer speed. The rushing of words past the imagination's editor results in a breathless taking in of the whole, only after which the unexpected "sense" contained within the imagery asserts itself. The pivot of a poem might occur in the first word, but having met it so early in the reading the reader can hardly be blamed for not recognizing it as such. And another might work in exactly the opposite way, postponing its pivot for the last word, and then asking the reader to decide how to read it.

The first such poem on our list is Marlene Mountain's "pig and i." In five words she limns the entire scene, and the reader or listener really has no alternative but to take it whole. Only afterwards is it possible to unpack it, by which point the entire sensation of the poem is embedded within us. Boldman's poem operates in a similar fashion, as do the poems by Lyles, Spriggs, Tauchner, Burns, Metz, and, in a slightly different way, Patchel.

There is no parallel for this effect that I can find in normative haiku. The line breaks ensure that the reader slows down, and momentum is lost, which for most poems is not a loss, but for these special kinds of poems, removes much of their impact.

A third technique endemic to monoku is the use of multiple kire, "cutting." Some critics, such as Hasegawa Kai, feel that kire is the most critical poetic technique employed by haiku. The advantage this kind of monoku has is that the break can occur in one of several places, and each possible break point yields a different reading. Most often the sense of the poem remains similar, but different emphases create subtle shifts in meaning. We might think of such haiku as cut gems: each slight turn catches the light a bit differently; each facet contains its own inherent gleams and prismatic effects. Multiple possible caesuras yield subtle, often ambiguous texts which generate alternative readings, and subsequently richer poetic experiences. Each poem can be several poems, and the more the different readings cohere and reinforce each other, the larger the field occupied by the poem, the greater its weight in the mind. My poem is one such example, with others being the Metz, Wangchuk, and Stillman.

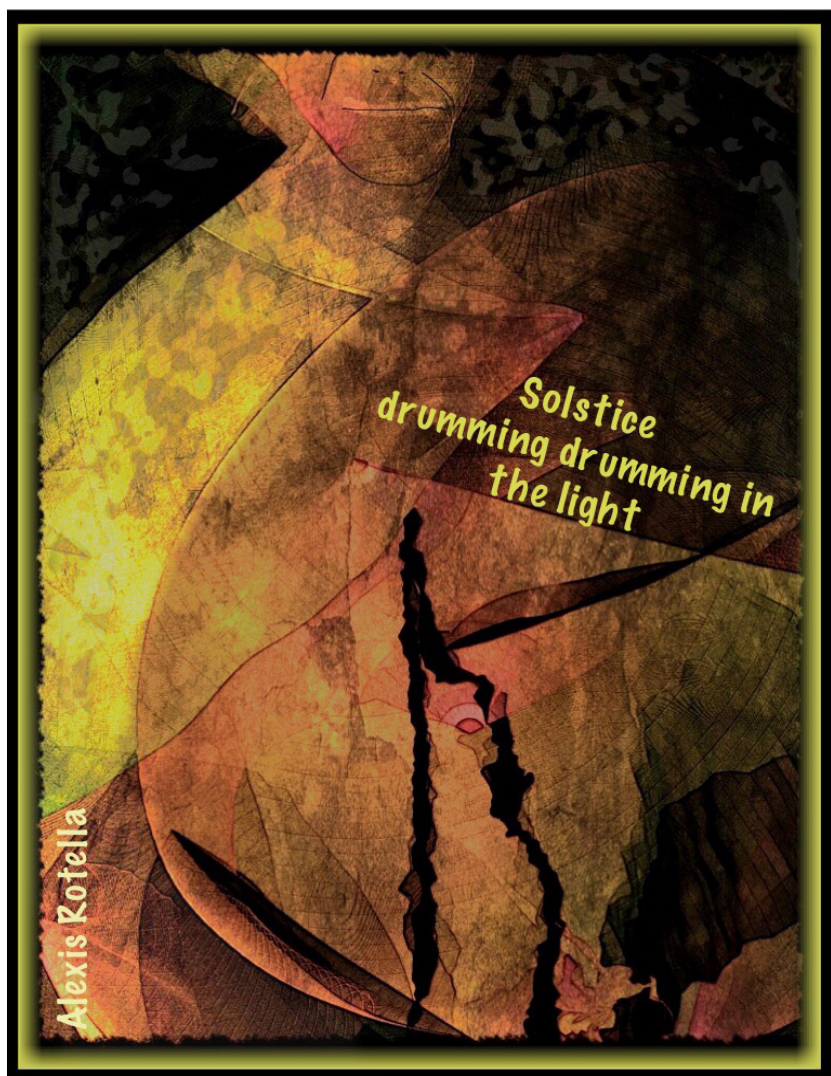
In addition to these three techniques let me briefly add the monoku's ability to enact its content, a kind of shape poem, as in the Wills; a more direct imposition of images in Lamb's; the creation of a kind of unexpected animism all the more direct for its form, as in the Roth; a vehicle for apothegm and epigram, in the tripi and Ramsey; and the irreducible, through-composed poem which a three-line treatment would render cumbersome, as exemplified by Lucas. There are special

effects as well, such as Patchel's word repetition which deepens the significance of the observation, and the management of disjunctive elements that might feel too loosely constrained in a less lapidary form, such as the Ashbery and Boldman.

And so on.

This is not advocacy for one-line technique for all English-language haiku. The needs of each poem must be determined individually, and those needs met. Nor is it any indication of all that's possible within a one-line treatment—I believe we've only begun to explore how the monoku might expand the range of English-language haiku. But it is an argument that one-line form is no longer a variant form—the monoku is, and has been for some time, a fully-fledged form of the genre, and with an exciting exploratory period just ahead. I look forward to participating in that exploration, and expect many of you will be involved as well. It will not be the very distant future when we will define haiku as a brief poem, most often in one or three lines. Only then will our explanation have caught up with the reality.





"Solstice"

Alexis Rotella

This Perfect Rose:

The Lasting Legacy of William J. Higginson

MICHAEL DYLAN WELCH

When William J. Higginson died on 11 October 2008, at the age of 69, he left behind a legacy of love for haiku poetry—his perfect rose. This legacy, chiefly in the form of poems, criticism, and books, particularly *The Haiku Handbook*, has influenced and directed generations of haiku poets for nearly half a century. His combination of being a poet, translator, teacher, editor, publisher, and scholar—or “haiku coach,” as he sometimes called himself—gave his legacy accessible appeal and lasting authority. For the length and breadth of his legacy, William J. Higginson takes his place with R. H. Blyth and Harold G. Henderson as one of the three most influential English-language commentators to have written about haiku poetry.

POETIC INFLUENCES AND HAIKU GROWTH

William J. Higginson was born on 17 December 1938 in New York City, and grew up in the Bronx and Bergenfield, New Jersey. After attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he joined the United States Air Force, which sent him to Yale to learn Japanese. He then served in Japan for two years at Misawa Air Base, in Aomori prefecture, near the northernmost tip of Honshu. It was at Yale and

Misawa that his love of the Japanese language and its literature began to flower. In his introduction to *Ten Years' Collected Haiku, Volume 1* (Fanwood, New Jersey: From Here Press, 1987), Higginson wrote that "The haiku was my starting verse. . . . my initiation began with an instructor at Yale reciting Bashō's *furuike-ya* to my class in Japanese military terminology. . . . Bashō's poem struck me like the stick of a Zen master" (1). Higginson wrote again of this pivotal influence in his haibun, titled "Well-Bucket Nightfall, or New Day?" published in the Haiku Society of America journal *Frogpond* 32:1, Winter 2009, the issue dedicated to him shortly after his death. This was to be "Bill's last personal writing, a haibun, written Friday, October 3rd, 2008, eight days before he died" (5):

Is this, then, to be the journal of my own well-bucket nightfall, when my own life will be snuffed out in a few weeks' time? Or the journal of a dark night to a bright new day? I have lived a long and productive life, to my own understanding, lived much of it on my own terms, much on the pure dumb luck of some accidental word or event no one could have predicted. Who could know that a single verse spoken in an endless year of USAF Japanese vocabulary drills relating to parts of weapons and flying airplanes would lead to a life-long interest in Japanese poetry that has sustained me through all the rest.

smell of bile . . .
I waken to October
afterglow

Higginson's passion for haiku led him to a life of poetry, criticism, and translation that embraced his knowledge of the language and culture, beginning with the publication of *Twenty-Five Pieces of Now*, translations of classical Japanese haiku, in 1968. This was the same year that Higginson became a charter member of the Haiku Society of America, which held its inaugural meeting in New York City in October of 1968 (he also served as president of the organization in 1976, and in 2007 he received the HSA's Sora Award for service to the

society). In 1969, Higginson completed a BA in English (with honors) from Southern Connecticut State College. In 1971, prompted by a desire to know more about William Carlos Williams, he moved to Paterson, New Jersey. He edited *Haiku Magazine* from 1971 to 1976, and in 1975 he started From Here Press, which published mostly haiku-related chapbooks, including collections by Allen Ginsberg and Ruth Stone. Higginson stayed in New Jersey until 1991, when he and his wife, Penny Harter, relocated to Santa Fe, New Mexico, a move chronicled in *Met on the Road*, his Bashō-influenced haibun book that my press, Press Here, published in 1993—a book that focuses on various haiku friends and their poems, all “met on the road.” He and Penny moved back to Summit, New Jersey in 2002, where he died in 2008 after a three-month illness.

William Higginson was sometimes imperial, but not imperious. He knew how to dress when giving an important speech, but wore a blazer with leather-patched elbows rather than a three-piece suit. He was a dedicated and passionate scholar, but although he did not have a PhD, he had educated himself more than enough to reach an equivalent knowledge. In print he went by William J. Higginson. In person he went by Bill. He was a tall-looking man, but not quite as tall as his slender frame usually suggested. He wore glasses and a beard that gave him a grandfatherly demeanor. He could be stern, yet he laughed readily. He expected something of every poet who approached him, whether encouraging a beginner to write a better haiku by learning more of its traditional propensity for season words, or by demanding that a peer rise to his level of scholarship and clear thinking. He could be impatient, but this was because he expected much of everyone around him. Above all, his goal was to be helpful to modern poets. As he wrote in *Ten Years' Collected Haiku, Volume 1*, “The game was to take haiku out of the hands of those poetasters who would keep all poetry in antiquity, and bring haiku and its devotees full-bore into the heat of our own time and place” (4).

In a private email message to me on 19 April 2015, haiku scholar Richard Gilbert noted the following about Higginson—observations that catch something of who Higginson was, and how supportive he was to so many people, in all spectra of experience:

Haiku North America 2007 [in Winston-Salem, North Carolina] was the first and last time I would meet and talk with Bill, though I've continued a warm collegial friendship with his wife, Penny Harter. In print, Bill sometimes crossed the line between objective criticism and personal attack. At the same time, as anyone familiar with criticism knows, strong critics hold strong opinions—strongly negative critique is part of the game. . . . Bill was at times a savage gatekeeper, with strong opinions. At HNA, I gave a talk on Hasegawa Kai, as a way of establishing new possibilities for English-language haiku. After the lecture and in the following days Bill and I had a chance to talk. I found Bill to be expansive, intellectually deep, and open-minded—also he was quite excited about my work. It was my impression he appreciated the rigor and research involved in my arguments, as well as the grounding in haiku history and contact with notables in Japan. I'd also mention that, to date, there is really nothing to compete with Bill's *Haiku Handbook* for expansiveness, for scope—where else would you find haiku (or haikuesque) poems discussed, which were penned by Paz, Seferis, Éluard, etc.? Bill taught me not just about haiku, but about haiku in cultural and historical settings. He helped make me aware of new avenues of literature, and alerted me to possibilities of critical approach, for haiku.

Similarly, in an appreciation that appeared in *Simply Haiku* 6:4, Winter 2009,¹ George Swede wrote about Higginson's connection with poets and scholars of all levels of experience:

Bill was a different person to different people. . . . In all that he did for haiku, Bill was diligent, independent and non-elitist. . . . Bill was also always ready to help anyone—from novice to master—in solving any problem to do with Japanese poetic forms: definitions, the proper season word, the appropriate next line in a renku, the right reference

1. See *Simply Haiku* 6:4 (accessed 22 April 2015).

text, a translation from Japanese into English and vice-versa, the best place to publish one's work, and so on. No wonder the descriptor, "He was generous with his time," is frequently included in discussions about Bill after his death. . . . Undoubtedly, in the future William J. Higginson will be remembered as an icon in the history of English-language haiku. But in the present, we cannot help thinking mainly of Bill's generosity and his outreach to other poets.

In his early years as a poet, the 1960s and 70s, Higginson balanced his haiku studies with longer poetry, publishing small anthologies, such as *Between Two Rivers: Ten North Jersey Poets* (Fanwood, New Jersey: From Here Press, 1981). He also published numerous volumes of his own poetry, such as *Paterson Pieces: Poems 1969–1979* (Fanwood, New Jersey: Old Plate Press, 1981), continuing the practice with such later books as *The Healing* (Fanwood, New Jersey: From Here Press, 1986), and *Surfing on Magma* (Summit, New Jersey: From Here Press, 2006). In 1973, he started teaching poetry in the Poets-in-the-Schools program, which deepened his practical experience of converting scholarly explorations into accessible knowledge for his students. He continued to be not just a teacher but a teaching poet, and in 1989 was inducted into the New Jersey Literary Hall of Fame. In the 60s and 70s, he also started publishing translations and essays on haiku that appeared in leading haiku journals, at first in Jean Calkins' *Haiku Highlights* and Eric Amann's *Haiku*, the latter of which Higginson took over in 1971 and renamed *Haiku Magazine*. His early published criticism culminated in the book *Itadakimasu: Essays on Haiku and Senryu in English* (Kanona, New York: J & C Transcripts, 1971), which won an award for critical writing in the inaugural Haiku Society of America Merit Book Awards in 1974. *Itadakimasu* was also a forerunner to his most influential book, *The Haiku Handbook*, which also won the HSA's Merit Book Award for textbook/scholarly work, in 1986.

As a publisher, too, with From Here Press, started in 1975, he demonstrated a penchant for service, rather than focusing just on

publishing his own work. In the 70s, he also began to write and study renku and related linked poetry, at first under the influence of Tadashi Kondō. Renku became an intense and lifelong passion, and he led many renku sessions at conferences and other gatherings, with statues of Bashō and Sora often placed near him as he offered instructions and guidance (these statues are now mine, a gift of Penny Harter). Renku and related collaborative genres would add further social awareness to his writing, adding another dimension to his drive to promote seasonal reference in haiku. In the past, as today, haiku has served to connect poets to each other as a social art, but also served to connect each poet and his or her poem to time—both the specific time of year and to the metaphorical time of life, in all their unfolding seasons. Higginson was not merely studying the *haikai* of old Japan, but actively bringing it into the twentieth century through the writing and appreciation of new work.

As an editor, Higginson could be relentless, but only because he insisted on high standards, not just for himself but also for those with whom he worked. In 2001, he provided a back-cover blurb for *The Nick of Time*, a collection of essays on haiku aesthetics by Paul O. William that I published with my press, Press Here. He also reviewed the introduction that I wrote with Lee Gurga for the book. His edits were forceful and detailed, decrying the paragraphs that didn't flow, or lacked clear logic, taking us to task for sloppy writing. My first reaction was to resist nearly everything he said, but when I looked past his stridency, I saw that he was right. He had invested himself in the essay, being generous with his time as he had done in previous interactions. Through this investment he found a better way to say what needed to be said, and offered it to us. It wasn't just that he wanted what we'd written to be better. Rather, his intensity demonstrated that he cared, that discussions of haiku mattered to him. Ultimately, these interactions showed him to be accepting me as a peer. I reciprocated as best I could by reviewing some of his essays, such as his detailed and impatient review of Jane Reichhold's *Writing*

and *Enjoying Haiku*,² providing numerous examples of problems pointed out in the review. We also worked closely together, long before this, on *A Haiku Path*, the monumental 1994 anthology that documented the first twenty years of the Haiku Society of America from 1968, and also debated, at length, each Haiku North America conference, and all the papers and discussions that arose from this gathering of the haiku tribes every two years. He was at odds with me about Garry Gay's invention of the rengay form, which I had promoted heavily as an alternative—or complement—to renku, but we both saw past that disagreement to value the fact that each of us in our own way was on the haiku path.

In later years, Higginson started a blog about haiku books, an extensive website, *Renku Home*, devoted to renku and other writing about haiku, and also edited (yet more service on his part) the “Haiku and Related Forms” portal site³ of the *Open Directory Project*. This site, in its long day, was the single best and most egalitarian online assemblage for worldwide haiku-related resources. The site has been neglected since Higginson's death. Perhaps no one could do it justice the way he could.

HAIKU AND *SENRYŪ*

It is worth sharing the following poems from a span of five decades to give a sense of William Higginson as a poet, as well as a translator and scholar. As much as he valued his recognition as a commentator on haiku, as a teacher and haiku coach, he wanted to balance that work with poetry too.

More intricate
than all winter's designs,
this spring flake

2. See *Modern Haiku* 34.2.

3. See DMOZ on haiku.

The preceding poem won the Haiku Society of America's first contest, in 1968.

Holding the water
held by it—
the dark mud.

Higginson told me that he wanted to retain the capitalization and punctuation of this 1970 poem because that was the way it was originally published, even if he no longer wrote that way. This poem shows, too, that he was not needlessly rigid in employing season words in his haiku, omitting them when it was best for the poem.

grey dawn
ice on the seats
of the rowboat

the tick, tick
of snow on the reeds . . .
sparrow tracks

The preceding two winter poems, from 1982 and 1989, show Higginson's continuing emphasis on seasonal reference. Listen to the T, K, and S sounds of the latter poem. Higginson once reminded me that in Japan they talk of "composing" haiku, not "writing" them, a point that underscores the lyrical and musical feeling in Japanese haiku that poets writing in English should also remember.

New Year's Eve . . .
thieves have left my car open
in the falling snow

going over a bump
the car ahead
going over a bump

These two car poems, from 1994 and 1999, are examples of both haiku and *senryū*. While Higginson wrote extensively about haiku, he also embraced *senryū*. He was very encouraging to me in a review in *Modern Haiku* of my anthology, *Fig Newtons: Senryū to Go* (Foster City, California: Press Here, 1993), and was passionate about distinguishing between haiku and *senryū*, even while his primary focus was on haiku.

summer storm . . .
a shopping cart rolls past
the end of the lot

crescent moon
would I look at the clouds
without it?

These 2001 and 2004 poems illustrate Higginson's ability to notice details, including close observations of himself and his emotional state, and to write about the ordinary and everyday. He encouraged others to write about such topics, to keep haiku accessible.

I look up
from writing
to daylight.

writing again
the tea water
boiled dry

spring rain
rereading my own book
I fall asleep

These three poems, from 1970, 1986, and 2005, cover a span of thirty-five years. They show a dedicated author at work, yet one who is not afraid to poke fun at himself, not taking himself too seriously.

Here are two more poems, from 2004 and 2005, that seem to look ahead to his final illness and perhaps his own passing:

fireworks crashing
and fireflies so silent . . .
tomorrow the biopsy

one maple leaf . . .
end over end on the sand
without a trace

In the very first paragraph of *The Haiku Handbook*, Higginson wrote that “The primary purpose of reading and writing haiku is sharing moments of our lives that have moved us, pieces of experience and perception that we offer or receive as gifts. At the deepest level, this is the one great purpose of all art, and especially of literature” (v). In his haiku and *senryū*, William J. Higginson participated in this social act of sharing, of giving the reciprocal gift of haiku, and hoped not only that others could see what he saw, but that he could see and feel what others saw and felt.

SEVEN SUCCESSES OF *THE HAIKU HANDBOOK*

Where Higginson cemented his legacy was with the publication of *The Haiku Handbook*, published by McGraw-Hill in 1985, reprinted by Kodansha International in 1989, and reissued in a twenty-fifth anniversary edition in 2010, also from Kodansha International. In inscribing my copy of the McGraw-Hill edition in 1991, Higginson referred to the book as “these rambles through brambles—watch for the thorns, but see the dewdrops.” He knew from decades of experience, before and after the book was published, that understandings of haiku were a contentious business. He knew that what he offered was one perspective, but I believe he also knew, with confidence, that he offered a balanced and informed perspective that would enable his readers to see the dewdrops despite any thorns.

Booklist referred to *The Haiku Handbook* as “the standard work in the field,” and that observation is still true today, even decades later. I believe the book has succeeded, and continues to succeed, for at least seven reasons. The first is that it covers the genre’s history, yet not exhaustively. Higginson provides overviews of the Japanese masters as well as the development of haiku in English, with just the right amount of information to be informative but not taxing. His chapters on “Haiku Old and New” hint at greater depths of exploration, but not with so much information that he would tire readers who did not already have a specialized or academic interest in haiku poetry. For someone with so much knowledge that he could have unloaded with a blast, then or later, he chose a path of restraint—a characteristic not unlike haiku poetry itself. He was, in a sense, an idling Ferrari of haiku knowledge, but knew that some of his readers needed just a bus ride. Nevertheless, he wanted to make sure they got somewhere.

A second reason for the book’s success is its carefully refined and wide-ranging translations. The translations of Harold Henderson and Kenneth Yasuda in the middle of the twentieth century had been gilded with titles, rhymes, and sometimes contorted syntax (although I believe Henderson, to his credit, later disowned the rhymes and titles). Unlike these stilted, Victorian versions, Higginson’s were modern, accessible, and disarmingly simple, a balance of the academic and poetic. He also presented them in historical and cultural contexts that brought them alive, making them seem as if they’d just been written. Higginson told me (and surely others) that he was particularly proud of his translation of Bashō’s *furuike ya*, which he said he worked and reworked in countless ways over many years:

old pond . . .
a frog leaps in
water’s sound

It is so simple, yet the details were very important, such as the ellipsis rather than a dash to indicate the *ya* cutting word, to suggest a moment

of passing time when we encounter the pond, and to help emphasize the temporal contrast between the pond's oldness and the newness of the frog and its splash. He also knew that, before Bashō's haiku, Japanese poems about frogs celebrated its croak rather than its jump. Here the poet was celebrating a different kind of sound, a radical departure from centuries of previous poems. This was an overtone to the meaning of "old" that readers miss too easily today. It was also important to Higginson to say "in" rather than "into," because he said the poem was not metaphysical in the way it would need to be for the frog to somehow leap "into" the sound rather than into the pond—a translation that he considered to be in error. Bashō's poem was much more direct and unpretentious than that, even while it had layers of depth. And he found "water's sound" to be better than "the sound of water," another possible translation of *mizu no oto*, because it was more concise. This version of Bashō's most famous poem is so unassuming, and so widely known, that we forget that it began with Higginson, and distils multiple factors, not all of which are addressed here. Higginson cared deeply about every nuance in his translations. On occasion he has been taken to task for some of his choices, as any translator will be, but his versions all reflect his deep caring for the haiku genre, his love for these perfect roses.

A third influence on the success of *The Haiku Handbook* is its succinct writing guidance. Where R. H. Blyth excelled at translating a great volume of haiku, describing what he saw as the aesthetics or techniques used in Japanese haiku and what to look for when reading them, Higginson extended well-considered advice to embrace the writing of haiku in English, in the context of Imagism, modernism, and postmodernism. He moved from the descriptive to the prescriptive, but was gentle if he was ever didactic. His guidance was as direct and immediate as the following, something I've adapted into my own workshops on haiku when I say, "Don't write about your feelings; instead, write about what caused your feelings":

This is the main lesson of haiku. When we compose a haiku we are saying, “It is hard to tell you how I am feeling. Perhaps if I share with you the event that made me aware of these feelings, you will have similar feelings of your own.” Is this not one of the best ways to share feelings? (5)

A fourth reason for the book’s success is its wide appeal to poets, teachers, and general readers at the nexus of scholarly and popular writing. He did not dumb anything down, but respected the reader’s intelligence as well as patience by concisely offering informed substance and practical guidance, not just for poets but for those who would teach poetry. Penny Harter’s haiku lesson plan adds to the practicality of the book, and many teachers of haiku, myself included, have adopted the seminal guidance offered here. Contributing to this wide appeal is the fact that the material is not overly specialized. Perhaps haiku itself is a specialized interest in the context of all poetry or other literature, but for those interested in haiku, the book was not excessively detailed, perhaps wisely for an introduction. Higginson’s later books, *Haiku Seasons* and *Haiku World*, were much more specialized in their focus on seasonal references, and their exploration in a worldwide context, something that had never been done in English before, at least not to the same extent.

A fifth contribution to the success of *The Haiku Handbook* lies in its liberal use of examples by various poets, complete with contextual references to other poets, such as the poetic ideograms of E. E. Cummings. Where others writing about haiku have used their own poems, sometimes exclusively, to illustrate their points, Higginson uses poems by poets from around the world, the sung and unsung. He was celebrating his subject, not himself, and not even other poets. His selections recognize the value of particular poems, without regard to whether the poet is well known. Consequently, someone like Marion J. Richardson (have you heard of her?) could be treated the same as a Nobel Prize winner. He did not shy away from quoting haiku by famous writers—such as Dag Hammarskjöld, Richard

Wright, Tablada, Rilke, Machado, Snyder, Ginsberg, Borges, Seferis, Paz, and others—but his emphasis was more on the poem. By this emphasis, he demonstrated the democracy of haiku, that haiku was a poetry of the people, accessible to anyone. By quoting so widely, too, Higginson builds confidence in his readers, who see that he knows his material, providing a passion that becomes infectious.

A sixth reason for the book's success is its simple title. The alliteration goes a long way in making the book memorable, and marketable, while the choice of words also promotes the book's practicality. Need help with haiku? Then you need a handbook, and William J. Higginson has written one. It's an unpretentious yet informative title, with just a touch of catchiness. Would it have sold so well if it had been blandly named *How to Write Haiku*?

A seventh reason for the success of Higginson's best-known book may simply be that its author was the right person at the right time. He was a poet, unlike Blyth and Henderson, and a much better poet than Yasuda, and he was a translator and a student of Japanese culture. He was not as fluent in Japanese as Blyth, Henderson, or Yasuda, but perhaps that was a strength, in that it forced him to study carefully, and to empathize with his readers who were also not fluent in Japanese. Translations of Japanese haiku had been appearing from Blyth and Henderson, and through the widely popular Peter Pauper Press editions into the 1970s, and now that interest could be developed into English-language haiku by a wide swath of readers. At this point, too, there had been only one major collection of English-language haiku, Cor van den Heuvel's *The Haiku Anthology* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), but although it was a major accomplishment, it was in some ways still formative. More guidance was needed, and *The Haiku Handbook* was just the book to help. Higginson was also a teacher, used to sharing ideas and fielding questions in a classroom, juggling learning styles and reader resistances to make his subject clear. And he lived close enough to the publishing powerhouses in New York City that he could more readily approach them. By the

time the book appeared, Higginson had been building a name for himself with poems, translations, and criticism for almost twenty years. Even if that was only within a small community, it gave him a voice that the haiku community wanted to hear more from, yet he extended his reliability on the subject to a broader poetry community as well, and to teachers and those with a general interest in Japanese arts. These factors all came together at the right time, when there hadn't yet been a book published about haiku that could bring this poetry into the modern age.

In contrast, for example, Joan Giroux's *The Haiku Form* (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle, 1974) seemed too narrow in its focus, dwelling more on Japanese haiku than on writing them in English, and lacked the range and context of Higginson's awareness, poetics, and scholarship. Giroux's book also reused Blyth's translations as well as Blyth's perspective on Zen and Yasuda's idea of the "haiku moment." It wasn't breaking much new ground, and asserted such misguided notions as believing that "punctuation . . . should also be included in the syllable count" (80) and that, despite language differences, haiku should still lean to the 5-7-5 arrangement. The book included only a few examples of haiku in English, mostly 5-7-5, almost all from just two sources, James W. Hackett and Helen Stiles Chenoweth's now largely dismissed regional anthology, *Borrowed Water* (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle, 1966). Higginson's book was more informed. It helped, of course, that it also came out from a major publisher, thus receiving healthy distribution and at least basic publicity. *The Haiku Handbook* found its audience, and its audience promoted the book to others because it found it helpful.

Indeed, Higginson wanted his book to make a difference, to help poets, no matter what their experience level. He lamented, as so many haiku advocates still do, that haiku continued to be mistaught in schools merely as a syllable-counting exercise, but *The Haiku Handbook* began to shift public understandings, providing a literary underpinning to haiku that was invariably absent in the

misinformation passed off so quickly in grade schools and curriculum guides. Writing in “The American Haiku Movement, Part I: Haiku in English” (in *Modern Haiku* 36:3, Autumn 2005), Charles Trumbull wrote that Higginson’s *Haiku Handbook* “made accessible for the first time in English a concise, eminently readable compendium of haiku history, modern developments, and information on both writing and teaching haiku and related forms. Now twenty years old, it is still essential reading for the American haiku poet” (55). The same is still true today, ten years further on, and may well be true for many years to come.

Although *The Haiku Handbook* remains essential reading for anyone interested in haiku poetry, Higginson wanted to update the book to accommodate haiku’s tremendous advances in the internet age, but was never given the opportunity, despite asking. But with the book still selling consistently, the publisher was reluctant to invest in any manuscript revision and redesign. He wanted to include many poets who had furthered the art and craft of haiku since 1985, and to document the rise of many national and regional haiku groups, such as the British Haiku Society and the Haiku Poets of Northern California. He also wanted to promote new presses that specialized in haiku, including my own, Press Here, Charles Trumbull’s Deep North Press, Jim Kacian’s Red Moon Press, and John Barlow’s Snapshot Press, among others.

The original *Haiku Handbook* was groundbreaking in its exploration of world haiku, and its reminder that English was not the only language in North America, but Higginson wanted to document worldwide developments much more extensively, especially when so much had been happening. Many haiku organizations had started around the world since 1985, and they and many individual poets had increasing communication with each other thanks to the internet, online discussion lists, and social media sites.

Higginson wanted to acknowledge new poets and translations and journals, and to say more about changes in Japanese haiku that were

just beginning to influence Western haiku, including *gendai* haiku. He wanted to talk about the inevitable fragmentation of haiku, and how that was both a beneficial and challenging development. He also wanted to refine some of his opinions about haiku, fill in historical gaps, provide easily updatable companion resources online, and revise his reference to “*onji*,” which he acknowledged was an incorrect or at least outdated term for the sounds counted in Japanese haiku.

A year and a half after Higginson died in 2008, Kodansha International republished the book in a 25th anniversary edition, with a new cover and brief foreword, but none of Higginson’s text was changed. Because Higginson was not able to update *The Haiku Handbook*, it has become a milepost for how haiku was at its time of publication, and perhaps the passing of time calls for new mileposts to be marked. As such, the book cannot help but eventually become dated, especially when most of the contemporary poets it quotes have died, and new books and organizations have come to the fore, but until then the book will continue to instruct and inspire.

OTHER BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

If *The Haiku Handbook* was Higginson’s most influential book, it was not his magnum opus. That was to be the twin publications of *Haiku Seasons* and *Haiku World*, which both appeared in 1996 from Kodansha International. They were originally intended as a single book, but the publisher suggested splitting them in two. Of the two books, that decision made *Haiku Seasons* a much more accessible overview than a combined single book would have been. This also made it easier for Stone Bridge Press to republish this volume in 2008—however, the publisher, Peter Goodman, chose not to republish *Haiku World*, suggesting to me it was perhaps too specialized a book for his press to invest in, much more so than *Haiku Seasons*. In both its original printing and slightly revised reprint, *Haiku Seasons* provides a thoughtful and finely researched exploration of the role of season words in English-language haiku, expanding the Japanese

model to address worldwide concerns, including latitude and longitude, the oppositeness of seasons in different hemispheres, and other challenges. It also addresses the difficulty of defining seasons in the first place, complicated by the early Japanese tradition of basing seasons on the lunar calendar, which has been replaced by our current solar calendar. He educates his readers on how the new year (counted as a fifth season in Japanese haiku), was originally celebrated according to the lunar calendar in February and so was immediately followed by spring. Knowing details like this can help one better understand seasonal references in traditional Japanese haiku. *Haiku World*, in contrast, takes the ideas of *Haiku Seasons* and manifests them in what was the first worldwide English-language *saijiki*, or almanac of seasonal topics and poems—a monumental production that incorporated knowledge of botany, zoology, climatology, and other natural phenomena, linguistics, geography, and more. Higginson set himself a limit of including no more than three poems per person, to avoid favoritism or imbalance, a restriction that no doubt made it daunting to find example haiku for particular season words. As a reference book, it is unequalled in demonstrating the role of season words in haiku, and helps to underscore the fact that haiku is a seasonal poem, not strictly a nature poem (a common, if slightly misleading, perception). As Charles Trumbull wrote of *Haiku World* in his “American Haiku Movement” essay, cited previously, “For the first time English-speaking haiku poets had adequate tools for studying the Japanese *kigo* system and could debate the adequacy of these conventions for non-Japanese haiku” (55).

To give a fuller sense of what *Haiku World* is like, the following is an example entry, on the early summer season word “rose” (*bara* in Japanese), with the first of its five example poems. This sort of detail goes on for hundreds of pages. Imagine confirming all those Latin names, researching related plants, and creating accurate descriptions, as well as finding and getting permission for suitable poems.

ROSE, *bara* (early). In Japanese *saijiki* this refers to cultivated roses, which would also be understood in English if the word “rose” were used

by itself. A number of well-known varieties could be named; I imagine that most Americans will picture a red rose unless the poem indicates otherwise. But in Europe and North America there are several kinds of summer-blooming native wild roses. These include the multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) with clusters of small white flower, common from southern New England south; Virginia rose (*R. virginiana*) with pink flowers, Newfoundland south to North Carolina and west to Missouri; and wrinkled rose, also called beach rose (*R. rugosa*) with rose-lavender or white flowers, especially noted along roadsides, in seashore thickets, and on sand dunes, and cultivate both for show and to prevent erosion, ranging from eastern Canada south to New Jersey, west to Wisconsin. Despite its name, the white Cherokee rose (*R. laevigata*) was introduced from China, but has gone wild, especially in much of the south-central U.S. England has the pink-flowering sweet briar (*R. rubiginosa* or *eglanteria*)—also known as *eglantine*—and dog rose (*R. canina*). The wild rose of Japan is the yellow-flowered MOUNTAIN ROSE (*yamabuki*) of late spring. Also: white roses. (160)

reading a mystery—
 a cool breeze comes through
 the beach roses
 —Cor van den Heuvel

Before *Haiku Seasons* was republished, when there was still a possibility to reprint *Haiku World* as well, I provided Higginson with dozens of pages of notes, at his invitation, for improving both books. This sort of engagement with his readers made his books better by embracing various points of view, and might well have been an accidental marketing technique, in that it gave so many readers (not just those whose poems were quoted) a vested interest in his books. This engagement is represented by the extensive list of names collected in the acknowledgments of the Stone Bridge Press edition of *Haiku Seasons*, and in Higginson's other books.

Not to be forgotten amid the fanfare of Higginson's handbook and his two books that explored international season words is his 1991 hardback book for children, *Wind in the Long Grass*, published by

Simon & Schuster, with sumptuous illustrations by Sandra Speidel. This book also took a worldwide view of haiku, with poems arranged by season representing poets from seventeen countries, as diverse as Ecuador, Cuba, Senegal, Greece, and Brazil. In his introduction, Higginson writes that “The haiku and pictures in this book will all make you imagine that you are seeing hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching something in a special way” (5), emphasizing that haiku’s central focus is on things we can experience through our five senses. Although intended for children, the book is equally appealing for adults.

Three other publications by William Higginson, among many, are worth at least a brief mention. The first is *Haiku Compass: Directions in the Poetical Map of the United States of America*, a very short book, more of an essay, published in Tokyo in 1994 by the Haiku International Association. It summarizes American haiku activities for a Japanese audience, and appeared in both English and Japanese. As with so many of his other books, *Haiku Compass* showcased poems by numerous poets from around the country, seeking to be as wide-reaching and representative as possible. This was one way that Higginson demonstrated that haiku was a poetry of the people, and not just an academic pursuit. He valued and harnessed its democratic and social aspects in writing about it, quoting others widely as a way to give back to poets—and a poetry genre—that had given him so much. Another publication is *The Seasons in Haikai*, published in Portland, Oregon in 1996 by Ce Rosenow’s Irvington Press, a book that was a precursor to *Haiku Seasons*, in a greatly condensed form. And a third notable book was *Kiyose: Season Word Guide*, which Higginson published (Summit, New Jersey: From Here Press) in 2005. This small booklet was a basic listing of essential season words, a much handier reference than the weighty *Haiku World* book. It enabled English-language poets to do what Japanese haiku poets have been able to do for decades—carry a handy guidebook in their pockets to check their use of season words, or to find inspiration while out on haiku walks.

Higginson's last major contribution to haiku was a return to translation, in *Butterfly Dreams: The Seasons Through Haiku and Photographs*, a privately published collection of about 200 poems arranged by season, with photographs by Michael Lustbader. These poems appeared not as a conventional book but as an electronic book, on CD-ROM, as a multimedia presentation with vibrant nature photographs and poems. After the aesthetic presentation of each poem and photograph, the book also includes commentary and cultural information on each poem, as well as photographic data. Higginson's first book was *Twenty-Five Pieces of Now*, a short collection of translations released in 1968. With the translations in *Butterfly Dreams*, in 2006, almost forty years later, it seems he returns full circle. The value of this publication is not just the translations themselves, but the beautiful and aesthetic way they are presented with photography and fine typography, embracing new technology. This way of not sitting still, of keeping up with trends and technology, was a key part of how Higginson developed and maintained his considerable influence in haiku poetry.

THIS PERFECT ROSE

Around 1991 or 1993, I remember Higginson vociferously questioning me about the authenticity of a haiku I'd written about "soft hail" that had streaked down the front of my sweater. He was at first adamant that such a thing wasn't possible, that hail couldn't be soft. I assured him that I'd recently experienced exactly that, in Southern California—and it arrested me enough to want to write a haiku about it. Later, I shared more information with him about soft hail, more properly known as graupel, and he was genuinely pleased to enlarge his understanding of a new natural phenomenon. Higginson at first encouraged me to use the more accurate and colorful word graupel, but he came to agree with me to use "soft hail" instead because some readers might not know the word "graupel," and could feel alienated by it. Soft hail was more intuitive to me at the time, but now I wonder if I might use "graupel" instead. As with

so many topics we discussed over more than two decades, Higginson was fascinated by the detail and subtlety of language, all of it part of his search for excellence in haiku expression. That caring was what led him to be on the Haiku Society of America's original definitions committee in 1973, and again thirty years later, in 2003, when he and new committee members revisited the society's oft-quoted definitions. Such was Higginson's longevity with haiku, and his passion for this poetry. He cared for haiku, as if they were prized roses.

William J. Higginson was never more in his element than at Haiku North America conferences, and he was the keynote speaker at the very first one, in August of 1991, talking about "North America and the Democracy of Haiku," an egalitarian approach to this poetry that he advocated for as long as I knew him. He was the only person to have attended all nine of the first nine biennial HNA conferences. At that first Haiku North America conference, which I helped to organize in Livermore, California, I asked Bill to sign my haiku autograph book, the first of what is now five volumes, filled with poems and signatures from many hundreds of haiku poets from around the world. From the beginning, I asked every poet who signed to include one or more of their favorite or best haiku, and to autograph and date it. Here's the poem Bill wrote:

after the shower
finally able to see
this perfect rose

For William J. Higginson, haiku was a perfect rose, glistening with dew—and, in the latter half of the twentieth century, he was its foremost gardener.



Exploring Richard Wright's Other World

JERRY W. WARD, JR.

Hakutani, Yoshinobu. *Richard Wright and Haiku*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2014.

Zheng, Jianqing, ed. *The Other World of Richard Wright: Perspectives on His Haiku*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011.

During the seventeen years since the publication of *Haiku: This Other World* (New York: Arcade, 1998), scholars and critics have been at once fascinated and puzzled by the fact that Richard Wright (1908–1960) composed slightly more than 4,000 haiku during the last two years of his life. The magnitude of his output is impressive, very impressive for a writer plagued by illness and political surveillance. It is now commonplace to claim that Wright's experiments with a

Japanese poetic genre were therapeutic, but such a proposition is not sufficient. One of the outstanding features of Wright's prose fiction and non-fiction was powerful, often jolting, imagery. Something beyond therapy that we may not yet be able to name motivated his deep investment in the discipline of haiku.

Recent books by Yoshinobu Hakutani and Jianqing Zheng seek to forge a critical discourse that can benefit readers who have a special interest in haiku or Richard Wright or both. Within the limits that are perhaps innate in explanatory activity, these books do move us forward in a quest to understand more about Wright's exploration in that other world of haiku. They help us to understand a little better the changing tensions between ancient Japanese and modern American ideas regarding poetry, poetics and aesthetics, and the cultural functions of haiku. Hakutani and Zheng invite us to participate in crucial critical work.

Hakutani's *Richard Wright and Haiku* focuses primarily on Wright's creativity within a specific genre. One might expect that the study would illuminate Wright's innovations as well as dialogues among haiku scholars about the consequences of innovation. Hakutani is one of the leading experts on haiku in the United States and an esteemed Richard Wright scholar. Along with Robert L. Tener, he edited the first edition of *Haiku: This Other World* and provided invaluable notes and an afterword. In *Richard Wright and Racial Discourse* (1996, hereafter *RWRD*), chapter 12 "Nature, Haiku, and 'This Other World,'" he provided a summary of points he has consistently made about haiku, Zen, an African view of life, Wright's retreat from moral, political, social, and intellectual life to find "in nature his latent poetic sensibility" (*RWRD* 261). It is noteworthy that Hakutani concluded this chapter by assuring readers that "Just as [Wright's] fiction and nonfiction directly present" the conviction that materialism and greed are "twin culprits of racial conflict," Wright's haiku "as racial discourse indirectly express the same conviction" (291). That *Richard Wright and Haiku* hesitates to engage implications of such a conviction is one of its shortcomings.

Hakutani chose to divide the book into Part I History and Criticism and Part II Selected Haiku by Richard Wright. Five of the chapters in Part I summarize the long history of Japanese haiku and the major work Yone Noguchi did in bringing notice of the genre to the English-speaking world of the early twentieth century; the remaining five chapters discuss Wright's haiku as English poems and senryu, the relationship of those poems to classic haiku and modernist poetics, and Hakutani's *idée fixe* about Wright's discovering "a primal outlook on life" which might reveal what Akan religion and Zen Buddhism share in common. Let it suffice that Wright possessed a primal outlook independent of his visiting Ghana and writing *Black Power*, and a more thorough investigation of Wright's use of African American rather than African lore would have been desirable. Hakutani's failure to use a skeptical, multi-dimensional perspective on what has been called the cultural unity of African thought is a demerit. Part II reprints 145 of the 817 haiku published in *Haiku: This Other World* along with the corresponding "Notes on the Haiku" from that edition. The recycling does not escape notice.

For readers who know very little about haiku or Richard Wright, Part I provides enlightenment, and Part II may encourage them to read all of the published haiku. More advanced readers may use Part I to refresh their memories of the haiku presence in American poetry and to ask questions about what such poets as Lenard D. Moore and Sonia Sanchez have contributed to the genre. On the other hand, some Wright scholars might dismiss the truncated repetition of Part II and invest energy in comparing Wright's early proletarian poetry with his later haiku by way of a close reading of Eugene E. Miller's *Voice of a Native Son: The Poetics of Richard Wright* (1990).

It would have been politic for Hakutani to have acknowledged either continuity or discontinuity between Miller's study and his own work in poetics. He would have impressed his readers with greater attention to incongruities in the study of Wright's haiku and minimized the sense that he is reaffirming overmuch the "official" perspective he and

Tener established. Hakutani's choices in recycling so much in *Richard Wright and Haiku* are not fatal and certainly should not preclude a fair reading of the book. On the other hand, he does not satisfy a reader's hunger for insights about Wright as much as *The Other World of Richard Wright: Perspectives on His Haiku*.

It is exceptionally valuable to have complementary and contrasting views of Wright's haiku, because only a few scholars have read all of his 4,000-plus haiku in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. A complete analysis of the haiku with the aid of a remarkable database recently constructed by Toru Kiuchi will unsettle any comfortable ideas about Wright's poetics. Jianqing Zheng has an uncanny sense of what is necessary; his anthology sets us on a journey toward future critical assessments of Wright and, indeed, toward expansive interpretations of the varying functions haiku can have in the contemporary world. Zheng made good choices in publishing original essays in tandem with reprinted ones from such journals as *MELUS*, *Valley Voices*, *Tamkang Review*, and *Journal of the College of Industrial Technology* (Nihon University). The ten essays in this anthology invite readers to contemplate Wright's daring and discipline, his flaws and triumphs, his humor and use of the American South and racial histories in grounding his haiku, and his fidelity to 5-7-5 syllable structures. Special notice should be given to Richard A. Iadonisi's challenging argument that Wright's haiku are not quite the escape hatches many believe they are, and to Zheng's belief "that nature, which fulfilled Wright and made him an integrated part of it through his haiku, is a fundamental element in his works" (*TOWRW* xvii). One must entertain the possibility that Wright's signature skepticism precluded any ideal, aesthetic integration with nature and exposed the mythopoetics of writers ancient and modern who assert they have achieved sublime enlightenment. Even as Wright submitted to the severe discipline of classical Japanese haiku, he was defiant in creating a body of poems that ultimately are projections in the haiku manner.

Richard Wright and Haiku and *The Other World of Richard Wright* are commendable guides that point us toward a future in the study of Richard Wright's poetics. They strengthen us to measure the merits of groundbreaking claims in Dean Anthony Brink's article "Richard Wright's Search for a Counter-hegemonic Genre: the Anamorphic and Matrixial Potential of Haiku," *Textual Practice* 28.6 (2014): 1077-1102. In many ways our exploring of Wright's other world is always a beginning, a fresh attempt to understand mysteries, those red suns that take our names away.





power outage
the orchid
sight

“power outage”

Lidia Rozmus

Haiku Resources

A Scholar's Library of Haiku in English

Introductions by *Juxtapositions* editors Stephen Addiss (University of Richmond), Randy Brooks (Millikin University), Bill Cooper (University of Richmond), Aubrie Cox (Millikin University), Jim Kacian (The Haiku Foundation), & Peter McDonald (California State University, Fresno)

A Scholar's Library of Haiku in English is a selected bibliography of books in English intended to promote the development of scholarship on haiku. Over the last fifty years there has been a tremendous growth in the variety and number of poets embracing haiku as their primary literary art. These haiku writers, editors, and publishers are part of a community that is eager to learn more about the haiku traditions in order to shape their own traditions through practice, critique and publication. Access to quality translations of haiku and significant scholarship on poets and Japanese literary history has helped provide a better understanding of the origins and contemporary practices in Japan. The last fifty years has been a rich cultural and artistic exchange, with a growing body of scholarship about haiku poetics, the history of haiku, and the ever-shifting landscape of innovative experimentation and mature practice evident in anthologies and scholarship.

This bibliography is intended to be a call for quality research and scholarship on haiku. We need more critical studies of excellent individual haiku poets. We need more studies on the connections between haiku and other literary movements and other arts. We need more literary history of haiku in English and the global movement of haiku as an international cultural experiment. We need more comparative literature of haiku across cultures including explorations of the relationship of haiku in English to Japanese haiku. We need more critical reviews of experimentation in haiku.

The editors of *Juxtapositions* have reviewed several libraries and known collections of English-language books available in order to create this short bibliography of some of the most important works of criticism and scholarship on haiku currently available. We have organized the bibliography into four sections: (1) Haiku in English Bibliographies, (2) Scholarly Books in English on Haiku, (3) Teaching Haiku & Poet's Craft Books, and (4) A Haiku Scholar's Anthologies.

We plan to do a follow-up bibliography on dissertations and theses related to haiku. Several books included in this bibliography, such as Robert Aitken's *A Zen Wave: Bashō's Haiku & Zen* began as a graduate study thesis. There have been a surprising number of such studies, and we intend to review and pull together a short guide to those in the future. Haiku scholarship is diverse and scattered in several disciplines, so we hope A Scholar's Library of Haiku in English is a good start to gathering awareness of these resources in one place. We know that this bibliography is not definitive and welcome your suggestions of titles to be considered for inclusion in an evolving online version of this bibliography. To recommend books to be considered for future updates of this bibliography, send your suggestions and comments to: <rbrooks@millikin.edu>.

HAIKU IN ENGLISH BIBLIOGRAPHIES

The following are the known bibliographies of haiku in English. The first bibliography, *Haiku in Western Languages: An Annotated Bibliography*, provided a thorough review of books and articles available before 1972. Randy & Shirley Brooks published a biennial bibliography of haiku books in print from 1980 until 1987. Randy Brooks has also maintained the Decatur Haiku Collection bibliography at Millikin University since 2000, and Charles Trumbull has an extensive database of haiku publications that is the basis for his bibliography available on The Haiku Foundation website. It should be noted that the American Haiku Archives and other special collections related to specific haiku poets at libraries such as Loras College (Raymond Roseliep) and the Rutgers University (Nicholas Virgilio) also have extensive collections of haiku in English with searchable databases of haiku publications. Also, several special collections of poetry include many haiku publications. Especially noteworthy collections are housed at Brown University, the University of Buffalo, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

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American Haiku Archives. A special collection of the California State Library. See the website for guidance on searching the archives.

SCHOLARLY BOOKS IN ENGLISH ON HAIKU

There are more scholarly books on haiku than one might expect, and they fall into three main groups, two of which have sub-categories. The first and largest group consists of books on Japanese haiku, with an initial sub-category of monographs that focus upon a single poet. Not surprisingly, Bashō is the most studied master, but there are also volumes in English on Issa, Buson, Chiyo, and Shiki. With a few notable exceptions, these books consist primarily of translations; they usually include a certain amount of historical and cultural background, but tend to offer only limited analysis. Among the exceptions is Robert Aitken's *A Zen Wave: Bashō's Haiku & Zen*, with mini-essays on individual poems from a Zen master's perspective, and Makoto Ueda's *Bashō and His Interpreters: Selected Hokku with Commentary*. This latter book offers a rare opportunity to explore

how Bashō's poems were traditionally understood in Japan, including some cases of fascinatingly different interpretations over the past several hundred years.

Historical surveys of haiku (and, more rarely, *senryū*) form a second sub-category well represented in English-language books. R.H. Blyth's volumes take precedence; although some later commentators criticize what they consider his over-reliance on Zen interpretations, no one has come close to the extraordinary amount of material he has published, and his translations from half a century ago hold up in the present day. Most historical surveys do not extend very far into contemporary haiku. However, some recent volumes have addressed the earliest haiku (in this case, *hokku* and *haikai*) before the form was thoroughly established in Japan. One is Steven D. Carter's useful study, *Haiku Before Haiku: From the Renga Masters to Bashō*. A few other books also take unique approaches, such as *The Art of Haiku* by Stephen Addiss, which begins with the earliest Japanese poetry and features haiku painting, known as *haiga*.

A third sub-category consists of books that do not take Japanese haiku as their primary theme, but offer some commentaries within a larger context. Among these are publications by leading scholars of Japanese literature such as Donald Keene, Earl Miner, Kato Shuichi, and Haruo Shirane, but only the last has also published a book centering on haiku: *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural History and the Poetry of Bashō*. In this sub-category one could add Roland Barthes, who discusses haiku briefly in his *Empire of Signs*. More traditional in approach are Kawamoto Koji's *The Poetics of Japanese Verse* and Ueda Makoto's *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*; Ueda has also published two books on Bashō and one on Buson.

In the second large grouping of scholarly books, examinations of English-language haiku are paramount. Here the initial sub-category consists of studies of individual poets, so far including Richard Wright, Clement Hoyt, and Raymond Roseliep. This is certainly an area where much more remains to be done, especially as evaluations

of the first and second-generation of English-language haiku poets are beginning to coalesce.

Next come books that treat haiku in English more broadly. These include several important studies by William Higginson; in particular, his *Haiku World* takes a fully international approach. Other volumes in this sub-category are *Studies in English Haiku* by Nakagawa Atsuo and *The Modern English Haiku* by George Swede.

Dealing with a specific element in haiku, *In Due Season: A Discussion of the Role of Kigo in English-language Haiku*, edited by A.C. Missias, tackles one of the significant issues in transposing a Japanese genre to the Western world. Higginson's *The Haiku Seasons: Poetry of the Natural World* offers interesting specifics in this regard. Conceived more broadly is Richard Gilbert's *A Disjunctive Dragonfly: A New Approach to English-language Haiku*.

The final group of scholarly books contrasts Japanese and English-language haiku. The title of another book by Gilbert clearly defines this theme: *Poems of Consciousness: Contemporary Japanese & English-language Haiku in Cross-cultural Perspective*. More studies comparing Japanese and English-language haiku would be welcome, with the proviso that poets in the West tend to be more aware of traditional Japanese haiku, such as those by Bashō and Buson, than of contemporary Japanese examples, which range from fully traditional to wildly experimental.

Of course, there are books that do not fit neatly into the groupings and sub-categories discussed. One such volume is Kenneth Yasuda's *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English*; more personal approaches are taken in *The Nick of Time: Essays on Haiku Aesthetics* by Paul O. Williams and *A Year's Speculations on Haiku* by Robert Spiess.

What will come next in research and publications on haiku? All of the above approaches can certainly be continued to good avail, especially studies of modern and contemporary poets and their haiku. In

addition, various forms of scholarly interactions between East and West have much to offer. Meetings, discussions, and publications such as the Modern Haiku Association's Proceedings of the First International Contemporary Haiku Symposium can be of great use to poets and readers, whatever their languages. With our cultural world gradually shrinking, the field of haiku is becoming more and more international, and future publications will certainly both reflect and promote this trend.

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Blyth, R.H. *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics*. Tokyo, Japan: Hokuseido Press, 1942.

Buson, Yosa. Edited and translated by Edith Marcombe Shiffert and Yuki Sawa. *Haiku Master Buson: Translations from the Writings of Yosa Buson—Poet and Artist—With Related Materials*. Union City, CA: Heian International, 1978.

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Higginson, William J. *Itadakimasu: Essays on Haiku and Senryu in English*. Kanona, NY: J & C Transcripts, 1971.

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Kawamoto, Koji. *The Poetics of Japanese Verse*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2000. Originally published in Japanese as *Nihon Shiika no Dentô* by Iwanami Shoten in 1991.

Keene, Donald. *The Winter Sun Shines In: A Life of Masoaka Shiki*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013.

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Spiess, Robert. *A Year's Speculations on Haiku*. Madison, WI: Modern Haiku, 1995.

Stryk, Lucien. *Encounter With Zen: Writings on Poetry and Zen*. Athens, OH: Swallow Press and Ohio University Press, 1981.

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Zheng, Jianqing, Editor. *The Other World of Richard Wright: Perspectives on His Haiku*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2011.

TEACHING HAIKU & POETS' CRAFT BOOKS

The following books address the how-to of haiku—how to teach, how to compose, how to revise. Beginners typically rely on one or more of these texts as they compose and rework their own haiku. The first such primer in English was Sadakichi Hartmann's *Tanka and Haikai: Japanese Rhythms* (1916). One early handbook that emphasized a Zen approach to writing haiku was Eric Amann's *the wordless poem* (1969). The first widely available resource that focused on craft was Jean Calkins's *Handbook on Haiku and Other Form Poems* (1970), followed by Betty Drevniok's *Aware—a haiku primer* (1971) and Joan Giroux's *The Haiku Form* (1974).

William J. Higginson and Penny Harter's *The Haiku Handbook* has been the most influential resource of this kind since its original publication in 1985 and is now also available in a 25th anniversary edition. This text provides a good general summary of classical Japanese haiku and the early evolution of the genre in English before setting out guidelines for the teaching and learning of haiku craft. The reference section includes an extensive list of season-words, a glossary of terms, and bibliography.

Among the other books, Lee Gurga's *Haiku: A Poet's Guide*, Bruce Ross's *How to Haiku*, explore haiku craft in ways that build on Higginson and foster the transition from beginner to experienced practice. Related online resources on teaching beginners or focused on the poet's craft include several kigo databases, such as the World Kigo Database <<http://worldkigodatabase.blogspot.com/>> maintained by Dr. Gabi Greve, and Jim Kacian's *First Thoughts: A Haiku Primer*.

British Haiku Society. *Haiku Kit: A Teaching Pack*, Second Edition. Braintree, Essex, UK: British Haiku Society, 1998.

Carter, Terry Ann, Editor. *Lighting the Global Lantern: A Teacher's Guide to Writing Haiku and Related Literary Forms*. Township of South Frontenac, Ontario, Canada: Wintergreen Studios Press, 2011.

Digregorio, Charlotte. *Haiku and Senryu: A Simple Guide for All*. Winnetka, IL: Artful Communicators Press, 2014.

Drevniok, Betty. *Aware—A Haiku Primer*. Bellingham, WA: Portals Publications, 1981.

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Gurga, Lee. *Haiku: A Poet's Guide*. Lincoln, IL: Modern Haiku Press, 2003.

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Higginson, William J. *The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku*. New York: Kodansha International, 1985.

Reichhold, Jane. *Writing and Enjoying Haiku: A Hands-on Guide*. Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International, 2002.

Ross, Bruce. *How to Haiku: A Writer's Guide to Haiku and Related Forms*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 2002.

Wakan, Naomi. *Haiku: One Breath Poetry*. Torrance, CA: Heian International, 1993.

A HAIKU SCHOLAR'S ANTHOLOGIES

The following noteworthy anthologies are recommended for a haiku scholar to know in order to understand the current diversity and breadth of the global haiku community. These anthologies embrace haiku as a literary tradition worthy of study and provide high-quality examples that continue to resonate through multiple readings. In order to be well read, a haiku scholar must read and study multiple anthologies, rather than rely on one seemingly canonical work.

Whereas in Japanese haiku culture and anthologies there are identified “haiku masters,” the contemporary global haiku community has been resistant to identify poets that everyone should follow as masters of the art. Certain poets are widely recognized as quality contributors, but not raised to the level of veneration nor emulation. Perhaps this

resistance to identify new “masters” has contributed to the challenge of creating a coherent body of criticism—there is a lack of critical commentary on individual poets and their contributions aesthetically and communally.

The global haiku community is made up of numerous active sub-communities. These sub-communities have their own traditions and historical paths through which they connect and exchange ideas and aesthetic approaches. The anthologies included in this bibliography provide some of the best haiku, excellent critical commentary and access to different approaches. Some, such as the *Midwest Haiku Anthology*, *The British Museum Haiku*, and *Indian Haiku: A Bilingual Anthology of 105 Poets from India* represent large communities, while others like Cor van den Heuvel’s *The Haiku Anthology* have historical significance. R.H. Blyth’s *Haiku* volumes, a first encounter with haiku for many English-language haiku poets, allow poets and researchers who cannot read or speak Japanese to read and experience haiku and writers beyond their time and place. Meanwhile Makoto Ueda’s anthologies often include scholarly introductions to help readers with historical and cultural awareness. Each contributes something to a larger understanding, and claims to fill some gap that is missing from other anthologies, whether it be historically or aesthetic differences.

The anthologies in this bibliography do not attempt to establish a canon. Anthologies were included for high quality or literary value that expands haiku as a literary art. Therefore, some types of anthologies have been excluded. Society and club anthologies that offer inclusion based on membership, while a strong representation of a community, often fluctuate in quality and have not been included. Also thematic collections of haiku can be literary and interesting, but do not typically expand a scholarly understanding of the art. An exception to thematic collections is *Baseball Haiku: The Best Haiku Ever Written About the Game* as it includes and provides a cultural bridge between Japanese and American writers. Other topical anthologies, such as cat haiku, zombie haiku or pop culture collections, fall into the category

of *zappai*, which are often 5-7-5 and value entertainment and comedy over literary quality. This bibliography also excludes translations that are derivative and/or have poor aesthetic judgement, as these do not properly represent the poems they are attempting to showcase.

Barlow, John and Martin Lucas, Editors. *The New Haiku*. Liverpool, England: Snapshot Press, 2002. <www.snapshotpress.co.uk>

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Blyth, R.H., Translator. *Haiku: Volume 4, Autumn-Winter*. Tokyo, Japan: Hokuseido Press, 1952. Sixteenth printing, 1977.

Blyth, R.H., Translator. *Senryu: Japanese Satirical Verses*. Tokyo, Japan: Hokuseido Press, 1949.

Borrell Nola & Karen Peterson Butterworth, Editors. *the taste of nashi*. Wellington: Windrift Haiku Group, 2008

Brooks, Randy and George Swede, Editors. *Global Haiku: Twenty-five Poets World Wide*. Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2000. [Iron Press edition in UK.]

Brooks, Randy & Lee Gurga, Editors. *Midwest Haiku Anthology*. Decatur, IL: High/Coo Press, 1992.

Brooks, Randy & Emily Evans, Melanie McLay, Rick Bearce, Editors. *Millikin University Haiku Anthology*. Decatur, IL: Bronze Man Books, October 2008.

Burns, Allan, Editor. *Montage: The Book*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2010.

Burns, Allan, Editor. *Where the River Goes: The Nature Tradition in English-language Haiku*. United Kingdom: Snapshot Press, 2013.

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Cobb, David, Editor. *The British Museum Haiku*. London, UK: British Museum Press, 2002.

Cobb, David & Martin Lucas, Editors. *The Iron Book of British Haiku*. North Shields, Northumberland: Iron Press, 1998.

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Deodhar, Angelee, Editor. *Indian Haiku: A Bilingual Anthology of Haiku by 105 Poets from India*. Chandigarh, India: Azad Hind Stores, Ltd., 2008. [Hindi & English.]

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Gurga, Lee and Scott Metz. *Haiku 21: An Anthology of Contemporary English-language Haiku*. Lincoln, IL: Modern Haiku Press, 2011.

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Howard, Dorothy & Andre Duhaime, Editors. *Haiku: Canadian Anthology*. Hull, Quebec: Editions Asticou, 1985.

Jenkins, Nigel, Ken Jones, & Lynne Rees, Editors. *Another Country: Haiku Poetry from Wales*. Llandysul, Ceredigion, UK: Gomer Press, 2011.

Kacian, Jim, Editor with Philip Rowland and Allan Burns. *Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013.

Kacian, Jim, Editor. The annual Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku from Red Moon Press publish haiku and related essays selected by a board of editors. At this time, these anthologies have featured work from 1996 through 2014.

Katō, Kōko, Editor. *A Hidden Pond: Anthology of Modern Haiku*, 2nd edition. Translated by Kōko Katō and David Burleigh. Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2003.

Kudryavitsky, Anatoly. *Bamboo Dreams: An Anthology of Haiku Poetry from Ireland*. Tralee, Co. Kerry, Ireland: Doghouse, 2012.

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Miyashita, Emiko, Editor and Translator. *The New Pond: An English-language Haiku Anthology*. Tokyo: Hokumei-sha, 2002.

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Stewart, Harold. Editor and translator. *A Chime of Windbells: A Year of Japanese Haiku in English Verse*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1969.

Stewart, Harold. Editor and translator. *A Net of Fireflies: An Anthology of 320 Japanese Haiku in English Verse*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1960.

Swede, George and Randy Brooks, Editors. *Global Haiku: Twenty-five Poets World Wide*. Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2000. [Iron Press edition in UK.]

Ueda, Makoto. Editor and translator. *Far Beyond the Field: Haiku by Japanese Women*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Ueda, Makoto. Editor and translator. *Light Verse from the Floating World: An Anthology of Premodern Japanese Senryu*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

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ONLINE HAIKU RESOURCES

Decatur Haiku Collection.

Haiku NewZ Archived Articles.

Nick Virgilio Bibliography.

The Haiku Foundation Bibliography.

The Haiku Foundation Digital Library.

The American Haiku Archives website.

Greve, Dr. Gabi *World Kigo Database*.

Kacian, Jim *First Thoughts: A Haiku Primer*.



JUXTA *Haiga*

Commentary by **STEPHEN ADDISS**

Haiga is the Japanese term for a combination of haiku poems and visual images—*hai* comes from haiku, and *ga* is the Japanese word for painting (as in *Zenga* etc.). All the great Japanese haiku masters, including Bashō, Buson, Issa, and Shiki, occasionally added paintings to their poems, almost always in a simplified style that did not overwhelm the haiku. Buson's haiga are very skillfully done, while Issa's are almost childlike, but they all contribute to the total experience. In other words, the images are not just illustrations to the poem, and the poems are not merely verbal explanations of the poems, but they add resonance to each other, creating something new.

Haiga have been slow to develop outside Japan, but in recent years more and more poets, and some painters, have experimented with the form. The haiga punctuating this first issue of *Juxtapositions* reflect a variety of approaches and styles, testifying to the increasing interest in this fascinating combination of visual and verbal. What these eight haiga have in common is finding ways to combine words and images in creative ways. Sometimes the text takes a seemingly modest role, as in Guy Beining's "the rope" (page 21). Here in the upper left, the words seem to have been cut and pasted on, while the "rope unwinds" of the poem occupies the center as it leads—or arrives from—the left. Other elements appear, offering viewers/readers opportunities to puzzle out the possibly multiple meanings of the total work. The power of the black-and-white style certainly invites our attention, especially the center large form with its cursive shapes, but what does it all signify?

In contrast, Ion Codrescu's "for a moment" (page 43) offers words growing like leaves in two areas of the composition, while the empty space in between allows us to consider if the sharing occurs entirely in the haiga, or more broadly in its interaction with viewers/readers. Surely "we share the same place" for a few moments. The lively calligraphy of the words certainly adds to the total visual rhythm, as does the burst of orange under the soft green of the leaves.

Color is even more important in the haiga by Annette Makino (page 103), where gold suffuses the space. However, the influx of white at the corners suggests that the work of the bees is not yet done. Their black-and-gold forms both reinforce and contrast with the various tones of gold, invoking the alchemy that is their life and work. The poem adds black linear shapes that, along with the red seal, anchor the total composition.

Ron Moss utilizes a variety of ink tones, rather than color, to give life to his "black tulip" (page 119). Standing out against the darkness above it, this tulip is encased in white, and bends gracefully, just a little towards the right. This gentle sense of movement is echoed in one of the leaf forms below, as though the entire plant were reaching into the dark. White, grey, black—nothing more is needed for this strong composition, and we can only visualize what will happen when the dusk grows stronger. Will the tulip disappear?

The forms of Marlene Mountain (page 143) are more abstract, and yet they seem to be ready to give birth. The calligraphy flows over the animistic oval, in which we can visualize floating and swimming forms; these are set against the purple circle which never begins or ends. For her own invented language, the artist/poet has provided a translation, "In mysheself I am all that need be."

Evocative abstract forms also enliven the haiga by Ellen Packham (page 175), but here the text is mysterious in different ways, first by being difficult to read against the black, and second by its surprising combinations, such as ants and umbrellas. In common with the previous haiku, the middle-ground is made up of writhing pink

shapes, while the many-armed black form is full of animate power and energy. Although many haiga offer illustrative effects, the lack of obvious connections between verbal and visual can be effective in inviting us to take part in the discovery of meanings.

Alexis Rotella also avoids obvious text/image connections in her “solstice” haiga (page 207). The large overlapping forms, in variations of yellow to orange to red, hint at a figure (with the lower part of a face at the top) while presenting a strong sense of autumn leaves—or might viewers offer other possibilities? The poem, set at an angle, is strong both in typeface and meaning—as the poet/artist continues drumming up a sense of light.

While these haiga reflect in one case the Western tradition of collage, and in other cases Western watercolor techniques, the “power outage” of Lidia Rozmus (page 237) is clearly based upon East Asian ink-painting values. First, there is more empty space than in any of the previous haiga, and second, a few lines and dots of grey-to-black ink are all that is necessary to create a strong sense of life and movement. The decision to offer nothing but two thickening-and-thinning linear strokes, along with three varied-size dots, shows a great deal of artistic courage. This confidence is amply rewarded by the harmony of the forms. As in all fine haiku and haiga, nothing more is needed.



JUXTA *Contributors*



Guy BEINING has published 6 poetry collections and more than 50 chapbooks, and has appeared in 7 different anthologies. He has recently appeared in the *Iowa Review*, *The Bitter Orleander*, *South Carolina Review*, *Creosote*, and *Gargoyle*. He is listed in *Contemporary Authors Autobiography* Volume 30, and the *Dictionary of the Avant Gardes*.



Ion CODRESCU teaches art and art history at Ovidius University in Constanța, Romania. In 2007 he received his Ph.D. in Visual Arts from the National University of Arts in Bucharest. He is author of 14 books of poetry, haiga and essays, and has received many prizes around the world. He has illustrated more than 100 books, magazines and journals.



Yūki ITŌ received his Ph.D. in Literature from Kumamoto University, and is currently an editor at an academic publishing house in Tokyo. In 2001 he joined the Modern Haiku Association (Tokyo). His publications include *New Rising Haiku: The Evolution of Modern Japanese Haiku and the Haiku Persecution Incident*, and the translation series *Kaneko Tohta* (four volumes).



Alexander B. Joy is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, following a B.A. from the University of New Hampshire in English and Philosophy. His haiku has appeared in many different journals, including *Modern Haiku*, *Mayfly*, *Haiku Presence*, *DailyHaiku* and *Tinywords*.



Jim KACIAN is editor-in-chief of *Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years*, the definitive work in the field; and author of more than 20 theoretical and critical articles concerning English-language haiku, as well as a similar number of books of poems, primarily haiku.



Annette MAKINO is an artist and haiku poet who combines Japanese-inspired paintings with original words to express quiet reflection and Zen humor. Makino's poems and haiga have appeared in the leading English-language haiku and haiga journals, and she exhibits her art regularly around Northern California.



A professor of English and Environmental Studies at Penn State Altoona, **Ian MARSHALL** is the author of four books, most recently *Border Crossings: Walking the Haiku Path on the International Appalachian Trail* (2012). He is a past president of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment.



Ron C. MOSS is an artist and poet from Tasmania, Australia. He is recognised as an outstanding illustrator and designer of many poetry books, and his achievements in haiku and related genres have been widely published and honoured with awards. Ron is the artist in residence for the online journal *A Hundred Gourds* and the annual *Muttering Thunder*.



MARLENE MOUNTAIN contends that the concept of 'no-self' was created for her long ago by men who knew they had plenty of self by just being male. women need plenty of self to get thru the thickness of established thought/s. in my earlier painting years i often heard 'wow you paint like a man.' i didn't. i painted as my 'self.'



Ellen PECKHAM has read, published and exhibited in the US, Europe and Latin America. An exhibit at the Dalet Gallery, and a related illustrated biography, *Continuum* (in the form of collage), took place in 2012. A book of her *haiga* and related collages was published in 2015. Her archives are collected at the Harry Ransom Center for the Humanities.



Alexis ROTELLA's work has been widely anthologized, including most recently in *Creative Writing: An Introduction to Poetry and Fiction*. She served as president of the Haiku Society of America in 1984, edited *Frogpond*, and founded and edited *Brussels Sprout* and *Prune Juice Senryu*. Her latest haiku book is *Between Waves*.



Born in Poland, **Lidia ROZMUS** has lived in the United States since 1980 and works as a graphic designer, teacher, painter, *sumi-e* and *haiga* artist and haiku poet. She has illustrated dozens of books, published five volumes of her own graphic work and poetry, and shown her *sumi-e* and *haiga* on 4 continents. She is art editor of the journals *Modern Haiku* and *Mayfly*.



Haruo SHIRANE is the Shincho Professor of Japanese Literature and Culture in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures and Chair of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University since 1996. In 2010, he was awarded the Ueno Satsuki Memorial Prize on Japanese Culture for his contributions to the study of Japanese culture.



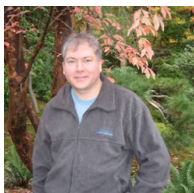
Susumu TAKIGUCHI is a Japanese poet, artist, and essayist. He served as a vice-president of the British Haiku Society, and founded the World Haiku Club. He has been employed as a financial correspondent, editor, art critic and part-time instructor at Oxford University. He is current director of Ami-Net Oxford International and chairman of the World Haiku Club.



Charles Trumbull is retired from a career in editing and publishing. A past president of the Haiku Society of America and recipient of its Sora Award for service to the HSA, from 2006 to 2013 he was editor of the journal *Modern Haiku*. In 2013–14 he was Honorary Curator of the American Haiku Archives at the California State Library.



Jerry W. Ward, Jr., an Honorary Professor at Central China Normal University, and retired from 32 years at Tougaloo College and 10 at Dillard University. He is the author of *THE KATRINA PAPERS: A Journal of Trauma and Recovery* and *The China Lectures*. He is co-editor of *The Richard Wright Encyclopedia* and the *Cambridge History of African American Literature*.



Michael Dylan Welch, a longtime officer for the Haiku Society of America, co-founded the Haiku North America conference and the American Haiku Archives. He has presented at the American Literature Association, American Literary Translators Association, and Haiku North America, and was keynote speaker for the 2013 Haiku International Association convention.



Udo Wenzel has written poems and short stories for 40 years, haiku and related poetry since 2002. He is the author of *Taubenschlag* and co-editor (with Rainer Stolz) of the 21st century German haiku-anthology *Haiku hier und heute*. He interviewed various haiku personages and researchers as an editor of the German online-journal *Haiku heute*.

JUXTA *Staff*



The haiku and haiga of **Stephen Addiss** have appeared widely. His books include *Cloud Calligraphy*, *A Haiku Menagerie*, *The Art of Zen*, *Haiga: Haiku-Painting*, *The Art of Chinese Calligraphy*, *Haiku People*, *A Haiku Garden*, *Haiku Humor*, *Tao Te Ching*, *Japanese Calligraphy*, *Haiku: An Anthology*, and *The Art of Haiku*.



Dr. Randy M. Brooks is the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and Professor of English at Millikin University. He and his wife Shirley are co-publishers of Brooks Books, and co-edit *Mayfly* haiku magazine. His major haiku collection is *School's Out*, and he's co-edited the *Global Haiku Anthology*, the *Midwest Haiku Anthology*, and the Red Moon Anthologies since 2005.



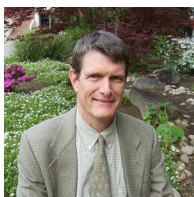
Bill Cooper serves as distinguished university professor and president emeritus at the University of Richmond. He has authored books and articles in cognitive science, higher education, and international relations. His haiku appear in a variety of journals and in collections *The Dance of Her Napkin* (2012) and *Overtones* (2014).



Aubrie Cox studied haiku under Dr. Randy Brooks at Millikin University, then earned her M.A. in Creative Writing from Ball State University. She currently serves as the *haiga* editor for *A Hundred Gourds*. Her chapbook *tea's aftertaste* appeared in 2011, and her poetry and prose have appeared in publications such as *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *NANO Fiction*, and *WhiskeyPaper*.



Jim KACIAN is founder and president of The Haiku Foundation, and founder and owner of the dedicated haiku publishing house Red Moon Press.



Senior editor **Peter McDONALD** is the Dean of Library Services at California State University, Fresno. He comes with decades of experience in journal publishing and has served as an editor on numerous publications, including Cambridge University Press inaugural E-journal Advisory Board in the 1990s. He can claim to be a minor, though dedicated, haikuist.



Ce ROSENOW's research explores the relationship between American poetry and Japan. Related articles have appeared in journals including *Literary Imagination*, *Notes and Queries*, and *Philological Quarterly*, and she co-edited with Bob Arnold *The Next One Thousand Years: The Selected Poems of Cid Corman*. She is the former president of the Haiku Society of America.



Dave Russo's haiku have appeared in *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *Acorn*, and other journals. He is included in the *New Resonance 5* anthology from Red Moon Press. Dave organizes events for the North Carolina Haiku Society and is the web administrator for NCHS and The Haiku Foundation.



Sandra SIMPSON began proof-reading in 1977. Since then she has been a newspaper sub-editor and technical editor for large, multi-disciplinary consultancies. Sandra is editor of the online *Haiku NewZ* and South Pacific editor for the annual *Red Moon Anthologies*. She has co-ordinated a writers' festival program in her hometown of Tauranga, New Zealand since 2001.

