

# TOSSED PEBBLES

*Living Words & Images*

Roderick Ayres











*To The Haiku Foundation*

*compliments of*

*Roderick Ayres*

# TOSSED PEBBLES

by  
Roderick Ayres

PhotoHaiku Press



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# Table of Contents

SPRING	7
SUMMER	37
AUTUMN	73
WINTER	105



## Preface

Many readers are familiar with the three line poetic form of the haiku (hi-COO). Some people remember these little poems as school day exercises.

Sand castle beach  
the band's last notes  
rising with the tide

Today the haiku is practiced and shared internationally. Some people have seen them here and there in books, magazines or on painted scrolls. For the master haiku poets these poems represent what scholar and writer Alan Watts described as "the most sophisticated form of literature in the world." Why? The poet is trying to say the most with the fewest words. Haiku are known for their focus on nature, on their foundation in Zen thought, and on their use of simple, everyday language.

For me the haiku and its relationship to my nature photographs is the best way to express the beauty of life as a spiritual journey. Juxtaposing the haiku with a photograph often brings surprising associations, both for the poet and the reader. And sometimes there is that "aha!" moment, that instant of sudden clarity combined with surprise. Most of all it can encourage a state of reverie where the mind opens to its intuitive and vibrant potential.

## Dedication

*This book is dedicated to all those whose hearts are open to beauty, to those who believe in childhood wonder, to those who love without hesitation, and to those who know there is something greater out there connected to a greatness within.*

*Tossed Pebbles is particularly dedicated to my father James Herbert, my mother Elizabeth Hope and to my two wise children James and Marissa.*

- RA





**SPRING**

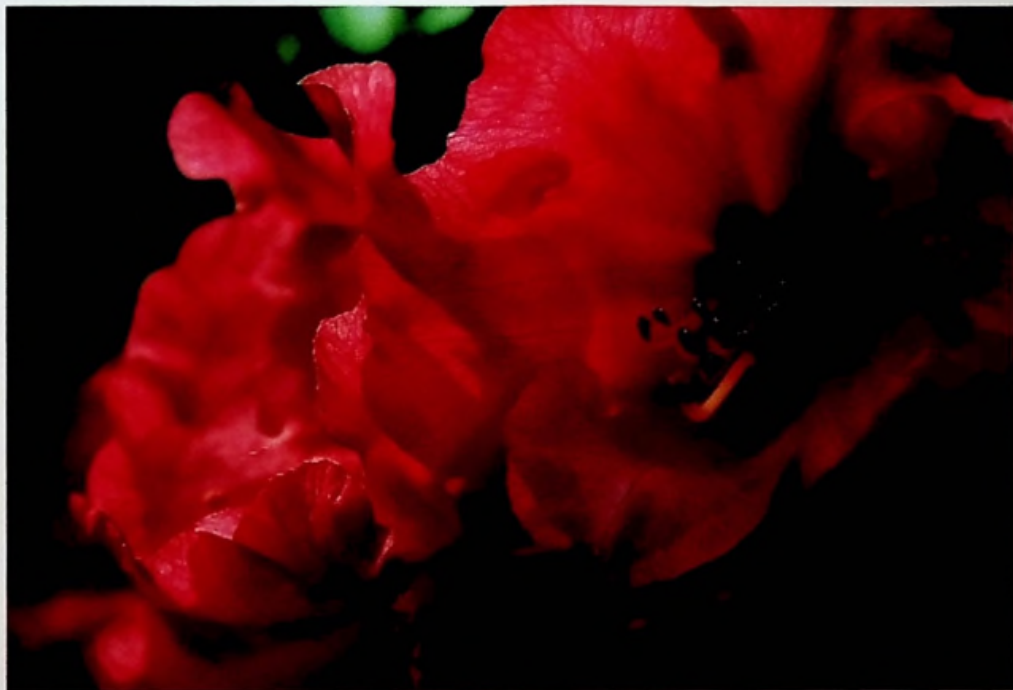


Below the wharf  
a starfish in moonlight  
points the way

From these cupped hands  
river water runs away  
with my face



Roots come to life  
in petal veins  
a breast-feeding mother



Black glass lake  
a swan circles  
in the eye of its mate

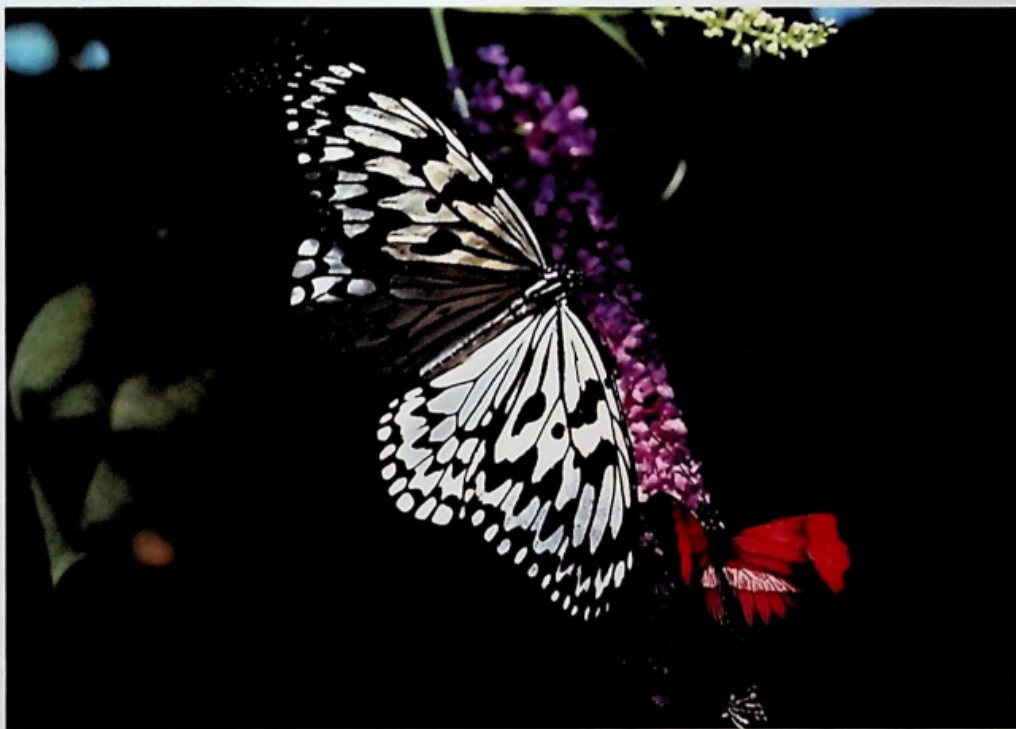
Treading water  
our conversation  
simple short



Falling gray feather  
from nowhere to nowhere special  
nameless free

Etched on a lookout rock  
initials of lovers  
woven in rain

Colors of the butterfly  
its poem  
of its world



No joke today for the young girl  
yet holding my hand  
her smile

Serpent squeals  
puppy learns once more  
about its tail

First time counting  
she learns to leave behind  
life before zero

Fallen twig's half-lifted bark  
I peel  
so young it curls about my finger



Vacationing  
news of our Sally's death  
pools of spaniel eyes



Fish moving water  
water moving fish  
spirit of art



Scent of lilac  
funeral goers' memories  
what remains

Mountain peak lookout  
eclipse-viewing crowd  
block out a child



Priest sweeps off his sidewalk  
not creating  
too much dust

In one blade of grass  
each season's colour  
patient as one pair of eyes

Morning sun wakes her window crystal  
solar system moves  
from flesh to flesh



Free of purpose  
water lily drinks the pond  
reflecting its beauty

I wake to a down-burst  
the old dog dreams  
the cat paces

Trail-resting  
glancing back  
to where ancestors walked ahead

Stone path  
missing a stone  
missing not a step



Between rest and flight  
balancing  
butterfly upon cherry blossom



Orchestra tunes up  
cacophony tap-tap-tapped  
into a symphony

Row of poplars  
sundials pointing  
crows home

Father pushing  
mother pushing  
stroller baby cries out

Window painted closed  
web moved only by the breath  
of soft graying eyes

Touching the flow  
I let my touching be  
the letting go





Glowing embers  
another log up the chimney  
straight as a tree

Phone is ringing  
he waits to be busy  
before picking up

Family of quails  
always in a hurry  
to get in line

So brief the wind's gift  
cherry blossoms pass  
through our fingers



**SUMMER**



Mt. Seymour  
losing my trail home  
look now I'm the mountain

Whinnying horse  
slides down loose shale  
rider thrown into rising dust

Inhaling her pillow  
Chanel No.5  
on an early flight

No matter how close  
the sound of far away  
French horn

White sails  
just enough wind  
to ripple the imagination



Dripping lure pirouettes  
catching sun  
after sun

Art light goes out  
paintbrush's pause  
paints it



Waiting, waiting  
my net full  
dripping with emptiness

Lying down in tall grasses  
my troubles  
swept from the sky

Beach fires smoke into the night  
an ember pops in two  
a single sound



Pungent wafting kelp  
all that's left  
of lotion and beauty

As water calms itself  
in the twilight pool  
her tears become stars

Water's sound  
ones only thought  
tossed pebbles

Cloud cover for our moon  
groping, groping  
she makes light of darkness



Haying season  
the farmer's work  
is alive



Ancient well  
sunglasses slip from my ears  
into unheard sound

Skyward gazing  
no end to the blue endless hues  
transparent as words

Harvest moon  
a retired marshal  
polishes his son's badge

The shape I give to emptiness  
what does this say  
about who I am

Nowhere to sleep  
in dawn's breeze  
my thoughts fly everywhere





Slowing wind slowly forms a dune  
now upon its crest  
shape of wind whispering

Glow on the mirror  
moon's reflection  
of the sun

Tomatoes in the window box  
for each she has a name  
but to the guest calls Dinner

Pigeons scatter from the cobblestones  
cyclist  
singing praises of the lord

Floating upon waves  
my raft-torn shirt  
wears the sea

Upon a bobbing log  
cormorant tribunal  
unmoved

From the sand also rising  
her perfect fingers  
wedding-ringed

Sharpened axe  
scent of red cedar  
slices through me



From center to center moving  
the perfect flight  
of destiny



Water's surface  
reflections  
silver into minnows

Toddler's unmade mind  
bends to pick and chew  
chewed gum

Without the sun  
no shadow  
no shadow without the tree

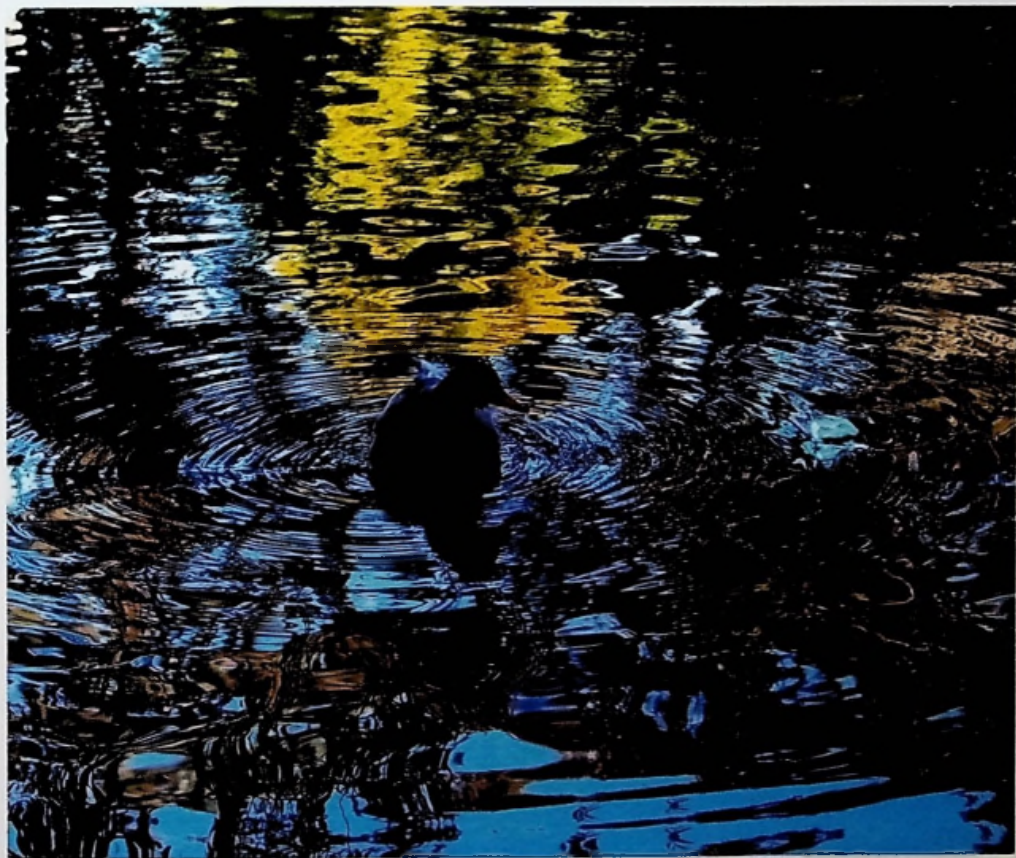
Spider clings to its rigging  
I too cling  
to its hold on me

Distant camps  
one sentry  
watches the other





When I move into  
the center of no thing  
I am the Oneness of all



Storm-snapped cedar  
into the river peers  
undulating roots

Fallen rose petals  
you've even attracted  
aphids



Clothesline flapping  
upstart virgins  
surrender to the wind

Letting a bird be a bird  
she lets go  
hands becoming wings



Paneless windows  
through you  
a happy mosquito flies

Crane fly  
you too search for the light  
to find a way out

Lightning flash  
an old woman picks berries  
counting for thunder

Holy man half blind  
whittles to a skylark's song  
the wood goes flying

I am one  
but in the oneness of all ones  
I am many





Heron lifts from the lake  
turning water  
into air







**AUTUMN**

Her footprints on the pool deck  
vanish  
in the sun and the rain

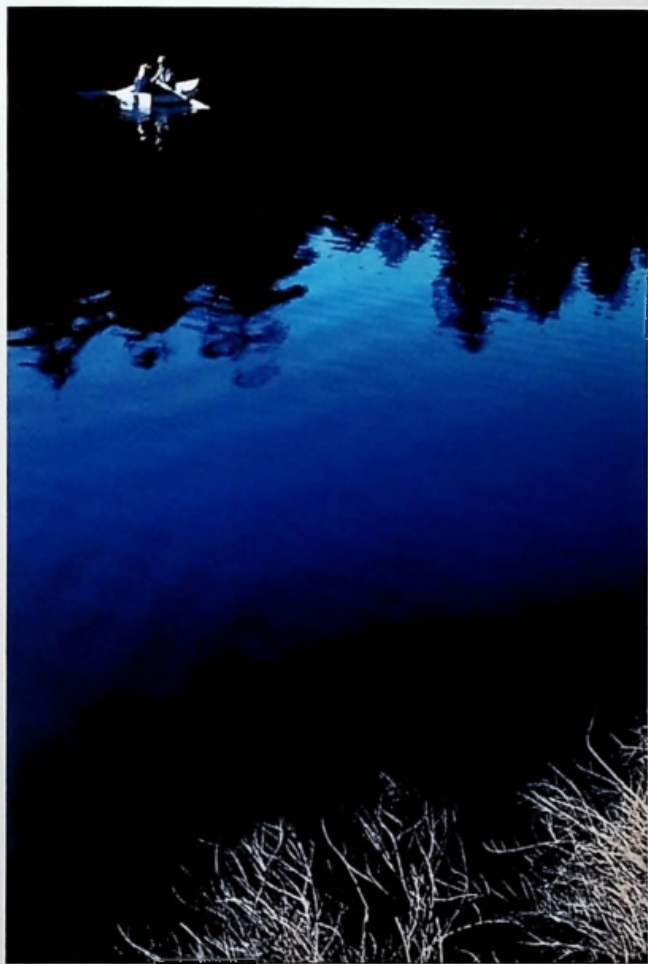
Sudden wind  
scales of a money tree  
slippery as fish

Antique shop  
for lease  
war medals in moonlight

String of brass bells  
on my door ring faintly  
trickster swings from word to word



From each oar spinning  
small silent whirlpools  
thoughts of lovers



Ever so slightly shifting  
axis, winds of autumn  
reflections



Neighbor's old radio  
talks of wars  
as she gardens

Even through drifting mist  
a lifeboat a voice  
and the moon



Kite flying  
an empty robin's egg  
rolls up to my toe

High among maple leaves  
crow  
shape shifting

Falling leaf  
you'll never touch the ground  
of this undying season



Hoisting the flag  
birds flutter skyward  
rising cloud unfurls

Dark cloud-gazing  
the puddle blinks  
but looks the same

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AUTUMN

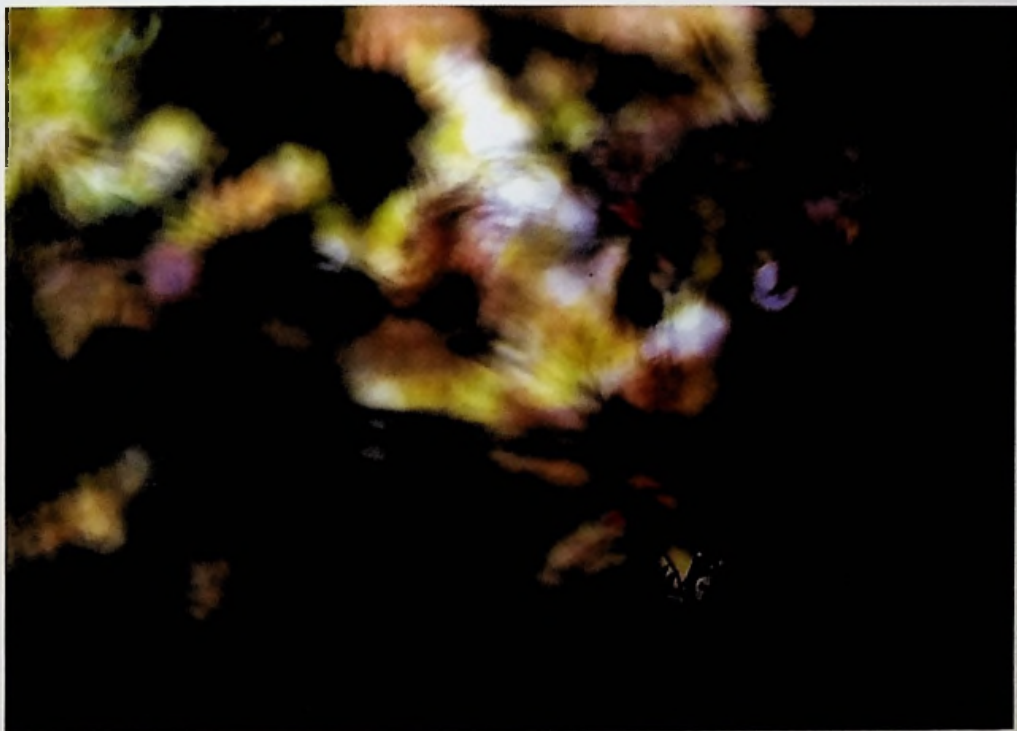
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Garden nursery  
little green boxes  
separate us from the earth

Leaving no trace upon the lake  
only the memory  
of rain



Calling time out  
the coach directs  
each second



Bird-feeder swinging  
autumn coming  
going

Turning roofs into waterfalls  
rain  
makes itself at home

---

AUTUMN

---

Lilacs in drizzle  
such fragrance  
soaking me through

The rain falls down  
but what is it that stays up  
in my looking

Boom-towing tug  
captain points the way  
with a toothpick





Through weather-beaten walls  
wind sings  
sun falls on falling leaves

Diving bird  
flying fish  
one a mystery to the other

Looking up from a road map  
with ragged edges  
tree line

Blowing my nose  
train rushes by  
power worth repeating

Thoughts won't release you  
from thoughts  
thinking about it







Mother's milk, maple's sap  
how similar in taste  
the fundamentals

That's why it does not keep  
what it takes  
the returning wind

Beach metal detector  
sweeps the sand  
his freckled wife combs her hair

Sunset in this spoon  
the world is full of things  
hard to digest

Rarely a perfect V  
Canada geese follow  
echoing lakes



Ditch pool  
dead leaves  
live together





Spanish girl  
waits for her man  
to wait for her

Old woman  
blows on her scratch and win  
for the rest of her life

Shaman's mask  
copper-flamed eyes  
gaze into my formlessness

Rain tapping  
on the recital hall window  
ah turns to snow





**WINTER**



Cycling through fog  
off with the heads  
of space and time

Cemetery wood smoke  
grounds man  
walking through it

Old folks' home sing-a-long  
each remembers  
some of the words

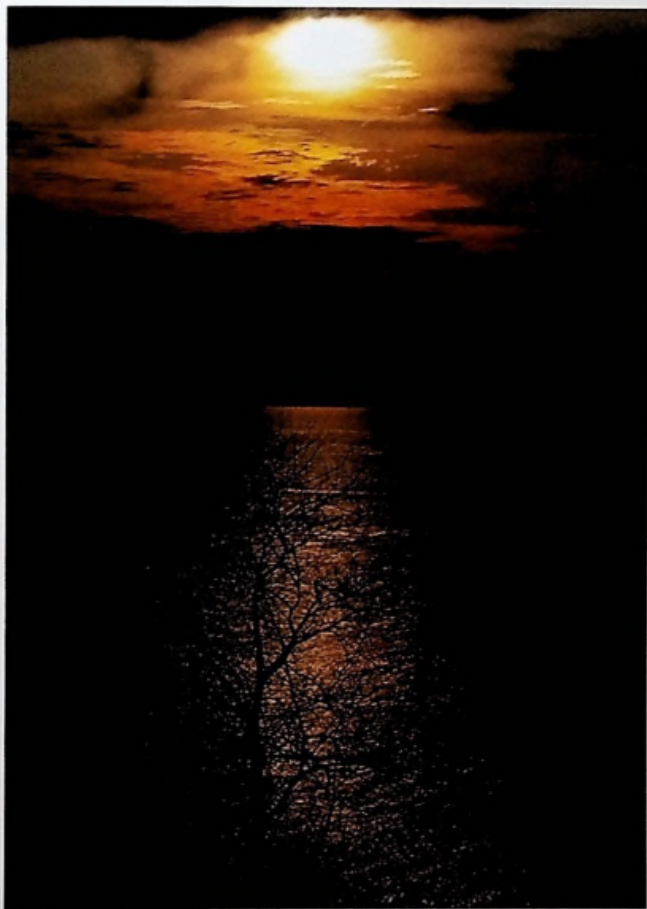
Under the bridge  
a white swan glides  
into childhood memory

Flitting down from winter boughs  
sparrow silhouettes  
as autumn leaves

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WINTER

---



Entering the icy walk  
arguing  
hand-in-hand

Bough of icicles dancing  
who goes there  
ha moon



Foghorn answers foghorn  
over and over  
I call my dog

Old snapshot  
rainbow in the mist of Kakabeka falls  
faded with my eyes

One moment of silence  
all that separates us  
from the unknown



Moon-lit meadows  
blanket of snow  
far from home

Banging off my toque  
ice crystals  
shoot into the night sky

Fox tracks in the snow  
now you are in my shoes  
now I too am gone

No map, no compass  
I am the river  
I lose to find



Forest whispers  
a holy man walks into  
his spirit world



Cliff curls over  
the crest of a wave  
a lover melts into her man

Clasp your hands  
around this rope of mind  
and pull

Slow-falling snow  
a beggar's perennial hand  
welcomes all

Suddenly the moon  
and the wind is alight  
this night of snow



Wordless breath of night  
dreams shaped  
in window frost





One thing moves  
then another  
till all is still





Fresh scent inhaled  
first fall of snow  
our baby's warmth

The thaw is just ahead  
but my fingers  
disagree with my mind

Traffic light waits  
homeless woman carts  
through red in a puddle

We wait for each other  
to pass through the door  
look an angel



Last night  
his kayak on black waters  
floated free

Ancestral carriage wheel  
pegged on a barn door  
by an icicle

Her old hand touches me  
with the warmth  
of crossing over

Winter gulls  
how pure one's voice  
on the thinnest of ice





Old goldfinch nest  
the pussy willow  
still sways with song

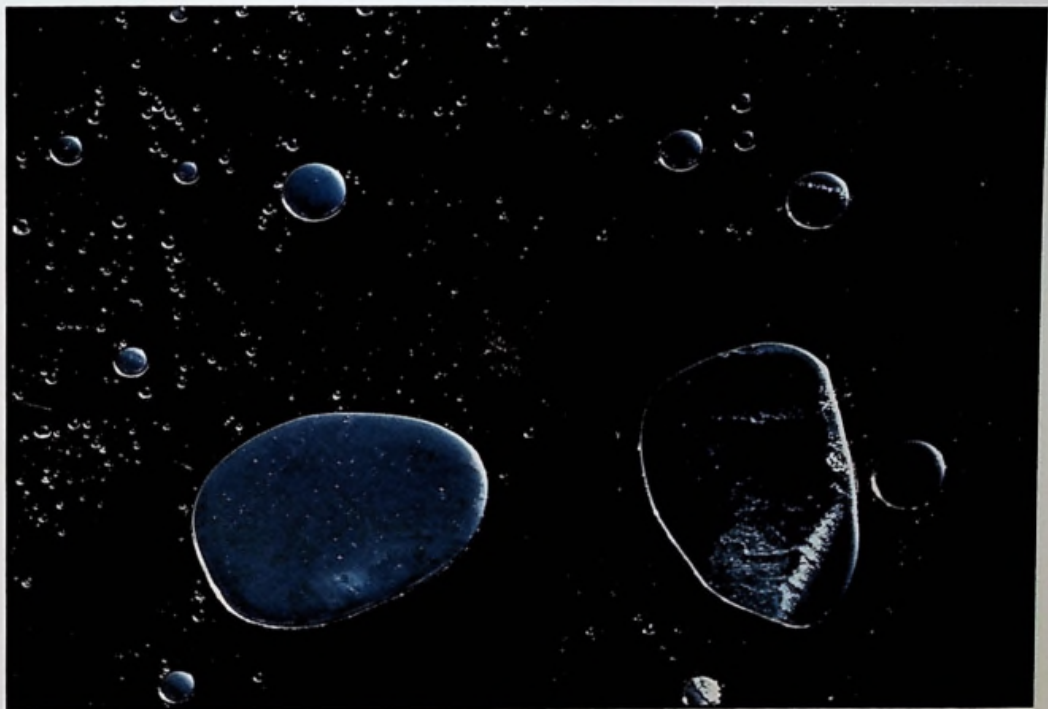
Running up the sand  
dancing over rocks  
gold cymbals of the moon



Wind chimes frozen by ice  
but wait  
simple flute sounds

Clapping mitts together  
the dogs come  
still at play

One scene in a seamless world  
how can I carry one  
into the other



In my darkest moment  
I looked down into a hole

When I became that hole  
I looked upon the light

Hunting season's come  
I'll wrap around my skin  
A bear's skin

Misted mountain valley  
in my glowing tent  
I wake to heavy sniffing



How many winters  
little moth  
are left in our clothes

and how many stitches  
before we get  
home

Coming upon a Y in the road  
yin or yang  
I'll circle around



## About the Author

Roderick Ayres grew up in the Ottawa Valley in the heart of Ontario, Canada, and for many years has resided on the west coast of British Columbia in the beautiful southern Vancouver Island area. He earned his degree in English at the University of Victoria and became a dedicated self-taught practitioner of concise literary work and nature photography.

The book in your hand is the result of years of study and practice, and like any art is an evolving process. Roderick Ayres under a different name has won awards (Daichu Temple's International Award in Haiku) in Japan, and has been published as well there (Mainichi Daily). He was also published in the United States and Canada. This is his first book. A second book "Wind Rippling" includes aphorisms, photos with haiku and urban vignettes with photographs. It is being completed and will follow "Tossed Pebbles."

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For further information, examples of Roderick Ayre's work, and where to buy, please go to  
[www.photohaikupress.com](http://www.photohaikupress.com).


Thank you for your support, and it's hoped this book will reward you many times.











From each oar spinning  
small silent whirlpools  
thoughts of lovers



**AUTHOR:** Roderick Ayres

**BOOK:** Tossed Pebbles: Living Words & Images

Filled with evocative haiku poems and lush images of nature, Tossed Pebbles is a collection of juxtaposed words and images organized into the four seasons. Each photo and haiku is like a pebble tossed into the water of the subconscious mind where the feelings of life ripple outward in concentric circles. This is an oasis of calm, clarity and abundance, the kind of life that over the years becomes the most important.

World of surfaces  
even words would reflect  
my rippling mind



Nancy Wilson Ross, editor of The World of Zen: An East-West Anthology wrote that "haiku is a "Zen art," and states that "Haiku's artful simplicity can arouse and deepen awareness of the simple yet miraculous 'is-ness' of everyday sights and sounds, for haiku is concerned with the Here and Now, with the necessity to 'catch life as it flows' which is also so much a part of Zen philosophy" (113).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Born in Ontario, Canada, Roderick Ayres created Tossed Pebbles as a gift to you in the hope you will see into a new world, into something unnamable but very present, something new but deeply familiar, and a state whose simplicity welcomes you to higher consciousness. He has published haiku in Canada and Japan. Roderick currently resides in Victoria, BC.

[RoderickAyres.com](http://RoderickAyres.com)

