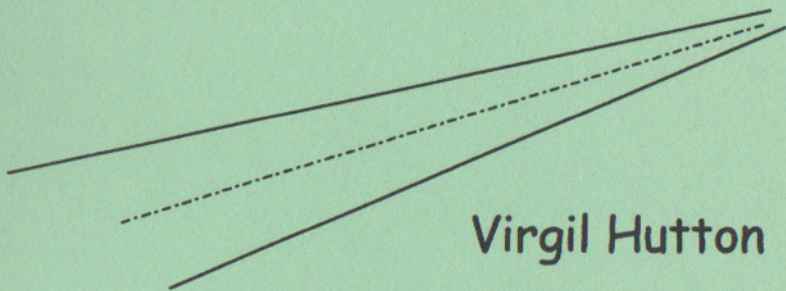


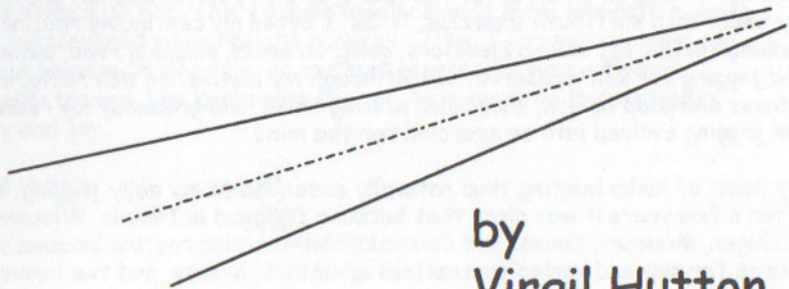
# Jogging The Haiku Highway



Virgil Hutton



# Jogging The Haiku Highway



by  
Virgil Hutton

## **Preface**

Writing haiku helps put me in touch with my surroundings and myself. The discipline of remaining open for the perception of a haiku moment, like a detective alertly receptive to clues, brings unexpected discoveries not only about ants or stars but also about oneself through one's responses to such things.

Since the late 1970s I have been on an exercise regime which included jogging. It was all an affair of the heart, as my lifestyle was not providing my heart with sufficient exercise. Thus, I began my continuing routine of walking faster, not taking elevators, going on walks, skipping rope, swimming, and jogging for self-preservation. Although my motivation was restoring fitness and good health, I was also writing haiku, and gradually my reason for jogging evolved into an exercise for the mind.

My habit of haiku hunting thus naturally extended to my daily jogging, and after a few years it was clear that because I jogged in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, Kansas and Colorado, the exercise routine became a source for new and varied perceptions of nature, beauty, and the human condition.



Two basics that I strive for in haiku writing are simplicity and profundity. Simplicity of image coupled with word economy transforms an otherwise simple prose statement into haiku poetry. Profundity is a problem because though it can be asserted, it can never be proved — and how pompous it is to pronounce one's own work to be profound. But even with my own poems, I can recognize that some have more layers of meaning or insight than others. Some give me a sense of profundity, of unfathomable depths, whereas others do not. One's poems ideally should leave one with a sense of yet undiscovered meanings and nuances. Thus, I can return again and again to a poem with pleasure, as one may repeatedly view a flower, perpetually teased, like Keats with his urn, by a sense of impenetrable mystery and joy.

— Virgil Hutton



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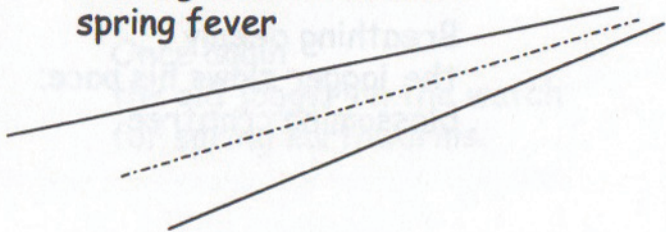
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## *For Lenore*

Q-50-51025-1-1021

Even the wind  
blowing in all directions;  
spring fever



The jogger's route  
extra long today;  
water sprinklers



Breathing deeply  
the jogger slows his pace;  
blossoming crabtree

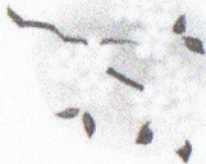


Staring back  
from the redbud blossoms—  
a robin

Once again  
the old jogger on the watch  
for spring earthworms

Far down the street  
petals from the crab tree;  
the spring wind

Jogging back  
into the rising sun —  
the dazzling dew



With each morning jog  
a little fatter—  
the first rosebuds

No need to raise  
his eyes from the jogging path;  
fallen tree blossoms

Trying to run  
away from his shadow;  
the morning jogger

Road sign warning:  
Dangerous Wind Currents;  
the quaking aspens

The old jogger—  
even his shadow  
dragging its feet

Jogging  
dreaming of the winter wind  
slapping at bugs

Suddenly  
a gnat in one eye—  
summer mountain jog

Motorcycle's roar;  
inscribed on the biker's coat  
"The Sons of Silence"



The old jogger  
passing a nursing home  
picks up his pace



Along the freeway  
patches of yellow daisies;  
remembering her

Next to  
the highway rest area  
a prairie graveyard

By the misparked car,  
the traffic cop pulls over  
to write his haiku

Morning bugs;  
working as hard as his legs  
the jogger's hands

Truck stopped for speeding  
flaunting the company name  
"Swift Carriers Inc."

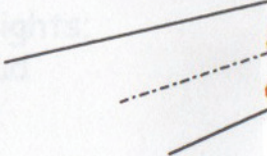
People in shorts  
enjoying snowball fights;  
scenic mountain road



Old jogger  
lucky to avoid  
the rusty nail

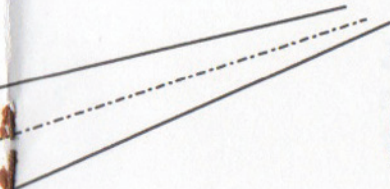
Children's chalk scribbles  
under the old jogger's feet;  
summer sunset

Framed  
by waving trees—  
the empty billboard





Sweaty jogger  
turns into a cooling breeze—  
waving buttercups



The old jogger  
passed by the swift shadow  
of a crow

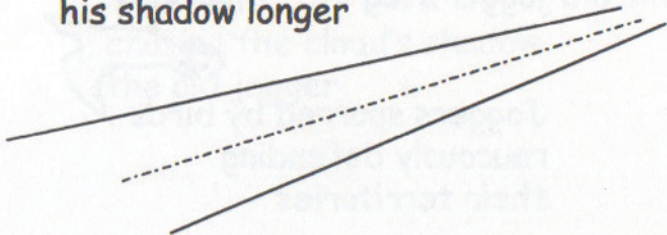
This heat;  
chasing the cloud's shadow  
the old jogger

Brushed by the wing  
of a black butterfly  
the old jogger's leg



Joggers spurred by birds  
raucously defending  
their territories

Summer's end;  
with each morning jog now  
his shadow longer



Tears  
in the jogger's eyes;  
the autumn wind

A falling leaf  
pats him on the shoulder—  
the old jogger



Dead branch  
across the jogger's path;  
the autumn chill



Seeking new markers  
along his jogging path;  
the withered flowers

First sizable snow;  
seeing the fellow joggers  
he can't see

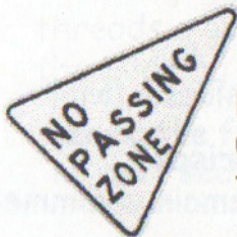


Every morning now  
slanting more to the north—  
the jogger's shadow

All the Christmas lights;  
the jogger decides to run  
an extra mile

Long after sunrise  
streetlights remain undimmed;  
the winter fog

Squatting rabbit,  
as the jogger goes past  
an extra quiver



Desolate highway;  
under a sunless sky  
the prairie snow

Winter fog;  
the jogger's mittens  
gathering rime

Bitter windchill;  
on the jogger's eyelashes  
tiny icicles

The old jogger  
works up a sweat;  
the melting snow

A trickle of blood  
from the mouse in the street;  
spring thaw

Gutter water  
running with the joggers;  
the end of winter

Early morning jog  
starts in shadow  
ends in sunlight



A wistful glance  
at the young rabbit's gallop—  
the old jogger

Weary jogger  
looking for the daffodils  
halfway on his route

The old jogger  
threads a gauntlet of barks;  
the budding trees

Obituaries—  
he pauses over those  
nearest his age

*Virgil Hutton*  
*1931-1997*

### About the Author

Virgil Hutton was born in Darjeeling, India, of missionary parents in 1931. From 1940 to 1952 he lived in Kansas and received a B.A. from Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. After a tour of duty with the Army in Korea (including two R&RS in Japan), he enrolled in the Graduate School of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor where he received an M.A. and Ph.D. in English. He joined the faculty of the English department at Illinois State University, Normal, in 1960, where he taught courses in literature and writing until his retirement in 1996.

Professor Hutton published articles on Shakespeare, Keats, Joyce, Swift, and Hemingway in addition to many film critiques. He was a haiku poet with his work published regularly since 1977. His best-known Kansas collection was published under the title *The Hawk's Vision*.

Some of the haiku in this collection were first published in *frogpond*, *Dragonfly*, *Modern Haiku*, and *People's Poetry Newsletter*.



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