

# The Wonder Code



*Discover the Way of Haiku*

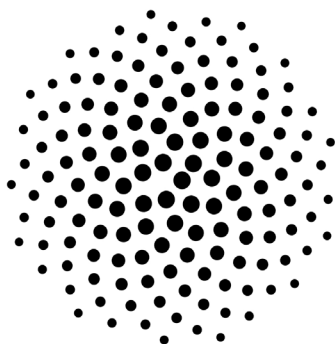
**SCOTT MASON**

*and see the world with new eyes*











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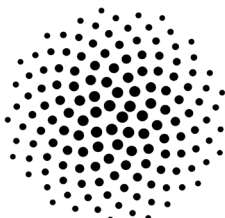




# The Wonder Code

*Discover the Way of Haiku  
and see the world with new eyes*

SCOTT MASON



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In loving memory of

Harriet Scott Camp Mason

1923 – 2005

who set me on the path of wonder

\*

In loving gratitude to

Carla Gambescia

my traveling companion in wonder



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The beginning of our happiness  
lies in the understanding that life without wonder  
is not worth living.

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL





# The Wonder Code



# Introduction

We find only the world we look for.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Yes I think to myself what a wonderful world.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

Fifty years ago Americans heard two iconic songs for the first time. Best known from the cover version performed by Peggy Lee, “Is That All There Is?” recounted moments of disappointment in a young woman’s life, each time leading her to the rhetorical question of the song’s title. Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World” took a different tack, rejoicing in the manifest wonders of nature and the natural goodwill of ordinary people going about their everyday lives.

Disenchantment vs. Wonder . . . a starker contrast in worldviews would be hard to conjure!

## INTRODUCTION

Sometimes the very things we dream about and strive for, when we actually succeed in getting them, fail to deliver lasting joy or satisfaction. In those moments we too might be tempted to ask: *Is that all there is?* This book's answer to that question is an emphatic *Of course not!* Wonder abounds. What's more, it can be experienced by anyone, anywhere, and at any given moment. The question to ask—if we truly seek more balance and happiness in our lives—is how to tap into the wonder around us. The method I propose in these pages is to learn to see the world anew through “haiku eyes.”

It may seem unreasonable or even absurd to suggest that the humble haiku, a tiny poem of Japanese origin, could somehow alter one's view of the world. Yet mid-last-century the British scholar R. H. Blyth went even further: “Haiku is the final flower of all Eastern culture; it is also a way of living.”

Our own conception of “living the good life,” and our continual striving for that state, has by and large expunged wonder from how we experience each day. Each chapter in this book responds to one of the subtle ways in which our culture and times estrange us from wonder. In each case I will suggest how the practice of

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haiku poetry—especially the attentive reading and *assimilation* of haiku poems—can start to act as a corrective and even an antidote to wonder deprivation. Every chapter title in this book states an imperative; collectively they formulate what I call The Wonder Code.

But can non-Eastern readers hope to even “get” haiku?

As Blyth observed, haiku poetry is the unmistakable product of Eastern culture, a flower with proximate roots in Buddhism (especially Zen Buddhism) and Japan’s native Shinto religion. Haiku emerged from these traditions as a welcome vessel for direct personal responses to everyday moments, a reverence for all facets of the natural world, and other reflections of Eastern spirituality and thought. Yet such spiritual insights and modes of thought have proven well within the grasp of original thinkers in the West. The epigraphs that appear throughout this book—all by Western men and women, many of them unaware of haiku—each convey something of the haiku spirit, particularly in their recognition and embrace of everyday wonder.

But what better evidence can be found for the understanding and value of haiku outside of Japan than

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its present flowering all around the globe? Quality haiku poems are now being written by individuals in every walk of life in scores of nations worldwide. This book serves as vivid testimony to that fact: the capacious “galleries” that end its chapters display the haiku poems of nearly three hundred ordinary men and women from dozens of countries on six continents. All were first published over the last two decades in the online journal *The Heron’s Nest*, where I serve as an editor. The poems in these galleries relate to the imperative declared in the title of their respective chapters. A “solo exhibition” of some of my own haiku poems follows the Afterword.

In his seminal essay *Nature* (1836), Ralph Waldo Emerson argued for “a poetry and philosophy of insight” that could restore us to “an original relation to the universe.” As I intend to show in this volume, Emerson’s challenge more than finds its match in haiku. Indeed I suspect that the burgeoning appeal of haiku poetry in the West has far less to do with the exoticism of its “Oriental” origins than with a basic human yearning for our original orientation of wonder at the world.

A casual glance through this book’s haiku galler-

## INTRODUCTION

ies will reveal that almost all of their poems depart from the 5-7-5 syllabic structure you might have expected to find. While haiku poems in the original Japanese traditionally conform to that tripartite structure with its total of seventeen *on* or Japanese sound units, those units are not comparable to English syllables: they're shorter. Consequently, nearly all respected contemporary haiku poets who write in English tend to use *fewer* than seventeen syllables to produce poems of comparable duration. There is simply no hard and fast syllabic rule for an English-language haiku today. (Sorry!) Furthermore, quality haiku poems can be found in one, two or occasionally more than the conventional three lines. (Is *nothing* sacred?!) More important than a haiku poem's syllable or line count is the presence of two constituent parts—sometimes called the “fragment” and the “phrase”—with a perceptible pause or an actual line break between them. The significance of this structure will be seen and discussed as the book unfolds.

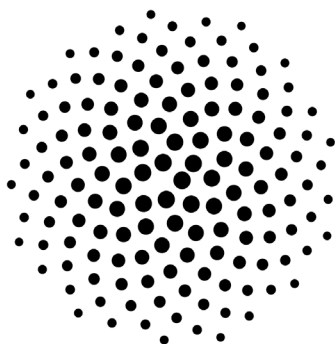
So far I have spoken of “haiku poems” when referring to more than one haiku. However, the Japanese word *haiku* is plural as well as singular, so hereafter I'll employ “haiku” in place of “haiku poems” and trust that

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you will recognize the plural usage based on context and subject-verb agreement. (Don't feel too chagrined if you have referred to "haikus" up to now: no less estimable a writer than Jack Kerouac used that term in *The Dharma Bums* and elsewhere; it even appears in the title of his own collection of haiku.)

Reading, reflecting upon and writing haiku have enriched my life beyond all measure. So the book before you is both a thank-you note and a gentle manifesto. If you enter these pages with a sense of discovery and consider these poems with a spirit of openness . . . what a wonderful world you will see!







## CHAPTER 1

# Think Small

Let us not take it for granted that life  
exists more fully in what is commonly thought big  
than in what is commonly thought small.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

A few years ago a friend of mine traveled to Florida with his wife and young son for a family vacation at Disney World. Shortly after their return I asked my friend what his son had liked best. With a soft smile and gentle eye roll he replied: “The luggage carousel at the airport.”

In recounting this brief exchange I intend no offense to the fine Imagineers at the Magic Kingdom. But a child will be captivated by what he or she finds captivating—whether or not it’s the featured attraction. For my friend’s small son, an apparatus that miraculously

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birthed a conga line of jostling travel bags was just such a source of wonder.

Zen Buddhists sometimes speak of “beginner’s mind” (*shoshin*), a state of openness uncolored by preconceptions or so-called life lessons. Beginner’s mind can be highly useful in many situations and for many tasks. Children, being children, manifest beginner’s mind quite naturally. For that very reason they can sometimes school the rest of us in everyday wonder, as my friend’s son so aptly proved.

When one of his followers asked the great Japanese haiku master Bashō (1644-1694) how to write haiku, he suggested finding a three-foot-tall child.

Those of us in the West tend to think differently. How often we assign things or events a level of importance relative to their size or their demands on our attention. Nowhere is this cultural bias more evident than in the United States where “bigger is better” could serve admirably as our national credo. To cite but three examples, American automobiles, homes and restaurant portions tend to dwarf their counterparts elsewhere.

Our bias towards bigness may trace in part to America’s distinctive geography and history. Once

## THINK SMALL

freed of their colonial bonds, Americans of European ancestry began to look westward with a growing sense of opportunity and challenge (“Go West, young man”) matched only in scale by the seeming endlessness of the continent before them. Boundless aspirations became the norm.

While population pressures certainly led to expansion, a sense of divine mission provided its own impetus. The belief of many Americans in our nation’s “manifest destiny,” though conceptually based on democracy and freedom, was both historically and rhetorically rooted in religion. Proponents of manifest destiny often spoke of America’s “divine providence.” (On the reverse side of our one-dollar bill can be found the words *Annuit Cœptis*—“He [God] has favored our undertakings”—just above the Eye of Providence, both tracing back to the 1782 design of the young republic’s Great Seal.) And manifest destiny embraced Thomas Jefferson’s vision of America as an agrarian nation whose Western wilds could be tamed for the benefit of its citizens—a vision in perfect accord with the Biblical notion of man’s dominion over the Earth and all its creatures.

## THE WONDER CODE

Compare that to the Japanese perspective on nature described by Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki:

The moon and the sun, storms and waves, mountains and rivers—so-called bigger aspects of Nature—will also engage their attention, but what I wish to emphasize here is the Japanese sensitivity for the small things of Nature generally neglected by people of the West, and the fact that these insignificant and ignoble creatures are in intimate relationship with the grand totality of the cosmic scheme.

This difference between West and East is profound: a sense of dominion over (frequently seen as an indifference towards) “the small things of Nature” versus a solicitous fellow-feeling for those same small things. Our own bias towards bigness ends up rewarding us with a giant blind spot in our day-to-day existence: it occludes a world of wonder right before our very eyes.

## THINK SMALL

But we can see and reclaim that world with haiku.

Haiku poetry brings us into the world of small wonders in multiple ways. First and foremost it plainly asserts, through its choice of subjects, that the modest things we tend to overlook and the common events we take for granted are worthy of our attention.

last night's rain  
cupped in a banana leaf  
a small green frog

*Ferris Gilli*

farmer's market  
a ladybug comes  
with the kale

*Kirsty Karkow*

In this respect, as in so many others, haiku reflects Buddhist principles. As pioneering haiku translator and commentator R. H. Blyth noted, “the belief that

## THE WONDER CODE

everything will someday attain Buddhahood gives value (gives equal value) to the most trivial objects.”

Haiku challenges our very notion of what *is* trivial. If we can convert our fresh attentiveness to contemplation, then we too may be able, in the words of William Blake, “To see a World in a Grain of Sand.”

waiting . . .  
a leaf falls  
into my lap

*Owen Bullock*

minute of silence . . .  
a single fir needle  
on the hardwood floor

*Tanya McDonald*

Worlds unto themselves, the small things featured in haiku may also occasionally hint at their “intimate relationship with the grand totality of the cosmic scheme.”



## THINK SMALL

forested ravine  
just enough light let through  
to gild a ripple

*Shelly Chang*

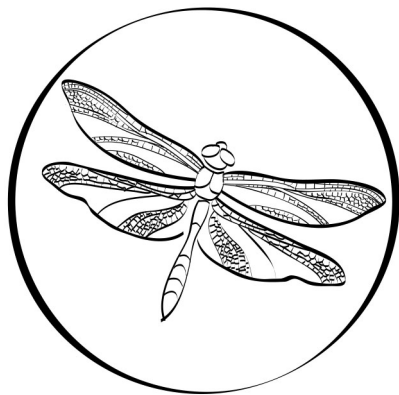
prairie stream—  
what I know about mountains  
in these small stones

*Chad Lee Robinson*

We know from modern science that viruses can fell Olympians, DNA can spell destiny, and atoms can destroy worlds. Yet so often we ignore the little things we can actually see. With haiku—the tiniest of all poems—we can discover the enormous power in “what is commonly thought small” . . . and the wonder in what’s hiding, here and now, in plain sight.



# Gallery One



# Think Small



THINK SMALL

one of us  
from a strange world  
dragonfly

*Ann K. Schwader*

THE WONDER CODE

chance of rain  
the dove selects rejects selects  
a twig

*Carolyn Hall*

peony buds—  
can an ant  
relax?

*John Stevenson*

## THINK SMALL

one egg  
rattling in the pot  
autumn rain

*Sandra Simpson*

lifting mist . . .  
a barnyard in sunlight  
with a chicken in it

*Michael McClintock*

THE WONDER CODE

limiting its search  
to just this planet  
white butterfly

*Barbara Snow*

butterfly  
on a dandelion—  
the baby's laugh

*Mary Frederick Ahearn*



THINK SMALL

coffee to go  
a dusting of sugar  
with my change

*Joann Klontz*

afternoon tea—  
each ant takes away  
a granule of light

*Lorin Ford*

THE WONDER CODE

tripod holes  
in the creekside mud—  
Yosemite dawn

*Michael Dylan Welch*

hut in the woods . . .  
small teeth marks  
on the toilet soap

*K. Ramesh*

THINK SMALL

a screen door's bang  
flies on the melon  
lift and settle

*Daniel Liebert*

horseshoe pit  
a yellow maple leaf  
leans on the spike

*Christopher Herold*

## THE WONDER CODE

moonlit beach . . .  
the white teeth  
on a cowrie shell

*Timothy Hawkes*

tea house  
a small leaf  
blackens a tooth

*André Surridge*

THINK SMALL

whispers . . .  
the hummingbird's tongue  
ripples the nectar

*Connie Donleycott*

new buds  
the snake's tongue  
tasting air

*Rajiv Lather*

THE WONDER CODE

Indian summer  
a turtle on a turtle  
on a rock

*Peggy Lyles*

continent's edge—  
a mound of jellyfish  
the color of twilight

*D. Claire Gallagher*

THINK SMALL

the flutter  
in the doe's flank  
crocus in snow

*Michele Root-Bernstein*

mountain torrent—  
the water ouzel flicks  
a white eyelid

*Ruth Yarrow*

THE WONDER CODE

first warm day  
the pulse of the honeybee's  
abdomen

*Yvonne Cabalona*

creek rising—  
a tree frog's heart beats  
against the window

*Anna Tambour*



THINK SMALL

clouds part—  
a mantis silhouette  
through the sunlit leaf

*Allen McGill*

cloudless sky  
a pelican's pouch  
full of light

*Debbie Strange*

THE WONDER CODE

the mourning dove's head  
turns backward so easily  
cool of the evening

*Burnell Lippy*

city sidewalk  
colors swirl in a bubble  
of spit

*Brenda J. Gannam*

THINK SMALL

with a little rain  
the color returns  
to a stone

*Jeffrey Woodward*

clearing sky  
a hailstone melts  
on the fallen flower

*Nathalie Buckland*

THE WONDER CODE

first day of May  
the woodchuck's cheek  
full of flowers

*Lesley Anne Swanson*

faded totem pole—  
the frog's mouth  
filled with snow

*Cindy Zackowitz*

THINK SMALL

morning sun—  
fish scales glisten  
in the otter scat

*H. Gene Murtha*

twilit tombstone  
an owl  
drops a pellet

*Emily Romano*

THE WONDER CODE

driftwood  
the knothole catches  
a drop of rain

*Susan Constable*

a drip of resin  
stills the green beetle  
windswept pine

*Bill Cooper*

THINK SMALL

autumn breeze  
a pine cone waddles  
toward the shore

*Allan Burns*

sea oats  
a beachball blows  
between dunes

*Paul MacNeil*

THE WONDER CODE

high tide  
a plastic dump truck  
moves another shell

*Jay Haskins*

empty beach house  
a seashell left  
on the windowsill

*Matthew Louvière*



THINK SMALL

fountain pool  
all the circles  
where the coins used to be

*Carlos Colón*

rings on a stump—  
an inch  
for my life

*Francis Masat*

THE WONDER CODE

writing table  
I watch a spoon  
gather the dawn

*Seán MacMathúna*

skylight raindrop  
holding jupiter  
and the moon

*Hilary Tann*

THINK SMALL

still reflecting  
upon creation  
dragonfly eye

*paul m.*



## CHAPTER 2

# Come to Your Senses

When water is the object of my thought,  
I feel the cool shock of the plunge  
and the quick yielding of the waves  
that crisp and curl and ripple about my body.

HELEN KELLER

O plunge your hands in water,  
Plunge them in up to the wrist;  
Stare, stare in the basin  
And wonder what you've missed.

W. H. AUDEN

**I**n a famous scene from the 1936 film classic *Modern Times*, Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp character plays a factory worker on an assembly line at the Electro Steel

## THE WONDER CODE

Company. With a wrench in each hand his sole function is to tighten pairs of bolts with a single twist as the metal plates that bear them pass before him on the line. What role his assigned component will play in the final product—or what that product may be—is never revealed to us or apparently to him. Impressively dexterous, Chaplin's character contends with ramped-up assembly line speeds and a litany of distractions (pesky itches, a persistent bee), all with hilarious effect. The task demands his complete attention and eventually his entire being: our Little Tramp becomes consumed by his job quite literally, jumping into and threading his way through a maze of giant gears as he labors just to keep up. When his shift is finished so too is his normal sense of self and surroundings. Temporarily an automaton he comically chases after bolt-like objects to twist, wherever they happen to appear.

Chaplin the actor plays this scene for laughs. But Chaplin the writer/director sends a message that cries out clearly: the relentless pressures for productivity that come with industrialization put our individual and collective humanity at risk. Yet, more than eighty years later, industrialization has led modern societies to

## COME TO YOUR SENSES

greater prosperity. The types of soul-sucking jobs performed by the Little Tramp now occupy actual robots. In the end our humanity is fully intact.

Or is it?

On a recent afternoon I noticed a procession of backpack-laden grade school children slowly making their way home. They were each absorbed with a handheld device, oblivious to one another and their surroundings. This same sort of scene plays out everywhere, it would seem.

sunlit magnolias  
each student  
bent to a phone

*Glenn G. Coats*

Electronic dependency is hardly confined to the prepubescent and teenage sets. According to Pew Research Center, in late 2016 over three-quarters (77%) of American adults owned a smartphone. A study released by Deloitte the same year claimed that those adults checked their smartphones an average of 47 times each

## THE WONDER CODE

day, 62% of them starting within 15 minutes of waking up. Nielsen has found that American adults spend on average more than half their waking time (10 hours, 39 minutes) peering at a screen, whether attached to a smartphone, tablet, personal computer, television or other device. The tightening grip of digital technology ends up loosening its users' connection with their physical environment: for instance, phoning or texting while driving is the cause of one in every four automobile accidents in the United States. Chaplin's grand imagination could scarcely have conjured the electronic body snatching taking place in our own modern times.

Of course digital technology is only the latest in a progression of product advancements that have buffered and occasionally isolated us from our natural surroundings. We spend our days and nights cosseted with moisturizers and fabric softeners, acoustic panels and earphones, deodorizers and climate control. But our comforts come at a cost.

Cocooned and plugged in we've also opted out—of a world filled with sensory wonders. While amenities may spare us all kinds of unpleasantness, and the Internet may provide a wealth of entertainment, informa-



## COME TO YOUR SENSES

tion and access, these boons can lull us into shadow existences cut off from the life-enriching dispatches the world constantly sends to our senses. The words of visionary poet William Blake have never seemed more prescient: “If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro’ narrow chinks in his cavern.”

The humble haiku—“a door half-opened, a mirror wiped clean” (R. H. Blyth)—can serve as a gentle corrective. Years before the widespread use of the Internet and most other “virtual” platforms, American haiku pioneer Nick Virgilio declared that his haiku practice helped him “to get in touch with the real.” Haiku can do the same for us today; the need has never been greater.

Comprised of mere words, how can haiku help us “come to our senses”? Quite simply, an effective haiku encapsulates an instant of keen perception in a form that can be released and experienced anew by the receptive reader. When the record of such an instant includes a vivid *sensory* impression, the reader will often feel an “I am there” surge of sensed experience. These sensed experiences afford their own immediate rewards, but

## THE WONDER CODE

they also encourage our greater ongoing attention to the sensory wonders within our physical world. In just this way they guide us back to what's real and alive.

The usual two-part structure of each haiku plays a vital role in providing the reader with that "I am there" sensed experience. The haiku "fragment" (typically the first or third line) and the haiku "phrase" (comprising the other two lines) act as kindling, while the gap between them serves as oxygen; this mix will combust as sensed experience in the predisposed reader's mind.

In the following three haiku a sound, sight or smell sensation becomes more noticeable and vivid for the reader because of its contrast with a nearly *opposite* first impression conveyed by each poem's opening fragment: namely, the impression of silence (Quaker meeting), drabness (dumpster) or austerity (winter rain).

Quaker meeting  
the rasp of leaves  
against the walk

*Mary Stevens*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

dumpster  
the iridescence  
of starlings

*Bill Kenney*

winter rain  
the tropical scent  
from the dish soap

*Connie Donleycott*

In the next three haiku the reader's sensory experience is heightened by means of a *complementary* relationship (though not a *causal* one) between the poem's opening fragment and the phrase that follows.

drowsy afternoon  
clover heads heavy  
with beebuzz

*Michele Root-Bernstein*

## THE WONDER CODE

cicadas  
none of the sawn boards  
even in length

*Kay Grimnes*

toothache—  
a woodpecker comes  
to stab the suet

*Christopher Herold*

The creators of television commercials sometimes use the term “video vampire” to describe how the dynamic visual content in a TV spot can overwhelm or “drain” audience recall of its audio content—including the selling message—if the two are not carefully aligned. In the following three haiku, the fragment effectively *suppresses* the poem’s visual content in order to clear the way for the reader’s experience of a non-visual sensation. (Note that the fragment in the second haiku appears at its end instead of its beginning.)

COME TO YOUR SENSES

in blinding snow  
sweet silage smell  
from a door left open

*LeRoy Gorman*

the softness  
of lamb's ears  
garden for the blind

*André Surridge*

autumn evening  
the clink of carnival rings  
on empty bottles

*Chad Lee Robinson*

The sensory vividness of these haiku recalls that in the first epigraph to this chapter where a sightless Helen Keller describes in graphic terms her tactile experience of water.

## THE WONDER CODE

Haiku can also convey startling perceptual effects by *blurring* the senses through a poetic technique known as synesthesia.

wind shift  
the canola field  
smelling yellow

*Marilyn Appl Walker*

night frost  
I can hear the moonlight  
creaking in the garden

*Maria Tomczak*

telephoto lens  
the loon's call  
comes into focus

*Carolyn Hall*

An array of other sensations can be experienced

## COME TO YOUR SENSES

viscerally in the haiku gallery appearing next.

Each moment brings with it an ocean of sensory stimuli. Haiku invite us to return to our senses—and plunge into a world filled with wonders that must not be missed.





## Gallery Two



**Come to Your Senses**



COME TO YOUR SENSES

frosty morning  
the goat's first squirt  
pings the milkpail

*Mark Dailey*

THE WONDER CODE

slipping over morning fields  
a sunray  
catches the hare's urine

*Gabriel Rosenstock*

catch and release  
a little shine left  
on my fingers

*Jim Kacian*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

Mojave sunrise  
a splinter swells  
my fingertip

*Eve Luckring*

riffles . . .  
a belted kingfisher  
splinters the light

*John Barlow*

THE WONDER CODE

family reunion  
the click  
of worry beads

*frances angela*

click-clack  
of the bead curtain—  
the sway of her hips

*Sandra Simpson*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

sound of anklets  
on the winding path  
river song

*Sanjukta Asopa*

mountain music  
the poverty  
in minor chords

*Glenn G. Coats*

THE WONDER CODE

Gypsy violin . . .  
the wheat harvest  
sparkling with fireflies

*Tatjana Debeljački*

heat lightning—  
Christmas beetles  
spangle the fly screen

*Lorin Ford*



COME TO YOUR SENSES

screened window  
the full scent  
of jasmine

*Cara Holman*

closed casket  
the funeral director's  
peppermint breath

*Jack Barry*

THE WONDER CODE

polenta  
crackles in bacon grease  
swirl of light snow

*Jeanne Cook*

firelight  
the hiss and crackle  
of an old LP

*Ashley Rodman*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

Halloween  
crackly Draculas  
in black garbage bags

*Tony Beyer*

suburban darkness  
only the rumble  
of garbage can wheels

*Robert Forsythe*

## THE WONDER CODE

swamp gas  
a lone bull frog  
fills the lake

*Michele L. Harvey*

chilies roasting . . .  
the old pickup truck  
backfires

*Jerry Foshee*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

clanging cymbals—  
the rooster joins  
the worship

*Yesha Shah*

an afterlife  
of mariachi bands  
day of the dead

*Sergio Ortiz*

THE WONDER CODE

pock  
of tennis balls—  
the heat

*Gwenn Gurnack*

crickets droning  
the tennis ball covered  
with slobber

*Charlie Close*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

humid day—  
dog drool  
down the window

*George Dorsty*

dogday night  
one bug zap  
at a time

*Christopher Patchel*

THE WONDER CODE

rucksack  
in tall grass  
the scent of honeysuckle

*Allan Burns*

flattened grass  
where the bear slept  
stink of salmon

*Billie Wilson*



COME TO YOUR SENSES

a shooting star—  
the short grass  
tickles my neck

*Peter Yovu*

the tickle of bristles  
I cover-up  
my hickey

*Yvette Nicole Kolodji*

THE WONDER CODE

spring again  
a taste of rust  
in the harmonica

*Paul Pfeuger, Jr.*

end of summer  
the rust on my scissors  
smells of marigolds

*Margaret Chula*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

sudden winter  
the press of cold metal  
against the paper gown

*Beverly Acuff Momoi*

deep winter  
the sacrament  
of flannel

*Ann K. Schwader*

THE WONDER CODE

Remembrance Day—  
the thin sound of a bugle  
wavers in the rain

*John Crook*

Silent Night—  
a distorted world  
on the busker's sax

*Carl Seguiban*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

fresh lava flow  
heat waves wobble  
the horizon

*Brad Bennett*

March snowmen—  
Picassos appearing  
on front lawns

*John Soules*

## THE WONDER CODE

muezzin call . . .  
the glint of morning  
on a desert flower

*Kyle Sullivan*

the third-note rise  
of a towhee's song  
fragrant breeze

*Peggy Lyles*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

nightfall  
a waft of frangipani  
by the pool

*Anne Carly Abad*

harvest moon rising . . .  
the smell  
of his new Jaguar

*Chen-ou Liu*

THE WONDER CODE

wedding balloons—  
the squeak and squeal  
of tying a knot

*Susan Constable*

sunset moon  
she pops seafroth bubbles  
with her lips

*Linda Jeannette Ward*



COME TO YOUR SENSES

salt spray  
a taste of peat  
in my whiskey

*Quendryth Young*

falling snow  
her deep  
husky whisper

*Ernest Wit*

THE WONDER CODE

winter sunset  
blinking  
between the boxcars

*Garry Eaton*

outside the wake  
cigarettes  
dot the dark

*Jennifer Popolis*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

creosote  
the smell of the docks  
where I learned to fish

*James Chessing*

summer asphalt  
the man-made scent  
of rain

*Peter Newton*

## THE WONDER CODE

first warm day  
the hum  
of Harleys

*Lauren Mayhew*

mid July  
two-bee harmony  
in the lavender

*Kathleen O'Toole*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

trumpet lily  
more baroque  
than jazz

*Jennifer Sutherland*

tinny radio  
a sweat bee circles  
her painted toes

*Dave Russo*

THE WONDER CODE

first mouthful  
of a warm cider doughnut  
scarlet hillsides

*Doug Kutney*

hailstone  
it tastes a little  
of wild onion

*Dan Liebert*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

October fest  
too much oom-pah-pah  
in the mustard

*Adelaide B. Shaw*

snow moon  
bitter wormwood  
still on her tongue

*Mary Davila*

THE WONDER CODE

sunglare  
the rasp of my clam rake  
uncovers tin cans

*Allen McGill*

leaf raking  
the swish-swish  
of corduroy

*Carolyn Coit Dancy*



COME TO YOUR SENSES

KEEP OFF GRASS  
the tut tut tut  
of a sprinkler head

*John Hawk*

autumn equinox  
the tap tap tap  
of Bingo markers

*Alice Frampton*

## THE WONDER CODE

cow bells  
floating over the breeze  
wild oregano

*Angela Terry*

winter hills  
with each boot crunch  
the scent of sage

*Jo Balistreri*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

lullaby of rain  
another pinch of saffron  
in the pumpkin soup

*Alan Summers*

woodstove's glow  
the scent of oranges  
studded with cloves

*Connie Donleycott*

THE WONDER CODE

raging blizzard  
the gritted teeth  
of jumper cables

*Jeff Stillman*

crescent moon  
the gas pump handle  
steals my warmth

*Mark Brooks*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

frosted furrows  
an old mare's whinny  
silvers the air

*Claire Everett*

midsummer stream  
a grackle dips its beak  
in shimmer

*Robert Gilliland*

## THE WONDER CODE

as if this sky  
weren't sky enough  
indigo bunting

*Alan S. Bridges*

autumn dusk—  
the orange underbelly  
of a slug

*Sara Winteridge*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

approaching storm . . .  
a fluorescent swimsuit  
on the clothesline

*Hana Nestieva*

lightning oak  
a screech owl's nest  
in the breach

*Elizabeth Howard*

THE WONDER CODE

smoketown dawn  
a rogue rooster's  
corrugated cry

*Kristen Renée Miller*

the taste of smoke  
in the single malt . . .  
autumn deepens

*Polona Oblak*



COME TO YOUR SENSES

scent of lemon  
the glint of a sunbeam  
on polished pews

*Sue Mill*

ebb tide—  
the river bottom's  
special smell

*Joan Murphy*

THE WONDER CODE

sweetness  
oozing from a fig  
indian summer

*Harriot West*

bare feet  
the child squelches  
through a cowpat

*Patricia Prime*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

pea soup fog  
the slosh  
of a paddle wheeler

*Ida Freiling*

ferry gift shop—  
all the tourist mugs  
gently tinkling

*Michael Dylan Welch*

THE WONDER CODE

woodpecker  
the higher pitch  
of a hickory

*Katherine Cudney*

a change in their voices . . .  
children finding  
a fledgling

*John Stevenson*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

lambing  
the smell of wet sweaters  
fills the barn

*Bruce Boynton*

sweltering heat  
a hole in the backyard  
bleeds scorpions

*Anthony Itopa Obaro*

## THE WONDER CODE

morning sun  
stroking its warmth  
through the old dog's fur

*Rachel Sutcliffe*

winter night—  
I hear the cat's purr  
with my hands

*Hortensia Anderson*

COME TO YOUR SENSES

sheep back  
from shearing—  
spring breeze

*Stephen Toft*

loose knit sweater—  
the spring wind comes to me  
in a thousand ways

*Tom Tico*

THE WONDER CODE

outgoing tide  
jellyfish fade  
with the sky

*Marian Olson*

dusk  
an empty beer can  
taps the dock

*H. Gene Murtha*



COME TO YOUR SENSES

night of stars  
all along the precipice  
goat bells ring

*an'ya*



## CHAPTER 3

# Feel the Moment

Let us trust that a time will come when  
the present moment shall be no longer irksome;  
when we shall not borrow all our happiness from  
hope, which at last is to end in disappointment.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

**P**icture yourself in a familiar room. Let's say it's daytime, on a mild weekend. A pair of well-worn shoes lies on the floor. Gauzy curtains billow from a half-opened window. A green pepper rests on a surface

## THE WONDER CODE

nearby. The setting is tranquil, yet your mind is engaged: with a tidbit of confidential information shared by a friend; with your plans for dinner this evening; with a tough decision you recently made; with a project due this coming week; or with some other concern.

Now picture yourself in an art museum. Framed on the wall is Vincent van Gogh's 1888 still life *Shoes* . . . or Andrew Wyeth's 1947 interior (with billowing curtain) *Wind from the Sea* . . . or Edward Weston's 1930 photograph *Pepper No. 30*. A certain haunting quality about the particular image in front of you draws you in. Your thoughts about the past and the future dissipate at that moment. In their place you feel something ineffable yet moving—and vital.

Shoes . . . curtains . . . peppers. Such are the things of our daily lives. Their familiarity may not breed contempt so much as a general indifference. Our strongest feelings tend to flow towards an uncertain future (via hope or fear) or to certain events from the past (through nostalgia or regret), siphoning the present—where we actually *live*—of much of its emotional life.

Yet our focus can shift. As shown in the second scenario above, art can “frame the familiar” and, in so

## FEEL THE MOMENT

doing, *de*-familiarize it—offering it back to us for a second look. While museum art is typically thought of as *spatial*, much of it could also be thought of as *temporal* in the sense of preserving, for our contemplation, particular instants in time. Almost a century ago the critic Paul Rosenfeld proposed that the photographs of Alfred Stieglitz

. . . affirm life not only because they declare the wonder and significance of myriad objects never before felt to be lovely. They affirm it because they declare each of them the majesty of the moment, the augustness of the here, the now. They attest in clearest tones that life is present fully in every instant in time; that the present contains both past and future; that there is no instant in time not fully bound and related to every other. For they themselves are but the records of moments.

Much the same could be said of haiku, a more accessible way to capture the moment (no batteries re-

## THE WONDER CODE

quired) and to share its emotional essence.

evening light  
a loaf of bread  
on the cutting board

*John Stevenson*

Chinese pork stall  
the deep valley  
in a chopping log

*John Tiong Chunghoo*

Haiku are recorded in the present tense. This practice is more than convention: it helps convey the freshness of sensations and the immediacy of emotions from poet to reader across time and space.

The strong resonance we experience in many fine haiku, as those above, derives in no small measure from understatement. Their emotional valence is both inherent and implicit: inherent because it flows directly and naturally from the subject matter presented; but

## FEEL THE MOMENT

also implicit because the poet refrains from telling us exactly how he feels. In a sense, the writing of haiku can be thought of as an act of faith: faith that the subject matter, if effectively chosen and presented, will go some distance in speaking for itself; and faith that the reader can pick up from there and use her own background, thoughts and imagination to experience that subject matter in a personally meaningful way.

R. H. Blyth, as always, offers a cogent perspective:

The aim of haiku is to bestow on things the poetic life which already they possess in their own right. . . . This poetry of things is not something imposed on them, but brought out of them as the sun and rain bring the tender leaf out of the hard buds.

This attention to “the life of things” can be seen in the animistic beliefs of Shintoism, one of two principal sources informing the field of Japanese aesthetics. The other is Zen Buddhism, reflected this way in the aesthetic ideal of *wabi sabi* (wah-bee sah-bee) as de-

## THE WONDER CODE

scribed by designer and author Andrew Juniper:

Wabi sabi's influence on Japanese aesthetic values has inspired such arts as the tea ceremony, flower arranging, haiku, garden design, and No theater. It offers an aesthetic ideal that uses the uncompromising touch of mortality to focus the mind on the exquisite transient beauty to be found in all things impermanent. It can be found in the arrangement of a single flower, the expression of profound emotion in three lines of poetry, or in the perception of a mountain landscape in a single rock. Like Zen, its philosophical mentor, it is sublime in its subtlety.

While the Japanese have refined and catalogued their aesthetics to a level found nowhere else, the emotional power of *wabi sabi* (as well as the other aesthetic principles discussed shortly) can be felt by those of sensibility from other cultures, too.



FEEL THE MOMENT

autumn equinox  
my mother's writing  
on yellowed paper

*Marili Deandrea*

first names  
no longer in fashion  
weathered headstones

*John Soules*

in the rest home lounge  
the silent piano  
its line of cracked keys

*John Hawkhead*

morning sidewalk  
flattened leaves and the imprints  
of those blown away

*Tom Tico*

## THE WONDER CODE

Zen, as is true of Buddhism generally, sees life in continual flux, evolving into and out of a replenishing nothingness. Although dissolution and decay feature prominently in a great number of affecting haiku like those just shown, life also springs eternal.

a rusted truck  
the wheel wells filling  
with rhubarb

*Paul MacNeil*

The Japanese have applied the term *mono no aware* (moh-no no ah-wah-ray) to things or situations with a certain kind of poignancy suggesting, in the words of Alan Watts, “the echo of what has passed and of what was loved.”

clam dig  
the quiet passing  
of a sail

*Garry Eaton*

FEEL THE MOMENT

empty fairgrounds—  
tent peg holes  
half filled

*Gwenn Gurnack*

near evening . . .  
willow shadows return  
to the river

*Mohsen Farsani*

twilight  
a child's pail taken  
by the tide

*Cherie Hunter Day*

Watts describes *yūgen* (yoo-gen) as things imbued with “a kind of mystery,” while Jane Reichhold offers both more and less: “a word describing poetry that is so mysterious that many volumes have been written to explain it.”

THE WONDER CODE

snow moon—  
steam rising  
off the milk pail

*Alan S. Bridges*

All Souls' Eve  
limbs of the sycamore  
through the fog

*Jim Kacian*

horned owl  
near the window  
a curtain inhales

*Elizabeth Howard*

Towards the other end of the aesthetic and emotive spectrum lies the principle of *karumi* (kah-roo-mee), a lightness of spirit and touch favored by the great haiku master Bashō towards the end of his life.

FEEL THE MOMENT

moonlit pond . . .  
he lifts his child above  
the threat of frogs

*Janelle Barrera*

buttercups  
the haltered pony  
on its back

*Thomas Powell*

soap bubbles  
how softly mother  
bursts into laughter

*Kala Ramesh*

With resonant imagery and deft word handling, skillful haiku poets can suggest a larger scene and all its emotional coloration from a simple object or gesture.

## THE WONDER CODE

no one calls  
she gently dusts  
her porcelain rabbits

*Elena Naskova*

meanwhile  
gloved hands brush lily dust  
from the hearse

*Claire Everett*

The first of these may evoke both the contemplativeness of a Vermeer and the psychological desolation of an Edward Hopper painting, while the second might just be the nugget to inspire a great novel or film. (Faulkner claimed that *The Sound and the Fury* began with the mental picture of “the muddy seat of a little girl’s drawers in a pear tree, where she could see through a window where her grandmother’s funeral was taking place and report what was happening to her brothers on the ground below.”)

These next three relate more upbeat moments.

FEEL THE MOMENT

stepping stones  
across the stream  
your hand small in mine

*John Kinory*

suncatchers  
in the shop window  
she smiles back

*Darrell Lindsey*

revolving door—  
a gust of holiday laughter  
warms the sidewalk

*H. F. Noyes*

Just as objects and gestures can evoke larger scenes, certain word or phrase references to the season—what the Japanese call *kigo* (kee-go)—can trigger broader associations, most notably the seasons of our lives and all the emotions we ascribe to them.

## THE WONDER CODE

Springtime brings anticipation, creation, uplift  
and expansiveness.

almost spring  
noseprints  
on every window

*Charlie Close*

spring morning  
doing something new  
with pink scarves

*J. Zimmerman*

May sky—  
from head to tail  
the cardinal's vibrato

*Grant D. Savage*



FEEL THE MOMENT

our first night  
under spring stars  
the horses wander

*Michael McClintock*

With summer come daydreaming, bonhomie,  
serenity and freedom.

summer afternoon  
the boys tell stories  
about someday

*Jennie Townsend*

midsummer day—  
tilting the longneck  
all the way up

*Chad Lee Robinson*

THE WONDER CODE

summer clouds  
she talks about death  
hypothetically

*Collin Barber*

fireflies  
and I get to stay out  
as long as I like

*Christopher Patchel*

In autumn change is in the air—and in our lives.

yellow leaves  
a girl plays hopscotch  
by herself

*Peggy Lyles*

FEEL THE MOMENT

fall colors—  
my youngest son's  
deep voice

*Paul David Mena*

what my words can't explain—  
the autumn sun  
on your back

*paul m.*

autumn dusk  
I wave to a girl  
waving to someone else

*Dietmar Tauchner*

With the onset of winter, the world and we wind  
down.

THE WONDER CODE

so suddenly winter  
baby teeth at the bottom  
of the button jar

*Carolyn Hall*

one plate one fork one spoon

winter evening

*Kristen Deming*

winter night  
the slow circling  
of the bar rag

*Bill Kenney*

waiting  
becomes living  
late winter

*Brad Bennett*

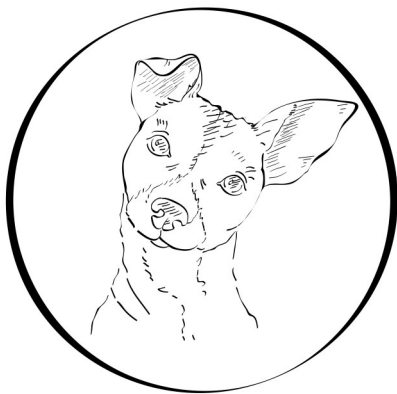
## FEEL THE MOMENT

As we cycle through the seasons we course around the wheel of emotions from wonder to joy to affection to disaffection to sadness to acceptance to satisfaction and back again to wonder.

If to feel is to live, then to develop a haiku sensibility is to live in the wonder each and every moment brings.



## Gallery Three



Feel the Moment





FEEL THE MOMENT

the world a blossom  
I make up a song  
for my dog

*David Boyer*

THE WONDER CODE

day in the park—  
finding a cherry blossom  
in the baby's diaper

*Michael Meyerhofer*

OMG  
both rain and sunlight  
on a blue jay's tail

*Burnell Lippy*

FEEL THE MOMENT

a girl's laughter  
waterfalls flinging  
rainbows

*Frances Jones*

the laughter  
of elderly friends  
magnolia rain

*D. Claire Gallagher*

THE WONDER CODE

our daughter's wedding  
dusting the room  
she dreamed in

*Francine Banwarth*

calloused hands  
the carpenter smooths  
his daughter's gown

*Robert Witmer*

FEEL THE MOMENT

the nail sinking in—  
my father's hammer  
in my hand

*Gary Hotham*

summer's end  
the mother of the bride  
holds an empty hat box

*Michele Root-Bernstein*

THE WONDER CODE

alone tonight—  
the calla lily curves  
into shadow

*Hortensia Anderson*

life alone  
licking  
the ladle

*Owen Bullock*

FEEL THE MOMENT

never younger  
than now  
I zest a lemon

*Marilyn Appl Walker*

a purple tree  
when did I stop  
being young?

*Katherine Cudney*

THE WONDER CODE

Peering into  
the deep well, two boys  
talk about girls

*George Swede*

summer night  
his sister and I  
suddenly alone

*Marcus Larsson*



FEEL THE MOMENT

summer rain—  
her kimono tied  
loosely

*Sandra Simpson*

rain all day—  
behind the bead curtain  
her smile

*Peter Yovu*

THE WONDER CODE

new girl at school  
maple pods  
twirling endlessly

*Tyrone McDonald*

my world spun  
on roller-skates  
first kiss

*Barb Behrendt*

FEEL THE MOMENT

clear sky  
the bouncy castle  
inflating

*Stephen Toft*

morning after  
all the balloons  
down from the ceiling

*Alexander B. Joy*

THE WONDER CODE

grey afternoon  
the amber eyes  
of nobody's cat

*Sandi Pray*

winter night—  
the understanding eyes  
of a lumpy teddy

*Carmen Sterba*

FEEL THE MOMENT

softly the quail  
from their crowded crates  
greet the dawn

*Tom Drescher*

night time  
in the hospice aquarium  
the pulse of fish gills

*Joyce Clement*

THE WONDER CODE

shadows in the sun . . .  
the secret lives  
of Southern women

*Rebecca Drouilhet*

for better or for worse  
our lights and darks  
tumbling together

*Annette Makino*

FEEL THE MOMENT

in the quiet  
of a love scene  
our cat purrs

*Tom Clausen*

the very back  
of the cat's mouth  
Sunday afternoon

*Charlie Close*

THE WONDER CODE

watching the deer  
watch my morning train  
pass by

*Mark E. Brager*

weathered barn  
the farmer's wife  
studies her hands

*Barb Behrendt*



FEEL THE MOMENT

today's list  
of yesterday's tasks  
cottonwood fluff

*Ann K. Schwader*

closing time:  
zoo animals smaller  
than their shadows

*Charles Trumbull*

THE WONDER CODE

magpie season  
the schoolgirl's lunchbox  
on her head

*Cynthia Rowe*

a handstand  
just to see if I can  
honeysuckle

*Susan Antolin*

FEEL THE MOMENT

creak of the swing . . .  
my feet still reach  
the sky

*Connie Donleycott*

Indian summer  
a kid drags his backpack  
in the dust

*Jennifer Popolis*

THE WONDER CODE

caught in a lie—  
icicles shatter  
on the stones

*Kirsty Karkow*

rain patter  
on the windshield  
. . . second lie

*Roberta Beary*

FEEL THE MOMENT

lingering heat  
the third-grade classroom  
one desk short

*Peggy Lyles*

last ship off the island  
the nun hoeing vegetables  
briefly looks up

*Bernadette Duncan*

THE WONDER CODE

my kinfolk  
don't say a lot  
hemlocks all around

*Greg Piko*

silent on the war  
my father points out  
the winter stars

*Stephen Kusch*

FEEL THE MOMENT

no details  
about the procedure  
quiet rain

*Glenn G. Coats*

hot afternoon  
the squeak of my hands  
on my daughter's coffin

*Lenard D. Moore*

THE WONDER CODE

her last words  
snow falling  
on beech leaves

*Jeff Hoagland*

a carpet of leaves . . .  
I try to remember  
her first smile

*John Kinory*



FEEL THE MOMENT

i take the strongest  
of my walking sticks  
first cherry blossoms

*vincent tripi*

the marigold  
in a plastic cup  
Mother's Day

*Jennifer Corpe*

THE WONDER CODE

honeybees sway  
on the snowdrops  
one of her good days

*Mary Frederick Ahearn*

wheeling her chair  
through leaf fall  
we sure knew how to dance

*Bill Pauly*

FEEL THE MOMENT

carousel  
she asks to ride  
the winged horse home

*Robert Epstein*

muffled voices  
Mother's pin cushion  
sparkles in the light

*Ron C. Moss*

THE WONDER CODE

Memorial Day  
the nonagenarian's  
crisp salute

*Carlos Colón*

muted sunlight  
the crisp corners  
of the folded flag

*Cara Holman*

Fifth of July  
bottle caps  
stamped in the sand

*Trevor Pyle*

winter evening  
an unbought brioche  
under glass

*Jennifer Popolis*

THE WONDER CODE

the cold and the rain and the wind  
and  
forsythia

*Linda McCarthy Schick*

his first smile  
catkins curve across  
a brook

*Ann Egan*

FEEL THE MOMENT

undone  
by another  
sunset

*N. E. Taylor*

a lovers' moon—  
she tosses her bra  
out of the hayloft

*Curtis Dunlap*

THE WONDER CODE

pebble-seeker  
a small boy shows me  
his handful of summer

*Warren Gossett*

glowing embers  
I tell her a story  
she already knows

*Rick Tarquinio*



FEEL THE MOMENT

summer stars  
my children ask me  
to name a favorite

*Tom Painting*

planetarium  
my child's grip  
starts to loosen

*John McManus*

THE WONDER CODE

spring walk  
just me and my  
ponytail

*Marili Deandrea*

drifting cherry petals . . .  
a window goes up  
in the passing limousine

*Michael Dylan Welch*

FEEL THE MOMENT

wipers wiping  
slush from the windshield—  
radio love song

*Alice Frampton*

singing gondolier  
the passengers'  
fixed smiles

*Kay Grimnes*

THE WONDER CODE

sun low  
chins resting  
on the losing oars

*Helen Buckingham*

handshake  
not a kiss  
starless night

*Stephen A. Peters*

FEEL THE MOMENT

virga rain  
the empty crib  
in the next room

*Joy Reed MacVane*

full moon  
all the places  
you could be

*Deb Baker*

THE WONDER CODE

ebb tide  
the shell I keep reaching for  
carried further away

*John Crook*

night fishing  
all we imagine  
still out there

*Glenn G. Coats*

FEEL THE MOMENT

moonrise  
an owl swoops up  
something

*Meik Blöttenberger*

midnight  
some of the sounds  
are insects

*Quendryth Young*

## THE WONDER CODE

near the horizon  
a wave forms  
touch me there, again

*Eve Luckring*

starlit sky—  
I touch a turtle  
before it returns to the sea

*K. Ramesh*



FEEL THE MOMENT

evening walk  
the faded leash  
I can't throw out

*John Soules*



## CHAPTER 4

# Prepare for Surprise

“Curiouser and curiouser!” cried Alice . . .

LEWIS CARROLL

*Eureka! Eureka!* cried Archimedes. The greatest mathematician of classical antiquity is said to have made his famous exclamation—while running buck naked through the streets of Syracuse—after noticing how his body displaced and spilled water when entering a filled bathtub. That simple observation ended his search for a way to measure the volume of any object having an irregular shape.

The story is likely apocryphal: the hydrostatic principle bearing Archimedes’ name solves the same problem and is better documented in the historical record. Yet it carries an odd credibility. More than two millennia later, Swiss engineer Georges de Mestral must

have experienced his own eureka moment after walking his dog in the woods. The tenacious burrs that attached to its coat and his trousers led to his invention (or *discovery*) of Velcro.

The burr-clad de Mestral and unclad Archimedes were outliers: most folks would curse the burrs or bemoan, if not cry over, spilt bathwater. But few of us see surprise as a font of possibility.

Our general attitude towards the unexpected tends to shift with age. Self-described professional “surprisologists” Tania Luna and LeeAnn Renninger share this finding from their research:

Before age six, kids use the word surprise almost exclusively to describe positive events. As we get older, surprise takes on a more negative association. Why? One reason is that surprise makes us vulnerable, and as we get older, we associate vulnerability with embarrassment and shame.

## PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

Of course we feel most vulnerable when we feel a lack of personal control or competence. Such feelings arise quite naturally in unfamiliar circumstances and in times of great change. These very conditions prevail in contemporary life. For instance, the latest advances in technology occur at an exponential rather than a linear rate; and while many benefits may attend these advances, so too do increased uncertainty and dislocation in once-stable careers, belief systems, communities and relationships. As Luna and Renninger observe, “today we are surprised more often than ever before. We are also more acutely aware of the unpredictability of tomorrow.”

What we cannot predict or control we often try to avoid. In the process we stigmatize surprise.

The main motivation behind Luna and Renninger’s work is to raise awareness about and promote what they call “the positive consequences of surprise: delight, excitement, adventure, curiosity, wonder, and serendipity.” These also happen to be the operative qualities of many fine haiku.

## THE WONDER CODE

sudden gust—  
the book opens to a poem  
I like even better

*Carolyn Hall*

preoccupied—  
my hand fills with  
dog nose

*Anna Tambour*

The two-part structure of a haiku makes it the perfect platform for the building and quick collapse of expectations. The poems above carry the whiff of mini-epiphanies or even *satori*, the Japanese Buddhist term for a sudden awakening or enlightenment.

To Luna and Renninger's roster of positive consequences we might add the quality of "insight." Haiku can spark insights on matters ephemeral to eternal.

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

remembrance day  
a toddler crying  
for her fallen flag

*Quendryth Young*

dead hamster—  
my son invents  
a religion

*George Dorsty*

headstone  
a dash  
between the years

*Francis Masat*

The most affecting “surprise haiku,” like those above, share the added quality of *veracity*. To surprise us with what also somehow “rings true” is one of the best ways not only to attract our attention but also to challenge conventional wisdom.

## THE WONDER CODE

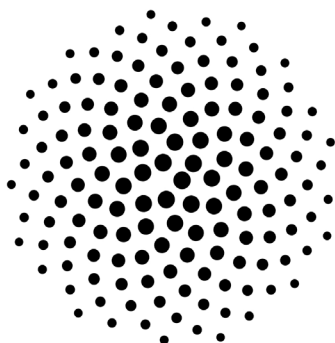
R. H. Blyth offers this insight:

The aim of haiku is not beauty; it is something much deeper and wider. It is *significance*, a poetical significance, “a shock of mild surprise”, that the poet receives when the haiku is born, and the reader where it is reborn in his mind.

Think of haiku as a safe space for surprise, a place to risk nothing but your wariness of surprise. The more haiku you read and assimilate, the more open will be your approach to the world—and the more you’ll experience and appreciate that world for all its unexpected wonder.

Yes, Alice, there is a Wonderland: to see it you’ll just need to wake.







## Gallery Four



Prepare for Surprise



PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

the day begins  
descendants of dinosaurs  
darting, singing

*George Swede*

THE WONDER CODE

tornado warning  
the meteorologist  
continues to smile

*Collin Barber*

pumpkin weather  
the big smiles  
of the candidates

*Garry Eaton*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

winter evening  
a young woman smiles  
from the hair dye box

*Joseph M. Kusmiss*

alone  
with my Cheerios  
and another missing child

*Charles Trumbull*

THE WONDER CODE

storm clouds building  
re-enactors gather  
for an understood outcome

*LeRoy Gorman*

July 4th—  
small talk over beer  
with a redcoat

*H. Gene Murtha*



PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

without enemies  
toy soldiers  
defend the sofa

*Peter Barnes*

battling elk  
my elbow  
claims the arm rest

*Yvette Nicole Kolodji*

THE WONDER CODE

roadside sweet corn  
the girl tans her legs  
next to the money

*Marsh Muirhead*

wishing fountain  
most thoughts  
still a penny

*George Dorsty*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

field of dandelions  
thousands of wishes  
go unused

*Adelaide B. Shaw*

the sun sets  
on the old man's deathbed  
on the nurse's legs

*David Caruso*

THE WONDER CODE

island dreams  
sails set  
on washday

*Barb Behrendt*

clothesline—  
ballet tights frozen  
in fifth position

*Allen McGill*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

wind surfing  
gulls hover  
over the wipeouts

*William Cullen, Jr.*

winter funeral  
we face our mortality  
in high heels on ice

*kate s. godsey*

THE WONDER CODE

Amish country  
the deer beside the road  
stare at us

*John Stevenson*

clipped grass  
a rabbit keeps an eye on  
Saint Francis

*Richard Straw*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

the watchtower guard  
has the best view  
plum blossoms

*Johnny Baranski*

hide-and-seek  
the weeping willow  
giggles

*Sabine Miller*

THE WONDER CODE

low tide  
waiting for grandchildren  
to happen

*Kala Ramesh*

dogwoods  
the stench of  
baby questions

*Amelia Cotter*



PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

bed of spring moss—  
she tosses her hair  
over his shoulder

*Linda Jeannette Ward*

police: Get on the ground!  
no snow  
for us to make angels

*Tyrone McDonald*

THE WONDER CODE

midday  
the coffee turns  
to wine

*Tom Clausen*

a Friday in Lent  
such praise  
for cod

*Dan Schwerin*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

spring moon  
the sleeping dog  
wears a puppy's face

*Stephen Amor*

under the rainbow  
a hundred cows with  
one expression

*Peter Yovu*

THE WONDER CODE

Navy housing  
she plants her garden  
in pots

*Connie Donleycott*

contemplation garden  
we decide  
five minutes is enough

*Sandra Simpson*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

autumn nightfall  
a strong case for both moonlight  
and sharp teeth

*Elmedin Kadric*

bear tracks  
how many  
will remember me?

*John Hawk*

THE WONDER CODE

store window  
nude mannequins  
herald spring

*Roland Packer*

nude beach  
a man and a woman  
collecting feathers

*Ed Markowski*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

full moon  
the silence of birds  
expanding

*Bob Lucky*

sine wave  
a purple finch  
does the math

*Alan S. Bridges*

THE WONDER CODE

Christmas dinner  
the handle broken off  
a tradition

*Gary Hotham*

Christmas night  
the wise men  
a bit banged up

*P M F Johnson*



PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

only one small  
Darth Vader  
I start on the Milky Ways

*Ellen Compton*

supermoon—  
my son changes into  
pajamas with a cape

*Chad Lee Robinson*

THE WONDER CODE

desert petroglyph  
autumn rain falls  
on the sun

*Victor Ortiz*

sundial  
time pauses  
for a cloud

*Greg Piko*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

October sun  
a couple hold their embrace  
in the sculpture garden

*Matthew Paul*

sculpture park  
every raven  
a critic

*Ann K. Schwader*

THE WONDER CODE

swallowtail  
maybe I'll  
say yes

*Francine Banwarth*

unpruned roses  
more butterflies  
than I deserve

*Joy Reed MacVane*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

deep woods  
a caterpillar  
lets in the sun

*Yu Chang*

tree stump  
an ant scurries across  
three wars

*John J. Dunphy*

THE WONDER CODE

bodhi tree . . .  
not a single leaf  
is still

*Salil Chaturvedi*

dead tree  
the last leaf  
chirps

*Anna Tambour*

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

winter blues—  
the harmonica man plays  
for Wall Street

*Don Baird*

parade's end  
a trombone  
outside the portaloo

*Hilary Tann*

## THE WONDER CODE

Thanksgiving  
my brother and I catch up  
at halftime

*John S. O'Connor*

animal crackers . . .  
saving the elephants  
for my granddaughter

*Andy Burkhardt*



PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

the dinosaur museum  
I have to be there  
for the grandchildren

*LeRoy Gorman*



## CHAPTER 5

# Only Connect

Knee-deep in the cosmic overwhelm, I'm stricken  
by the ricochet wonder of it all: the plain

everythingness of everything, in cahoots  
with the everythingness of everything else.

DIANE ACKERMAN

the human heart connecting particles and waves

PEGGY WILLIS LYLES

One autumn day fifteen years ago I was hiking along a wilderness trail in Colorado. Approaching a stand of aspens I witnessed a mesmerizing spectacle: my field of vision filled with thousands of golden leaves fluttering in a light breeze with utter abandon. This experi-

## THE WONDER CODE

ence stirred me and absorbed me in a way I shall never forget. The best I can say is I felt a sense of communion.

Only later did I learn the proper name of those trees: quaking aspens or trembling aspens (*Populus tremuloides*), so called for the movement of their unusually flat leaves suspended on long stalks known as petioles. Later still I learned that those dozens of trees and innumerable leaves were likely a single organism. What I took for trunks were technically stems connected by a common root system.

If we were to chop down such a “stem” we could read, on the stump’s cross section, its annual growth rings. The saga they’d tell us would be one of wet years (thick rings) and dry years (thin rings). They would also tell a tale of our favorite star. At every eleven-year interval we’d notice a cluster of thicker growth rings corresponding to wetter conditions; these, in turn, would reflect the greater storm activity here on Earth correlated with a higher incidence of sun spots occurring at the same interval ninety-three million miles away.

These eleven-year sun spot cycles result from changes in polarity of the sun’s magnetic field. Those polarity shifts are thought to arise from a side effect of

the sun's rotation. And the cause of that rotation must extend well beyond our tiny footprint in cosmic space and our present eye blink in deep time. Just perhaps (in Dante's immortal words) it's "the Love that moves the sun and the other stars."

As the great polymath Alexander von Humboldt declared: *Alles ist wechselwirkung*—"Everything is interconnected." Similar claims have been made over the centuries by other visionaries, from Marcus Aurelius to Gottfried Leibnitz, from Leonardo da Vinci to Chief Seattle, and from the Transcendentalists to the first quantum physicists. Well before the scientific community ever heard of either the butterfly effect or quantum entanglement (the latter dubbed "spooky action at a distance" by Albert Einstein), Fyodor Dostoyevsky employed an eerily similar metaphor in *The Brothers Karamazov* . . .

My brother asked the birds to forgive him: that sounds senseless, but it is right; for all is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending; a touch in one place sets up movement at the other end of the earth.

## THE WONDER CODE

As for the sciences themselves, historian and journalist Peter Watson observes “that the various disciplines—despite their very different beginnings, and apparent areas of interest—have in fact been gradually coming together over the past 150 years.” According to Nobel Prize winner Robert Laughlin, “[w]hat we are seeing is a transformation of a worldview in which the objective of understanding nature by breaking it down into ever smaller parts is supplanted by the objective of understanding how nature organizes herself.”

Yet for all of that, we in our daily lives tend to see and experience ourselves and the things around us as independent entities. To be sure, we’ve begun to evolve towards more ecological thinking—“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe” (John Muir)—but, recycling aside, such thinking remains more theoretical than operational. And while the Internet has all the potential to foster a sense of global community, it can just as often serve as a portal to escapism, tribalism, or isolation from our immediate surroundings.

Perhaps we’re culturally conditioned to perceive the things of our world as largely independent of one

another and ourselves. The psychologist Richard E. Nisbett makes just that case in *The Geography of Thought*.

Modern Westerners, like the ancient Greeks, see the world in analytic, atomistic terms; they see objects as discrete and separate from their environments; they see events as moving in linear fashion when they move at all; and they feel themselves to be personally in control of events when they are not.

Conversely,

. . . modern Asians, like the ancient Chinese, view the world in holistic terms: They see a great deal of the field, especially background events; they are skilled in observing relationships between events; they regard the world as complex and highly changeable and its components as interrelated; they see events as moving in cycles between extremes; and they feel

## THE WONDER CODE

that control over events requires coordination with others.

Nisbett's description of Western modes of thought is suggestive, in part, of a cultural neurosis: it reveals a worldview premised on our *separation* from the world and from the basic fabric of reality. The psychic toll from such an alienated worldview may be subtle in individual cases but insidious all the same.

Attuned to the holistic thinking of the East, haiku can offer Westerners a welcome corrective to their dissociation and consequent sense of estrangement from the world; Blyth again:

Haiku are an expression of the joy of our reunion with things from which we have been parted by self-consciousness.

Haiku offer us not only the *product* but also, far more significantly, the *process* of a holistic practice: the usual two-part fragment/phrase structure of each haiku challenges each reader *to find or make a connection* between those very two components. In just this way,



## ONLY CONNECT

an engaged reader supplies the thread that will stitch the poem and give it fresh life.

In return, this practice rewards and vivifies *the reader*. Spending time with haiku cannot help but activate a greater sense of participation, and ultimately a greater actual *engagement*, in the world around us.

crickets and porch . . .  
everything is more  
than together

*Adrian Bouter*

wild artichoke the whole world dipped in butter

*Kath Abela Wilson*

When we engage the world with a haiku sensibility, the world might just re-engage us by gently nudging our most firmly held perceptions. Our perception of boundaries, for instance, may start to give way.

THE WONDER CODE

Continental Divide—  
a bumblebee gathers pollen  
from both slopes

*D. Claire Gallagher*

autumn wind  
the neighbor's tree  
becoming ours

*Ben Moeller-Gaa*

reconstructing  
a field mouse—  
owl pellets

*Terri L. French*

What of our sense of priorities?

ONLY CONNECT

focusing  
first on the foghorns  
and then on the lulls

*Tom Tico*

crescent moon  
would I look at the clouds  
without it?

*William J. Higginson*

Or of what is cause and what is effect?

the waves  
slowly splitting the rocks  
splitting the waves

*David Gershator*

THE WONDER CODE

salmon run  
does the river too  
have memory?

*Yvonne Cabalona*

What of present and past?

last seen  
by ancient kings  
winter comet

*Jose del Valle*

high desert  
the weathered rock  
gives up a shell

*Lynne Steel*

ONLY CONNECT

For all the challenges the world presents to our conventional notions when viewed through haiku eyes, we may come around to a better, more satisfying vision of our place in it.

a sand ripple  
just fits my arch—  
sunrise

*Ruth Yarrow*

morning yoga—  
the curve of a lizard  
on the wall

*K. Ramesh*

animal skull  
the child fingers  
her eye

*Tom Painting*

THE WONDER CODE

autumn light  
the deer's shadow  
touches my toes

*Susan Constable*

We may find as well that everything comes full  
circle.

source of the creek  
a kinglet's  
breeding song

*Allan Burns*

winter wind—  
a cradlesong sung  
in an ancient tongue

*Billie Wilson*

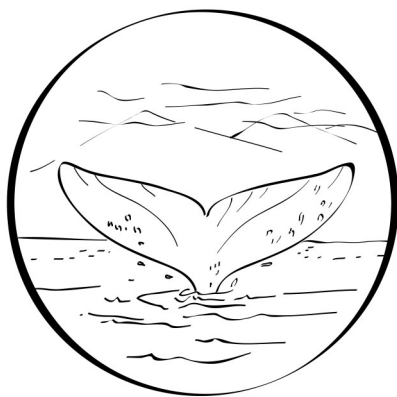
## ONLY CONNECT

At that magic point where East meets West and humanity meets “Nature,” haiku reveals the “intimate relationship with . . . the cosmic scheme” (Suzuki) of our co-inhabitants on this planet *as one and the same* as our own “original relation to the universe” (Emerson). It all begins with wonder.





## Gallery Five



Only Connect



the barnacled flukes  
of migrating whales . . .  
mountains lost in the haze

*John Barlow*

THE WONDER CODE

speckled egg  
the sunlight  
on my thoughts

*Kirsten Cliff*

sea cave  
the thoughts I keep  
inviting back

*Meik Blöttenberger*

frigate in dry dock  
the spider on the mainmast  
hoists a moth

*Gail Oare*

black spider  
clutching her egg sac  
night wraps around the moon

*Natasha Adams*

THE WONDER CODE

slaughter month  
first sprout buds  
in the pig trough

*Martina Heinisch*

pet cemetery  
the wildflowers  
always return

*June Rose Dowis*

on tsunami silt a sea of wildflowers

*Peg McAulay Byrd*

wild iris—  
the water leaks  
from a cracked vase

*Cindy Zackowitz*

THE WONDER CODE

day moon  
a child feigning sleep  
in the hammock

*Sabine Miller*

she stops me  
from picking a lemon  
—it's asleep, she says

*pjm*



between roots and branches  
centuries  
and a child's swing

*Seánan Forbes*

child's bedtime  
—the blanket that grew  
on a sheep we know

*Carol Purlington*

THE WONDER CODE

swarms of butterflies  
crossing the border . . .  
rumors of war

*Cezar-Florin Ciobîcă*

faultline  
wild eyes of the horses  
as we pass

*Jerry M. Bryant*

where an army  
swept through a wheat field  
hopping sparrows

*Michael McClintock*

retracing the steps  
of palanquin bearers  
a snail in rain

*Kyle Sullivan*

THE WONDER CODE

it begins . . .  
a galaxy of dust motes  
in the projector's beam

*James Chessing*

earthshine  
on the new moon  
first kiss

*Keith Heiberg*

Venus rising . . .  
I linger a little longer  
in the hot tub

*Lew Watts*

full moon—  
the baby monitor  
sighs

*Vladislav Vassiliev*

THE WONDER CODE

straggles of mist  
ancestors evaporating  
in a Highland dawn

*G W Colkitto*

morning fog . . .  
when my embryo  
had gills

*Tyrone McDonald*

a child's magician hat—  
dust motes float  
in the moonlit attic

*Rebecca Lilly*

funeral . . .  
I still remember  
my first swim

*Marili Deandrea*

THE WONDER CODE

shooting star—  
father's ring  
slips off my finger

*H. Gene Murtha*

a faint groove  
round my ring finger  
new moon

*Jo McInerney*



riderless animals  
on the merry-go-round  
moon halo

*Brandon Bordelon*

haloed moon  
the hawker twirls  
his glow bracelets

*Lynn Edge*

THE WONDER CODE

a mill wheel  
slowly turning—  
more and more stars

*Dorota Pyra*

numberless stars  
a long stick to keep  
the campfire going

*Christopher Herold*

dusk-deep clouds  
the rumble of a freight train  
shakes loose a star

*Rick Tarquinio*

goat-bell  
a star  
goes out

*Philip Rowland*

THE WONDER CODE

slight breeze  
clothespins hold  
a training bra

*Meik Blöttenberger*

bamboo bending  
in the wind—  
I bargain for mangoes

*L. Costa*

last car payment  
my dog's head outside  
the window

*Joe McKeon*

butterfly  
my bra  
too small

*Yvette Nicole Kolodji*

THE WONDER CODE

long afternoon—  
the mahout sleeps  
in elephant shadow

*Vidya S Venkatramani*

approaching storm  
a nest of yellow jackets  
in the scarecrow's belly

*John W. Wisdom*

cloud of no-see-ums . . .  
bluegills  
tease the bobber

*Julie Warther*

shooting stars  
a splash of sea salt  
brightens the soup

*Pat Tompkins*

THE WONDER CODE

a grackle  
in every tree  
random thoughts

*Catherine J. S. Lee*

the knife sharpener  
on his bicycle—  
falling leaves

*Kala Ramesh*



fallen leaves  
the child in her  
gives a kick

*Tom Painting*

leaves on the river—  
too old to call myself  
orphan

*Peter Yovu*

THE WONDER CODE

tai chi  
with my wife . . .  
morning glories open

*Randy Brooks*

evening rain—  
I braid my hair  
into the dark

*Penny Harter*

kindling  
no time like now  
for that first kiss

*Neal Whitman*

speaking my mind . . .  
a log tumbles  
out of the fire

*Melissa Spurr*

THE WONDER CODE

a boy's drum  
moves the dragon's feet  
New Year's Day

*Tom Sacramona*

ring of mountains  
elders walk the drum beat  
around a fire pit

*Victor Ortiz*

Shaker village:  
the clarity  
of birdsong

*Cherie Hunter Day*

blackbird song . . .  
the universe  
expands

*Claire Everett*

THE WONDER CODE

low winter moon  
just beyond the reach  
of my chopsticks

*Fay Aoyagi*

winter stars  
the fishing holes  
left behind

*Yu Chang*

one deep breath  
for a moment the pine  
is part of me

*Harriot West*

last cast  
a fisherman's breath  
becomes river mist

*Matt Morden*

THE WONDER CODE

heron in flight—  
the rowing coach  
claps out a rhythm

*Tanya McDonald*

oars in unison  
slicing the river  
slicing the moon

*Angela Terry*



new love  
still some green  
in these autumn leaves

*Naia*

Milky Way—  
maybe tonight  
I'll conceive

*Brenda J. Gannam*

THE WONDER CODE

morning moonlight . . .  
a raccoon teeters  
on the chain link fence

*Connie Donleycott*

roasting sun  
the egret's measured steps  
in buffalo shadow

*Adjei Agyei-Baah*

the big dipper  
my dog keeps searching  
for the right spot

*G. R. LeBlanc*

steam rising  
from the dog's pee  
witching hour

*Alice Frampton*

THE WONDER CODE

disappearing sun—  
the first bubble  
in the pasta sauce

*Dana Duclo*

a single bubble  
after the beaver dives  
the rising moon

*Jack Barry*

gibbous moon  
my ear on the curve  
of her belly

*Angelee Deodhar*

swollen moon—  
the sudden urge  
to push

*Francine Banwarth*

THE WONDER CODE

sweet peas  
tremble on the trellis  
the bride's "I will"

*Peggy Lyles*

honeymoon  
we wade into the current  
of a great river

*Kirsty Karkow*

nine-month belly—  
she slowly unwraps  
the heirloom crèche

*D. Claire Gallagher*

circle of lamplight—  
I complete the baby quilt  
begun for me

*Carolyn Hall*

THE WONDER CODE

faint stars . . .  
the cabby speaks  
of home

*Timothy Hawkes*

calls from listeners  
who've been through the same  
winter stars

*Marcus Larsson*



a sliver of moon  
the old bluesman  
breaks a string

*Ron C. Moss*

icicles . . .  
keeping time  
until the end

*Elizabeth Steinglass*

THE WONDER CODE

all the frogs  
in the snakes' aquarium  
staring at the sun

*Scott Metz*

hunter's moon  
the gator's eyes  
hold the light

*William Cullen, Jr.*

starry night  
the draught horse's shoes  
spark on concrete

*Martha Magenta*

steam museum—  
the carousel horse  
bares its teeth

*Sandra Simpson*

THE WONDER CODE

sparrow's flicker the gradual cat

*Robert Davey*

cats with other plans zen garden

*Laura Williams*

alleluias  
a trapped bird flutters about  
the church

*Gillena Cox*

piano practice  
leaves swirl  
allegro con brio

*Roberta Beary*

THE WONDER CODE

fresh bale  
the donkey sniffs  
a distant field

*Rick Tarquinio*

the taste of cider  
when fallen leaves begin  
to overlap

*Burnell Lippy*

mother mends her shawl  
with tobacco twine . . .  
curing season

*Curtis Dunlap*

setting sun  
my mother picks  
the last tomato

*Elizabeth Moura*

THE WONDER CODE

first  
in the last trash bag—  
the box it came in

*Stephen Amor*

emptying the trap . . .  
a pumpkin seed between  
the mouse's teeth

*Nathalie Buckland*



my baby's sigh  
the last colors  
of sunset

*Lynne Steel*

the spiral  
in a red hothouse rose—  
year's end

*Brent Partridge*

THE WONDER CODE

lingering twilight  
a water dragon's tail  
dangles in the pool

*Quendryth Young*

low tide  
the baby's foot hanging out  
of a buggy

*Jenny Fraser*

ONLY CONNECT

migrating whales  
all our footprints  
wash away

*paul m.*



# Afterword

Too much of a good thing can be wonderful.

MAE WEST

**Y**ears before Indiana Jones swapped a pouch of sand for a golden idol and outran an avenging boulder across the silver screen, my adolescent fascination with archeological exploits led me to early accounts of Machu Picchu, Knossos and the Valley of the Kings. In the last case I was captivated by a peephole moment recounted by Howard Carter (and attended by his patron, Lord Carnarvon) in his quest for the tomb of Tutankhamun:

At first I could see nothing, the hot air escaping from the chamber causing the candle flame to flicker, but presently, as my eyes grew accustomed to the light, details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals,

## AFTERWORD

statues and gold—everywhere the glint of gold. For the moment—an eternity it must have seemed to the others standing by—I was struck dumb by amazement, and when Lord Carnarvon, unable to stand the suspense any longer, inquired anxiously, “Can you see anything?” it was all I could do to get out the words, “Yes, wonderful things.”

Strange as it may seem, this passage has bubbled up from my subconscious a number of times in recent years in a whole new context.

As one of the editors of a quarterly haiku journal, I receive submissions every three months from dozens of poets worldwide. Apart from their family members or close friends I will be the first to see most of these poems. So when a cache of especially fine haiku appears in the glow of my computer screen at night, the excitement I feel will sometimes trigger my recollection of Howard Carter’s breathless words.

Have all my marbles been swapped for a bag of sand?

## AFTERWORD

I think not. It has been my good fortune to visit most of the amazing places I read about in my youth, and many more besides. These have been the experiences of a lifetime. But I've also been fortunate to discover, with haiku, an endless supply of more proximate wonders. These have been the experiences of a *life*. My life is far richer for the incomparable treasure of its accumulated haiku moments.

Such moments begin with everyday wonder . . . but where does wonder begin? I believe it begins with a *sense of discovery*: "We find only the world we look for." (Thoreau)

Haiku poets and their readers revel in what's found in nature, on their doorstep, or even closer at hand. All these discoveries originate with something "outside" the poet. The impulse to *share* such discoveries carries all the excitement of *Look what I found!*

The poet Billy Collins has observed that

. . . a very deep strain of existential gratitude . . . runs through a lot of poetry. It's certainly in haiku. Almost every haiku says the same thing: "It's amazing to be

## AFTERWORD

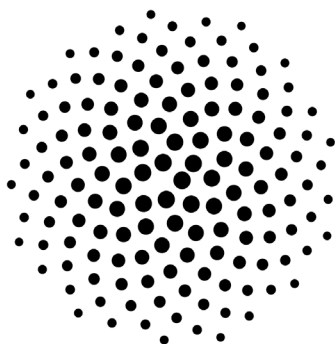
alive here.”

The unwavering outward gaze of haiku poetry—spawned by a sense of discovery and sustained by everyday wonder—is what I believe accounts for its unique appeal and life-affirming emotional uplift. With haiku we look beyond ourselves to recognize and appreciate the ground of our being. As Alan Watts noted, you did not come into this world, “you came *out* of it.”

Come see and experience that world with haiku eyes. Behold marvels small as well as large. Partake in a feast for all the senses. Come scale the peaks and plumb the depths of our truest feelings. Meet and even befriend the unexpected. And connect with the ultimate essence of which we are part.

Life awaits . . . may its wonder be with you.







# Solo Exhibition



Haiku by Scott Mason



HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

rosebud  
inside  
a private garden

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

one way  
into the labyrinth  
a maple key

cloister garden  
a bumblebee enters  
the flower's cup

THINK SMALL

once a tortoise  
how it cups  
the sun

near sunbathers  
driftwood  
nearly bleached

empty shell  
the wind intones  
my sins of omission

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

Blessing of the Fleet  
a ghost crab skitters back  
to the scupper

private beach community  
the circles in which  
dune grass moves

full moon  
one giant leap  
for a water strider



THINK SMALL

taking  
its sweet time  
stinkbug

kindly stopping  
for me  
mourning cloak

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

between fence rails  
an orb weaver  
graphing the breeze

trellis arcade  
a moth flitters back  
from the vanishing point

THINK SMALL

a ladybug  
out of nowhere  
we make up

once in frame  
the blue morpho  
folds its wings

old growth tree stump  
a millipede runs  
out of time

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

just-missed subway . . .  
the throbbing beat  
of two congas

train track clatter  
the conductor's punches  
contrapuntal

finally home . . .  
my car engine ticks  
to the stars

COME TO YOUR SENSES

homecoming  
the tree swing's wooden seat  
cushioned with moss

meteor shower . . .  
I dust off the grit  
of shingles

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

wet paint smell . . .  
gingerly touching the slats  
I just sat on

casting off . . .  
a dock splinter  
under my nail

COME TO YOUR SENSES

stitching the darkness  
the glint  
from a gondola's prow

silver moon  
the clapping of halyards  
on aluminum

midnight mooring  
the twinkle  
from her navel stud

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

spring bog a theory of everything

conch to my ear sonic boom

silver thimble her voice had a lilt



COME TO YOUR SENSES

bounding across  
the boulder field  
mountain thunder

rolling fields  
the vocabulary  
of sheep

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

upwind scent  
the long hang time of a whitetail  
leaping

salt water taffy  
a long line of cars on the bridge  
heading back

COME TO YOUR SENSES

a tall straw  
color drains  
from crushed ice

afternoon shadows . . .  
a topiary hippo  
slips into the pool

hunting lodge  
the soup stock  
packs a kick

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

epochs in the making  
the box canyon's  
sudden chill

record cold the clothespins inside

city heat wave . . .  
the wind-lifted flap  
on a bronze general's coat

COME TO YOUR SENSES

heirloom lace curtains—  
first light dapples  
the bassinet

setting sun—  
hillside hay bales  
hang by their shadows

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

plantation oak the reach of its shadow

where muskets once fired   milkweed fluff

FEEL THE MOMENT

spring peeper . . .  
all that remains  
of yesterday's thunder

skyscraper façades  
in the rose-colored twilight . . .  
what seemed possible

slave burial ground  
a mourning dove  
we can only hear

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

dune  
the parabola  
of a passing tern

beach in autumn  
the three-legged black Lab  
dog enough

lonely walk  
the sudden urge  
to throw a stick



FEEL THE MOMENT

catching the sun  
the majorette's  
dropped baton

plum blossoms falling . . .  
her fingers lift  
from the braille

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

first communion  
cherry petals  
in everyone's hair

unclipped forsythia  
all children  
can sing

FEEL THE MOMENT

forest canopy barely containing my awe

spring  
an airborne squirrel  
open-pawed

what more do I need starlings loop

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

call of a loon . . .  
cove light and shadow  
ripple in

estuary  
curving gently to the mouth  
of a swan

last day of summer . . .  
something indecipherable  
in the sand

FEEL THE MOMENT

wind-carved sand . . .  
I crumble a bayberry leaf  
to bring her back

she said she'd return  
as a seagull  
which one

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

we meet again . . .  
the brook swollen  
with yesterday's rain

enough said . . .  
her teaspoon  
stirs the rest

FEEL THE MOMENT

the faint melody  
of a carousel  
swirling leaves

the swirling blizzard  
abates . . .  
cat on my lap

snowbound  
the kaleidoscope  
stuck

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

first day of spring—  
from the church spire Gabriel  
musters one cloud

flash of lightning—  
Lady Liberty raises  
her torch to the sky

lunar eclipse  
our garden gnome starts  
to make sense



PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

jury deliberation . . .  
out the window  
a tangle of limbs

sculpture garden  
a spider web deep  
in cleavage

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

outhouse  
a spider descends  
and retracts

summit cairn  
the trail dog slowly  
lifts a leg

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

barely awake  
my first steps  
flush pheasant

sultry day  
a model sailboat slowly  
unzips the sky

Venetian canal—  
lifting fog reveals  
another mask shop

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

the sea lettuce  
on my face mask  
a late Matisse

Mott St. storefront  
the glazed look  
of a Peking duck

sudden cloudburst—  
Mona Lisa in chalk  
turns expressionist

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

sidewalk café—  
on the list of specials  
yellow tree pollen

West Side Story revival  
the subway grate  
claims one more stiletto

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

lost  
in the wilderness  
my cynic

ground fog  
I am certain  
of nothing

PREPARE FOR SURPRISE

nothing  
remains to be pruned  
zen garden

zen garden  
the furrows disappear  
from her brow

her hoop earrings  
tigers leaping  
to mind

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

passing through her snow angel nocturnal tracks

onshore breeze rippling through dune grass a fox

starlight harbored in shells washed ashore



ONLY CONNECT

summer moonglow  
the crescent  
of toe prints in sand

no escaping  
this moonlight—  
Pompeii

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

Amalfi sunrise  
a cluster of lemons free  
of the bird netting

dusk  
a crow  
bides its time

ONLY CONNECT

new moon  
the night watchman  
goes unseen

nocturne  
the French horn soloist's  
hidden hand

midnight mass  
the stained glass infant glows  
from within

HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

how deer  
materialize  
twilight

alfresco  
the sommelier decants  
a red sunset

late December evening  
a fox tail tapers  
to nothing

ONLY CONNECT

starry night  
the lifeguard stand  
tilted back

crescent moon . . .  
a horseshoe crab  
returns to the sea

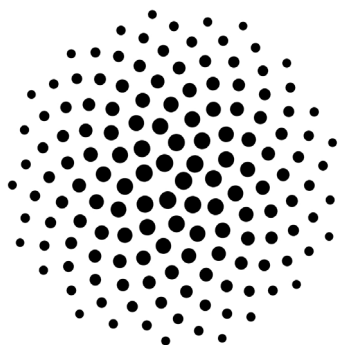


HAIKU BY SCOTT MASON

inchworm . . .  
how long it took to return  
to wonder









## Acknowledgments

Thanks must first go to the 285 poets whose haiku moments—all originally published in *The Heron's Nest*—have breathed fresh life in the preceding chapters and galleries. No one declined the opportunity to appear in this book, and the vast majority responded not only with graciousness but also with enthusiasm and even gratitude. I hope they will feel that my presentation does some justice to their poems.

My deep appreciation also goes to the scores of other poets I originally contacted but whose work I could not accommodate in the finished volume. Their absence from these pages has been my sole disappointment in this undertaking—and that absence is only due to the less obvious fit of their work with my ultimate themes, arguments or arrangements rather than the quality of those poems which was

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

uniformly high. The haiku community possesses a surfeit of talent.

And a true community it is. As widely dispersed as haiku poets may be, we are united as proud “amateurs” in the sense of that word’s original meaning—those who follow a personal interest, like the Way of Haiku (initial caps or not), for the love of its intrinsic values and rewards. I felt that spirit and sense of camaraderie when warmly welcomed to my first regional meeting of the Haiku Society of America (HSA) some fifteen years ago. That feeling has continued unabated through the years, not only at the quarterly HSA gatherings I’ve attended in New York but also at events like the one-day Haiku Circle in northern Massachusetts every June and the biennial Haiku North America conference at alternating locations around the U.S. and Canada. Many other such haiku events take place elsewhere. It’s always fun to meet people you first got to know and appreciate on the printed or electronic page . . . “Only Connect” in action!

I’ve also had the good fortune to be a part of two more intimate sets of haiku compatriots. One is the Spring Street Haiku Group, the eclectic and accom-

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

plished crew of poets I was invited to join a dozen years ago; we meet monthly in lower Manhattan to share both our latest poems and good cheer. The other is our team of fellow volunteer editors at *The Heron's Nest*—a “dream team” not only because we mainly communicate and commune through cyberspace but also because of my colleagues’ haiku experience and excellence, not to mention their unstinting generosity with our journal’s contributing poets and each other. I am proud of both associations. All of these involvements have deepened my appreciation of haiku and have paved the way to this book.

I would like to acknowledge five particular individuals from the haiku community who’ve been especially helpful to me in my haiku development, the refinement of this work, or both.

John Stevenson is a leading light in the world of English-language haiku and a recipient of the Sora Award for distinguished service to the HSA. As editor of *Frogpond, Journal of the Haiku Society of America*, he encouraged and assisted me in my early attempts at haiku just as he has done for many others. So when John succeeded Christopher Herold as managing editor

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

of *The Heron's Nest* in late 2007 and invited me three years later to join his team as an associate editor, how could I refuse? John and his haiku continue to enlighten and inspire me.

Peggy Willis Lyles, an associate editor of *The Heron's Nest* for eight years until her passing in 2010, was one of my editors at the journal before I became one myself. She too was a source of strong encouragement and gentle help. Peggy took the same role with many of her other “assigned” poets and was justly beloved for it. Her own book of haiku, *To Hear the Rain* (Brooks Books, 2002), ranks among my handful of favorite individual collections. Thanks go to Peggy’s husband Bill for his consent to use some of her poems here that date from the years just before she served as editor.

Michele Root-Bernstein first appeared on the haiku scene around the same time I did. Michele is a gifted scholar and author in the field of creativity studies, a very fine haiku poet, a former associate editor of *Frogpond* and the founder and leader of the Evergreen Haiku Study Group in her East Lansing, Michigan community. She is also a person I consider a valued confidant and friend. Her thoughtful and detailed feedback

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on my manuscript resulted in several critical improvements. For that, and for her friendship, Michele has my heartfelt thanks.

Michael McClintock's haiku have been a source of admiration and wonder for years (he enjoys equally high stature in the world of tanka poetry), so it was a thrill to discover that he would be one of my assigned poets when I joined the editorial team of *The Heron's Nest*. Michael's submissions regularly fall into the category of those I characterized in my Afterword. His early encouragement of this project, his careful review of the manuscript, and his kind words of praise mean more to me than my own words can adequately convey.

Cor van den Heuvel is both a pioneering and legendary figure in English-language haiku. More than anyone I know he has lived "a haiku life," so thoroughgoing has been his decades-long involvement with and dedication to the practice of haiku poetry. Best known as editor of *The Haiku Anthology* (more than forty years in print), Cor also co-edited *Baseball Haiku: The Best Haiku Ever Written About the Game* and he authored *A Boy's Seasons*, a book-length memoir in haibun (nar-

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

rative prose with haiku interspersed) depicting vivid experiences and impressions from his boyhood days in small-town northern New England. Among his assorted honors are the World Haiku Achievement Award (2000; London and Oxford, England) and the Masaoka Shiki International Haiku Award (2002; Matsuyama, Japan). Many of Cor's own poems have become classics, so his forthcoming book of selected haiku, from The Haiku Foundation, will be a welcome addition to an already towering legacy. I first met Cor at a New York regional meeting of the Haiku Society of America (which, like John Stevenson, he had once served as president) but I got to really know him through my involvement with the Spring Street Haiku Group of which he is a charter member. We've become good friends over the last twelve years. All that said, Cor is known not only for his sharp eye but also for his candor. So my response to his overwhelmingly positive reaction to my manuscript was first one of relief . . . and, only afterwards, pleasure! It has been a privilege and joy to know Cor.

All but two of my own haiku in this volume first appeared elsewhere. My thanks go to the editors of the following journals and books where nearly half of



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

those poems were originally published: *Acorn*, *A New Resonance 6* (Red Moon Press), *Blithe Spirit* (British Haiku Society), *Bottle Rockets*, *Cattails* (United Haiku and Tanka Society), *Fire in the Treetops* (Haiku North America anthology), *Frogpond* (Haiku Society of America), *Juxta Two* (The Haiku Foundation), *Modern Haiku*, *Muttering Thunder* and *The Heron's Nest*.

My remaining poems here were recognized in various haiku competitions; appreciation goes to the sponsors and judges of the following: Anita Sadler Weiss Memorial Haiku Award (Haiku Poets of Central Maryland), British Haiku Award (British Haiku Society), HaikuNow! Award (The Haiku Foundation), Harold G. Henderson Memorial Award (Haiku Society of America), IHS International Haiku Competition (Irish Haiku Society), International "Kusamakura" Haiku Competition, Janice M. Bostok Haiku Prize (*Paper Wasp*), Kaji Aso Studio International Haiku Contest, Katikati Haiku Contest, Kokako Haiku and Senryu Competition, Mainichi Haiku Contest, Manitou Shores Haiku Contest, Martin Lucas Award (*Haiku Presence*), NZPS International Poetry Competition (New Zealand Poetry Society), *Paper Wasp* Jack Stamm Haiku Competition, Penumbra Poet-

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ry and Haiku Contest (Tallahassee Writers Association), Porad Haiku Award (Haiku Northwest), Robert Frost International Poetry and Haiku Contest (Heritage House Foundation; The Studios of Key West), Robert Spiess Memorial Award (*Modern Haiku*), Suruga Baika Literary Award, The Betty Drevniok Award (Haiku Canada), VCBF Haiku Invitational (Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival), *Wild Plum* Haiku Contest and the Yamadera Bashō Memorial Museum English Haiku Contest.

Early versions of this book's manuscript were also shared with several discriminating readers outside of haiku circles as something of a "reality check." My profuse thanks are due the following individuals for their helpful feedback: Amy and Jim Galloway, Joe Plummer, Sally and Eric Rosenfeld, Deborah Schneider and Jim Tilley.

Lannie Hart is not just a dear friend but also the wonderful artist who produced the illustrations that begin each of this book's five haiku galleries as well as my "solo exhibition." Thank you, Lannie!

Finally . . . Carla Gambescia. How lucky I've been to share most of my adult life and passions with the brilliant, creative, fun-loving Carla. When it comes to

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

haiku and so much else, she is my biggest proponent—the aforementioned solo exhibition of my own haiku appears in this volume at her insistence. And Carla has always served as my first and best reader. In at least three places during the writing of this book she saved me from myself . . . but we needn't go into that here. Suffice it to say that *The Wonder Code* would not exist in its present form, or possibly even at all, were it not for Carla's encouragement and support. For that and for so much more I shall be ever grateful.



## Further Reading

Throughout *The Wonder Code* I've advocated the beneficial but also pleasurable regimen of reading and "assimilating" haiku on a regular basis. I would be remiss to leave matters there and not suggest some next steps (and stops) beyond these pages. So here you will find a starter's list: thirteen worthwhile destinations along the Way of Haiku. May they represent just the next stage in your never-ending journey of wonder.

### Haiku on the Internet

*The Heron's Nest* ([www.theheronsnest.com](http://www.theheronsnest.com)) – Would you expect me to start elsewhere?! As it happens, the Archives link on this site will bring you to what may be the most extensive collection of quality English-language haiku now readily accessible at any one place on-

## FURTHER READING

line—approaching 10,000 poems. [This was the source of the haiku used in the preceding chapters and their galleries.] But first be sure to check out the current quarterly issue. It begins with three “Editors’ Choices” immediately followed by a commentary—written by a member of the editorial team—on the first of those poems. Annual print editions are also available for purchase from the site.

The Haiku Foundation ([www.thehaikufoundation.org](http://www.thehaikufoundation.org)) – Launched at the start of 2009 by American haiku dynamo Jim Kacian, owner of Red Moon Press, The Haiku Foundation website is a cornucopia of all things haiku-related. Just have fun exploring. (For instance, its “Book of the Week” archive contains dozens of individual author haiku collections.) This is an indispensable resource featuring fresh content daily.

*A Haiku Workshop with Quendryth Young* ([ssoa.com.au/books/poetry/haiku-workshop-quendryth-young](http://ssoa.com.au/books/poetry/haiku-workshop-quendryth-young)) – If you’re interested in trying your own hand at writing haiku I could think of no better place to start than this incisive yet friendly free download from Australian

## FURTHER READING

poet Quendryth Young, courtesy of the Sydney School of Arts & Humanities. Haiku-writing guidelines are illustrated with a generous helping of Quendryth's own fine poems.

Graceguts ([www.graceguts.com](http://www.graceguts.com)) – This is the personal website of Michael Dylan Welch, a leading haiku poet, cofounder of Haiku North America, haiku ambassador-at-large and prolific essayist. A good place to begin might be the starred links on its Essays page.

## Haiku Journals

*Modern Haiku* ([www.modernhaiku.org](http://www.modernhaiku.org)) – Established in 1969, *Modern Haiku* is the longest-running journal of haiku poetry and related forms (plus essays, book reviews and more) in the United States. A must-subscribe choice for any English-language haiku enthusiast. Three issues a year.

*Frogpond* ([www.hsa-haiku.org/frogpond](http://www.hsa-haiku.org/frogpond)) – Started in 1978, *Frogpond* is the “Journal of the Haiku Society of America” and comes with membership in that organi-

## FURTHER READING

zation. With comparable content, frequency and pricing to *Modern Haiku* this attractive journal offers an excellent value.

*Acorn* ([www.acornhaiku.com](http://www.acornhaiku.com)) – A semiannual journal that has published only haiku (no essays, reviews or other haiku-related content) since 1998, *Acorn* is a favorite of English-language haiku aficionados. Two other niche offerings of note are *Mayfly* ([www.brooksbooks-haiku.com/mayfly](http://www.brooksbooks-haiku.com/mayfly)) and *Bottle Rockets* ([www.bottlerocketspress.com](http://www.bottlerocketspress.com)), launched respectively in 1986 and 2000.

## Haiku Anthologies

*The Haiku Anthology* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1999) – The third edition of Cor van den Heuvel's pioneering and now classic English-language haiku anthology, first published in 1974, features many of the finest North American haiku written in the second half of the twentieth century.

*Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2013) – This chronological survey in-



## FURTHER READING

cludes the “most original contributions” to English-language haiku from 235 poets beginning with Ezra Pound in 1913, as well as an engagingly thoughtful introduction by poet Billy Collins and a well-researched historic overview by editor-in-chief Jim Kacian.

*Where the River Goes: The Nature Tradition in English-Language Haiku* (Snapshot Press, 2013) – Edited by Allan Burns and produced by British haiku poet John Barlow’s excellent Snapshot Press, this themed anthology features generous haiku selections from just forty poets, plus related text. To quote from the end of my own review of this volume in *Frogpond*: “All things considered, I regard *Where the River Goes* as the finest book of and about haiku to emerge so far this century.”

## Other Haiku Books

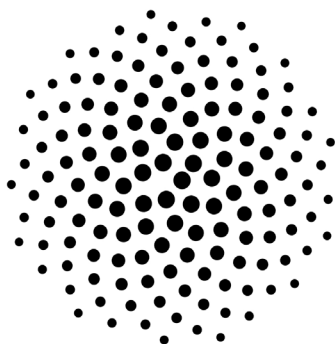
*Haiku, Volume 1: Eastern Culture* (The Hokuseido Press, 1949, 1981) – This book by British scholar R. H. Blyth—along with its three companion volumes focusing on seasonally arranged and annotated Japanese haiku—was the first to truly engage Westerners with the sub-

## FURTHER READING

ject of haiku. Blyth's insights still feel fresh after nearly seven decades and this volume remains a touchstone for serious students of haiku.

*The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Teach, and Appreciate Haiku* (Kondansha USA, 2010) – The intrigued haiku reader and aspiring haiku poet will learn much about haiku history, craft and practice from this 25th Anniversary Edition by William J. Higginson (with Penny Harter).

*Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford University Press, 1998) – As a new haiku poet I asked Peggy Lyles for some reading suggestions and this was one of them. Professor Haruo Shirane's impeccable scholarship and fascinating insights will be transformational for those with a deeper interest in haiku.





# Notes

## Book Epigraph

The beginning of our happiness – Heschel, Abraham  
Joshua, *Radical Amazement* [[www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=1080](http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=1080)]

## Introduction

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Yes I think to myself – From “What a Wonderful World,”  
written by Bob Thiele (as “George Douglas”) and  
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- 2 Haiku is the final flower – Blyth, R. H., *Haiku, Volume 1: Eastern Culture*, The Hokuseido Press (Tokyo, 1981), p. 5

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- 4 In his seminal essay – Emerson, Ralph Waldo, *Nature*, James Munroe and Company (Boston, 1836), p. 5

### Chapter 1: THINK SMALL

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- 10 When one of his followers – Ueda, Makoto, *Modern Japanese Poets and the Nature of Literature*, Stanford University Press (Redwood City, 1983), p. 298
- 12 The moon and the sun – Suzuki, Daisetz T., *Zen and Japanese Culture*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, 1959), p. 238
- 13 As pioneering haiku translator and commentator – Blyth, R. H., p. 21
- 14 If we can convert – Blake, William, “Auguries of Innocence” (1803)

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### Chapter 2: COME TO YOUR SENSES

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O plunge your hands – Auden, W. H., “As I Walked Out One Evening,” *Another Time: Poems*, Random House (New York, 1940)

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A study released by Deloitte – “2016 global mobile consumer survey: US edition” [[www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/global-mobile-consumer-survey-us-edition](http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/global-mobile-consumer-survey-us-edition)]

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screen-time-nielsen]

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The humble haiku – Blyth, R. H., p. 243

Years before the widespread use – van den Heuvel, Cor (ed.), *The Haiku Anthology*, W. W. Norton & Company (New York, 1999), p. xi

### Chapter 3: FEEL THE MOMENT

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With an eye make quiet – Wordsworth, William, “Lines



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- 107 Almost a century ago the critic – Rosenfeld, Paul, "Stieglitz," *The Dial*, April 1921 [key excerpts reprinted in Edward Weston on Photography, Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., Peregrine Smith Books (Salt Lake City, 1983), pp. 27–8]
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- 110 Wabi sabi's influence on Japanese aesthetic values – Juniper, Andrew, *Wabi sabi: the Japanese art of impermanence*, Tuttle Publishing (Tokyo, 2003), p. 2
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- 171 As Luna and Renninger observe – Luna, Tania and LeeAnn Renninger, PhD, p. 24
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[[www.avhumboldt.de/?p=6527](http://www.avhumboldt.de/?p=6527)]

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- 277 The poet Billy Collins has observed – “Billy Collins, The Art of Poetry No. 83,” (interview by George Plimpton), *The Paris Review*, Issue 159, Fall 2001
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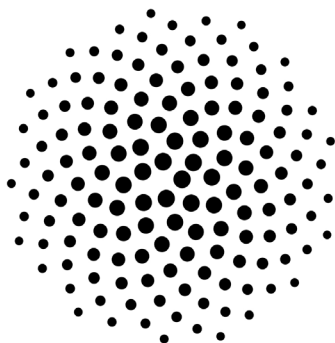
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## Praise for **The Wonder Code**

Ever since Blyth and Henderson published their groundbreaking translations and interpretations of Japanese haiku years ago many others have taken pen in hand to show how such a small form of poetry is able to create works that can move us more vividly and directly than longer ones. No one has been more successful than Scott Mason in this book.

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Michael McClintock, Founding President,  
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**SCOTT MASON** first learned about haiku poetry on a hiking trip in Japan. Since 2002 he has been the recipient of over 150 haiku awards, including first place finishes in more than 20 international competitions. Scott volunteers as an editor with the haiku journal *The Heron's Nest*.



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