

THE HERON'S NEST — VOLUME 12 (2010)



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VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1 – MARCH, 2010

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FEATURED POEMS

fishing village
a rumor of blues running
through the café

Jim Kacian

*

summer wind
we ask a younger couple
where we are

Marcus Larsson

*

winter sun . . .
I look for something useful
to do with my hands

Michael McClintock

HERON'S NEST AWARD

fishing village
a rumor of blues running
through the café

Jim Kacian

In the close-knit economy of a fishing village, news of bluefish running would generate a welcome rush of activity. Blues are important commercially and for sport. They migrate in sizable schools following baitfish and are likely to cause a stir wherever they show up along the world's coastlines. Their appearance brings the promise of good fishing for those who know how to outfight them, good eating for those who enjoy bold flavor, and prosperity for knowledgeable fishermen and the businesses that support them.

Through its rhythm and diction Jim Kacian's haiku communicates the electricity such news would set loose, while poetically suggesting significant undercurrents. The rumor of blues running is one village folk would want to confirm quickly. As readers we are momentarily surprised by the third line. We were ready to hear the run located north of the pier, or along the coast in the next county, or a mile or so out to sea. As we pause to accept the perfectly credible information that the rumor is running "through the café," we recognize "running" as a word that does double duty, referring simultaneously to the fish and the unverified report of their appearance. The poet has skillfully merged the characteristics of rumor and the nature of bluefish, and, by extension, he draws our thoughts to ways schools of fish and groups of human beings are alike and different.

Suddenly shadow poems swirl below the surface. The "blues" of depression, personal and economic, might spread through a fishing community as readily as good news.

Rumors can convey beneficial information or falsehoods as sharp-toothed and vicious

as the bluefish that may or may not be running nearby at the moment of the poem. And the haiku's musicality invites consideration of blues music, celebrating sadness and often based on the inhumane treatment of human beings by other human beings. Bluefish, after all, are ravenous predators and even cannibals.

Such shadows emphasize the positive energy buzzing through the café. Vitality, conviviality, and interdependence are all the more striking against the contrast of their opposites. For readers, "a rumor of blues" becomes a phrase to remember and run with.

— Peggy Willis Lyles
March 2010

POEMS

pulling
the “push” door
vernal equinox

Alan Bridges

*

the road disappearing
into wetlands of mist . . .
I keep going

Chen-ou Liu

*

the scent of turned earth
across seeded fields
twilight

Billie Wilson

*

hawthorn breeze
the white bob
of a rabbit’s tail

Katrina Shepherd

*

spring wind
our dog barks
where I’m hiding

Marcus Larsson

*

wildflowers
I cannot name
most of me

George Swede

*

twin lambs
the ewe keeps watch
over the one not moving

Myra King

*

her note
in my pocket
cherry buds

Stephen A. Peters

*

the best conversations
are in my head —
rain on the windowpane

James Chessing

*

May rain —
I stretch my body
over the whole bed

Carmi Soifer

*

choke cherries —
press of my skeleton
through the flesh

Judson Evans

*

thudding surf —
her permission
to be blunt

Jeff Stillman

*

sequoia national park
I promise my grandkids
they'll grow tall

Yu Chang

*

lifeless bumblebee —
the ground around it
darkens with raindrops

David Serjeant

*

hailstone
it tastes a little
of wild onion

Dan Liebert

*

anniversary
an old dress on the line
fills with wind

Ben Moeller-Gaa

*

gibbous moon
my son tells his part
of the story

Cherie Hunter Day

*

nursing blisters
at the halfway mark . . .
soft mossy rocks

Barbara A Taylor

*

cloudburst
the sound of raindrops
changing size

Susan Constable

*

summer night
my cat speaks to it
through a screen

Jennifer Gomoll Popolis

*

the desert stars —
I almost believe
his “forever”

Lorin Ford

*

a neighbor’s dog howls
with the sirens —
night heat

Jennifer Corpe

*

the ocean’s roar
on the forest hike
my second-wind

Connie Donleycott

*

dry thunder
one yellow leaf trickles
from all of the green

Jennifer Corpe

*

fluffy seed pods —
the evening air heavy
with party chatter

Adelaide Shaw

*

Death Valley:
a man who's never been there
tells me all about it

Collin Barber

*

as great
as the grizzly
the fear

George Swede

*

sand fishing
the long shadow
attached to his heels

Cynthia Rowe

*

your cologne
lingers on my skin . . .
day moon

Jo McInerney

*

summer's end
we topple a pyramid
of beer cans

Melissa Spurr

*

toddler's first
one small step
toward the moon in the window

Mathew V. Spano

*

autumn moonlight
a migrant worker sings
his way home

Melissa Spurr

*

smoke drifts
from a fajita stand
plaza autumn

Ann K. Schwader

*

the right shoes
in the wrong size
October moon

Glenn G. Coats

*

scent of balsam —
shapes of geese
held in the mist

Diana Webb

*

sheen of apples —
in a migrant child's lap
her own dirty feet

Andrew Riutta

*

my mother braiding my hair . . .
I realize now
how young she was

Bonnie Stepenoff

*

walking alone —
my face
disassembles

Hilary Tann

*

rushing home
as though you were still there
autumn dusk

Dru Philippou

*

autumn leaves
the songs we learn
as children

jennie townsend

*

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Barbara Snow

*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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Indian summer

Cindy Zackowitz

*

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my thinning hair

Temple Cone

*

Veterans Day —
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Ruth Holzer

*

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off the carrots —
Thanksgiving

Curtis Dunlap

*

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ink sinks deeper
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Greg Piko

*

squirrel chatter
in the woodshed
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Connie Donleycott

*

jade tea cup
the fallen leaves
of the poinsettia

Richard Krawiec

*

snow-covered hills —
my sister and I coast
into the New Year

hortensia anderson

*

winter moon
across the wall
my long shadow

Peter Macrow

*

city zoo
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at snow

Temple Cone

*

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I harvest all the balls
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Walter Franceschi

*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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*

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Neal Whitman

*

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Adelaide Shaw

*

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Bruce Ross

*

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*

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*

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to sing

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*

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*

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*

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*

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FEATURED POEMS

campfire sparks –
someone outside the circle
starts another song

Billie Wilson

*

unfazed
by my problems
the moon

Christopher Herold

*

horsetail clouds –
a biker shrinks
into the open miles

Chad Lee Robinson

HERON'S NEST AWARD

campfire sparks —
 someone outside the circle
 starts another song

Billie Wilson

Conjuring a nighttime scene of companions gathered in a warm circle of light, this lovely poem could be in the woods, in an open field, beside a lake, or on a seashore. I explore a familiar setting that, along with employing sensory pull, holds my attention with the suggestion of an unexpected moment of involvement. The haiku's rich layering allows me to enter it through multiple doors.

The careful wording and structure of "campfire sparks" creates rhythmical appeal, its content and musicality summoning voices of assorted ages joined in song: "Kumbayah"; "Greensleeves"; "You Are My Sunshine"; "Zum Gali Gali." Different readers will remember their own campfire favorites. The susurrations of essences call up a fire's hissing as it burns sap or damp parts of the wood. With the smell of smoke comes grease dripping from crisp hotdogs, the charred sweetness of marshmallows melted on the ends of sharpened sticks, the scent of grilled seafood.

The loaded word "sparks" is intuitively ideal. We are drawn to watch sparks from a fire, and the campfire itself sparks memory and emotion. This poem is about connections, as evinced by the last two lines. "Circle" is a key word, with connotations of belonging and safety and a reminder of the circle of life.

The second line creates a significant layer, and for me is the crux of the poem. What of the singer who is "outside the circle," someone who is apart from the close camaraderie, yet "begins another song"? It could be a visitor who until now was unsure about joining

the group, or some stranger simply walking past. Whoever the person “outside,” he or she is caught up in the mood, feeling a connection to the singers inside the circle, not wanting the moment to end.

Today as we gather around campfires in the great outdoors, we span generations. We bring families together, renew old friendships, and make new ones. Following the ways of our forebears, we celebrate societal and familial history through story and song. Several millennia ago, our ancestors huddled around campfires for protection against cold and predators. Eventually ritualistic gatherings near fire became a way to carry on spiritual and earthly tradition. Perhaps the campfires that were so vital to early humans are now part of our inherited, cellular memory. Anyone who has ever watched a fire until the ashes start to whiten around glowing embers has surely experienced the spell it casts, possibly a nostalgic one with yearnings for a time buried deep in the past.

Billie Wilson’s skillfully wrought poem, while clearly in the here and now, transcends time and distance, evoking treasured memories and a sense of welcome for someone outside this group of fellowship. I am grateful to her for sharing an experience that still reverberates, for inviting me into the circle.

— Ferris Gilli
June 2010

POEMS

traces of light —
the way back
to the stars

Gary Hotham

*

a bit drunk
the sea
softly crashing

Terry O'Connor

*

a perfect circle
drawn in the sand —
my hand trembles

Maralee Gerke

*

crescent moon
bare arms brush
evening primrose

Ashley M. Boutin

*

mallards drift
into the pickerelweed
lazy afternoon

Catherine J. S. Lee

*

creek crossing
her hand in mine
one rock at a time

Stephen A. Peters

*

she calls
to tell us she has news
dandelion breeze

C. William Hinderliter

*

red chili pepper
I compare her calendar
with mine

Fay Aoyagi

*

letting the day take me . . .
a sea otter
floats on its back

Greg Piko

*

low tide
the metal detector
misses sunset

Pat Tompkins

*

morning yoga —
the curve of a lizard
on the wall

K. Ramesh

*

thunderclouds
the soft boom
of a bittern

André Surridge

*

strewn mimosa
a carnival creature
snaps at the crowd

Matthew Paul

*

ripened corn
I write the last line
to my thesis

Aurora Antonovic

*

a cockroach
on the welcome mat . . .
motel dusk

Collin Barber

*

anywhere sun
finds the creek
water striders

Allan Burns

*

six o'clock news
I magnify the world
of a praying mantis

Fay Aoyagi

*

lunch hour —
a whisper of pigeon wings
enters the conversation

Tim Singleton

*

wasteland
the dandelion head
emptied of seeds

Cynthia Rowe

*

last night of summer
the old cat and I
go out with the stars

Ron Moss

*

new coolness
more neighbors know
my dog's name

Shimi

*

school desk
one name carved
deeper than the rest

Aubrie Cox

*

moonlit shadows
his hands find
my dark places

Francine Banwarth

*

no voice
but for the stones
autumn brook

paul m.

*

hazy moon —
Dad's walking stick
knocking in the trunk

Ruth Holzer

*

small-talk
a flock of starlings
settles on the fence

Christopher Herold

*

her due date
the apple at the tip
tilts the limb

Marilyn Appl Walker

*

corn husk dolls
she hardly remembers
the old place

Bill Pauly

*

Central Park
after a jogger
the pigeons regroup

Bill Kenney

*

autumn leaves
the river picks up
its pace

Michele Root-Bernstein

*

“Regrets . . . I’ve had a few”
too much apple
on the peel

Harriot West

*

colors change
telling jokes
in a foreign tongue

Michele Harvey

*

December sunset
the red inside
the mare’s thin coat

Jack Barry

*

withering wind . . .
a hurt with a name
I can’t pronounce

Janelle Barrera

*

Christmas dinner
the fifth burner
finally ignites

Mary Davila

*

a moonlit pumpkin field
in the rearview
she fixes her makeup

LeRoy Gorman

*

All Souls' Day
zombies return
to the costume shop

Alan S. Bridges

*

what's left of my faith:
light from one star
in a blue-black sky

Billie Wilson

*

firelight
the hiss and crackle
of an old LP

Ashley Rodman

*

December rain
the scooter bumps
room to room

Glenn G. Coats

*

a bare bulb
burning in the barn —
winter fields

John Soules

*

winter grasses
a break in our
interconnectedness

Hilary Tann

*

hallway light flickers —
I inch towards
the dead mouse

Marshall Bood

*

idling bus
the driver blows
into cupped hands

Bob Lucky

*

long talk
the sunny side of the street
has switched

Doug Kutney

*

cold ocean
moon shards leap
from waves to rocks

Edith Bartholomeusz

*

bedside watch
a barn owl shrieks
in the snowy spruce

Elizabeth Howard

*

winter morning
I shovel the drive twice
waiting for the hearse

Matthew Cariello

*

deep inside
the city's sound
winter crows

David McKee

*

snow moon
two porch chairs
facing each other

Chen-ou Liu

*

rusty gate
the beaten track
of its swing

Brendan Slater

*

nearly spring
a new facade
for the bridal shop

Joann Klontz

*

daffodils —
in first grade I played the one
in Jesus' garden

Brenda J. Gannam

*

small town garage
Miss December
nineteen ninety

Grant Savage

*

Navy housing
she plants her garden
in pots

Connie Donleycott

*

two steers
rub their heads together
morning chill

Susan Constable

*

sleety rain
the flowered umbrellas
sold out

Adelaide B. Shaw

*

spring greening
a teat for each piglet
but one

Carolyn Hall

*

hometown visit
an urge to go full tilt
across the speed bumps

Harriot West

*

spring dusk —
a camellia follows
the curve of the moon

Hortensia Anderson

*

deserted trail
my heart skips a beat
over a turtle

Audrey Downey

*

inside pitch —
learning to pronounce
new names

Merrill Ann Gonzales

*

morning prayers
her Hopi flutes stacked
in the sunflower can

Neal Whitman

*

hospital window —
a fingerprint against
the summer sky

Paul Hodder

*

long summer
another dog
snarls at me

Sandra Simpson

*

lily-of-the-valley
the effortless dance
of butterflies

Katrina Shepherd

*

Spanish guitar —
leaf shadows flicker
on the empty floor

James Chessing

*

on vacation —
the sound of the inn
settling

Deborah Fox

*

exam table
my feet sway
to an old song

Michele L. Harvey

*

hole in the footbridge
I spit
straight in my face

Artur Lewandowski

*

tumbleweed . . .
kids on bikes
in hot pursuit

Quendryth Young

*

neap tide —
gulls grubble for clams
in the mudflats

Kirsty Karkow

*

spent shotgun shells
our legs find the rhythm
of the tracks

Michele L. Harvey

*

shades of autumn
the gleaners come
in rat-grey coats

Lorin Ford

*

wave after wave
the godwits leave
for Siberia

Sandra Simpson

*

sunstreams
the donkey's neck stretches
into August barley

John Barlow

*

far away thunder
the polished rocks
in the river

Bouwe Brouwer

*

spirits
on the painter's brush —
autumn woods

Brent Partridge

*

sand covers
the salmon bones —
autumn begins

Cindy Zackowitz

*

teeth on its catch
the rasp of an otter's breath
autumn dusk

Grant Savage

*

Coat hanger rust
on his church shirt —
winter comes early

Rebecca Lilly

*

Veteran's Day
it whips the way
wet flags do

Amy Whitcomb

*

a rose hip
bright in the snow
Pearl Harbor Day

Yu Chang

*

Christmas Eve
searching for the beginning
of the Scotch tape

Alan S. Bridges

*

the red-deer herd
packed tightly together
winter sunlight

Matthew Paul

*

cut from driftwood
a cross stands
on the headland

Patricia Prime

*

the church fills
with smells of overcoats —
morning mist

Mark Lonergan

*

her small hand in mine
we scrape a rising tone
from the metal bowl

Ruth Yarrow

*

a misty halo
around the streetlight
smoking hoodies

Terry O'Connor

*

morning quiet
a thin skin holding
the yolk intact

Chad Lee Robinson

*

school closings —
the snowmen arrive
flake by flake

Curtis Dunlap

*

the second opinion
no worse than the first
Groundhog Day

Melissa Spurr

*

fat bellies
of sparrows
February's extra day

Burnell Lippy

*

winter sunshine
a cockroach also comes out
of the hole

Sasa Vazic

*

late-winter twilight
he comes home
without the dog

Francine Banwarth

*

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

Melissa Spurr

*

winter night
the slow circling
of the bar rag

Bill Kenney

*

finches flit
through dry stems —
winter shadows

Nathalie Buckland

*

waking
into absence
late winter

Ann K. Schwader

*

a snow goose
cups its wings to land —
curve of the shore

Warren Gossett

*

spring melt
the susurrations of water
in the tea kettle

Angelee Deodhar

*

scattered leaves
a chaplain flips the pages
of his prayer book

Roland Packer

*

glacial potholes
a shrike returns
to the cholla

Allan Burns

*

rainy night
the slam of his car door
brings a sigh

Lynn Edge

*

a row of dryers
twirling their contents
longer days

Cherie Hunter Day

*

churchgoers —
ice floes drift together
at the river's mouth

Kirsty Karkow

*

spring
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open-pawed

Scott Mason

*

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turning purple
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Bill Pauly

*

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nightfall

Michael McClintock

*

first warm day
the training wheels
come off

Jeff Stillman

*

spring breeze
it's just not the same
with open eyes

Tyrone McDonald

*

our house for sale
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that won't be mine

Michael Feinstein

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K. Ramesh

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FEATURED POEMS

a killdeer pretends
her wing is broken
the smell of cut hay

DeVar Dahl

*

summer day
a census taker pushes
the rusty bell

Fay Aoyagi

*

the slight hesitation
before our sails fill
summer's end

Lynne Steel

HERON'S NEST AWARD

a killdeer pretends
her wing is broken
the smell of cut hay

DeVar Dahl

DeVar Dahl shows us an actual behavior and contrasts it with a human perception. The sense of scent is somehow, at least sometimes, linked to deeper feelings. Even as sentient beings with abstract thinking and figurative language available to us, perhaps it is too simple to deny any type of species' memory, or instinctive memory. People have some reflexes built in: startle, eye blink, flight (getting away), pulling away from pain, aggressive display, etc. But to different smells? Do the odors of rain, fat in the fire, or new-mown hay dwell deeper than consciousness? Or, are they learned as our newborns learn the scent of exactly their own mothers?

A drive in the country, then the smell of hay or of a mower cutting grass, maybe with clover in it? These stimuli are all called up in the cluster of feelings from Dahl's haiku, nesting birds and what will be the first cutting of the hay field.

What is pure instinct, genetically transmitted species behavior, is the old "broken wing trick" performed by some field or ground birds. This defense of nest or young is conducted by ostriches to mallards, but especially plovers and grouse. The most numerous of these plovers in N. America may be the killdeer. They nest almost anywhere on the ground: meadows, cultivated fields, gravel roadsides, even golf courses. Their nestings range across Canada down to Baja, to Texas, and from New England to Florida. Some migrate, some do not.

I have seen this distraction display by a killdeer (named for their loud calls some say sound like *kill DEER!*) when I was just walking along dunes, and down a wood's path for the ruffed grouse. The female killdeer (or grouse) dances a very fine line between being killed or losing its eggs, new chicks.

The hay scent may come from a place nearby, or more ominously as a farmer sits on his tractor, actually haying. Is the nest coming up? The driver might lift his mower blade to miss the low nest if he sees it. Killdeer eat only bugs and lots of them, so farmers will like this kind of resident on their land. The wing-dragging may help it but for unintended reasons.

Ground birds depend totally on camouflage, even the eggs' coloring, and motionlessness. But at a certain point when a perceived predator gets too close, the performance starts. With cries and lots of fluttering, she explodes into motion. Acting very injured and edible to a fox, weasel, or raccoon, the bird tries to drag itself away, with a stiff wing that drags too. It hops, calls, carries on, but moves ever away from the nest/nestlings. The whole little bird (killdeer are about 10 inches long, wingspan of 21 inches) is like a matador's cape. Here one minute for the charge, and gone at the last second. A killdeer may never have met a threat before. I have watched foxes hunt mice and while they have no claws for attack, they have long jaws just packed with teeth. And, they can quickly and nimbly jump. The killdeer is taking a great chance. Eventually the predator gets too close to her or has been led far enough and, suddenly well, the bird flies away.

Thank you, DeVar, for two haiku images that so quickly take me to memory and sensation.

— Paul MacNeil
September 2010

POEMS

dried apricots
a comfortable silence
between us

Bob Lucky

*

the worn away paint
of canted boats . . .
geese winging in

John Barlow

*

aubergine clouds
a peacock's shriek
deepens the gloom

Elizabeth Howard

*

skillet rust
stains the sink . . .
whirling leaves

Chris Bays

*

overcast day
how does it go
that song about love

André Surridge

*

beach stones
the weathered softness
of old jeans

G. R. LeBlanc

*

autumn air . . .
the diminishing trail
of voices

Mary Davila

*

steady downpour
a Forever stamp
on the condolence card

Billie Wilson

*

autumn rain
buttoning the thirty-six
pearls on her gown

Diane Mayr

*

fog in the valley . . .
the cd she gave me
stutters

John Kinory

*

gray light
of the coming rain
a raven's cry

Ann K. Schwader

*

life alone
licking
the ladle

Owen Bullock

*

the full moon
above a field of snow
staying up a while

Greg Piko

*

deep winter
the sound of mail dropping
through the slot

Carolyn Hall

*

long winter
my wife slows her pace
to mine

Bill Kenney

*

she shows me
the first snow
a finger on her lips

Philip Miller

*

coffee to go
a dusting of sugar
in with my change

Joann Klontz

*

crow caws
a flow of sap
from the maple trees

Marjorie Buettner

*

long thaw
porridge putters
in a pan

Katrina Shepherd

*

almost spring
the lace of my running shoe
trips me again

Connie Donleycott

*

frosted grass
the new calves
butt heads

Glenn G. Coats

*

first day of spring
the murmuring pulse
of raven wings

Susan Constable

*

Coin in the mud
sinking deeper —
heads and tails

Lucien Zell

*

window warmth
flies that came in yesterday
want out

Christopher Herold

*

softly raining
this planet has so many
mouths, so many teeth

Peter Yovu

*

skies softening
the pond ice
breaks from shore

Jeff Stillman

*

spring flood
the ache
of old loves

Hilary Tann

*

barn swallows . . .
Pop leaves the door
open a crack

Wende Skidmore DuFlon

*

rope marks
on the mustang's neck
spring wind

Chad Lee Robinson

*

after the rain
smell
of childhood

Amelia Cotter

*

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

Grant Savage

*

a fisherman
on my weeping rock . . .
azaleas in bloom

Merrill Ann Gonzales

*

buttercups dot
the downland pasture —
capering rabbits

Matthew Paul

*

bee season
she asks me to listen
to her fruit trees

Kirsty Karkow

*

summer rain —
the potted plants
push against the glass

Robert Witmer

*

lilacs at dusk —
"ready or not
here I come"

John Soules

*

field of dandelions
thousands of wishes
going unused

Adelaide B. Shaw

*

billabong splash
the next turtle climbs
to the snag's tip

Lorin Ford

*

slicing papaya —
the swing
of her black pearls

Sandra Simpson

*

on her cheek
an eyelash darker
than her own

Francine Banwarth

*

longest day . . .
children fishing
for ant lions

Carolyn M. Hinderliter

*

black clouds
the rain barrel still full
of cobwebs

Francis Masat

*

shy girl
first to notice
the hummingbird's tongue

Bill Pauly

*

clear-cut forest
the way
no longer the way

Glenn G. Coats

*

sunset
comparing
bikini stripes
Helen Buckingham

*

monsoon wind
that touch of dust
on the rain scent

C. William Hinderliter

*

summer morning
a butterfly floats through
the teashop door

Bob Lucky

*

Mojave sunrise
a splinter swells
my fingertip

Eve Luckring

*

shirts versus skins
a vulture spirals
into the sky

Tanya McDonald

*

historic tour —
the guide points out buildings
no longer there

Alan S. Bridges

*

paddy fields . . .
a heron glides past
bent backs of women

K. Ramesh

*

the hills stir
with unmown hay . . .
summer dusk

Jo McInerney

*

faraway voices
fishing nets thrown
in the spotlight

Ron Moss

*

village pool
children beat sunlight
into stars

_kala

*

the attic . . .
my short-lived dreams
under the ceiling fan

Chen-ou Liu

*

road just paved —
a cucumber picker hoists
the wooden crate

Lenard D. Moore

*

starry night
my child makes
more than one wish

Stephen A. Peters

*

solar eclipse
the cat aroused
by settling birds

Cynthia Rowe

*

sandcastle
my child in
his own world

_kala

*

no longer lovers
the rosebush you gave me
has bloomed at last

Speranza Spiratos

*

strangler fig
the cooling shade
around me

Quendryth Young

*

night garden
all the births and deaths
that will go unrecorded

George Swede

*

virgin forest —
moonlight sinks into earth
with my pee

Ruth Yarrow

*

least bittern . . .
I hold the paddle tight
against the current

H. Gene Murtha

*

our passing breeze —
a do not disturb sign swings
on the hotel door

Gary Hotham

*

summer dusk
a white flag waves
from the tree house

Lorin Ford

*

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Curtis Dunlap

*

what we don't speak of —
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releasing him . . .
the bull trout's back
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Harriot West

*

drifted sand
over campfire ash —
summer's end

Nathalie Buckland

*

river gravel
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I once skipped

Alan S. Bridges

*

freeway drizzle
he helps his only daughter
move out

Victor P. Gendrano

*

October sunset
the glow of tomatoes
on the sill

Shane Robitaille

*

the mugo pine
gathers maple leaves . . .
my husband chose me

Billie Wilson

*

sweater weather
the tip of a cane
in the crosswalk

Scott Mason

*

gibbous moon
a paper cut
from Don Quixote

Jose del Valle

*

awakening
to the fly-off shuffle
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Gillena Cox

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Catherine J. S. Lee

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train rails
lead away from here —
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Scott Owens

*

not as funny
as it sounds
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Carlos Colón

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cold snap
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the room shrinks and grows
with every breath

Helga Härle

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the funeral director's
peppermint breath

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Quendryth Young
Alstonville, New South Wales, Australia

Peter Yovu
Middlesex, Vermont

Cindy Zackowitz
Anchorage, Alaska

Lucien Zell
Prague, Czech Republic

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FEATURED POEMS

ragged clouds
how it feels
to hold a rake

Robert Epstein

*

chicken wire
the softness
of the rabbit's nose

Yu Chang

*

labor day
the crease finally worked
into new shoes

Michele L. Harvey

HERON'S NEST AWARD

ragged clouds
 how it feels
 to hold a rake

Robert Epstein

The December *Heron's Nest* Award poem epitomizes the haiku potential for awakening recognition of a profound mystery within what seems most ordinary. Why do we do some things so automatically? With but nine words, "ragged clouds" has the power to enter the reader's psyche and evoke a sense of wonder. How can we just pick up a rake and rake?

A good haiku employs numerous tools and Robert Epstein's poem is an example of many. Economy of words, alliteration, use of kigo, internal rhyme, sensuous aesthetics and ambiguity combine to create the essence of haiku.

"Clouds" and "how" might ask a reader to determine the weather, and even though "cloud" is an all season kigo, "ragged" makes me feel autumn in my bones and its ever-changing sky. An amalgamation of "clouds" and "hold" makes "cold" and I immediately sense a bite in the air. The alliteration of "r" sounds almost says *brrr*, while the repetition of "h" signals *huff*, and I see white clouds of breath. Are the ragged clouds coming from my own mouth?

After clearing the yard for a time, I stop to admire my work. My arms lean on the rake for support as I rest and inhale the scent of churned leaves. Then I explore the smooth wooden handle. It's warm where my grip was: one hand high, the other halfway down, one pushing and one pulling. I actually notice for the first time the action of raking or

sweeping. How did we learn this movement as we grew up? How could we have practiced enough for it to become second nature?

Not long ago I visited my grandson, who is almost a year old. I watched him wield a toy hockey stick in play, imitating what he had already observed of the sweeping motion. Some actions (holding eating utensils, putting on clothing, or taking steps) we do daily, without thought, until maybe one day we can no longer do them. This haiku reminds me to appreciate the gift of all such abilities.

Other important attributes of good haiku are resonance, potential for multiple interpretations, and different layers of meaning. According to William J. Higginson's *The Haiku Handbook*, "the lack of connectives allows the images of a haiku to resonate with each other." The definite pause after "clouds," even without punctuation, separates the two parts of the haiku, while the emotional connection between them remains. Just as the layers of leaves are dragged away, so too are the layers of story. On a second reading, one might see a storm coming in those ragged clouds and during the fight or flight adrenaline rush might feel the rake handle slip and pull in an awkward manner. Thus the poet might require a re-grip. On a third reading, we may see a deliberate need to aerate the grass, removing the leaves first, so that the grass can breathe. And thus the ragged clouds are connected to the ragged edge of each grass particle and, once again, the ragged breath of the raker.

There is little need to say more. Each of you will find your own story in Robert Epstein's fine poem, and on behalf of the editors and all our readers I would like to thank him for sharing it with us.

— Alice Frampton
December 2010

POEMS

one leaf's
slow somersaults . . .
oh to start over

Peter Newton

*

grandad's story
candle light flickers
in the snakeskin's eye

Ron Moss

*

north wind
the holes
in my beliefs

Christopher Patchel

*

Valentine's Day
I divide
the orange segments

Gautam Nadkarni

*

he rolls a smoke
with blunt-tipped fingers . . .
huddled sparrows

Jo McInerney

*

winter sun
the spine of one book
out of line

Glenn G. Coats

*

a blizzard outside
I want to believe
what the preacher says

LeRoy Gorman

*

kindling
no time like now
for that first kiss

Neal Whitman

*

power breakdown —
a mother nursing
in the dark

Vasile Moldovan

*

canyon winds
pine cones skip
from cliff to cliff

Edith Bartholomeusz

*

auction day
dead leaves swirl
around the stone seat

Cynthia Rowe

*

wordless
in my borrowed tongue
plum blossoms

Chen-ou Liu

*

unseasonal heat
a woodpecker
and its ideas

Fay Aoyagi

*

a blossom
in the bird bath
sunny side up

Quendryth Young

*

mind chatter —
interrupted
by wildflowers

G. R. LeBlanc

*

narrow sidewalk
I'm under her umbrella
for a moment

Walter Franceschi

*

first sumi-e
my apologies
to the bamboo

Yu Chang

*

each needle
on the saguaro
first light

Ann K. Schwader

*

stray thoughts
a butterfly probes
the netting

Michele Root-Bernstein

*

a handstand
just to see if I can —
honeysuckle

Susan Antolin

*

Cinco de Mayo —
losing my daughter
to the dance floor

Carlos Colón

*

temple steps —
a man with a snake
offers to tell my future

Sonam Chhoki

*

Mother's Day
I cut the long white root
from a carrot

Carolyn Hall

*

deep in thought
the pitcher plant
wide open

H. Gene Murtha

*

warm day
a koi sways
on her fan

Connie Donleycott

*

still not tired
to give —
apricot tree

Heike Gewi

*

a moment alone
in the desert of Iraq
her damaged photo

Earl Moore

*

butterfly garden . . .
a big voice answers
a small one

Francine Banwarth

*

the day begins
descendants of dinosaurs
darting, singing

George Swede

*

near the mountain top —
the wind doesn't stay
on the path

Gary Hotham

*

Sunday afternoon —
end of a dog's leash
whipping through the grass

Jennifer Gomoll Popolis

*

the long heron a-a-wk
toward a tree . . .
middle of my daydream

Carmi Soifer

*

tail-flicking cattle
mired mid river . . .
the heat

Jeff Stillman

*

loons scattering . . .
a floatplane touches down
into summer

Michael Dylan Welch

*

moonlit grass
and black shapes of cattle
a distant flute

Angelee Deodhar

*

street fair —
easy to find
the balloon man

Adelaide B. Shaw

*

road-testing
her electric car
the silence of stars

Helen Buckingham

*

chilies roasting . . .
the old pickup truck
backfires

Jerry Foshee

*

getting acquainted
our children
fight over a seashell

John Kinory

*

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*

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*

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*

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and beach sand

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*

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*

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in a bottle

K. Ramesh

*

robbing the bees
she speaks of
lip balm

Curtis Dunlap

*

city park
sun getting low
in the bottle

Grant Savage

*

deep in the cedars
walking to the jingle
of our bear bells

Amelia Cotter

*

rib shadows
on a loping coyote
a field of cut hay

paul m.

*

releasing
the day's only catch
summer slips away

Jeff Stillman

*

autumn afternoon
in the cemetery
every bench taken

Marilyn Potter

*

river washed stones
remembering a woman
who knew how to love

Greg Piko

*

dry grass
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in the tea pitcher

Bob Lucky

*

summer's end
a crawdad's firm grip
on hotdog bait

Carolyn Hall

*

shallow river
the boat
at dragonfly speed

Jennifer Corpe

*

garden bench
my warmth left
for the autumn rain

Grant Savage

*

deep night
clocking the moon
by the pine

Francine Banwarth

*

fall morning
men move lumber
from pile to pile

Joanna M. Weston

*

moonless night
the wet trash bags
reflect the stars

Victor Piñeiro

*

shallow stream
the leaf that bumped my ankle
drifts on

Christopher Herold

*

late afternoon
liquidamber leaves
in the hamper

Gavin Austin

*

sunlit moon
the whiskey shines
between sips

Collin Barber

*

autumn equinox
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from both sides

Marsh Muirhead

*

cicada husk
on the campus sidewalk —
sound of the fountain

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slow over reed plumes
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*

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Billie Wilson

*

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*

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through the pines
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*

memories
the soot
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*

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*

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*

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Marshall Bood

*

January
the wind ruffles
walking crows

Vladislav Hristov

*

night crossing —
 salt spray rises
up through the anchor hole

Michael Dylan Welch

*

taking his leave
in a winter dream
my oldest friend

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*

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Susan Constable

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a bouquet of weeds

LeRoy Gorman

*

April playground
only the teacher
wears a coat

DeVar Dahl

*

swollen river
a jacaranda bud
in the child's palm

Ron Moss

*

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with anchovies

Fay Aoyagi

*

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for sidewalk dining —
a waitress pulls weeds

Robert M. Hopkins

*

gray tree frogs
calling from the ditch —
wrong side of the tracks

Jeff Hoagland

*

up the mountain
the dog brings
his own ball

Aubrie Cox

*

starry evening
I can still
make you laugh

Marcus Larrson

*

river narrows
the pitched call
of an osprey

paul m.

*

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she picks the flowers
out of her salad

Diane Mayr

*

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Katrina Shepherd

*

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Dietmar Tauchner

*

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George Swede

*

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Patricia Prime

*

longest day
dipping cornbread
in buttermilk

Thomas Martin

*

heat wave
a fly moves slowly
away from my swat

Deb Baker

*

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the sun goes down
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Ruth Holzer

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MEMORIAL PAGES FOR PEGGY WILLIS LYLES

IN MEMORY OF PEGGY

In 2002, the same year I invited Peggy to become a Heron's Nest editor, she invited me to write an introduction to her forthcoming book, *To Hear The Rain*. I was delighted, having greatly admired Peggy's haiku for many years. In my introduction, I chose several poems from the collection to illustrate her virtuosity. Peggy has now flown from The Nest and from the world of nests: her family and many, many friends. Though she will remain in our hearts, mine aches with loss while at once it celebrates all she left for us. In tribute, I offer lines from three of Peggy's poems that I chose to introduce her book, adding to them a few of my own words, with deep respect and gratitude:

a layer of blue silk
the cloudless void
she leaves

cold wind
The Heron's Nest
one desk short

gone
the **hand** we reached for
when **in the dark**

I miss you, Peggy. The grace with which you lived your life will forever inspire mine.

Christopher Herold

MEMORIAL POEMS

autumn moon
turtle crawls
in the sand

Robert Bauer

*

a handful of coins
tossed for love; magic shifts
in the river depths
where a shaft of sunlight finds
the diving goldeneye

Ferris Gilli

*

September mist —
someone
I've lost

Paul David Mena

*

summer clouds . . .
the steps to the lighthouse
are painted blue

Alice Frampton

*

sweet magnolia
Spanish moss leans
with the breeze

Paul MacNeil

*

more darkness
more stars . . .
autumn begins

John Stevenson

*

A voiceless cicada
quivers on the reed by
the heron's nest

Tadao Okazaki

*

flowering briefly
you
and the spider lily

Carlos Colón

*

the poet
sings a new song
sound of rain

Sheila Windsor

*

birdsong
a clothesline
dripping light

Yu Chang

*

shore for the poet,
shore for the poet's work,
water lily fragrance

vincent tripi

*

Round and beautiful
the moon breathing with cut grain
slowly moves westward

Horst Ludwig

*

autumn
the Great Blue
gone from the marsh

Karen Klein

*

familiar hymns
prayers worn deep
in the wood

Glenn G. Coats

*

sunlit hilltop
she gently sets down
her daisy chain

Scott Mason

*

school closed
fireflies gather
under the willow

William Cullen Jr.

*

this lambent light
over autumn fields
southbound geese

Billie Wilson

*

morning glories,
butterflies,
were they not right here?

Janelle Barrera

*

no last goodbye
so soundlessly the turtle
returns to the sea

Carolyn Hall

*

reading her poems
the stillness of hummingbirds
in flight

Kate MacQueen

*

wind-borne seed . . .
I have
no doubt

Christopher Patchel

*

a beach dune
drops a little sand . . .
the autumn stars

Michael McClintock

*

twilight beach —
a full moon rises from
the darkening sea

Penny Harter

*

late summer
one floating leaf
already red

Hilary Tann

*

late summer clouds
a light breeze rustles
white hydrangea

Bruce Ross

*

first frost
golden foliage holds
the sunlight

Quendryth Young

*

a faint silver line
arches the night sky . . .
moonbow!

Kala Ramesh

*

gray summer sky
seed-beads sparkle
on a blue silk thread

Connie Donleycott

*

a final splash
while the light holds . . .
golden shafts

Barbara A. Taylor

*

clear sky
how much she loved
the color blue

Cherie Hunter Day

*

the first night
the bright star's
below the horizon

Allan Burns

*

news of her death
on the night table
the book unsigned

Roberta Beary

*

hummingbird flight
the swiftest movements
are invisible

Margarita Engle

*

the last
stair step —
breathing the sky

Eduard Tara

*

an empty chair
beside me —
crickets' requiem

Fay Aoyagi

*

softly at first
on a swollen wind
voices in the rain

Ron Moss

*

harp music . . .
wild pear blossoms
in the teacher's window

Maria Steyn

*

ebb tide beach
so much to be treasured
left behind

johnny baranski

A SELECTION FROM THE HERON'S NEST POEMS OF PEGGY WILLIS LYLES

September '09 Williams Memorial

Walden absorbs
a fallen oak —
the cold, damp hush

*

December '08 Higginson Memorial

blue dragonfly
pine needles cover
the narrow path

*

December '06 Porad Memorial

quick brushstrokes
while the light holds —
crickets

*

March '05 Lamb Memorial

a ripple
reaches the pond's edge —
daffodils

*

December '05 Kilbride Memorial

turning tide
the river goes
from gray to blue

*

September '03 Kylan-Jones Memorial

dark afternoon
hydrangeas drying
upside down

*

February '02

birdsong
through open windows —
he lifts the veil

*

March '02

mother's scarf
slides from my shoulder . . .
wild violets

*

October '01

lingering heat
the third-grade classroom
one desk short

*

December '01

Indian summer
a turtle on a turtle
on a rock

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS FOR 2009

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OVERVIEW

The Editors and Web Master of The Heron's Nest are pleased to announce the results of the Readers' Choice Awards for favorite poems and poets featured in Volume XI, 2009.

A record 123 voters provided us with their top ten poems from Volume XI. We are very grateful indeed that so many readers took the time to revisit the 492 eligible poems we published last year (in addition to memorial poems for Paul O. Williams and D. Claire Gallagher) and made their top selections known to us.

The print edition of Volume XI, to be mailed in April, will include the contents of all four quarterly issues, the entire awards report, with commentary, a section of special mention poems, and a generous sample of comments by readers on individual poems and on the voting process, plus winning entries from the illustration contest.

And now on to the results!

FAVORITE POEMS

GRAND PRIZE: POEM OF THE YEAR
(18 votes totaling 131 points)

mile high . . .
adding my breath
to the clouds

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Jim Kacian (March Issue)

FIRST RUNNER-UP

(13 votes totaling 106 points)

Milky Way —
maybe tonight
I'll conceive

Brenda J. Gannam (December issue)

SECOND RUNNER-UP

(13 votes totaling 104 points)

graveside —
my breasts
leaking

Nora Wood (March issue)

THIRD RUNNER-UP

(14 votes totaling 86 points)

honeysuckle
where you first hear
the river

Burnell Lippy (September issue)

Other popular poems:

85 points: "what do I know" - Yu Chang - March

73 points: "spring morning" - Christopher Herold - March

70 points: "bearing down" - Yu Chang - June

63 points: "first night out" - Laryalee Fraser - September

59 points: "cinnamon toast-" - Jennie Townsend - March

57 points: "mountain lake" - Yu Chang - March

56 points: "trail dust" - Harriot West - December

55 points: "caught" - Vladislav Vassiliev - June

53 points: "leaden sky" - Carolyn Hall - March

51 points: "first frost" - Beverley George - September

50 points: "we talk . . ." - George Swede - December

49 points: "roaring wind" - Tom Clausen - September

Altogether, 347 poems garnered points.

POPULAR POETS

This category represents the total number of points awarded each poet for their entire body of work in Volume XI. The most poems an individual can have accepted in The Nest each year is eight. Obviously, the more poems a person publishes, the greater chances he or she has of attracting votes. Two poets had eight poems published during 2009 and two poets had seven. While this is always a factor in the final results, perhaps it was somewhat less so this year, as witnessed by the fact that the two poets topping the list have very clear voting margins and some other top voted poets achieved that result with many fewer poems.

To put into perspective how well the winners did: the average total points for combined works this year was 29.

GRAND PRIZE: POET OF THE YEAR

(52 total votes for 7 of 7 poems = 314 points)

Yu Chang

FIRST RUNNER-UP

(23 total votes for 3 of 4 poems = 174 points)

Nora Wood

SECOND RUNNER-UP (TIE)

(22 votes for 4 of 5 poems = 146 points)

Christopher Herold

SECOND RUNNER-UP (TIE)

(21 votes for 2 of 2 poems = 146 points)

Jim Kacian

We would also like to commend the following poets for garnering well over the average total point score of 29:

Brenda J. Gannam : (3 of 3 poems received votes totaling 121 points)

Burnell Lippy : (2 of 2 poems received votes totaling 109 points)

Glenn G. Coats : (5 of 6 poems received votes totaling 104 points)

Sandra Simpson : (7 of 8 poems received votes totaling 102 points)

Lorin Ford : (6 of 6 poems received votes totaling 102 points)

Carolyn Hall : (5 of 5 poems received votes totaling 101 points)

Jo McInerney : (3 of 3 poems received votes totaling 99 points)

Harriot West : (4 of 4 poems received votes totaling 95 points)

John Barlow : (8 of 8 poems received votes totaling 94 points)

Chad Lee Robinson : (6 of 6 poems received votes totaling 89)

Bob Lucky : (4 of 5 poems received votes totaling 89 points)

George Swede : (2 of 2 poems received votes totaling 83 points)

Jennie Townsend : (3 of 4 poems received votes totaling 77 points)

Marcus Larsson : (3 of 5 poems received votes totaling 75 points)

Quendryth Young : (2 of 4 poems received votes totaling 74 points)

Laryalee Fraser : (3 of 3 poems received votes totaling 70 points)

Curtis Dunlap : (4 of 5 poems received votes totaling 70 points)

Collin Barber : (4 of 5 poems received votes totaling 70 points)

Michael McClintock : (5 of 5 poems received votes totaling 69 points)

Fay Aoyagi : (2 of 4 poems received votes totaling 69 points)

Altogether, 189 poets received votes.

Congratulations to all contributors to Volume XI. Reading through the poems again, I was struck by our good fortune in being honored to publish some of your best work!

John Stevenson

2010 ILLUSTRATION CONTEST RESULTS

We are pleased to announce the results of this year's illustration contest.

Congratulations to those whose work has been selected and our deep appreciation for everyone who has offered their work. We received over two hundred images this year. It was truly a pleasure to see so much creativity and beauty.



Front Cover: Ron Moss



Back Cover: John Kinory



Spring: Sandra Simpson



Summer: Stefanie Lamb



Autumn: Claudia Brefeld



Winter: Mary Davila



Overview: Michele L. Harvey



Readers' Choices: Merrill Ann Gonzales

ABOUT *THE HERON'S NEST*

*where tradition and innovation meet ...
and complement each other*

PHILOSOPHY

It is our intention to present haiku in which the outward form of each poem has been determined by two important elements. The primary element is the poetic experience, faithfully and uniquely evoked in words. The second element helps to shape the first; it is the poet's knowledge and respect for traditional haiku values. When well balanced these elements result in work that is distinctively and unmistakably haiku.

"Poetic experiences" are those which inspire us to express ourselves creatively. "Haiku values" are the traditional underpinnings, both Japanese and Western, by which haiku sensibility has evolved into what it is today, and which will continue to shape haiku traditions in the future. There are many ideals equated with each of the various haiku forms. No one poem can embody all, or even a majority of these ideals. Each of us must decide for ourselves what is important in the writing and appreciating of haiku

STAFF

Christopher Herold, founding editor
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Alice Frampton, associate editor
Ferris Gilli, associate editor
Paul MacNeil, associate editor
Robert Bauer, webmaster and contributing editor

TECHNICAL NOTE

This volume is a 2024 reproduction of an issue from 2010 and may contain errors of transcription or typography. For current information about the journal and staff, and more recent issues, please visit us at <https://theheronsnest.com>.