

THE HERON'S NEST — VOLUME 2 (2000)



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TECHNICAL NOTE

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FEATURED POEMS

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

John Crook

*

leafless trees
and beyond them leafless trees
and the highway

Leatrice Lifshitz

*

the bobcat
the doe
only my eyes move

Laurie Stoelting

HERON'S NEST AWARD

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

John Crook

The world is overspread with people and somehow each of us must find ways to survive. Long ago humanity discovered that gathering into groups was effective protection from predatory beasts. Then groups began to wage battles against one another in order to preserve their respective families, territories, societies and belief systems. War is ever so ancient and always tragic.

Most countries have declared a certain date upon which those who fought and died to preserve national interests and traditions are to be gratefully remembered. In England this day is called Remembrance Day, the equivalent of Memorial Day in the United States.

John Crook's haiku about Remembrance Day is one of sadness and impermanence. From the beginning we have been fragile in our relationships, and from the beginning weather has affected our efforts to survive. The rain in this poem reminds us that we are vulnerable to the forces of nature. The bugle reminds us that we are vulnerable to each other.

Upon first reading, I wondered where the poet was when he witnessed the ceremony. He may have been passing by. Perhaps his home is situated close to a war memorial, or maybe he was watching the service on television. After visualizing several possibilities I realized that the poem is effective no matter what the point of perspective. I like to

imagine that John Crook was actually in attendance, and that the event took place at the grave of an unknown soldier.

As the ceremony draws to a close we hear the first clear notes of taps. They slice through the raindrops drumming on a sea of umbrellas. Until now the mood has been somber. For many the remembered wars seem remote. Halfway through taps a note wavers in the rain-heavy air and all at once we are overwhelmed with emotion. Was the bugler irrepressibly moved by the gravity of the moment, or did the weather actually have an effect on that long thin note? It doesn't really matter; with empathy we go straight to the heart of the moment: life—and the recollection of monumental sacrifices made in the attempts to preserve it.

In good measure this haiku's emotional power is realized by attenuating our perception of time. The first line, "Remembrance Day—" is the Sunday nearest the eleventh of November, an autumn image that serves to set up the overall frame of reference. The second line implies location (probably a cemetery), and narrows time to a few sustained musical notes. The third line not only intensifies the atmosphere but fine-tunes the moment, focusing our attention on the waver within a note. It is through this waver that the full impact of the experience is released, increasing the emotional tension to the point of tears.

Thanks go to John Crook for so expertly sharing this poignant experience.

— Christopher Herold
January, 2000

POEMS

Christmas Eve–
the monk's frosted window
kindles a star

H. F. Noyes

*

low clouds
Orion's feet
disappear

Jason Sanford Brown

*

clouds of a cold front
the star I'd been wishing on
winks out

Yvonne Hardenbrook

*

leather gloves–
in the rafters a barn owl
closes its eyes

Alex Benedict

*

white cat
moving her black kitten
moonlit snow

Matthew Louvière

*

dark woods-
 an owl glides out
into moonlight

Doris Thurston

*

dirt road
coyote skins draped over
a snowy fence

Debi Bender

*

winter rain
tied to the gate
a yellow balloon

Dean Summers

*

new winter moon
three star magnolia blossoms
lend their light

Peggy Lyles

*

winter night
my cat
kneads me

Jerry Judge

*

cold sky
a trolley headlight
cresting the hill

paul m.

*

cold morning rain-
a poor man takes a doll
from the trash bin

Zoran Doderovic

*

snowmelt
in the stump's hollow
a sparrow bathes

Emily Romano

*

concrete carport
a swallow fledgling peeks
from its mud nest

Francine Porad

*

across the street
a gust of wind glistens
with ginkgo leaves

Alice Benedict

*

bitter wind–
a withered hops vine
curled around the trellis

Cindy Zackowitz

*

gathering winter violets
a helicopter shadow
stops my hands

Naomi Brown

*

night rain–
the small serrated song
of a frog

Ferris Gilli

*

designing ripples
in the sunlit fountain
April wind

Juanito Escareal

*

over the top
of my sunglasses
blue sky

Carolyn Hall

*

late from break:
the dash through bees and clover
in heels

Kat Avila

*

Sunday morning
ants on the rim of my
coffee cup

Carolyn Hall

*

heat lightning
the heron's toes
grip dead wood

Peggy Lyles

*

park twilight-
a light comes on
by itself

Tom Clausen

*

the fog lifts
ripened tomatoes
weight the trellis

Francine Porad

*

first brushstrokes
texture the white gesso-
daybreak

Cherie Hunter Day

*

the wildflowers
that shook the day, piled
in baskets

Michael McClintock

*

dull afternoon-
waterdrops slide
into waterdrops

John Barlow

*

evening walk
a merry-go-round turning
in the fog

paul m.

*

tangled seaweed-
two raccoons tussle
over a clam

June Moreau

*

ocean calm
the huge red sun touches
its reflection

Jerry Kilbride

*

first autumn rain
under firs summer lingers
in scented dust

Randal Johnson

*

white lilies . . .
the parish priest
begins to speak

Joann Klontz

*

autumn foliage
some old friends
remarry

John Stevenson

*

pink morning light
a dying monarch struggles
from cupped hands

Rick Tarquinio

*

autumn vacation–
clouds in the blue sky
unmapped and nameless

Dorothy McLaughlin

*

just a tinge
of red in the leaves
evening crickets

Margaret Chula

*

no name on her plot–
I move the flowers about
bare grave to bare grave

David Cobb

*

morning chill
the blind girl tells me the stones
sound sharper than usual

Jerry Ball

*

white sand raked smooth–
one persimmon
one dent

John Hall

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FEATURED POEMS

waterfall . . .
the passage of a floating leaf
slowed by wind

Rick Tarquinio

*

winter sun—
she wraps up her hair
in a colored scarf

Charles Trumbull

*

harbor stillness
a gull feather alights
on sunset colors

Alice Benedict

HERON'S NEST AWARD

waterfall . . .
the passage of a floating leaf
slowed by wind

Rick Tarquinio

The following is one of many possible scenarios and is based on the understanding that what is perceived of the "outer" world is determined by one's inner condition.

It's the final day of a wilderness vacation. Tomorrow the campsite is to be struck, the car loaded and driven back down the twisty mountain road. In two days it'll be back to work where a crucial project is scheduled. The few carefree days of the vacation have passed, days when warm sun, puffy clouds, the scent of pine, and the rush of the river made up the entire world. As departure nears the body begins to tense; increasingly the mind fills with concerns about the upcoming project. But today is today, and there's still time this afternoon for one more hike to the top of the falls. At the river's edge there's a large rock to sit on and once more there'll be the warm sun and the mesmerizing sound of water pounding the rocks below. Thoughts about work continue to babble the mind but gradually drowsiness deepens into sleep. Eventually a cloud passes over the lowering sun and the cool of its shadow puts an end to the nap. It's time to go back to camp, build a fire, cook one last dinner. A pale green leaf falls onto the glossy water. It turns slowly and begins to drift toward the falls. It'll take a minute, maybe two, for the leaf to reach the edge and pass over . . . why not wait until it does, *then* start back. The current quickens near the edge; so does the leaf. But wind rising from the shadows under the waterfall slows the leaf as it's about to slip over. The moment seems longer than it ought to, almost an eternity.

On the way back to camp, the image of the leaf lingers and there's a realization: returning to sit by the waterfall one last time and the slowing of the leaf are two versions of the same thing: an instant of tranquility before an inevitable plunge. In the moments preceding radical change, time often appears to slow. The future and the past lose their power. Uncluttered by thought, things are perceived in the vivid clarity of the present. Innumerable paths lead to this poem, or one like it; they converge in an awakening—a clearly focused moment revealing the ultimate potential of all moments: eternity.

The experience of this haiku is reproduced both visually and rhythmically. The word "waterfall" is quick (usually spoken with one accented syllable) yet the ellipsis adds duration to the quickness (both qualities of waterfalls). The second line (three beats in eight syllables) is long, resembling the journey of the leaf. The rhythm of the final line ("slowed by wind") corresponds with the action described; as we read we too slow down. The word "slowed" is the point at which we are transformed—the instant of letting go, of being fully present. Interestingly, the cause of this slowing is a quick thing: wind. Water rushes down. Wind rushes up. The leaf is held back and we are suspended in a timeless moment of heightened awareness. Awareness of what? The ephemeral. Rick Tarquinio's haiku epitomizes the Japanese term "yugen," the profound and mysterious realization that all things pass. But for me the most pleasing aspect of this poem is its demonstration of our capacity to be keenly aware of this passage.

— Christopher Herold
February, 2000

POEMS

night of stars
all along the precipice
goat bells ring

an'ya

*

dawn light-
the bare shadow of a tree
flickers on the wall

John Crook

*

snowed in-
the sound of my tea bag
steeping

Del Doughty

*

January sun
the long pause between
icicle drips

an'ya

*

thin ice
morning sunrays enter
the river

Zoran Doderovic

*

plywood roof
stillness seeps in
with the cold

Cherie Hunter Day

*

winter sunlight
the pattern of old wallpaper
showing through

Alison Williams

*

steady snowfall-
reading and re-reading
my daughter's letter

Paul David Mena

*

chilly morning
a patch of bright light
beneath the rhododendrons

Bruce Ross

*

song sparrow
again and again
no answer

Dean Summers

*

haze-blurred horizon
a painted bunting hovers
in the sea oats' curve

Peggy Lyles

*

deepening
deepening into the sea
twilight sky

Penny Harter

*

art studio
a red amaryllis leans
on the windowpane

Kathleen Rogers

*

snake skin
caught on a blade of rock
windless day

Doris Thurston

*

sunset heat
distant loon wings
slap the lake

Paul MacNeil

*

smooth stones–
waves rinsing off the rain
rain rinsing off the waves

Gary Hotham

*

early warmth
in the backyard a flicker
pokes among rocks

William J. Higginson

*

someone sobbing
the watering can
full of rain

Matthew Louvière

*

passerby, why hurry?
the dogwood blossoms
are in full bloom

Kay Anderson

*

evening star
children's intimate whispers
before they reach home

Giselle Maya

*

the long pause
 between her wish and
tossing the coin

Joann Klontz

*

night heron
rising from its nest of sticks
the wind

Peggy Lyles

*

autumn rain
on a telephone wire
someone's jump rope

Dean Summers

*

pond spillway
slowly through fallen leaves
a mottled snake

Elizabeth Howard

*

autumn dusk
a strip of yellow crime scene tape
flutters in the wind

Robert Gilliland

*

open-air concert
flute arpeggios pour down
from flickering stars

H. F. Noyes

*

this cool morning
enough dewdrops for tea-
Issa!

Mary Fran Meer

*

in a puddle
a leaf with a puddle
in the middle

Doris Thurston

*

autumn sunset
a wood stork's pink feet
stirring silt

Ferris Gilli

*

the drunkard
tries to keep to the path
falling leaves

Penelope Greenwell

*

on her shoulders
the family rests-
the scarecrow's crows

David E. LeCount

*

cold and windy
some with, some without
acorn caps

Nina Wicker

*

winter chill-
old goose feathers drift
on the village pond

John Crook

*

December deluge-
swept downstream
everything but the moon

Carolyn Hall

*

into the dusk
that ends a century
a roosting bird

David Cobb

*

frosty morning
our slightly formal
greetings

John Stevenson

*

bird feeder
again the squirrel comes back
to check

Emily Romano

*

biting wind-
the pink plastic flamingo
turns south

Darold D. Braida

*

solstice moon
the sheen of new ice
in the birdbath

Rick Tarquinio

*

millennium eve
twisting the bottle
to a slow pop

Joann Klontz

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FEATURED POEMS

fireplace shadows
the smell of melted snowflakes
on loden cloth

Charles Trumbull

*

constant wind
the icicles more curved
with each drip

an'ya

*

a stone well
thick moss muffles
the bucket's clank

Ferris Gilli

HERON'S NEST AWARD

fireplace shadows
the smell of melted snowflakes
on loden cloth

Charles Trumbull

Here's a poem that provides some fine examples of the use of implication, one of the more essential defining characteristics of haiku. Another strength of this poem is that specific images are presented, yet plenty of room is allowed for various perspectives. The poet arranges these images in a manner that encourages us to interact with them. The harmonizing of sight and scent is also appealing, and the "I" sounds are wonderful!

Right away, "fireplace shadows" presents the first implication. Although fireplaces in disuse often harbor shadows, it is likely that these shadows are meant to imply an existing fire. This becomes more of a certainty as we read each succeeding line. Also at the beginning is a choice of perspectives: to envision the fireplace dark and empty or containing a fire. If there *is* a fire, is it a quiet flickering or a roaring blaze?

The second line, "the smell of melted snowflakes" is very interesting. I immediately ask myself what a melted snowflake smells like, and just as quickly realize that it must smell of the substance on which it has melted. Curiosity piqued, I'm eager to continue to the third line. But first I look more closely at the second line. The snowflakes have melted, raising the likelihood of an already kindled fire. At this point in the poem, however, it's still within the realm of possibility that there is no fire, that the snowflakes floated down the chimney and now intensify the odor of the soot into which they're melting. Perhaps the poet has just walked in with a bundle of wood and is kneeling on the hearth twisting paper spills or placing slivers of kindling in the shadowy fireplace.

Until we reach the end of the poem we are held in suspense. Is there a fire? And on what have the snowflakes melted?

The third line pulls everything together. We discover by implication where the snowflakes have melted. (The word “coat” is not used.) And now a live fire seems probable. Surely the poet hung his coat to dry and then sat down by the hearth to warm himself. He gazes into the flames and their shadows. The heat from the fire has melted the snowflakes and the smell of cloth wafts through the room. I too lean back, close my eyes, and heave a deep sigh. Ahhh . . . the smell of damp wool!

I must say that this poem is clear and simple, not nearly as cerebral as I've made it seem. The above thought processes were largely subliminal until the time came to write these comments. Wanting to determine why I like this haiku so much, I searched through what is inherent in the words. In truth, they appeal almost entirely to the senses and to our feelings. The images combine to evoke a mood: relief to be settling down at home, especially with snow falling outside. Charles Trumbull is a marvelous host, allowing us to fill in the details of his experience for ourselves.

— Christopher Herrold
March, 2000

POEMS

chilly wind-
a marmot whistles
from the moraine

Darold D. Braida

*

winter morning sun
on yellow stucco-
the church bells of Florence

Randal Johnson

*

cracked ice
the eagle's tail feathers
spread wide apart

Cindy Zackowitz

*

black ice
a snow swirl from the lake's edge
in slow motion

Marjorie Buettner

*

winter sunset
high in the willow
an egret

Kay F. Anderson

*

cold clear night-
after the candle flickers out
blue moonlight

Elizabeth St Jacques

*

taking the stairs
two at a time-
snowlight on the ceiling

Dee Evetts

*

winter barnyard
cows in the sunlight
sheep in the shade

Joann Klontz

*

winter bee
working a burial wreath
the twenty-third psalm

Nina Wicker

*

Quaker meeting
through stovepipe-heated air
the world shimmers

Ruth Yarrow

*

frosty night
the drip of sap
into a bucket

Linda Robeck

*

milking hour
a whitish mist moves
toward the moon

an'ya

*

autumn picnic
down the leaf-strewn table
daddy longlegs

Elizabeth Howard

*

valley oak
all the colors of fall
in a single leaf

Carolyn Hall

*

stiff wind-
shadows of things
stretch on the street

Tom Clausen

*

starry night
fragments of conversation
drift over new snow

John Crook

*

hawks circle
the sound of a tedder
turning hay

eric l. houck jr.

*

October wind-
from inside the peach
the smell of rain

Penelope Greenwell

*

morning glory
gently the postman
opens the gate

Robert Gilliland

*

a cloud moves
onto the moon crescent-
the thinness of it

Zinovy Vayman

*

kitchen table
wild flower bouquet
beer bottle vase

Dean Summers

*

birdbath
the rising sun
splashed with bluejays

Debi Bender

*

bend in the road
the plodding turtle
curves its neck

Matthew Louvière

*

along with the tide
a ribbon of kelp
fishes itself ashore

David E. LeCount

*

bamboo in snow–
but for a Sung painter's art
I'd have passed it by

H. F. Noyes

*

passing sailboat-
the jetty cormorant's
outstretched wings

June Moreau

*

rising sun
a gull high in the space
between us

Laurie Stoelting

*

roses I meant to pick
their golden petals
taken by wind

Mary Fran Meer

*

digging
for the shovel
winter dawn

John Stevenson

*

winter sunshine
the yellow kitchen
even more welcoming

Francine Porad

*

the stutter
of the kettle heating up
snow-flecked camellia

Pat Laster

*

new grass
two white horses
touching necks

Paul MacNeil

*

autumn rut-
the bull elk's bugling echoes
and re-echoes

Darold D. Braida

*

day ending
without sunset, night coming
without stars

Paul O. Williams

*

early winter light-
a flock of starlings rise
from the shadows

John Crook

*

crescent moon . . .
moths come touching
spikes of the iris

Michael McClintock

*

tumbled-in barn
blackberry cane
in full bloom

eric l. houck jr.

*

birdfeeder
still full when we return
autumn chill

Carolyn Hall

*

two ravens
talking on the edge-
satellite dish

Penny Harter

*

turn of the century
meditation mat
unrolled as usual

Dee Evetts

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FEATURED POEMS

someone whistling
in the dark-
hazy moon

Naomi Brown

*

through the rain
a riff of birdsong
camellias half open

Margaret Chula

*

first snow
footprints from an office building
veer off toward the park

Robert Gilliland

HERON'S NEST AWARD

someone whistling
in the dark-
hazy moon

Naomi Brown

The mirror is always before us. At the moment Naomi Brown wrote this haiku, at this moment of my writing commentary, and at the moment you read it, the mirror takes the form of words, both the poet's and my own. What do these words express?

"Someone whistling in the dark-[the] hazy moon."

The moon reflects light from an invisible sun. Whistling reflects the mood of a person obscured by darkness. Not only is light from the sun reflected by the moon, it is diffused by haziness in the atmosphere. How is the whistling modified? How do you imagine the whistling to sound? Could it be that, as the moon is indistinct, so too is the whistled tune? Is it whimsical? Off-key? Perhaps the whistler is a bit tipsy. Or is the tune well rendered, loud and clear in contrast to the hazy moon? What each of us makes of a stranger's whistling speaks of our own human conditions, and our own imaginative capacities.

In contrast to the whistling (which can be heard), is the source of the whistling: a person obscured by darkness. By means of a dash these two contrasting images unite to create a mood which is then represented visually by a third image: the hazy moon. This alchemy of word-images creates a mysterious encounter with the unknown.

Physically, here are just seven English words divided into eleven syllables; three images, one in each of three horizontal lines. The dash at the end of the second line separates the first two images from the last . . . and connects them.

Cerebrally, we have a poet's effort to express her experience in words. The result induces our interpretation of the words into mental images: the sound of whistling, the darkness that conceals the whistler, the vision of a hazy moon.

Emotionally, this haiku is a powerful evocation of a mood. The poet doesn't make the common error of telling us how she feels; she allows us complete freedom to respond in our own individual ways.

Spiritually, enlightenment is incomprehensible, as sunlight is too bright to gaze upon. It must be intuited, as sunlight must be seen indirectly, reflected by things . . . like the moon. Who can look at the sun? Who can trace whistling (or any other manifested thing) back to its source? We are whistlers in the dark, expressing things we don't fully understand. We gaze at the moon, and even then it isn't always clear.

Thank you Naomi for presenting us with such a well polished mirror.

— Christopher Herrold
April, 2000

POEMS

mountain forest
... only the sound of
snow melting

Cathy Edwards

*

sea mist
the scent of the night
it spent in the pines

Michael McClintock

*

spring rain
from the woodshed
a hen's cackle

Cherie Hunter Day

*

bus stop
under a mango tree-
the squeak of fruit bats

Sue Mill

*

the stranger's binoculars
from hand to hand
chicks in the heron's nest

Carolyn Hall

*

late night walk
swollen in spring mist
the lights from the bridge

Kris Kondo

*

first camellia
along a stony path
in the morning fog

Jerry Ball

*

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

Ferris Gilli

*

click of the latch
a painted lady flutters
between screen and window

Kay F. Anderson

*

sudden gust
the young starling
fans its tail

an'ya

*

pond reflection
it's only wind
that puts on wrinkles

LeRoy Gorman

*

courtyard pond
goldfish weave through light
among the reeds

Maria Steyn

*

her tiny hand
against the attic roof
heavy rain

Elizabeth St Jacques

*

neglected garden
lichen growing
on a wrought iron fence

Carol O'Dell

*

eye fixed
on the changing sky
a dead sparrow

Paul Walker

*

first raindrop
in the pond a lily pad
wobbles

Matthew Louvière

*

rainy morning-
while getting the paper
the smell of a skunk

Paul O. Williams

*

trinket box
the old roller skate key
warms in my hand

Mary Fran Meer

*

a rusted truck
the wheel wells filling
with rhubarb

Paul MacNeil

*

evening rain-
I braid my hair
into the dark

Penny Harter

*

darknesses within
the outlines of shadows–
midnight deer

Issara

*

morning frost–
the moon too
is melting

David E. LeCount

*

first snow–
I twist the tea bowl
to see its old design

Ion Codrescu

*

silver vixen–
moonlit snowflakes float
into her cage

H. F. Noyes

*

Christmas morning . . .
the croak of a crow
from across the fields

John Barlow

*

through the empty
wine glass on the sill-
the moonlit sea

Penny Harter

*

strawman
morning sunlight glitters
on his coat of ice

Emily Romano

*

first stars
a snowflake slides
from an eyelash

Cindy Zackowitz

*

blizzard-
sticking out of a drift
the snowman's arm

William Cullen Jr.

*

January rain . . .
at the edges of my nap
the old cat kneading

Rick Tarquinio

*

freezing fog
a sparrowhawk clings
to the aviary wire

Alison Williams

*

below zero–
her casket descends
into its hole

Stephen Amor

*

February sun
on the graveyard wall
I warm my hands

Dee Evetts

*

cold sun
the wild currant blossoms'
red fragrance

Doris Thurston

*

snowmelt on a familiar road
strangers' names return
to mailboxes

LeRoy Gorman

*

record cold
the salesman's bible
open on the counter

Joann Klontz

*

for a grave
next to his loved one
the extra daffodils

Fay Aoyagi

*

a circle of light
cupped around it in the snow . . .
purple crocus

Robert Major

*

Valentine's Day
dropping coins into the wishing well
our reflections merge

Laura Bell

*

muddy boots
everywhere the gurgle
of freshets

Larry Kimmel

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FEATURED POEMS

spilt milk
spreading along the grout lines
morning chill

Carolyn Hall

*

from fresh mud
the white moth rises . . .
early spring!

*

Issara

a persistant whistle
in the grosbeak's song-
the fading moon

Cindy

HERON'S NEST AWARD

spilt milk
spreading along the grout lines
morning chill

Carolyn Hall

Beautifully exemplified here is the capacity of a haiku to embody topics of vast proportion. The above poem expresses the law of karma. It also contains a memory of emotions that arose from careless action, and more immediately, a new response to a similar action. All this in just a few words that, of themselves, describe only what is happening in the here and now. Carolyn Hall gives us a haiku seed that has the power to expand our consciousness of space and time.

"morning chill" is a reference to autumn. Condensed in these two words is possibly the first recognition of a point in the cycle of seasons when the life force begins to turn inward again. The image has a sense of inevitability, a foreshadowing of the passage of life, or at least of a return to dormancy. Coming last, this line serves to echo and to intensify the implication of "spilt milk."

As in "morning chill," "spilt milk" is dense with meaning. For a great many of us it is sure to conjure up the old adage: "There's no use in crying over spilt milk." Parents often say this to a child whose inattentiveness has caused some minor catastrophe. Why the reproach? Because until we know better we tend to cling to being upset with ourselves. Experience (the adult) reminds us that nothing can be done to erase the results of our actions (karma). What's done is done. "Get over it," they say. It's interesting that the poet doesn't seem to be in a rush to grab a sponge or dishcloth. She opts to linger a while, observing the passage of milk between counter tiles. It could be that she's a slow starter, still a bit groggy from sleep, not about to rush to do

anything. But I don't think so. Among other things, Carolyn Hall is a haiku poet. To write effective haiku she had to learn to slow down, to open her senses to what life proffers, and to take note of details and ramifications. Often the ramifications in our haiku are only perceived subliminally but, nonetheless, they're there. What is grout? A substance that connects and holds together tiles. What is self-esteem? Knowledge that connects us psychologically to ourselves. Some milk is spilled. It spreads along the grout that holds together the counter. If this brings about a bad feeling, the feeling spreads along self-esteem which holds together the emotions. In our youth we don't yet recognize that every manifestation contains its own dissolution (feeling bad will pass). As we grow older we relate more and more to impermanence, hopefully finding it easier to be detached, and to appreciate the connections between such things as spilling milk, grout, and a morning chill.

Standing in the cold morning air, Carolyn calmly watches milk spread along lines of grout. Maybe she remembers a time long ago when she was upset with herself, having caused something unpleasant to happen. Maybe she remembers being told not to hold on to her feelings.

The milk slows, stops, and seeps in. Just beyond the leading edge of whiteness, the grout darkens . . . In ignorance we think we make mistakes. In wisdom we become aware that we are ignorant. No mistakes.

— Christopher Herold
May, 2000

POEMS

spring ritual
pulling out roots to make room
for roots

Doris Thurston

*

wedding vows
butterflies flicker in the light
of a church window

John Crook

*

birdwatcher–
is it a male
or a female?

Alexis Rotella

*

bright spring morning
the kitten backs away
from the coffee cup

Kay Grimnes

*

spring sun–
in the shadow of a bucket
a black button

Odd G. Aksnes

*

Shrove Tuesday
I confide my sins
to a white butterfly

Joann Klontz

*

nourished by crude seeds–
yet how beautifully
the song sparrow sings

Margaret Chula

*

jacaranda flowers
the twin tracks
of a car

Paul MacNeil

*

the day no post comes
a worm writhes
on the garden path

David Cobb

*

alone in the woods,
I turn my head
to sneeze

John Stevenson

*

a long detour
around Cloud Mountain
mud-caked boots

Janice Brown

*

a mind of its own
the gate to the school yard
in the spring breeze

Jerry Ball

*

lazy day-
our wrist watches
on the ice chest

Michael Dylan Welch

*

dampened weeds
weaving them over and under
spokes of the basket

Francine Porad

*

summer sunbeams
through the gym's high fan blades
the world of dust

Juanito Escareal

*

shade tree
spreading my jacket
between bare roots

paul m.

*

humid afternoon
flat on our backs in the grass
analyzing clouds

an'ya

*

summer photograph-
after cutting my son out
only sky and sand

Patricia Laster

*

bumper-to-bumper
late afternoon sunlight
on weed flowers

Robert Gilliland

*

heat lightning-
all the way into Mexico
the mountains rise

Michael McClintock

*

late summer downpour
the garden drain spewing
rose petals

Paul Walker

*

night breeze-
the lake held still
by waterlilies

Sue Mill

*

alpine meadow-
I lean on my walking stick
to pick blueberries

Leatrice Lifshitz

*

small town square-
old men brush the leaves
from a checkerboard

Robert Gilliland

*

eye of the storm-
deep in the current
a gold leaf turns

Katie Cameron

*

rattle of wind
through a plastic pinwheel-
the toddler takes a step

Emily Romano

*

skinny-dipping-
the pale backs of city boys
in the moonlight

Emily Romano

*

shadows and veins
shaping a red leaf
one brush stroke

Ferris Gilli

*

the deeply cut leaves
of a Japanese maple
another good-bye

Cherie Hunter Day

*

winter wood
in with a hawk
sudden silence

Rick Tarquinio

*

cold dusk-
my thoughts pass through
a crow flying by

Tom Clausen

*

moonlit door
the cat's ears point
to the dark

Maria Steyn

*

church door locked
a hollow sound
answers my knock

H. F. Noyes

*

stranded jellyfish
swallowing sand-
winter moonlight

David LeCount

*

the blue heron's
six foot wing span folds . . .
a breeze smoothes the willow

Kay Anderson

*

writing letters . . .
the cry of a night bird
near my house

Ion Codrescu

*

lost at night
on a country road . . .
falling stars

Joseph Kirschner

*

winter sunset
in the shrimp boat's wake
pink pelicans

Carolyn Hall

*

kitchen sink
treasures from the beach
in a smelly heap

Laura Bell

*

sun after rain
the bare crabapple
luminescent

Yvonne Hardenbrook

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FEATURED POEMS

croquet . . .
a butterfly flits
through a wicket

Emily Romano

*

prairie darkness
our motorcycle following
the North Star

Elizabeth St Jacques

*

bitter cold
the distant train pulls
some of my night with it¹

Anita Virgil

¹ Editors' Note: This haiku was corrected from the original on 4/20/2009.

HERON'S NEST AWARD

croquet . . .
 a butterfly flits
 through a wicket

Emily Romano

The butterfly accomplishes effortlessly what we humans approach as a sporting challenge. We often play with the intent to win, and in this regard (with the exception of a tie) there are two possible outcomes: success or failure. The butterfly however, passes through the wicket without thought—no trace of ulterior motive, no possibility of winning or losing.

A nearly weightless butterfly and a heavy wooden ball. The contrast is cartoon-like. Undoubtedly some folks will say that this poem is a senryu. So be it. And so it's time for some free association . . .

Imagine a wicket, a thickish wire about two feet long, bent, with both ends thrust into the lawn to form a low arch. For fun, let's imagine being quite close to it. Let's sit on the grass, focus on the nearby wicket, and wait. Soon comes the solid sound of a wooden ball getting whacked, and a second later the ball comes rolling into view. A close one! It smacks up against one side of the wicket and abruptly stops. "That very moment and second, o Best Beloved,"² a butterfly appears in all its fragile whimsy, and flits right through.

² Rudyard Kipling, from the *Just So Stories*

To what degree does this poem express human foible? We dote on the ludicrous: the butterfly intentionally poking fun at us! It's easy to make the leap, to externalize our own amusement with ourselves. Yes, we could call this poem a senryu.

Yet the humor in Emily's poem is as light and non-judgemental as the butterfly. We can easily forego contrasting any human egocentricity to nature's more unselfconscious activities. We could just shout bravo, and applaud the butterfly's unwitting performance. Or, we could quietly marvel at the way all things seek to go about their business despite the wickets that pop up along the path. Surely this is haiku.

Tongue-in-cheek humor, delight, awe. One or all of these are potential responses to this poem. It seems to strike a perfect balance between haiku and senryu. And when a poem is this good, who cares what it's called. It's transcendent.

At this point I could delve into specific observations about the craft in this poem, but I won't. It would only serve to diminish the wonderfully cathartic effect it has. So I'll just end with some gush. Brief. Vividly clear. Not a wasted word. Terrific phonetics. Excellent rhythm. I'm impressed with how well balanced this poem is. Absolutely delightful!

— Christopher Herold
June, 2000

POEMS

days lengthen
the amaryllis topples
under its own weight

Margaret Chula

*

first Father's Day

without him

Patricia Laster

*

rickety fence
a spring calf stretches toward
younger grass

Suzanne McIntire

*

before the curtain
the drama of schoolgirls
in the audience

John Stevenson

*

summer clouds–
a child scatters popcorn
on the fish pond

Michael Dylan Welch

*

a spring wind
coins in the cup
of a sleeping beggar

paul m.

*

churchyard clover
around our shadows
brighter green

Debra Woolard Bender

*

fireworks-
the whiteness
of her throat

Jim Kacian

*

tornado watch-
three violets poking
from a fire ants' nest

John Ower

*

heavy rain
bending one into another
purple hollyhocks

Ion Codrescu

*

rain and more rain
ripping off the month
two days early

Nina A. Wicker

*

in the corner
just the warm sun
and the rocker

Barbara Campitelli

*

glass of lemonade
wind leafs through the book
left on the railing

Robert Major

*

sunset . . .
waves break
into darkness

Issara

*

the dull clack
of a channel marker
bent dune grass

paul m.

*

clock face
the precise shadow
of a small spider

Larry Kimmel

*

reading the paper . . .
the dog sniffs
my shoes

Stephen Amor

*

blank drawing pad
a violet damselfly
resting at the edge

Cherie Hunter Day

*

moon gazing . . .
the crossing light changes
back to red

Ellen Compton

*

ocean fog . . .
hunched on the white road sign
a small white heron

Carolyn Thomas

*

dwindling light
in a small child's hand
the first fallen leaf

Maria Steyn

*

grey morning
the slow beat of a heron
against the wind

John Crook

*

cattle truck–
a cowbell swinging
from the guard rail

Leatrice Lifshitz

*

bright sun–
the redness of the fox
against the snow

Darold D. Braida

*

first day of spring
at the snowbank's edge
a muddy puddle

Michael Ketchek

*

shadows fade
into a glowing fog bank
winter geese

Paul MacNeil

*

first snowflake
shivering of the universe
on an eyelash

Nikola Nilic

*

beyond the gate
the stretch of sky goes
uninterrupted

Merry Gordon

*

spring equinox
moonshadow deepens
the creek

Carolyn Hall

*

morning stillness . . .
 sunlight dapples
the ropes of the swing

Rick Tarquinio

*

kids find Pokemon
in the blossom-petal patterns–
the rain-drenched wall

Kris Kondo

*

sunlit garden
the scent
of my straw hat

Kay F. Anderson

*

his grave–
a butterfly lands
on a plastic flower

Brian Gierat

*

desert mist
one sidewinder takes its place
alongside another

Matthew Louvière

*

distant traffic hum–
the stone buddha's
moss-filled crevice

Michael Dylan Welch

*

spring snowflakes
melting as fast as they fall
these daydreams

Marjorie Buettner

*

oar-scoop whirlpools
spin behind the boat
calm spring day

Randal Johnson

*

first communion
bleeding hearts sway
beside the path

Ferris Gilli

*

midday
deep in the agave
light and shadow

Lori Laliberte-Carey

*

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

Peggy Lyles

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FEATURED POEMS

thump and screech—
the long freight pulls out
in robin's song

William J. Higginson

*

standing waves
the tide's quiet way
up river

Paul MacNeil

*

cloudy day
the fallen purple petals
of the azalea

Randal

HERON'S NEST AWARD

thump and screech-
the long freight pulls out
in robin's song

William J. Higginson

How interesting that twice in this poem we must read ahead in order to gain the necessary insight to experience the power of the moment. "thump and screech"?! What on earth could this be? We are intentionally rattled before the cause is revealed. The second line directs our ears to the cacophony of a railroad yard: flatbeds, tankers, cattle cars, and box cars, all getting shunted into position behind one engine or another, thumping and banging as their couplings engage. But it isn't until we've heard the robin sing that we feel (through contrast) the full impact of the train.

By the second line, this particular train has its caboose. It begins to inch out of the yard into the countryside. The grip of the couplings tightens and the train slowly pulls itself taut. Car by car, the engine takes on weight as slack is reduced. It strains forward, steel wheels screeching along the rails.

All that brute power in the imagery of the first two lines, yet it's the third line that packs the punch. The marvelous thing about the final line (aside from the contrast to the train sounds) is discovering that the robin's song was there all along, long before the train pulled out—not into it but "in" it.

At first there seems to be only the railroad yard. It's an arrogance of sorts, a loud and important sounding place that carelessly impinges upon its surroundings. And here we have it: "surroundings." The place IS surrounded—surrounded by the rest of the world

which is called to our attention by the robin's song. In this poem, the robin's song IS the rest of the world.

After first reading this poem I closed my eyes, relaxing into the images. As I did, the countryside seemed suddenly huge; it simply consumed the robin, the train, and the railroad yard from which it came. There are two worlds represented here (human and natural), seemingly separated by their differences. Without distractions it would be easy to bask in the pastoral world of the robin, or to be intrigued by the abrasive business of a railroad yard. We are often beguiled by one world to the exclusion of the other. But when that train pulls out of the yard, it actually pulls us IN, into the bigger world that contains both train and robin. This marvelous haiku by Bill Higginson offers us an opportunity to return to our original self, to the "big" perspective, in which we can hear both train and robin simultaneously. This train actually leads us back into nature.

— Christopher Herold
July, 2000

POEMS

dark June night
bulls' bellowing
echoes across the hollow

Elizabeth Howard

*

ocean horizon-
touching the curvature
of a white shell

Jerry Kilbride

*

summer day-
walking barefoot beside
grandchildren's footprints

Billie Wilson

*

a flatbed
hauling scrap metal
summer heat

Barry George

*

sunlight on the wall-
brushing against the yellow
my deep blue shadow

Hortensia Anderson

*

parking lot at dawn-
gulls roosting among
upturned shopping carts

Jack Lent

*

morning sun
the peach's blush
deepens near the pit

Ferris Gilli

*

noon sun
picnic cheese
sweating

Michael Dylan Welch

*

a roadrunner stops
its tail still fanning
midday heat

Naomi Brown

*

ripples of light
across an oak plank floor
the wheelchair's wobble

Lynne Leach

*

with added wrinkles
the paper samurai
assumes its pose

Raffael deGruttola

*

village common
the newly painted clock tower
missing its hands

Joann Klontz

*

gentle wind-
a silkworm spinning
on its thread

Suzanne McIntire

*

old pond
hesitant
I dip my net

Violetta Belvill

*

low sun
the glass blower twirls
a tear-shaped vase

Peggy Lyles

*

cicada at noon
on the mountain trail
-summer's end

Patricia Laster

*

long afternoon
a fly rides
the pendulum

Larry Kimmel

*

bench in the woods
empty
except for my thoughts

Stephen Engleman

*

evening approaches
the wildflowers she picked
somewhere in her book
Jerry Ball

*

down in the sunken garden
the last lantern
flickering

Matthew Louvière

*

too bright
to contain itself . . .
ring around the moon

Kay F. Anderson

*

cold wind-
the crow leans
to caw

Stephen Amor

*

a late snow
someone
sighs

John Stevenson

*

just now it comes
in the tight-furled poppy buds
a looser look

H. F. Noyes

*

spring haze
a sparrow finishes
the redpoll's song

Cindy Zackowitz

*

dry trees
the wind sharpens
its sound

Ion Codrescu

*

bitter cold-
the juniper berry parts
the jay's beak

an'ya

*

and after such a year
the first crocus
in its usual place

Anita Virgil

*

reflected
in the muddy puddle-
plum blossoms

Deirdre Grimes

*

ribboning through
the bed of pansies:
pale green gartersnake

Emily Romano

*

Sunny spring day-
cat meowing to no one
in particular

Duane Clark

*

freshly turned earth
in the palm of my hand
radish seeds

Giselle Maya

*

dandelions-
a lone runner
circling the field

Fay Aoyagi

*

whiter still
on the moonlit windowsill-
Easter lily

Brian Gierat

*

slanting rays
in the paloverde blossoms
warm breeze

Lori Laliberte-Carey

*

stone wall-
between two rocks
a bleeding heart

Merrill Ann Gonzales

*

cooking together-
the rosemary and garlic
from our garden

Mark Brooks

*

spring evening
a heron moves slowly north
piercing the pond

Odd G. Aksnes

*

morning sun-
gone from a cabinet
the old bowls

paul m.

*

twilight
the scent of orange blossoms
lingers

Jennifer Jensen

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FEATURED POEMS

a curtain billows
before the rain
scent of roses

Ferris Gilli

*

rumble of thunder
the colt dances stiff-legged
across the pasture

Kay Grimnes

*

sunrise:
among the silent earth movers
a fawn

Charles Trumbull

HERON'S NEST AWARD

a curtain billows
before the rain
scent of roses

Ferris Gilli

The billowing of a curtain before the arrival of rain – a marvelous observation. And yet it's a fairly commonplace occurrence, caused by changing barometric pressure. Telltale signs such as this are experienced by everyone, but more often than not people don't pause long enough to express them in words.

Roses indicate that the season is summer. I imagine it being hot and muggy (this poem was written in Florida), and that the window is open in hopes of circulating the stagnant air. The feeling of heaviness is pervasive. Soon the temperature begins to fall and the oppressive atmosphere is stirred by a breeze. A curtain billows. In with the draft comes the perfume of roses, a scent that can be as dense as the air has been. There's an immediate precognition of being at the edge, a certainty that something is about to happen.

This is a poem of arousal and of excitement. An atmosphere of tension will soon be relieved. Storms are often destructive, so there is also some sense of foreboding. These feelings are heralded in an instant by all but one of the senses. We see the curtain billow, hear it rustle, feel the fresh stirring of air, and breathe in the sensuousness of roses. Ferris Gilli's poem is a wake-up call for nerve endings.

I have always enjoyed haiku in which the middle line can be read as an essential part of two distinct images, especially when those images combine to evoke and intensify one mood. In this haiku, "before the rain" serves to end the first line phrase, turning it into a

complete sentence. It also serves as the beginning of a phrase that concludes with the final line. Haiku such as this call out to be read twice in succession, first pausing at the end of line one, then at the end of line two. By pointing in both directions, and at two different senses, “before the rain” is doubly emphatic of a moment in time.

Read independently, all three lines are phrases; all three clear, concise descriptions. The first reveals a place. The second indicates the time of observation. The third not only presents a new stimulus, it actually dissolves the apparent separation of observer and observed. Our attention is twice called to the time at hand, first by the billowing curtain, then by the smell of roses. Cause and effect is apparent here (always something to be wary of in writing haiku), but in this instance the pitfall is hardly noticeable and of little consequence. The sequential aspect of the two stimuli, if not utterly cancelled, is modulated by the middle line as it draws us into the power of an unfolding event . . . suddenly we are fully present to welcome the leading edge of rain.

Ferris' haiku has mood! It is subtle, exciting, beautiful, and full of anticipation. It is also finely crafted.

— Christopher Herold
August, 2000

POEMS

summer moon–
the sound of eggs
coming to a boil

Carolyn Thomas

*

mosquito larvae–
sudden fits of motion
in the rain barrel

Robert Major

*

outside the door
I leave them there
the dog, the fleas

Bill Flanagan

*

country road
by the sharp left turn
a white cross

Suzanne McIntire

*

tractor overturned–
gathering crowd
arms folded

Lenard Moore

*

grinding sumi ink
rain spatters dust
on the skylight

Kay Anderson

*

rainstorm . . .
in the car the rescued dog
shakes

Naomi Brown

*

twilight
the only car ahead
turns off

Tom Clausen

*

border town
its shadows creep beneath
the barbed wire fence

Merry Gordon

*

the auctioneer
pauses for breath-
pony's loud snort

Emily Romano

*

that dull gleam
through the hazy park-
a playhouse window

William J. Higginson

*

the shallows
pond grass connected
to the moon

Zoran Doderovic

*

setting star
the mountain rises
black with night

Paul MacNeil

*

mist across the lake
a loon's tremolo
slips through

Mary Fran Meer

*

winter fog-
the horn of a freighter
heading out to sea

William Cullen, Jr.

*

thick haze
from a burning hillside . . .
moonrise

Gary Barnes

*

balmy night-
pushing the crocheted throw
back to her side

paul m.

*

morning fog
down by the bayou a heron
spears a fish

Matthew Louvière

*

alone again-
counting an odd number
in the skein of geese

Cindy Zackowitz

*

snow-covered mountains
I return my wristwatch
to the travel bag

Jerry Ball

*

all the way home
the wind at my back
New Year's day

Carolyn Hall

*

propped on the porch
a brand new pair of crutches
steady spring rain

Lynne Leach

*

gust of wind
the candy wrapper tacks across
a puddle

Larry Kimmel

*

specimen skull
holes
for the rabbit's ears

Stephen Amor

*

an old woman's garden-
jasmine spills over
the stone fountain

Joy Tucker

*

daffodil
the splatter of sleet
in its cup

an'ya

*

spring sun
raindrops
on the red camellia

Alison Williams

*

wind in the tree
tree in the wind
blue sky

Kevin Smith

*

too young
to own a cottontail
-our silence

Patricia Laster

*

twilight-
the parked tractor
still warm

Mark Brooks

*

spring night
one leg over
the blanket

John Stevenson

*

a snagged lure
dangles from the deadfall
sunshine on the hooks

Brian Gierat

*

wind bursts the peonies
only a few strewn petals
land in pairs

H. F. Noyes

*

ebb tide
the shell I keep reaching for
carried further away

John Crook

*

Sunday bells . . .
the first ripe mulberry
sweetens the shade

Rick Tarquinio

*

summer solstice–
spitting cherry pits
into the river

Margaret Chula

*

his ninety-seventh
the white peony nods
in table sunshine

Nina Wicker

*

Saturday . . .
a single sailboat
in the shipping lane

Joann Klontz

*

drunk on the beach–
the moon in my sake cup
disappears

Hortensia Anderson

*

waterfall mist
sunrays spread out
into the woods

Nikola Nilic

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FEATURED POEMS

summer stars missing:
the dark shape
of the dark lighthouse

William Cullen Jr.

*

morning dew
a circle of fallen petals
beneath the peony

John Crook

*

summer morning-
the kitten ignores itself
in the full-length mirror

Barry

HERON'S NEST AWARD

One warm summer night, with the sky clear and the stars numberless, a poet decides to walk to the nearby seashore. He comes to an old lighthouse, one no longer in use so that it appears doubly dark, just a familiar shape looming up into the sky. It occurs to the poet that this structure, built for the purpose of sending out light, is in fact blocking the light from some stars, light that has traveled untold distances at an incredible speed. The lighthouse seems to have become a black hole, darker even than the surrounding night. Realization consumes the poet and he writes a haiku.

summer stars missing:
the dark shape
of the dark lighthouse

William Cullen Jr.

Such a distinctive shape, the lighthouse; an icon that simultaneously represents danger and protection. Lighthouses call our attention to perilous shores, and in so doing guide us away from them. Stars too are navigational aids. As with lighthouses, stars evoke a wide range of emotions. Inconceivably vast, the starry universe can appear frightening and inhospitable, yet it tantalizes us with its mystery and inspires our imaginations. While gazing at the heavens we can feel infinitesimally small, insignificant, ignorant, alone. We can also be relieved. Overwhelming personal problems lose their grip, giving way to an awe of the impersonal magnitude of space. In the light of infinite stars comfort can be taken in our very ignorance, wisdom that comes with a sense that in the final analysis the playing field is level; we are all in this together.

A lighthouse blocks the view of some stars. The poet may be considering that the technologies we create to help us find our way can sometimes obscure it – when

navigating towards worldly goals, often short-sighted and self-centered, we must necessarily lose sight of a bigger picture.

I imagine that, for William Cullen Jr., feelings and speculations such as these must have taken place as he gazed at the lighthouse and the night sky beyond. And surely all the while he was under the influence of incessantly pounding surf. As the stars seem eternal, so too does the sea, and the sound of collapsing waves. When pondering lighthouses there is a sense of eternity as well, at least of continuity – a beam of light ceaselessly sweeping the sea, blinking on and off, day and night. But the one in this haiku seems to be out of commission. And as for those twinkling stars, some of them have gone out too – some long, long ago. Yet their light continues to reach our eyes . . . unless of course there's a lighthouse in the way.

This haiku represents an evening of immensity. Visually it is striking, powerful in its stark contrasts of dark and light, dark and darker, near and far. Inherently it resonates on both emotional and intellectual levels, delighting us with irony while intimating those age-old questions: who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?

– Christopher Herold
September, 2000

POEMS

country kitchen
stray strands of cornsilk
glisten in the sun

an'ya

*

one rock for my garden-
a thousand ants
rescuing eggs

Carolyn Hall

*

acres of coal cars
honeysuckle climbing
the train yard fence

Dave Russo

*

electrical storm:
my daughter practices
the letter "s"

John S. O'Connor

*

sirens nearing
a sudden breeze sways
the basket of cactus

Nina A. Wicker

*

sultry day
boys on their wheels
making the wind blow

Debra Woolard Bender

*

stones stacked
inside the wheelbarrow
a firefly's glow

Rick Tarquinio

*

midday heat
taking it in
the white gardenia

Karina Young

*

between the rafters
a doll-sized trunk of clothes
the heat

Cherie Hunter Day

*

bouquet of roses--
she slips into
something else

Mark Brooks

*

heads down
the sunflower
the finch

Linda Robeck

*

new dock
the snowy egret's stride
unchanged

Kay Anderson

*

the gold light
of an autumn day
the autumn sea

Michael McClintock

*

pale sun
the frozen river holds
deep shadows

Beverly Tift

*

casino
its light fades away
in the dawn

Martin Cohen

*

late august-
the way the spider's web
bows with each gust

Brian Gierat

*

darkened garden-
on this night of no moon
the white eggplant

Emily Romano

*

stubbled rice paddy
the white heron's harsh cry
has no echo

Naomi Brown

*

winter desert-
our breath
speaks for us

Sandra Simpson

*

a patch of coltsfoot
amid roadside debris
-the overcast brightens

Tom Clausen

*

a common wire fence–
then a western tanager
sits there a moment

Paul O. Williams

*

up to their necks
in lawn daisies
the robin the worm

Margaret Chula

*

discussion with friends–
motionless fish
in the aquarium

Zoran Doderovic

*

reaching a wide stream . . .
the trail continues
on the other side

Robert Major

*

pine tops
against deep twilight
a bob-white's call

Peggy Lyles

*

flowering crabapple:
in and out of morning sun
the lark's song

Charles Trumbull

*

May sun
the door opens
before I knock

John Stevenson

*

breezy afternoon-
dandelion ghosts
float past the daisies

Billie Wilson

*

steady current
the great carp opens
and closes its mouth

Stephen Amor

*

scent of pines-
a wind from the hill
leads me home

Ferris Gilli

*

gas station
one worn-out hiking boot
beside the trash can

Elizabeth Howard

*

summer heat
an old man's flirtation
turns to a yawn

Laura Bell

*

beach road
kid's bare feet
out the windows

Robert Gibson

*

sea oats
a beachball blows
between dunes

Paul MacNeil

*

moonlit beach
a sandcrab emerges from
under the castle moat

Carlos Colón

*

in sycamore shade
the buzzing summer
a moment still

H. F. Noyes

*

summer evening
the girl who forgot my name
is laughing again

Jerry Ball

*

empty beach house
a seashell left
on the windowsill

Matthew Louvière

*

her answer tatters away
with the wind
a seagull's cry

Larry Kimmel

*

every night
this stretch of road . . .
honeysuckle

Suzanne McIntire

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FEATURED POEMS

morning stroll-
unshared thoughts float off
with the withered leaves

H. F. Noyes

*

summer's end-
tearing out the ivy
with both hands

Penelope Greenwell

*

tumbleweeds
stopped by a fence
the Milky Way

Matthew Louvière

HERON'S NEST AWARD

morning stroll-
unshared thoughts float off
with the withered leaves

H. F. Noyes

How much of what we think do we actually share with others? Literally very little. Even if afflicted with verbosity it's not remotely possible for the tongue to approach the speed of thought. The relaxed tone of this haiku leads me to believe that the poet refers to this ordinary, everyday flow of thought – all the more likely if, in fact, he is walking by himself.

But the poet may have company on his walk, someone with whom an issue has arisen. The concept of “unshared” is loaded. Are the unshared thoughts in this haiku of the everyday variety, simply flowing in and out of the poet's consciousness, or has he *chosen* to maintain silence? Moments of opportunity present themselves to us and, for some reason, we may decide to not speak out. Those moments are quickly gone, and usually soon forgotten, but their residue tends to linger in the backs of our minds, influencing all that we do. If this poem was not so beautifully balanced the emotional connotations would conflict. But it is in balance. We are directed to an experience of peacefulness and non-attachment.

The season appears to be late autumn. Withered leaves are falling. The poet takes a morning walk, a casual walk, so he calls it a stroll. Nothing much seems to concern him. Although he *could* be with a friend, I imagine that he is alone. Either way he perceives his thoughts to be no more nor less important than withered leaves floating off in a breeze – just leaves, just thoughts.

One aspect of this haiku that helps to make it so successful is that the poet does not tell us his thoughts are *like* withered leaves. In fact he describes the thoughts as floating off *with* the leaves. But by placing these two images near each other he invites us to recognize for ourselves that they are different manifestations of the same phase in a single process.

Of itself, thought can be about anything. The generalized concept of thought carries no emotional charge. But withered leaves *do* have emotional significance. They indicate a particular time in the cycle between birth and death, a passing away of vitality, a return to the source. The proximity of thoughts to the withered leaves lends those thoughts emotional value and gives an indication of the poet's human condition. The leaves float away; the poet is not attached.

What *is* the emotional nature of this poem? It's up to each of us to decide. One reading has the feeling of “sabi”: the sense of being alone, detached, and probably at peace with that. A second reading evokes the mood of “aware”: transcendence, loss, and perhaps some regret. Which ever way we choose to read these words, the poet himself is simply letting go.

Tom Noyes shares with us an experience of liberation. It is a beautifully balanced haiku that expresses willingness to accept things just as they are.

— Christopher Herold
October, 2000

POEMS

dew drop
on a dusty grass blade . . .
the ant backs up

Michael Dylan Welch

*

dense foliage-
the full strawberry moon
makes a path

Merrill Ann Gonzales

*

at the edge
just as I let my hair down
the blue heron flies

Leatrice Lifshitz

*

changing frost patterns
on the windowpane
winter sun

Sue Mill

*

leaving . . .
she uncoils the morning glory
from the garden gate

Charles Trumbull

*

distant lightning
followed by the sound
of a cricket

Arkady Elterman

*

October moon-
a waterstrider dimples
the gilded stream

Emily Romano

*

boarded window
of the tarot reader
autumn evening

paul m

*

coughing and spitting
into the morning glories
then off to work again

Jerry Ball

*

November wind
one leaf pauses
at each sidewalk crack

Brian Gierat

*

a broader path . . .
I rake away my footprints
with the yellow leaves

Peggy Lyles

*

stained glass-
the fleeting shadow
of a bird

Barbara Campitelli

*

steady rain . . .
I fall short of being the human
I wish to be

Francine Porad

*

wild iris-
the water leaks
from a cracked vase

Cindy Zackowitz

*

morning stillness
a dandelion seed
hovers

Kevin Smith

*

old broom
half swept away
with the dirt

Laura Bell

*

a gust of wind
finally knocks the scarecrow out
cold

Ty Hadman

*

spring rain-
a puddle at the end
of the hopscotch ladder

John S. O'Connor

*

this bright day . . .
the empty house
of my mother

Michael McClintock

*

fluttering breeze
the moth sticks its legs
through a screen

an'ya

*

hot night
the moth fans a breeze
through the screen

William Cullen, Jr.

*

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

Carolyn Hall

*

approaching storm
the young blackbird struggles
with a worm

John Crook

*

summer rain-
cat draped
over the footstool

Carolyn Thomas

*

summer lethargy . . .
 between faucet drips
the ticking of the kitchen clock

Rick Tarquinio

*

sound of a bomber
wind is striking
the pulled-down blind

Zoran Doderovic

*

summer begins . . .
the underground sprinkler head
raises a rock

Zolo

*

downpour
all the puddles
wash away

Mark Brooks

*

leisurely gossip
our neighbor's dog
snaps at flies

John Stevenson

*

this heat
only the shadows
move

J. D. Heskin

*

cats sunning
I speak their names
their tails twitch

Robert Gibson

*

transient asleep
at the fountain's edge-
coin-light on his cheek

Martin Vest

*

a long line
at the drinking fountain
ants

Cindy Tebo

*

clouds billow
the island bridge swings open
for one ship

Nina A. Wicker

*

sultry day
a lizard rides my finger
to the aloe leaf

Ferris Gilli

*

oppressive heat-
a bird emerges
from a puffy cloud

Jasminka Djordjevic

*

lingering day . . .
a garbage can lid
becomes first base

Betty Kaplan

*

summer breeze
the criss-cross of gull tracks
in damp sand

Pamela Miller Ness

*

record heat-
the jade plant slumps over
a few yards from the hose

Carolyne Rohrig

*

swamp sunset-
the dragonfly rises
from a lily pad

Suzanne McIntire

*

river rocks
turtles sunning
in tiers

Joann Klontz

*

alpine meadow-
kneeling to photograph
white heather

Billie Wilson

*

scattered bones-
the dog puts on the scent
of the dead

Earl Keener

*

twilight-
words in the margins
of sketchbook trees

Cherie Hunter Day

*

one straw
longer than the others
fragrant bale

Debra Woolard Bender

*

adrift
casting a bright line
into shadow

Linda Robeck

*

traffic wind
in the black-eyed Susans
a dead bear

Paul MacNeil

*

humid night
the depth of purple
in the shadows

Alison Williams

*

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dangling on her sleeve
a silver button

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*

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your footprints

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dragonfly . . .
the tai chi master
shifts his stance

Peggy Lyles

*

open windows
the sound of a distant train
on a sleepless night

Jerry Ball

*

in-laws visit—
a red dragonfly lands
in the white lily

Mark Brooks

HERON'S NEST AWARD

dragonfly . . .
the tai chi master
shifts his stance

Peggy Lyles

Tai chi is a martial art, a way to attain overall fitness and harmony, and a form of meditation. The origins of tai chi are lost to time. Although descriptions of individual postures and their principles have been found in records over 3,500 years old, the first set of recognizable postures is attributed to Chang San Feng, a monk living in the mountains of China about 600 years ago. Today tai chi is usually practiced very slowly, a graceful moving from posture to posture without losing touch with one's center of gravity. Increasing the tempo turns the practice into a martial art, the most popular school of which is the Yang school. Interestingly, a classic symbol for yang is the dragon, the same mythical beast for which the insect in this haiku was named. Tai chi originally developed from observations of birds, beasts, and insects whose movements, undistracted by thought, are immediate and in harmony with their environment.

Dragonfly and tai chi master—is the poet speaking of two entities or one? I've heard the dragonfly described as the “ultimate flying machine.” By observing one we can see how beautifully it maintains its balance. In flight the thorax is nearly motionless between wings blurred by speed, wings which can carry this insect instantaneously in any direction. Even when not in flight the dragonfly shifts its position quickly, surely, and without hesitation. It is a natural master of tai chi, which literally translated means “supreme ultimate.” Together, the words are meant to express “living life to it's fullest.”

From another perspective, the poet may have witnessed the interplay between two beings, a dragonfly and a person practicing tai chi. The insect may have unexpectedly

appeared in front of this person, hovering a few inches away, or perhaps it landed on one hand, or on the sleeve of an outstretched arm. Imagine being taken by surprise by this sudden presence. A change of stance would be a natural reaction. Or maybe, delighted by the company of such a flying ace, the master shifted in order to better observe the insect. The two may even have moved in unison, dragonfly and tai chi master performing a dance in order to better study one another.

The musical qualities of language are important to haiku and should be considered carefully. Readers balk (consciously or unconsciously) at unbalanced rhythms or tongue-twisting phrases. Conversely, language that calls too much attention to itself, whether through rhyme, cleverness, the use of complex or technical words or grammar, etc., also diminishes the impact of a haiku. Read aloud, Peggy's haiku has a classic rhythm: brief opening, a clear break, and smooth follow-through. The qualities of sound are also well-considered. The long "i" in "dragonfly" comes again right away in "tai chi." The short "a"s in "master" and "stance" are at the ends of the second and third lines. In those same two words, the "st" consonance is heard first in the middle, then at the end respectively, saving the poem from too overt a rhyme. The opposite consonance (the "ts" in "shifts") falls neatly between "master" and "stance." These sounds are beautifully spaced, enhancing rather than detracting from the reading. This poem has a relaxed, conversational tone. Because the language is well balanced, the experience is more immediately accessible. Haiku tai chi!

— Christopher Herold
November, 2000

POEMS

storm clouds brew-
a crone on the mountain road
draws tight her black cloak

H. F. Noyes

*

ready to carve
a smile on it
this orange moon

Carlos Colón

*

harvest moon-
migrant kids eat the bread
tossed to the crows

John W. Wisdom

*

November wanes;
the farmer's pet gander
honks at the moon

Emily Romano

*

snow moon
a white mantle
on the scarecrow's coat

Matthew Louvière

*

a steady drizzle
the pitchfork in the bale
slowly darkens

Dennis Dutton

*

mischievous night
the orb weaver waits
at the edge of its web

Joann Klontz

*

smoke-scented air-
a squirrel burrows
in the woodpile

Naia

*

turning his wheelchair
to face the window-
falling leaves

Penelope Greenwell

*

fireplace heat
in my socks-
winter morning

Suzanne McIntire

*

the young cat
follows each sound
knitting needles

Elizabeth St Jacques

*

new year–
poised above the rice paper
the ink-blackened brush

Carolyn Thomas

*

throwing off the comforter . . .
storm windows rattling
in the nursery

John S. O'Connor

*

the day's first bull
trots into the ring . . .
snow on the mountains

Michael McClintock

*

first raindrops
the neighborhood dog and chainsaw
stop.

Doris Thurston

*

rusty stovepipe
leaking blue woodsmoke
-winter sky

Hank Dunlap

*

night wind
one star in the bare crabapple
comes and goes

Yvonne Hardenbrook

*

houseflies
on the windowsill
dead of winter

Giovanni Malito

*

headwind
the heron sideslips
into the reeds
John Crook

*

all around
the parking meter
spring rain!

Harold Bowes

*

washed windows
a place to splatter
the spring rain

an'ya

*

the child's face-
speckled eggs
in the abandoned nest

Nina A. Wicker

*

thunder clap
the twins
jump

John Stevenson

*

early morning-
the slanted shadow
of the pink house

Francine Porad

*

tornado warning-
the sprinkler's
tiny hiss

Martin Vest

*

Winding garden path
a little girl splashes through
multi-colored puddles

Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

red plums
her steady hand slips
between the bees

Ferris Gilli

*

dawn-tinged window
a cicada s w e l l s
into its song

Kris Kondo

*

summer heat-
the golden retriever's breath
on my leg

Zoran Doderovic

*

sheen of web
across a shattered pot
the barn's splintered light

Lynne Leach

*

summer clouds
the faraway look
in a stranger's eyes

Alison Williams

*

dusty trail-
the same thoughts
as yesterday

Cindy Zackowitz

*

Summer's end . . .
as the stream turns
colored leaves follow

Betty Kaplan

*

end of summer
outside the bookstore
paperbacks curl

Rick Tarquinio

*

gladiola frond . . .
silhouette of a cricket
on the other side

Zolo

*

wilderness trail
the manicured poodle
still on a leash

Carolyn Hall

*

base of the falls
a rainbow
breaks into foam

Pamela Miller Ness

*

the river-
the town also spilling out
of the mountains

Paul O. Williams

*

early autumn
the little girl next door
turns forty today

Arkady Elterman

*

full moon
half dark – half light
the sea

Ty Hadman

*

ocean swell
crossing the moonlight
the bow lifts

Martin Cohen

*

busy freeway-
squashed on the shoulder
an orange hard hat

Sue Mill

*

first stars
the swoop and soar
of swallows

Christopher Patchel

*

on the roof late-
my brother hammers nails
in the moon

Earl Keener

*

carillon bells
the stone buddha's eyes
remain closed

Debra Woolard Bender

*

geese in formation
rush-hour traffic
merging

Connie Meester

*

new chanterelles
along the fallen spruce
wren song

Cherie Hunter Day

*

parchment moon
a silo's silver cap
looms out of the fog

Elizabeth Howard

*

Armistice Day
an old soldier dozing
on the stage

J. C. Herring

*

autumn
the church steeple reappears
in the blue sky

Jane Reichhold

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uphill trail
the scarred trunk
of a giant sequoia

paul m.

*

empty corner
slowly the moon leaves
the dust

Odd G. Aksnes

*

autumn afternoon—
the tombstone
strapped to a dolly

Earl Keener

HERON'S NEST AWARD

uphill trail
 the scarred trunk
 of a giant sequoia

paul m.

Chinese ch'an (zen) master, Tung-Shan Liang-Chieh (807 - 869), said "The discovery of the subjective element in the objective is the beginning of self-discovery." Go to the core of paul m.'s poem and this quote is fully illuminated.

On the surface there are two elements in this haiku, a trail and the trunk of a tree. The poet writes of the trail as being "uphill," indicating that, at the time of his experience, he had been hiking up rather than down. "Uphill" also implies some hardship, of course, or at least considerable exertion.

The poet comes to an impressive tree and pauses to rest, and to admire. This particular tree is a giant sequoia, a species that can grow to be more than three hundred feet tall over the course of several millennia. The scars on its trunk are also records of hardship. "Uphill trail" and "scarred trunk"—the connection leads us deeper. We find that a mutual journey is involved; the poet and the sequoia, both on an upward trek. Since sprouting, the tree has constantly been acted upon by weather, sometimes extreme weather. It may have been struck by lightning, or scorched by forest fires, blazed by man, or had limbs broken off by wind or heavy snow. And, having lived much longer than any person presently alive, this tree has undergone far more trials and tribulations than has the poet. But clearly there is more inferred here than the comparison of scars on a tree to one man's strenuous hike up a trail. The juxtaposition of "scarred trunk" and "uphill trail" points directly to tenacity, the will to survive. Not only is the tree's

tenaciousness suggested, and the hiker's, but that of *all* living things. Striving to live and to prosper, we become scarred. "Life is suffering," the Buddha said.

While admiring this ancient tree, the poet suddenly becomes aware of himself as an integral part of an infinitely greater organism. The journey is seen to be more than a myriad individual struggles; it is one tremendous struggle.

The form this haiku has taken indicates that it emerged when the walls between subject and object dissolved. paul m. doesn't write himself into the poem, and by doing so separate himself from the world. Because of this we don't have to work our way through the divisiveness of a personal pronoun in order to realize what he realized. One of my favorite descriptions of haiku given by R. H. Blyth (and one that Master Liang-Chieh would surely have enjoyed) is this: "At the moment of composition or appreciation, there is no distinction between inner and outer. Life runs so freely between them that we perceive things by introspection, and our experiences of the 'outer' world have the same immediacy, validity, and certainty as have states of pure 'self' consciousness." paul m.'s poem works in this way. He finds the subjective in the objective. Now he presents it to us. What . . . *who* do you find at the heart of this haiku?

— Christopher Herold
December, 2000

POEMS

back and forth
leaf shadow weaves
over the loom

Jane Reichhold

*

grandmother
giving chase again
the fat turkey

Elizabeth St Jacques

*

deserted beach
missing a child's
hand to hold

Francine Porad

*

deep winter–
a man outside the market
feeds crows from his hand

Billie Wilson

*

ax and pine
with every chop
a higher sound

Zinovy Vayman

*

autumn gusts
the ragged flight path
of a grey heron

John Crook

*

bubblegum on my shoe
the little girl in the red coat
skips to school

Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

lightning storm
bridge cards face-down
on the table

Carolyne Rohrig

*

northern lights
these problems
suddenly small

Marjorie Buettner

*

winter rain
against the window
the cactus has flowered

Sue Mill

*

dawn-
shades of grey break
into birdsong

Pamela Miller Ness

*

spring sunrise . . .
the empty green bottle
fills with light

William Cullen, Jr.

*

call from an old friend
first hummingbird
at the fuchsia

Margaret Chula

*

Easter morning-
she unwinds her rosary
from the Buddha's shoulders

Owen Burkhart

*

grave diggers
deeper into the hole
June sun

Nina A. Wicker

*

ice storm ended
a cardinal singing
in the bent birch

Elizabeth Howard

*

puddled field
the cat finds sunlight
on a fence post

Maria Steyn

*

cancer again
the slope
of his shoulders

Kay F. Anderson

*

waiting . . .
dandelion fluff
settles on the table

Cindy Zackowitz

*

June breeze
a hole in the cloud
mends itself

an'ya

*

graveyard-
pictures of ancestors
washed by rain

Ljubinka Tasic

*

hawthorn-
a neighbor names
the tree by my door

Leatrice Lifshitz

*

music class
the fan blows his notes
in all directions

Carolyne Rohrig

*

warm sunlight
in deep green leaves
the arrow's path

Lori Laliberte-Carey

*

city park-
children gathering coins
in the dried lake

Zoran Doderovic

*

retirement home . . .
unfinished jigsaw puzzle
on the corner table

Robert Major

*

August moon–
no one speaks
of the humidity

Penelope Greenwell

*

a briefcase
flung open on the table
. . . jungle orchids

Michael McClintock

*

at the zoo
a whistle moves
the wolf's ears

Odd G. Aksnes

*

with the mower off
I expected to hear
more

John Stevenson

*

evening shadows-
picking blackberries
through barbed wire

Darrell Lindsey

*

a desert wind
stirring at the trailhead
fragrant sage

Cherie Hunter Day

*

cricket chorus
in the deep gravel ravine
jewel weed

Merrill Ann Gonzales

*

early morning
the rain falls lightly
on water-jar lids

gop

*

Indian summer
my bookmark
a yellow leaf

Christopher Patchel

*

prison sunset-
in coiled razor wire
a sparrow's nest

John W. Wisdom

*

mountain path-
growing out of a stone wall
one white flower

Betty Kaplan

*

wilted garden-
a beetle drops
into a fissure

Suzanne McIntire

*

the end of summer-
a seagull and I
share the sandbar

Hortensia Anderson

*

smooth stones
the coolness of water
held in their shapes

Debra Woolard Bender

*

moon on the lake:
someone has stolen
all my clothes!

Ty Hadman

*

tossing and turning
all through the night
mockingbird song

Hank Dunlap

*

morning fog-
the scent
of eucalyptus

Naia

*

thinking about you-
the remarkable redness
of this tomato

Paul O. Williams

*

a maple seed
floats in the millpond . . .
deep blue sky

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*

the cat
reworks his litter-
summer dusk

Barry George

*

All Saints' Day
the rooster crows
again and again

Joann Klontz

*

garden path . . .
in the space between thoughts
the first drop of rain

Rick Tarquinio

*

fleeting sunlight
on the doorknob, warmth
from a stranger's hand

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*

full moon
she nurses her infant
in the garden

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FIRST ANNUAL VALENTINE AWARDS

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OVERVIEW

“It is as much an art to read haiku as it is to write them.” So said Reginald Blyth, and I believe it is one of the more important insights he offered us. The haiku poet's craft involves becoming transparent so that the experience will be unobstructed when read. There should be no distracting residue of the poet's ego. The circumstances are provided by the poet, who trusts that (and again I quote Blyth) “The reader can do again what the poet has done.”

As I re-read and re-lived the poems for which you, the readers of The Heron's Nest, cast votes, I was deeply impressed by your sensitivity and by your estimations of what most closely approaches the essence of haiku. Along with your votes, some of you expressed the reasons for your decisions. A few of the qualities you offered as important to your decision making were: “quiet; unassuming; a subtle connection of nature with humankind; the evocation of a deep emotional response; a clear message; carefully chosen images; clear and concise wording; rhythm; thoughtful arrangement of lines; selflessness; combining human activity with nature in such a way that both are revealed in a new light; how connected we are to the whole of creation when we ourselves are creating; satisfying to the senses; the one I seem to get lost in for the longest amount of time; the word structure pulls the image slowly through the mind . . .”

In particular I'd like to quote (with his permission) what John Stevenson wrote to me when casting his vote. His sister-in-law, he noted, said: “The editor's choice commentary seems to value different things in the various poems commented on.” John went on to say: “It seems to me that there is a very active kind of reading required of

anyone who appreciates haiku, and that a good haiku may support many different readings, but no one reading makes it work, nor even one kind of reading.” John also pointed out that “individual poems tend to match some [criteria] more than others [of The Heron's Nest list of criteria], and that this varies from one poem to another.” These observations are astute, and well stated. I share them with you because they are corroborated by the wide variety of poems voted for by you the readers.

I was amazed that, of the one hundred sixty-two haiku presented in the four issues of Volume I, twenty-nine different haiku received votes. That's one out of every five or six! Twenty-five poets received votes and a few of them received votes for more than one of their haiku. Something for which I am personally gratified is that each of the four Heron's Nest Award winners in Volume I received votes, as did three of the eight runners-up. It seems that we (the editor and the readers) are pretty much in accord. So now I'm delighted to present the First Annual Valentine Award winners! The readers' voting resulted in a grand prize winner and a tie for runner-up.

— Christopher Herold

February, 2000

WINNERS AND COMMENTARY

EDITOR'S CHOICE

the frayed rope
 swings back into the shade-
 country swimming hole

Burnell Lippy
 Volume 1, Issue 2

I admit it. The task of choosing a winner was considerably easier for me than it was for most of you who voted. The principle reason is that I'd already chosen four haiku for Heron's Nest Awards, one for each of the issues in Volume I. Where I did have difficulty was in deciding between those four award-winning poems. Each is powerful in a different way. At last I settled upon the poem that most deftly captures a single ephemeral moment, one that wouldn't be noticed by anyone who arrives at the scene a second before or after the event. In addition to this essential immediacy, I wanted to select a poem that has a clear sense of season.

Through the moment he describes in words, Burnell Lippy emphatically implies the event that takes place immediately before the rope swings back into the shade: a joyous letting go in the sunshine. And implicit in that letting go is the excited anticipation of plunging into the cool, sensuous wetness of water. Equally implied are the moments immediately following the passage of the rope into shadow: the return from active to passive, from realization to potential, from center stage to anonymity. All of this in one short poem. How? Our attention is directed to a single point of time and space so compact that it illuminates those things going on around it.

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READERS' CHOICE

summer morning
 the old dog seems to know
 the length of his leash

Jerry Ball
 Volume 1, Issue 1

In presenting a poem chosen by readers I think it appropriate (and preferable) to quote readers when possible. I do so here with the voter's permission. "I sense that there is an old dog at each end of the leash and, although they are different species, they seem to be joined in an instinctive knowledge that it's going to be a hot one and there's no point in getting all worked up first thing. If you get to be an "old dog" you usually do learn the length of your leash. I found the suggestion of mutual learning between pet and master very attractive."

In addition to the well chosen words of this poet, I'd like to add that Jerry Ball's haiku is simple, informal and down-to-earth. No complicated terms; simply what is. This is not a poem about resignation, it's one of willing acceptance. I think both master and dog are "old souls." Each loves life and wants to get outside into the vastness of it, but their enthusiasm has evolved over the years into a shared state of grace. The leash is a pivotal image. We are all on a leash of one kind or another. How we handle this fact is what determines our character, how freely we live within our bodily constraints.

This haiku begins with an acknowledgment of the day's potential ("summer morning"), a sense of promise. The rhythm of alliteration in the final line ("the length of his leash") moderates this potential, and suggests having come to grips with present conditions. What a wonderfully balanced haiku this is. Jerry Ball well deserves our applause.

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READERS' CHOICE RUNNERS UP

a swirl of ink
in the brush water
early dusk

Cherie Hunter Day
Volume 1, Issue 3

This haiku by Cherie Hunter Day is so accessible. I was immediately struck with her revelation. She is painting a scene and, as with most paintings, light and shadow are of great importance. Naturally this painting reflects the qualities of the day's passage. The mind does not have to struggle to find the poet's perspective. And when the artist is winding up her afternoon's work she notices that the very act of cleaning a brush is in accord with all else, a resonance with the painted canvas and with the coming of dusk. To read this poem is to swirl.

Another admirable aspect of this haiku is Cherie's beautifully understated seasonal reference "early dusk." The summer solstice has long since passed and dusk arrives sooner each day. As darkness overcomes daylight, so too does the ink overcome the water's clarity. In this poem there is a feel of the onset of winter.

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morning tea
from the parakeet's cage
a toy bell tinkles

June Moreau
Volume 1, Issue 4

I commented at some length on June Moreau's poem in the December issue of *The Heron's Nest*. Her haiku was my choice for the award that month. With clarity and

simplicity, June magnifies a subtle mood. It is a peaceful moment, one that evokes the feeling of contentedness. She conveys this feeling, in part, by utilizing the musical quality of words. June Moreau writes as if she were playing a fine instrument which, indeed, she is. And she plays beautifully. Her “morning tea” haiku has now received two awards for excellence.

These haiku are both quiet. They both bring to mind those moments when we simply close our eyes and sigh happily in deep appreciation and gratitude for life.

— Christopher Herold
February, 2000

ABOUT *THE HERON'S NEST*

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

PHILOSOPHY

As editor of this journal my intention is 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. To help you decide whether or not to submit your work, I'd like you to know the qualities I regard as important to haiku.

STAFF

Christopher Herold, editor
Alex Benedict, Webmaster

TECHNICAL NOTE

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