

THE HERON'S NEST — VOLUME 3 (2001)



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FEATURED POEMS

cold snap
the rattle of a rake
over stones

paul m.

*

high noon
a cat stares down
the chipmunk's hole

Peggy Lyles

*

approaching storm
a nest of yellowjackets
in the scarecrow's belly

John W. Wisdom

HERON'S NEST AWARD

cold snap
 the rattle of a rake
 over stones

paul m.

A haiku is a door. Beyond the portal is experience -- and mood. Some haiku are quiet; what action there is is carried in a few words. A complex scene and its inter-relationships are distilled with careful management of language. paul m. takes the reader over the threshold with five key words. Within his haiku one senses temperature, sound, and the sight of an action (portrayed without a direct verb). The haiku unfolds seemingly without a guide; the poet is invisible. Indeed, by the time we finish reading, the clarity and immediacy of mood may have caused most of the words to disappear as well.

The writer has very artfully employed his "keywords" not only for meaning but for their sound, music, and emotional effect. The mood of the haiku is heightened in this way and a reader may not be aware (should not be aware) of this until later analysis, intellection. "Cold" is not only the season word (paired with "snap," the word it modifies), the long "o" sound makes it slow to say, so we feel its meaning even more. "Snap" is a direct word: blunt and short. The season is probably early to mid-autumn. A particular feel is in the air and it seems likely that this experience took place early in the morning, often a time when there's very little wind. Everything is still. In cold, dry air, the "rattle" is a brittle sound. The observer turns toward it. The noun "rattle" is modified and explained by a tool: the rake. The quick assonance of "snap" and "rattle" flows into the consonance of "rattle" and "rake." We are led from from one to the other in rapid order. Then the poem closes as it began, with slow sounds: the "o"s in "over" and

"stones." The last word now shares the characteristic of the first; the stones are cold as well.

Resolution for the question of who is doing what is not fully supplied to the reader. Without explicit direction one may assume fallen leaves move with the strokes of the rake. The leaves also rattle, but not like the skittering of rake teeth. It may be that this is a Zen garden, but with the author's use of "stones," rather than sand or gravel, it is more likely that we are simply pointed toward the regular maintenance of a landscape.

Do we see the gardener's breath or is the whole scene out of sight, only the almost-unpleasant sound reaching us? Do we see the bare shadows of trees on the ground and the rake passing through them? The angles of both? Is the raking rhythmic? Do we smell the leaves? The pureness of the air? Is a deep breath of this air as satisfying as the rake-on-stone sound is unsettling?

Analysis aside, as readers the three Editors were unanimously drawn to this haiku, to the power of its mood. Before we knew of one another's responses we had each moved fully into the moment, adding our own unique experiences to that of Paul M.'s.

— Paul MacNeil
January, 2001

POEMS

frosty morning
the carriage horses
turn a tight circle

Matt Morden

*

used clothes
placed out on the stoop
a light snowfall

Bruce Kennedy

*

first Christmas–
my daughter plays
with a cardboard box

Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

frost moon
pairing his wool socks
warm from the dryer

Carolyn Hall

*

sudden storm
the geese overhead
fade into snowflakes

Gary Barnes

*

shopping plaza-
in the handicap parking
piles of snow

Yvonne Hardenbrook

*

trimming the tree
his brother's ornament
nearest the angel

Joann Klontz

*

winter evening
the last crow flies past
-then another

Doris Kasson

*

the hound howls
at his echo-
mountain winter

Jerry Judge

*

footprints in the snow . . .
eight candles flickering
on grandma's menorah

Betty Kaplan

*

year's end
this unfinished
poem

Debra Woolard Bender

*

the mourning ends-
walking out
into new sunlight

William Cullen, Jr.

*

approaching rain
a second wren tips
the tall thistle

Stephen Amor

*

garden path-
the child sorts good rocks
from bad rocks

Mark Brooks

*

line drive to center
all faces turn toward
the sunflower field

Charles Trumbull

*

January 1st
fresh grave being covered
by snow

Carlos Colón

*

two red cedars
joined in their early years--
grown apart with age

Robert Major

*

walking the old paths
I am again
a child!

Ljubinka Tasic

*

red dust--
a little boy sprints the bases
between innings

Lenard D. Moore

*

every now and then
he swats at a fly
midday heat

Penelope Greenwell

*

summer drought-
next to her rose tattoo
a pale blue vein

Harold Bowes

*

steps fade . . .
her scent lingers
among thorns

Odd G. Aksnes

*

vapor trail-
between here and there
spider working a web

Nina Wicker

*

distant thunder
the spindly legs
of a crane fly

paul m.

*

scarecrow
still measuring
the vast summer sky

Ty Hadman

*

opening night-
the dark rose unfurls
its scent

Yvonne Cabalona

*

guided hike-
beyond the talk
quiet woods

Mary Lee McClure

*

sharing with a grandchild
the secrets
of clouds

John Stevenson

*

in the corner
the usual spiderweb,
the usual moth

Paul O. Williams

*

raindrops-
a stink bug swings
on the half-ripe berry

Cindy Zackowitz

*

warm night
one moth still bumps
the extinguished lamp

Tony Beyer

*

first cold day-
the slower pace
of big black ants

Elizabeth St Jacques

*

gaining an hour . . .
I water the marigolds
one more time

Barry George

*

withering leaves
the lawyer to write his will
rings the doorbell

Carol Conti-Entin

*

mother's bedroom
the silver thimble
catches moonlight

sheila windsor

*

vacation's end-
a dead cockroach
in the bathtub

gop

*

late summer chill . . .
the old headstones trailing back
into the pines

Bruce Ross

*

autumn wind
men in wrinkled suits
argue with the cab driver

Jerry Ball

*

warmth of the tea room
the colored leaves
turn into themselves

Margaret Chula

*

other lights
than our own-
the Milky Way

Gary Hotham

*

starlit lake–
a stray bobber afloat
in the galaxy

an'ya

*

black squirrel
leaping into an oak–
rush hour wind

Carolyn Rohrig

*

outside the Guggenheim
the shapes
of real trees

Gabriel Rosenstock

*

frost moon
an old maple changing
the face of it

Leatrice Lifshitz

*

light snow–
the cookie sheet warps
in the oven

Jim Kacian

*

foggy morning-
a buck looking in
my basement window

Alexis Rotella

*

children scatter
across the schoolyard
leaf-catching

Christopher Patchel

*

Dutch canal
a swan paddles past
a no propeller sign

John Crook

*

my child's kiss-
a down feather drifts
onto the book

Maria Steyn

*

quiet morning
the delicate balance
of snow on boughs

Marjorie Buettner

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FEATURED POEMS

the slow turn
of a barber's pole-
afternoon heat

John W. Wisdom

*

back at camp
the mountain peak
still in my legs

Yu Chang

*

black water-
a goose paddles
through morning snow

Cindy Zackowitz

HERON'S NEST AWARD

The birdbaths are covered with ice, and wrappings of bed sheets have turned bushes and trees into misshapen ghosts. As the frigid wind creeps into the house and into my bones, I combat it with hot coffee and layers of clothing, and by reading this haiku:

the slow turn
of a barber's pole–
afternoon heat

John W. Wisdom

Those lines transport me into another time and place, into summer, where the soothing drawl of Southern speech matches the unhurried pace of my small hometown.

"Uptown" consists of a row of buildings facing the railroad track. The plate-glass window of the general store advertises Sweet Peach snuff, fresh hens' eggs, and Red Goose shoes. Other lures include five-cent bottles of Orange Crush and Coca-Cola chilling between chunks of ice in the drink box, and the latest Pocketbook paperbacks available for a quarter apiece. A spotted hound lies dozing beneath an oak bench, stirring occasionally to snap at a bluebottle fly. He ignores the shrill peeps of hundreds of mail-order chicks in cardboard boxes, and the smells of chicken manure and fowl mash that drift from the adjoining two-room post office.

The first building in the row is Smitty's Barber Shop. Beside the door hangs the modern counterpart of that ancient symbol of barbering and bloodletting, an electrically driven barber's pole, with its slowly spiraling red, white, and blue stripes. Half the shop roof is sheltered by a huge, hundred-year-old magnolia, but the shadows cast by dark green leaves and full, creamy blossoms are deceptive; this afternoon it's 102 degrees in the shade. To walk, to sit, to wave a paper fan—to simply breathe—is to sweat. A barefoot

child whose father is inside getting a haircut sits between two great tree roots, gazing nearly hypnotized at the incessantly flowing curves of the barber's pole.

The slow rotations of the pole remind me of the turning of the Earth. The rhythm and imagery of John's haiku represent the essence of summer. As dog days begin, it seems that the time of torpid air and blazing sun, long days melting into one another, will never end, just as the bright stripes curve continuously into themselves with the endless turning of the pole. The broad temporal boundaries of the season are reflected in the shape of the poem's words on the tongue, words that ask to be read leisurely, the "r's" barely pronounced, to emerge slowly like cool syrup poured from an earthenware pitcher.

Occasionally we are given the gift of a poem that awakens sensual memories, allows us to re-visit a moment of our own, and resonates so strongly that we experience a physical shock of wonder and recognition. Finely and concisely wrought and perfectly complete in its brevity, this haiku is such a poem for me. I am grateful to John for this vivid reminder that the seasons change, that winter will end.

— Ferris Gilli
February, 2001

POEMS

pear scent
from the sake cup
winter moon

Peggy Lyles

*

gray morning
the icicle grows
by another drop

Mary Lee McClure

*

deathbed-
out the open window
the open sky

Laura Bell

*

just now
as my life turns crazy
forsythia

Jim Kacian

*

dying embers-
nodding off to the sound
of tree frogs

Earl Keener

*

northern lights
filtering through fir trees
a distant train whistles

jason murray

*

creek grasses
bent seaward
winter rain

Carolyn Hall

*

new grave
a sparrow tugs
at a ribbon

Emily Romano

*

passing the church
she gazes upward
spring twilight

Bruce Kennedy

*

early morning
a snail
in my sandal

gop

*

again I take
the wrong way . . .
those violets!

Ljubinka Tasic

*

cloudless sky
a great blue heron wades
through pond scum

Michael Ketchek

*

thunder clouds-
landing with the first raindrops
dark-eyed junco

Francine Porad

*

spring afternoon
the sound of a bee bouncing
off the window

Peter Williams

*

getting to know you
a timer goes off
in the kitchen

Yu Chang

*

narrow path
bees swarm between us
and the sea

Joann Klontz

*

sunlit reeds
the slender line
of the bittern's beak

Kate MacQueen

*

spring rain
the measured step
of a sandhill crane

paul m.

*

her laughter . . .
a waterdrop slides
in the nasturtium leaf

Maria Steyn

*

summer shower
my face flows down
the windowpane

Bogoljub T. Mihajlovic

*

cry of the finch
wrapped in hawk talons-
scattered seeds

Kay F. Anderson

*

mud-spattered pickup-
four dogs watch
the tavern door

Billie Wilson

*

hiking trail
a tarantula and I
back up together

Carolyne Rohrig

*

Woodland stream
among the sword ferns
quivers of light

Katie Cameron

*

business trip ending
my shadow pulls a briefcase
from the car trunk

Harold Bowes

*

thunderclap!
a squirrel near the feeder
clutches its chest

Francine Porad

*

saguaro shadow-
the packrat hiding
something bright

MaryJane Turner

*

river crossing
the gap between
stones

Odd G. Aksnes

*

bright summer sun:
a black dragonfly tests one weed
after another

Bruce Ross

*

how much
do the neighbors know?
my grass grows long

John Stevenson

*

daymoon-
the branch of a birch
laden with crows

an'ya

*

nearly sunset
the spider shadow moves
in the curtain

Mark Brooks

*

summer dusk
the town hall clock
drowns a drunk

Matt Morden

*

early dusk-
toward the fingernail moon
a vee of geese

Yvonne Cabalona

*

night rain
a glimpse of deer antlers
between wiper blades

Lenard D. Moore

*

leaving each shadow
as it was . . .
evening breeze

Michael McClintock

*

red berries
at the tip of each branch
the setting sun

Susannah Getty

*

subway stairs–
the old man climbs
into autumn

William Cullen, Jr.

*

autumn drizzle
a terra cotta pot
in pieces

Mark Brooks

*

autumn wind
goldfinch feathers cling
to the gravel

John Crook

*

a hawk's eye-
autumn gusts rattle
the beech leaves

Alison Williams

*

shifting clouds-
an alligator swallows
the big yellow moon

naia

*

recess over
leaves swirl around
children in line

Gary Barnes

*

a crow
on the top-most branch
winter solstice

Patricia Laster

*

morning meditation
the goldfish
winks

Lee Gurga

*

catching a cricket
and letting it go
hunter's moon

Rick Tarquinio

*

yellow leaves
a girl plays hopscotch
by herself

Peggy Lyles

*

end of autumn
only thistle
left in bloom

Stanford Forrester

*

sun brightens the room
Christmas cards fastened
to a Navajo rug

Jean Jorgensen

*

cold day-
the teacher untangles me
from the lotus position

Kathy Lippard Cobb

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FEATURED POEMS

winter sunrise
slowly
the cockerel finds his voice

John Crook

*

deep summer-
the sweet-smelling wake
of a hay wagon

Brett Peruzzi

*

winter solstice
the flock of starlings
takes a new shape

Matt Morden

HERON'S NEST AWARD

winter sunrise
slowly
the cockerel finds his voice

John Crook

Aren't adverbs to be shunned in haiku? Generally speaking I believe that they are. When I find I've used one in a poem I usually weed it out or replace it . . . usually. There are exceptions, as there are to most haiku parameters. Each of us brings to the writing table a set of guidelines that we feel to be important, our own personal haiku philosophy. We have each adopted particular aspects of the craft that we honor and with which we wish to comply. The tendency is to grip those concepts tightly. But if we wish to reach the deeper strata of an experience there is a point at which we must be willing to loosen our grasp. This willingness is what enables us to get to the crux of it. We begin to feel our way through words and usages, more often than not encountering a challenge to stray from at least one of our chosen tenets. Do we sacrifice here in order to emphasize there?

The main reason that adverbs aren't much used in haiku is that they tend to tell rather than show. Adverbs serve as expressions of a poet's opinion about the manner in which something takes place, not just the observable facts. With less modification, the facts allow us to determine the quality of action for ourselves.

John Crook's poem features an adverb. It's all by itself, the entire second line! How can this be acceptable? Even though the sunrise is a clear visual image and the cockerel's crowing is distinctly audible, the word "slowly" is the heart of this poem. It is pivotal, referring both to the sun and to the cockerel; it connects them. More than this, "slowly"

connects these two images to winter itself, and to all else passing through that part of the seasonal cycle.

Winter: a time when nature has withdrawn into itself. The heart rates of hibernating animals decrease significantly. Leaves wither and fall as the sap no longer reaches stems and twigs. Air molecules slow in vibration, condense, and grow cold. There is less daylight, and the sun, now further away, provides less heat. It arcs closer to the horizon which gives the impression that it's rising more slowly.

The cockerel awakens with the first light. It opens its beak to crow but nothing much happens, except that icy air rushes in and reappears again, warm and white against the gray dawn. Again it tries, managing a short, feeble gaaak. The poet stirs in his bed and half-opens his eyes. The cockerel, compelled by instinct, let's out another hoarse croak, a little longer this time. The poet lies there, awake now, but still in the slow-moving twilight realm between dreams and a new day. He listens as the cockerel's voice gains strength with each fresh effort. He feels the bird's winter as his own.

My thanks to John Crook for his haiku invitation to share empathy.

— Christopher Herold
March, 2001

POEMS

warm kitchen
the rise and fall
of friends' laughter

Yu Chang

*

first valentine
in the kindergarten box-
scent of fresh paste

Betty Kaplan

*

back home-
trees that i knew
in all their seasons

Tom Clausen

*

dark river
shadows of gypsies
around the fire

Bogoljub T. Mihajlovic

*

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

Gabriel Rosenstock

*

raveled mitten-
bird tracks crisscross
patio snow

Mary Lee McClure

*

winter branches
a spray of snow
from the magpie's tail

Peter Williams

*

dusk-
the stillness of swans
in a flooded field

Odd G. Aksnes

*

spring morning-
a bird shoots out
of the scarecrow's sleeve

Earl Keener

*

on the old
flowering quince
a quince

Winifred Jaeger

*

pale sun-
cherry petals drift
onto the cat's fur

L. M. Hussenbux

*

power blackout
frogs boom
in the billabong

Anna Tambour

*

bus stop-
the ladybug on my finger
spreads her wings

Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

a clod of earth
the worm wiggles
out both sides

Joann Klontz

*

damselfly
for a moment only
the stony creek

paul m.

*

willow by the pond
one branch stirs
its own reflection

Katie Cameron

*

remaining blossoms
a gardener rakes the sand
across his footprints

Jerry Ball

*

warm spring day
a nun joins the schoolgirls
at skip rope

Christopher Patchel

*

deep in discussion
my father's hands
untangle our fishing lines

Martin Vest

*

heat lightning
an armadillo skitters
into a ditch

Mark Brooks

*

evening sun
boys playing cricket
on the river bed

K. Ramesh

*

nightfall
wingbeats of blackbirds
deep in the thicket

Kate MacQueen

*

sunrise
meets the shore
wave after wave

Debra Woolard Bender

*

a breeze
through paper lanterns
the dancer lifts her fan

Peggy Lyles

*

Ivy League quad
a squirrel gathering nuts
looks me over

John Stevenson

*

old mission-
desert wind swinging
clapperless bells

MaryJane Turner

*

calm sea-
a huge tree trunk
washed up on the shore

Ty Hadman

*

our lips touch-
the surf moves sand
beneath my feet

Darrell Byrd

*

summer's end
the sound of horseshoes ringing
across the lake

Rick Tarquinio

*

evening light
the red dragonfly
as still as the riverstone

Carolyn Thomas

*

evening sunrays
the tap roots of turnips
left in dry ground

Nina Wicker

*

pioneer house
the scent of smoke trailing
through the dark rooms

Elizabeth Howard

*

October snow clouds . . .
the wasp nest's outer coverings
flap in the wind

Bruce Ross

*

slingshot
the pebble misses
a star

John W. Wisdom

*

into the tunnel . . .
late autumn fades
in the rear view

Lenard D. Moore

*

one stroke
splits the log-
a crow caws

Hortensia Anderson

*

misty foothills-
a woodpecker scarcely dents
the thick-spread silence

H. F. Noyes

*

squirrel bones
between tree roots-
needles falling

Cindy Zackowitz

*

floodlit sky
the wrecking ball swings
in and out of darkness

Barry George

*

full moon-
I wonder which state
his jet is crossing

Yvonne Cablona

*

conversation lags-
far out on the spindly branch
a withered leaf

Harold Bowes

*

year's end
her skipping rope
too short

Maria Steyn

*

New Year's Day
an orca leaps
over the gray swell

Carol O'Dell

*

adding a squawk
to the scrabble of mice-
rusty hinge

Neca Stoller

*

starry night-
frost patterns grow
from the window's edge

Jasminka Nadaskic Diordievic

*

winter rain
tufts of moss
on the flagstone steps

Carolyn Hall

*

winter wind-
sandpipers chase
their voices

Doris Kasson

*

winter sky
three geese wheeling
around . . . around

Doris Thurston

*

virgin snow
a pine needle enters
point down

an'ya

*

frosting the window
with our breath-
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Larry Kimmel

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FEATURED POEMS

snow mixes with rain–
my mother keeps calling me
by my brother's name

Paul David Mena

*

headstones . . .
butterflies move
through the silence

Maria Steyn

*

sent back out
for something I forgot
winter stars

Rick Tarquinio

HERON'S NEST AWARD

snow mixes with rain-
my mother keeps calling me
by my brother's name

Paul David Mena

The drear of the day. Intermittent rain softens the old snow to slush. An occasional flake floats down with the cold drops. This bridging, this in-between kind of a winter day, is discomforting. It is not the calendar photograph or Currier and Ives print rendition of the season.

I see the poet leaving a nursing home, his experience still swirling in his mind. His breath is white; his gloves and scarf were left in the car because the nursing home is always so hot. He has to look down, stepping carefully on the sidewalk and at the curb on the way to his car (always at a far corner of the overloaded visitors' parking lot). This is my own identification with the scene Paul David Mena has stimulated me to share with him. The facility, no matter how well run, no matter how well intended is the staff, smells like all such places: disinfectant is paramount. The fluorescent ceiling lights are spaced evenly down each of the radiating hallways. Wheelchairs are parked in the day room. Walkers edge along in the halls. Another visit; again the poet goes, unremembered, back out into the bleak weather.

The most elemental bond of our species is that between parents and children (most strongly between mother and child). Imprinted. From birth the characteristics of touch, smell, and sound are known to each of the pair. Recently, while at a shopping mall, I heard a baby's alarm cry. It was exactly my daughter's cry, just eighteen or more years out of date. It startled me anyway. In this haiku that physical and emotional bond is the subject, even as the connection is fraying at one end. The son's love is strong, but

through the vagaries of age or disease the mother is losing touch. The old phrase has been “she's getting senile,” or “she's just getting old,” but these days a name is often applied: “Alzheimer's disease,” as if identifying the condition provides more power or control over it.

Long after first considering this haiku, I discovered that Paul had written it in five-seven-five arrangement. Even so, it's very simple and it has no padding. The poet has employed a kigo as a setting for the haiku, but it is the precision of the kigo itself that provides the point of resonance. What sadness! I empathize with Paul. His skill is such that only facts are stated, yet complex emotions may be evoked. There is love and there is duty. There is the hopelessness of a winter of the mind.

— Paul MacNeil
April, 2001

POEMS

i take the strongest
of my walking sticks
first cherry blossoms

vince tripi

*

first kiss--
the lilacs still heavy
with last night's rain

Billie Wilson

*

sunlight
in the tidepool
-each grain of sand

Hank Dunlap

*

incoming tide
a crab shell floats under
the cormorant shadow

Anna Tambour

*

garden path
the apprentice
puzzles over stones

Carolyn Hall

*

under the fallen log
a long slender stem
-lavender cyclamen

Carol O'Dell

*

nodding off . . .
a butterfly reflection
glides downstream

Stephen Amor

*

red dawn
the discord
of warbling finches

L. M. Hussenbux

*

downpour
a whelk's foot stretches
toward the waves

Peggy Lyles

*

red wagon
the sound of soda bottles
along a pebbled path

John W. Wisdom

*

mound of dirt
my son asks if ants
bury their dead

Cindy Tebo

*

sultry afternoon
biting into
the bargain cheddar

Alice Frampton

*

summer day-
shadows of cumulus clouds
rush over the hills

Robert Major

*

a flower-lined path
the latchkey kid
lets himself in

Joann Klontz

*

tiny bubbles
where the moose was
a cluster of flies

Yu Chang

*

afternoon heat
the vireo's endless
question, answer

Susan J. Kent

*

huge trees in the park-
a different dog
chasing the stick

Gary Hotham

*

hot afternoon-
a finch vanishes
down the chimney

Mark Brooks

*

cranberry bog
the lost fawn
visible for miles

Kay Grimnes

*

warm blueberries
a sand path winding
into sunset

Marianne Bluger

*

train whistle
in the night it is music
of far away places

Doris Thurston

*

a small hoot
moonlight reveals
the rest

Connie Donleycott

*

daybreak
trotting down the sidewalk
one gray coyote

Linda Robeck

*

foggy morning-
a chrysalis clings
to the eaves

Earl Keener

*

autumn creek
the thrush hops
to a smaller rock

paul m.

*

the storm clears
a mockingbird sings
in the moonlight

Gary Barnes

*

lunar eclipse
a white moth struggles
in the web

William Cullen Jr.

*

bitter words
last night's tea steeps
in the microwave

Debra Woolard Bender

*

mountain meadow
the fog, the deer
in silent retreat

Noor Singh Khalsa

*

sunrays on the pond
mallards fly single file
toward the horizon

Elizabeth Howard

*

crisp morning-
the yellow cactus
blooms anyway

Salena Morris

*

late day sun . . .
small pieces of ice floating
on the river

Bruce Ross

*

ticket reservation clerk
a small yellow leaf
on his neatly combed hair

K. Ramesh

*

empty shelf-
dusty outlines of books
my parents read

Kirsty Karkow

*

river of stars-
the channel light
flashing green

Ellen Compton

*

winter sun-
a cyclist pedals
against the wind

Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

first snow
on the wheat stubble-
the young fox pounces

John Barlow

*

maple leaves
piled up at the cabin door
stars in the trees

Randal Johnson

*

winter storm
a draught rocks the ship
in a bottle

Matt Morden

*

new moon-
lamplight fills the holes
in a shot-out stop sign

Cindy Zackowitz

*

first snowflakes
darkness and my face
on the windowpane

Sasa Vazic

*

light snowfall-
the tick of an engine
cooling

Patrick Kelly

*

a whinny
stops his shovelling
deep winter

Odd G. Aksnes

*

winter rain
preening itself, the swan
drifts backwards

Peter Williams

*

morning rush . . .
a street sweeper roars
over plum petals

Kay F. Anderson

*

a public bench
lit by one street lamp
the falling snow

Bruce Kennedy

*

the silence
after late night snow . . .
a pinecone falls

Lenard D. Moore

*

winter blues
the gnaw of my boots
on old snow

Christopher Patchel

*

spring snow–
beneath the burnt log
a blue lupine

H. F. Noyes

*

first day alone
a breeze fills my lap
with plum blossoms

Carol Raisfeld

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FEATURED POEMS

faint thunder
a snake sloughs its skin
in the creekbed

Anna Tambour

*

canyon echo
sky-colored asters
among the rocks

paul m.

*

hospice terrace
the gardener disturbs
winter dust

John Crook

HERON'S NEST AWARD

faint thunder
a snake sloughs its skin
in the creekbed

Anna Tambour

Stillness and heat. A time when creatures take refuge from the glaring sun by dozing under rocks, in caves and cracks and crannies, beneath cool leaves, and in quiet river shallows. There is no relief here; drought sucks the land. Thunder growls faintly, far away. Too far. Only memories of water remain where the rushing creek used to be, the silty bottom now cracked and dull. And yet, right there, something stirs. A snake is sloughing its skin in the creekbed.

The new skin gleams as the reptile slowly emerges from the one it has outgrown. Thunder rumbles again, possibly closer now. This time the rains may come, filling brooks and ponds and awakening new growth everywhere.

This brief poem confirms the author's close connection with nature. Anna Tambour doesn't speak of drought or seasonal change; instead she uses concrete images to imply these things. Anna's clear imagery and fine focus draw me into the moment, and her strong juxtaposition evokes new insight. It is in the space between the two parts of her haiku, in the words left unwritten, that I discover a deeper level of truth.

The poet has chosen her words carefully. The first line, "faint thunder," gives me a sense of something about to happen. The snake's presence in the creekbed (with the implication of a long drought) heightens tension. The "hiss" of a snake and the soft noise it makes sliding over leaves and grass are echoed in the repetition of "s" sounds:

“a snake sloughs its skin.” As the poem ends, I am struck by the grave importance of “faint thunder,” and the underlying hope in those words.

That the subject of Anna's haiku also serves as its kigo adds dimension; yet this kigo is obviously not contrived. Much of the poem's beauty and strength come from its concision; every word is essential for meaning and resonance. I perceive the haiku itself as metaphor for nature's cycles and constant changes. Anna Tambour's voice rings clear and true, and it is one I look forward to hearing again and again.

— Ferris Gilli
May, 2001

POEMS

day moon
dandelion seeds
drift by

William Cullen Jr.

*

green tea in white cups
an oriole holds forth
from a high branch

Larry Kimmel

*

my synagogue route-
from a draped Moslem woman
Grandma's scent

Zinovy Vayman

*

sunny afternoon-
a bee follows wildflowers
into my car

Billie Wilson

*

empty sandals
on the beach
pull of the moon

Carolyn Hall

*

spring sky-
the unfocused stare
of a newborn

Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

dead pear tree-
for ten days each spring
it was white with blossom

Florence Vilén

*

a few snow patches-
white steer faces peer
above wildflowers

H. F. Noyes

*

a black bear
sunning
daisy-strewn

Michael McClintock

*

a Cajun song
in the evening air
lilacscent

Elizabeth St Jacques

*

rising moon . . .
a slug's path
on a zucchini leaf

Naomi Brown

*

prairie flowers
gone to seed the dry flick
of grasshoppers

Christopher Patchel

*

unseasonable heat-
a woodpecker
in the lightning scar

Cindy Zackowitz

*

mountain silence
a leaf floats in the gorge
where a boxcar rusts

Marianne Bluger

*

a locomotive whistle
fills the tea room
evening chill

Bruce Kennedy

*

summer stream
a toddler's leaf floats
in circles

Lori Laliberte-Carey

*

approaching storm-
minnows dart
in the bait bucket

Brian Gierat

*

twilight
the meadow
cricketing

Evelyn Hermann

*

fallen leaves
settle deeper-
the hammock's sag

Harold Bowes

*

hermitage
a small hole dug
deep in an acorn

Matt Morden

*

the rhythmic whirr
of a neighbour's sprinkler
star-filled night

Maria Steyn

*

moonrise . . .
the German Pointer
holds position

Emily Romano

*

grey dawn
the precise strokes
of a crow's wings

Peter Williams

*

winter drive . . .
a flight of starlings
pours into the ditch

John Stevenson

*

short day-
behind every other sound
the patter of rain

Alison Williams

*

sand painting-
a rain dancer kneels
under the stars

MaryJane Turner

*

writing table
I watch a spoon
gather the dawn

Sean MacMathuna

*

crescent moon
the gas pump handle
steals my warmth

Mark Brooks

*

winter thunder-
startled by a whoosh
of pigeons' wings

John Ower

*

long dark road-
owl eyes reflect
from the saguaro

Salena Morris

*

winter solstice
out-of-town snow
comes in with the coal train

Cindy Tebo

*

icy morning
a small crackling
from the woodstove

Alice Frampton

*

tabletop fountain-
the doctor's bedside manner
in his voice

Yvonne Cabalona

*

foot-long icicles-
what to do with the spider
in the fruit bowl?

Kirsty Karkow

*

New Year's Day-
my son lets the tide
seep into his sneakers

Cherie Hunter Day

*

window frost-
the moon
through a thumbprint

Martin Vest

*

her hospital room-
snow filling the small field
next to the big one

Gary Hotham

*

Christmas Eve-
in the courtyard below
a flutter of wings

Pamela Miller Ness

*

whitecaps
across the inlet-
his salty beard

Peggy Lyles

*

new century-
the neighbor's rusty car
still on blocks

Lenard D. Moore

*

winter morning-
the shower pipes
change pitch

Jim Kacian

*

morning stillness
first squeak
from the squirrel's cage

John W. Wisdom

*

cloud shadow
the volcano
changes shape

Tony Beyer

*

a wild daisy
by grandfather's grave
our son mows around it

Jeanne Jorgensen

*

spring sky
two magpies fill
the pine

Odd G. Aksnes

*

first light
beads of water linger
on the prayer plant

Debra Woolard Bender

*

January rain-
catching a glimpse of my son
as I pass the school

paul conneally

*

bluestem grasses
melodic echoes
of a bugling elk

Elizabeth Howard

*

first spring wash . . .
colours from the sundog
bleed through a cloud

an'ya

*

nest-building
a bird carries a clump
of cat hair

Connie Donleycott

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FEATURED POEMS

crowd of umbrellas
a child opens his
face to the rain

Connie Donleycott

*

summer moon–
the changing rhythms
of a basketball

Lenard D. Moore

*

faded overalls
the garden weeds
touch the scarecrow

Cindy Tebo

HERON'S NEST AWARD

crowd of umbrellas
a child opens his
face to the rain

Connie Donleycott

"Life is suffering" the Buddha said. From the moment we are born we look for ways to protect ourselves from things that threaten our existence or in any way make us uncomfortable. All manner of contrivances have been created in order to control the environment. We add layer upon layer of physical, mental, and emotional "armor." What is odd about this is that the world which we wish to shield ourselves from is the very one in which we desire to live. For this reason the armor we've been putting on since birth eventually becomes stifling and can no longer be ignored. The constant quest for comfort and security must be transmuted into an attitude that is more accepting of things as they are, or, as one of my teachers liked to put it, "things as it is." In so doing we regain perspective and return to a vulnerable, more vital condition.

The circuitous piece of prose above is beautifully and simply built into Connie Donleycott's poem. She begins, not just with "umbrellas" but a "crowd of umbrellas," illustrating conditioned response—all those adults armoring themselves against the rain, probably without a second thought. But the child, not yet tamed, revels in life, in the feel of rain drops. He is unconcerned if he gets wet. It's fun and exciting. For this same reason children everywhere will stamp their feet in puddles. Connie's poem indicates the condition of mind necessary for us to write or to appreciate haiku. When the press of convention is telling us "Hurry, cover yourself," we must be willing to slow down and open our senses.

More often than not it is ineffective to end a line of haiku with an adjective. In this poem, however, it is a welcome if not necessary feature. The syntax of the second line sets up a surprise finalé and brings lightness to the poem. We are prepared to learn what the boy does with his umbrella, but instead we are startled into sharing with him the feel of rain. The images in this poem are visually striking as well. The faceless “faces” of umbrellas contrast with the exultant visage of the boy. Although it is likely that the poet saw umbrellas of several colors, I prefer to imagine a multitude of black ones and then, suddenly among them, the up-turned face of a boy. The key word is “opens.” It's what a person does with an umbrella, and also a turning to face something. This use of ambiguity is both creative and effective.

The opening of an umbrella is a rejection of what is. Lifting one's face to the rain is a joyous acceptance. Through this poem I'm reminded that, when overly-protective of my life, I diminish my ability to appreciate the life I'm living. If we open ourselves to this haiku, then we have accepted Connie Donleycott's invitation to take off our armor and be children again. Thank you Connie for a special experience.

— Christopher Herold
June, 2001

POEMS

summer evening–
a boat returns to harbor
with pink sails

Billie Wilson

*

opened door
the darkness lengthens
into a kitten

Barry George

*

from the balcony above
a hand outstretched
. . . rain

Peter Williams

*

sunrise . . .
a mountain's shadow
touches the city

Salena Morris

*

fluttering leaves
the play of sunlight
on my eyelids

Stephen Amor

*

channel marker
fledgling ospreys
stretch their wings

Kirsty Karkow

*

handmade paper–
ink bleeding into
a late summer moon

Carolyn Thomas

*

reading by lamplight;
sounds of a summer night
press against the screen

Robert Major

*

summer heat
a cat drinks the water
in the birdbath

Carmel Lively

*

concert in the park–
sudden raindrops
change the tempo

Owen Burkhart

*

nameless dirt road
and at the end of it
a field of potato blossoms

June Moreau

*

a shrike's cry
the river widening
at the bend

paul m.

*

fireworks at the park
someone brings The 1812
in a boombox

Yvonne Hardenbrook

*

country graveyard
a worn path between
the dead

Jim Kacian

*

autumn sunset
fog spills over
the coastal hills

Evelyn Hermann

*

cloud peaks
inch by inch the worm
stretches its shadow

an'ya

*

descending notes
of a canyon wren-
sunset

Hank Dunlap

*

dense smoke
the steep mountain road
curving sharply

Elizabeth Howard

*

remembering my mother-
a wood thrush song
at dusk

Lori Laliberte-Carey

*

carrying moonlight
into the house-
white peony

Margaret Chula

*

stillness
in the storm's eye
stars

Peggy Lyles

*

quiet house-
a spot of decay
on the anthurium

Yvonne Cabalona

*

puddle-
just for a moment
the moon at rest

Carlos Fleitas

*

the ashes
still log-shaped-
her 21st birthday

Carolyn Hall

*

rainy day-
one tile missing
from the blue roof

Cindy Zackowitz

*

meditation . . .
a pinecone plunks
the koi pond

Mary Fran Meer

*

moon sliver
the sound of dew
dropping from leaves

Anna Tambour

*

morning rain
blue flames flicker
under the teapot

Carol Raisfeld

*

coffee-cup shadow
mother and son
in deep conversation

Celia Crook

*

winter sky-
looking in
my empty wallet again

Stanford Forrester

*

steady rain
three vultures huddle
on a hayroll

Joann Klontz

*

a cold jar
of young eels
the moon in their eyes

Tony Beyer

*

wisps of fog
her red sweater
comes and goes

Emily Romano

*

huge cedar
snow resifted
through hemlocks

Ruth Yarrow

*

day moon-
water runs slowly
over a floe

Odd G. Aksnes

*

winter rain
the flow of ants
in the pantry

Cherie Hunter Day

*

wind swirls
in the nursing home courtyard
a few dry leaves

Michael Ketchek

*

deep winter
the old dog's shadow
lagging behind

Marjorie Buettner

*

light from the snow;
my wife shows me a small bloom
on the hyacinth

Del Doughty

*

false spring
cougar tracks
in moist sand

Darrell Byrd

*

March moon-
the melted snow
begins to freeze

Florence Vilén

*

spring wind
even the skunk
smells fine

Rick Tarquinio

*

blossoms in the wind
my daughter's date
idles in the drive

LeRoy Gorman

*

Easter vigil
into our kneeling silence
the creak of wood

Sheila Windsor

*

no destination
for my evening walk-
the hazy moon

Bruce Kennedy

*

April Fool's Day-
a skylark's song
way over my head

Matt Morden

*

sunlit jar
beekeeper's gift
on the doorstep

Carmen Sterba

*

lemon blossoms
by an open window
. . . Sunday bells

Michael McClintock

*

empty park-
a kite twists
in a treetop

Brian Gierat

*

spring moon-
the baby's heart beats
against mine

Kathy Lippard Cobb

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spring thunder-
from the center of a pine stump
a pine

naia

*

winter solstice
the road narrows
into one-way

Carol Purington

*

summer's end-
beachstore buckets on dusty shelves
anyoldhow

Sandra Simpson

HERON'S NEST AWARD

spring thunder-
 from the center of a pine stump
 a pine

 naia

The tree is named twice: the image of the tree that was and the tree that is. In its literal observation, the statement is simple but powerful. We are presented with the sight of a young tree growing from a stump, and the sound of a storm.

Experienced haijin will know that this pine (the one to which Master Basho wished us to go in order to learn) is an “all-season” kigo topic. The image of new growth issuing from an old stump combines well with the overt springness of the author's first line. Spring represents both the promise of growth and the certainty of change. The “truth” of the pine reveals the “truth” of life's struggle for existence.

The poplar/aspen/birch family of trees, the maples, and others can sprout from the stump or roots of a fallen giant. Not so the pine. Pines and other conifers reproduce only from seed. During a previous autumn, a seed from a pine settled on the stump of another pine and germinated. As the new tree grows, less and less will be seen of the old tree's form or substance. The pine whose stump is in naia's haiku was felled either by saw, disease, or storm. It has become a place for young life to find purchase.

The long second line and brief third line of this haiku may appear unbalanced visually, but the rhythm is natural and does not feel too long. In fact, the visual impact of the last two lines effectively furthers the tree-to-tree comparison. The construction is verbless. The author's craft seems to disappear early in the reading. Her treatment of a traditional kigo is not a mere weather report, but is instead a close observation. It animates the

participation to be shared in by readers: feeling the drop of barometric pressure, the stillness, the prominence of any sound in the forest. Naia has set a wonderful course to the discovery of relationships. She, along with the pines, the season, and even the ominous storm, work together to show us humans our natural place in the scheme of things.

Life and death combine in this poem. Things will not be easy for the young tree, even though it has taken root. There is a confluence of hope and threat. A storm rumbles nearby.

— Paul MacNeil
September, 2001

POEMS

midsummer's eve
the pond's last light
stirred by dipping swallows

Jim Kacian

*

dog days
the sun-struck arc
of the angler's cast

Carolyn Hall

*

beach run
the salty taste
of myself

Connie Donleycott

*

white birches
fog drifts past
the stone cairn

Bruce Kennedy

*

autumn rain
the long outside staircase
to my room

Stephen Engleman

*

August moon
the coolness of
new sheets

Merry Gordon

*

sparkling shoal
water strider shadows
cross the bottom

William Cullen, Jr.

*

morning fog
a worm trail ends
in a spiral

Lori Laliberte-Carey

*

steady autumn wind;
balloons at the same slant
in a used-car lot

Robert Major

*

a deep bruise
I don't remember getting
autumn evening

John Stevenson

*

starry sky
the honks of wild geese
rise from the quarry

Stephen Amor

*

cold moon slides
up the long window
shadow of her hand

Lenard D. Moore

*

bare winter prairie...
a little smoke rises
from an empty field

Bruce Ross

*

autumn wind
a tiny spider husk
spins in the moonlight

John Barlow

*

a cottonwood stump
brought in by the tide-
sparrow song

Cindy Zackowitz

*

solitary walk
dragging the stars
through pines

Odd G. Aksnes

*

first frost-
a daddy-long-legs
skims over bright leaves

Billie Wilson

*

prairie arroyo
half-grown bison bulls
corral the trucks

Elizabeth Howard

*

December beach
not a sign to be seen
of Christmas

Naomi Wakan

*

churchyard manger
knots in the plywood backs
of the wise men

Michael Ketchek

*

marmot hole
snow in the shade
of a lodgepole pine

paul m.

*

first spring day
the bareness
of legs

Connie Donleycott

*

mating season
a marsh hawk commits himself
to the somersault

Yvonne Hardenbrook

*

bear market-
still the cherries
blossom

John Ower

*

city dawn-
window washers
rise on their scaffold

Barry George

*

morning chores–
the chatter of sparrows
through the dryer vent

Brian Gierat

*

sea rock
in an old man's shape–
another spring

H. F. Noyes

*

pulling a weed–
the ladybug hangs on
for the ride

Cathy Edwards

*

morning migraine
the coo of a dove
outside my window

Darrell Byrd

*

morning sunshine
a wren weaves in and out
of the trellis

Celia Crook

*

sunlit porch-
a butterfly alights
on mail from overseas

Maria Steyn

*

spring melancholy
a field of rape flowers
gone to seed

Naomi Brown

*

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

Peggy Lyles

*

melon blossoms
a yellow-powdered bee
wipes its face

Darrell Byrd

*

cloudless sky
a pheasant flies from
the combine's teeth

Anna Tambour

*

the garden butterfly–
my daughter not close enough
then too close

Gary Hotham

*

afternoon hush–
the cat takes another step
towards a robin

John W. Wisdom

*

thunderclap
the cadence of the rain
changes

Sue Mill

*

slash burning–
the scarlet tanager
hits a high note

an'ya

*

family picnic
the youngest child pockets
a watermelon seed

Carmen Sterba

*

sunlit meadow
my small knight chases
dragonflies

Salena Morris

*

the drive-in movie screen
covered with graffiti-
shimmering heat

Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

summer noon-
the hearse's blackness
dazzles

John Ower

*

outdoor café-
a song sparrow
cleaning tables

Barbara Campitelli

*

honeysuckle . . .
the mailman takes a sniff
as he closes the box

Michael McClintock

*

city park
a child brings me
a dandelion

Larry Kimmel

*

graveside service
a stray dog pisses
on the casket

Linda Robeck

*

humid afternoon
the billboard painter
brushing on a smile

Patricia Laster

*

late summer–
baring the tan line
on my wrist

Alice Frampton

*

bonsai gift unwrapped
she removes
the twist of wire

Kay Anderson

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FEATURED POEMS

evening breeze
the spider cuts a petal
from its web

Peter Williams

*

between
the chimes of the clock
shooting star

Charles Trumbull

*

summer's end
a broken chair sits
at the water's edge

Penelope Greenwell

HERON'S NEST AWARD

evening breeze
the spider cuts a petal
from its web

Peter Williams

Peter Williams presents exactly enough information to draw me into his experience. The time of day and its welcome breeze set a tranquil mood. Evening . . . when daylight is fading and work comes to a close. Some people may be preparing dinner while others are already eating. Perhaps a fresh flower arrangement has been placed in the dining area, and it is there that the spider has chosen to spin its orb. More likely, the poet notices this event during an evening stroll in the garden. It is at once marvelous and commonplace—an alien-looking creature performing an everyday task for the same reason that we humans must constantly maintain our own constructions.

Alone, the word “spider” holds certain connotations: a sticky net, eight creepy legs, a fanged hunter feasting on smaller creatures. But before those mental images fully form, Peter surprises me with, of all things, a petal! While for us bright blossoms bring pleasure, just one stray petal can cause problems for a spider. This arachnid has a job to do before it can eat or rest. During construction, the spider has adjusted the web's tautness according to the size of prey it seeks. The introduction of a useless foreign object may damage or weaken the structure, and it will interfere with signals along the strands that relay vital information to the owner—about real prey.

I am struck by the sound qualities in this haiku. The doubling of the long “e” sound in the first line helps to create the sense of tranquility. The two “s” sounds in the second line are “cut” by the hard “c” in “cut.” The two short “e” sounds (at the end of the second line and the end of the third) help return us to the calmness of evening. The

sharp, precise point of marvel here (“cuts”) is nicely sandwiched between the two softer sounding portions of the poem. The rhythm is, depending upon how you read it, either a near classic 2 beat - 3 beat - 1 beat pattern: EVEning BREEZE / the SPIder CUTS a PETal / from its WEB, or a 2 beat first line followed by 3 even beats spread over the final two lines: (EVEning BREEZE / the SPIder cuts a PETal from its WEB). Either reading is effective.

Taken at face value, this poem is sharply focused and beautiful. It evokes a sense of peace, and reassures me of the continuity of nature. But its implications go beyond the immediate imagery. Demonstrated here is the finely tuned balance of nature. And without a single human reference appearing in overt juxtaposition, I am encouraged both to contrast and to liken human needs with the spider's. I wish I could have written this haiku. I'm grateful to Peter Williams for allowing me to share his extraordinary experience.

— Ferris Gilli
October, 2001

POEMS

red maple
against the white wall
of the fire station

Alice Frampton

*

autumn stillness
she straightens a shelf
of paper cranes

paul m.

*

garage sale
unraveled flowers
on the kimono

Carmel Lively

*

family reunion
rain bubbles burst
in a puddle

Odd G. Aksnes

*

walking meditation-
the path
between fallen apples

Sabine Miller

*

lingering heat
the third-grade classroom
one desk short

Peggy Lyles

*

outside view
the azure sky
fits the window frame

Gillena Cox

*

autumn wind
my daughter in the back yard
dancing

Marjorie Buettner

*

twilight in the park
cool seeps out
from all the dark places

Bruce Kennedy

*

harvest moon
the scarecrow
wears a tie

William Cullen, Jr.

*

lightning flash
how short
the stubble

Burnell Lippy

*

cloudcast afternoon-
corn popping
on the stove

K. Ramesh

*

an old man's breathing
barely moves the newspaper
winter dusk

Anne Homan

*

winter stars-
shaking rust down from
the old swing set

Harold Bowes

*

Grand Canal
row on row of gondolas
tossing at their stakes

Celia Crook

*

crochet hook
pulling the yarn through
deep November

Carolyn Hall

*

porch sitting–
the scallop of snowy hills
in his gesture

an'ya

*

bright Venus
two hawks settle
deep in the pine

Kate MacQueen

*

approaching storm
a peacock's cry above
the wind

Noor Singh Khalsa

*

tattered windsock–
a harbor seal slips between
two dinghies

naia

*

high above
the end of this long day
sliver of moon

Bruce Ross

*

Sunday morning
a neighbor comes out
to clap his shoes

Joann Klontz

*

floating
through my thought
butterfly

Connie Donleycott

*

rose trellis
a butterfly adjusts
its flight

Carmen Sterba

*

garden swing-
cat and butterfly
in mid-air

Maria Steyn

*

three fiddlers–
a dog weaves between
pints of stout

Benjamin Miners

*

she speaks softly
she speaks of daffodils
I write it down

Elizabeth Lyulkin

*

bumblebee
the buzz
between flowers

Peter Williams

*

a child's laughter
the touch
of a touch-me-not

Stephen Engleman

*

cool summer morning
I take my thoughts
out to the porch

John Stevenson & Seneca Kennedy

*

mid-argument-
a bumblebee
stumbles in clover

Matt Morden

*

a spider weaves
among the rosehips-
no one at home

Peggy Lyles

*

schoolyard quiet-
the scribble of ants
in a stone shadow

June Moreau

*

summer highway
puddles of light merge
with the sky

Hilary Tann

*

the striped racer
slithering to full length
canyon wildflowers

Cherie Hunter Day

*

passing clouds-
an ant swings
on a grass blade

Dragan J. Ristic

*

my daughter's graduation-
a gull separates
from the rest of the flock

Paul David Mena

*

the baby nods
cottonwood seeds
drift along the road

John Stevenson

*

a migrant worker
in the 'native plants' median
midday heat

Mark Brooks

*

goldenrod
bending
heatwaves

Emily Romano

*

dog days . . .
another block of hay
pops out of the baler

Joann Klontz

*

grit in the stomach
of the steamed clam-
summer heat

Jim Kacian

*

smoldering coals
the rattle of blue crabs
in a metal bucket

John W. Wisdom

*

amber shallows
a perch nibbles
the sky to pieces

William Ramsey

*

the slow blink
of radio tower lights
-autumn chill

Jane Wilson

*

noon sun
the cow chews her cud
clockwise

Anna Tambour

*

midday sun
my shadow
to the ocean floor

Pamela Miller Ness

*

passing thunderclouds-
a waterstrider's rush
to stay in place

Christopher Patchel

*

evening stillness
the small bubbles
as the trout rise

Kay Grimnes

*

autumn river-
pulled together on the deck
two white chairs

Harold Bowes

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FEATURED POEMS

funeral procession
the stillness of cotton blossoms
in sunlight

Lenard D. Moore

*

all that is left
of the mist
memorial stones

paul m.

*

winter waves
she folds and unfolds
her layoff notice

Linda Robeck

HERON'S NEST AWARD

funeral procession
the stillness of cotton blossoms
in sunlight

Lenard D. Moore

This is a profoundly peaceful poem, and at the same time, a poem of stark contrasts. The procession is in motion. So too are those left behind, who must themselves go on. The blossoms are not moving, nor is the deceased, now as still as flowers on a windless day. Yet there is movement within the seemingly motionless blossoms. The petals are imperceptibly unfurling and changing color. What of the spirit of the person who has just passed away?

The most common variety of cotton grown in the United States is "Upland" cotton. Its blossoms are white only on the day they open. On the second day they turn pink, and as the blossoms mature, the color deepens to a purplish red. When the petals fall, the bolls grow to the size of eggs, turn brown, and burst, yielding their wealth of soft white fibers.

I envision the blossoms in this poem to be a deep shade of pink, blooming on short bushes that have dark green, heart-shaped leaves. The season is probably late summer. The sun is warm and bright; the sky is blue. In a scene so abundant with life and color, a hearse is quite a contrast. The mood is somber and dignified. In each of the vehicles are friends and relatives of the deceased, most clothed in dark suits and dresses. How many spun of cotton, I wonder?

Although serene, Lenard's haiku has a tangible sense of drama, as if the universe is holding its collective breath. At the same time, there is obvious forward motion, the

sense of continuance. I also have the impression that this scene was observed from a distance, yet not physically distant. It is as though the poet was in an altered state of consciousness, a waking dream.

While reading this poem, I imagine myself a child. A friend and I have climbed a tree next to a cotton field, not too far from a country road. For us the only reality is close at hand, nothing but the joy of summer play. The sun is shining, birds are singing, our imaginations spin fantasies of heroes and villains. Life seems as though it will go on forever. In the distance a line of cars comes into view, moving slowly. Only their tops show above the sea of brilliant pink flowers. A long, shiny black hearse is in the lead. We stop playing to watch, hushed by the unsettling, unspoken question of our mortality. One by one the hum of each car engine passes. As the sound of the last car fades in the distance, the day is again as it was. Yet, somehow, it's not.

Lenard D. Moore has effectively recreated a spellbinding and mysterious experience. His words have given me occasion to pause at length, and to more deeply marvel.

— Christopher Herold
November, 2001

POEMS

autumn stillness
a magpie shakes seeds
from the torch weed

an'ya

*

family reunion
an assortment of onions
in the stew

Nancy Stewart Smith

*

deep autumn–
the last jigsaw piece
snaps into place

Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

winter pasture
the gray mare favors
one leg

Carolyn Hall

*

ice floes–
the wing of a gull
brushes a star

Sonia Christina Coman

*

church bells–
a dragonfly
flying low

Fay Aoyagi

*

getting dark . . .
grandpa searches too long
for the North Star

Edith Ellwood

*

the deep curve
of each narrow leaf
first snowfall

Elizabeth St Jacques

*

wildfire haze
between the icebergs
blue wind

Cindy Zackowitz

*

evening shadows
a mouse darts
from the fireplace

Darrell Byrd

*

mammogram-
morning snowflakes
stick

Alice Frampton

*

processional
cold wind lifts one corner
of the pall

Peggy Lyles

*

a long breath
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off the path

Gary Hotham

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summer heat
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Joann Klontz

*

cottonwood down
through morning sunlight
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*

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Stephen Amor

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Odd G. Aksnes

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reddening sky
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gull by gull

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*

humid night
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wavers to a stop

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into coolness

Christopher Patchel

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steady summer rain . . .
the gull takes a few short steps
in the puddle

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steamed up window
with long oblique lines
a child draws the rain

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the indignant cat
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ticking clock

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humid night
the scarecrow engulfed
in grapevines

Lori Laliberte-Carey

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red maple leaves
I sip the last
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airport wait-
a one-legged blackbird
adjusts to the wind

naia

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autumn sunset . . .
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flooded with color

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moonlight
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Jeffrey Eden

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end of summer
the rust on my scissors
smells of marigolds

Margaret Chula

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autumn sky-
the perfect blue
of dragonfly eyes

Emiko Miyashita

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evening train
windfall apples scattered
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Alison Williams

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Perseids . . .
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for one

Tom Clausen

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finding my way
with every turn
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naia

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an'ya

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Kathy Lippard Cobb

*

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Carolyn Hall

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Edith Ellwood

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Elizabeth St Jacques

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Cindy Zackowitz

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Darrell Byrd

*

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Alice Frampton

*

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cold wind lifts one corner
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with every turn
the full moon

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a turtle on a turtle
on a rock

Peggy Lyles

*

autumn afternoon
a shaft of light
ends in moss

Cindy Zackowitz

*

chance of rain
the dove selects rejects selects
a twig

Carolyn Hall

HERON'S NEST AWARD

Indian summer
a turtle on a turtle
on a rock

Peggy Lyles

I dip the paddle again. My canoe rounds the small curve of a Florida river into a scene not much changed since the age of dinosaurs. I pass under overhanging tree branches draped with Spanish moss. A fallen palm is angled down the bank and partially submerged in the river. The sun beats down on the palm and a row of turtles there, motionless, necks stretched out and up. Some have climbed on top of others. The canoe and I trigger some genetic memory in these reptiles, and they do what turtles do to escape danger. Rapid scrambling is followed by a mass plop into the safety of the water. Trails of bubbles rise. The turtles disappear from sight in the bottom's darkness. I resolve to take the next turn more slowly, and from the center of the river.

At first gulp, this haiku delivered me back to a canoe trip long ago. I've seen turtles like these in other places, but as I read this poet's haiku I experienced feelings of "once upon a time" on the Braden River in Florida.

The poem's opening kigo of calm and warmth sets up a perfectly clear evocation of "turtleness." "Indian summer" is an idiom of real weather conditions. The phrase is probably particular to North America, but I expect the phenomenon itself is known in other temperate zones. In October or early November (usually some time after the first frost) a warm spell may occur. It is a sort of return to summer, a false sense of it anyway. Often described as dry and hazy, the essence of this phenomenon is warmth out of phase. Languid and quiet, "Indian summer" evokes a certain peacefulness. We enjoy a respite, knowing the passage to winter is inevitable.

Space in the open sun, that is also safe from predators, is at a premium. Turtles must necessarily bask. They need sunlight to regulate their body temperature. They also use it to generate vitamin D, which synthesizes calcium for bones and for the shell itself. Considering this, I have always wondered why the turtles at the bottom of the pile allow stacking, but they do. It is their nature.

On another level, turtles are ancient animals and ancient symbols. The turtle figures in several of the world-origin legends of Native Peoples. To the Iroquois in the Northeast of North America, for example, a great aquatic turtle surfaced, expanded, and became the landmass of our watery planet. Classic Japanese gardens often feature rocks as kame-jima (turtle islands)–symbolic of old age and longevity.

Peggy Lyles has shaped language in a masterful way. She has imbued a static scene with wonderfully dynamic syntax. The smooth, slow assonance of the first line closes with a pause. Then follows a lively rhythmic transition that quickly spirals past, delivering a new rhythm. The double consonance of “turtle” is immediately repeated, followed by the final “ck” of “rock.” The excellent crafting of this haiku, along with the mood it communicates, have made it the editors’ choice by acclamation.

– Paul MacNeil
December, 2001

POEMS

a bull's eye
on a cardboard box
autumn haze

Peggy Lyles

*

moonstruck-
the circle of calm
after a seal dives

Kirsty Karkow

*

first snow-
a schoolgirl twirls
with a friend

Stephen Amor

*

winter solstice-
moving the scale
to a lighter place

Alice Frampton

*

city lake-
on the transparent ice
a brick

Zoran Doderovic

*

autumn dusk–
the bright end of a log
between pines

Odd G. Aksnes

*

starry night
one after another
deep autumn crickets

Emiko Miyashita

*

drawn to the train
in the toy shop window–
snow flurries

Michael McClintock

*

winter light
smoke shadows drift
over the water tower

Matt Morden

*

new millennium–
a bed of volcanic rocks
in the aquarium

Lenard D. Moore

*

mid-winter doldrums
the stone angel
with a handful of snow

Giovanni Malito

*

starlings leave
the leafless tree
the silence

Christopher Patchel

*

starless night-
a slice of stale bread
divided by five

J. B. Leong

*

l'heure bleu
I find my house
when the neighbor's dog barks

Zinovy Vayman

*

melted snowman
one white cloud drifts
across the puddle

William Cullen, Jr.

*

ice moon . . .
an elk touches its tongue
to the salt lick

an'ya

*

twilight shadows
pruned from the honey locust-
cold wind

Ann K. Schwader

*

winter storm . . .
growing puddles
of candle wax

Connie Donleycott

*

winter morning
the rattle of a shuttle
across the white threads

Kay Grimnes

*

her gravestone
the smooth place
no longer there

Dan McCullough

*

snow-laden cherry
a broken branch
dropping blossoms

Stephen Engleman

*

morning song
the orange ring
'round the blackbird's eye

Peter Williams

*

reclusive neighbor
spearmint from her garden
comes over to mine

Yvonne Hardenbrook

*

crested waves
red feet of a puffin
paddle the air

Celia Crook

*

egret-
for its landing on the river
a giant lily pad

Rosa Clement

*

sunrise-
the goldfinch continues
its song

Penelope Greenwell

*

one wing
folded against the other-
colors of a dead butterfly

Gary Hotham

*

dark clouds
a blanket of purple nettle
on the Indian mound

Lori LaLiberte Carey

*

low tide-
a shorebird's call
rises from the mud

Cindy Zackowitz

*

morning haze
she tries jasmine
in her hair

Maria Steyn

*

afternoon heat
the beggar's book
without a cover

paul m.

*

mountain ginko
all the haiku
a little breathless

John Stevenson

*

forest fringe
one fallen leaf
changes the landscape

Cindy Tebo

*

harvest moon–
the dog brings
a dirty sock to bed

Paul David Mena

*

cold rain
one squirrel backs another
to the branch's end

Kay Grimnes

*

twilight-
three magnolia seeds
left in the pod

Mark Brooks

*

autumn wind
mustangs sniff
at the dry waterhole

Darrell Bryd

*

harvest moon
the silver trunks
of dead trees

Lynne Steel

*

preparing for war
a chimpunk chatters
from a low-hanging branch

Paul David Mena

*

detox unit-
the apple leaf curls in
from both sides

naia

*

dew-spangled meadow-
a pickup leaves
new ruts

Donald J. Lanksa

*

insistent buzz
behind Venetian blinds-
Indian summer

Francine Porad

*

funeral procession
the second this week
autumn rain

Jasminka Nadaskic Diordievic

*

walking back with my answer-
her feet change the leaves
under the maple

Gary Hotham

*

autumn haze
a monk in saffron robes
rakes the sand

Nancy Stewart Smith

*

October sun
my wife pins hydrangeas
to the clothesline

Edward Cichorek

*

Indian summer
a maple leaf drawn back
into the eddy

Carolyn Hall

*

path to the bridge
the usual leaves
and acorns

Leatrice Lifshitz

*

colors of autumn
the russet alone is enough
for a heart lift

H. F. Noyes

*

in the midst
of autumn trees the one
autumn tree

Marian Olson

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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
Ferris Gilli, associate editor
Paul MacNeil, associate editor
Alex Benedict, webmaster

TECHNICAL NOTE

This volume is a 2024 reproduction of an issue from 2001 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>.