

THE HERON'S NEST — VOLUME 5 (2003)



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FEATURED POEMS

tai chi
with my wife . . .
morning glories open

Randy M. Brooks

*

winter stillness
each blackberry thorn
clearly seen

June Moreau

*

a few leaves
left on the tree
we have our talk

John Stevenson

HERON'S NEST AWARD

tai chi
 with my wife . . .
 morning glories open

Randy M. Brooks

Randy Brooks believes "that every haiku has within it a confirmation of the human heart being fully alive."¹ This one certainly does. The fluid tai chi movements match the soft unfolding of morning glories. A new day begins. The participatory presence of the poet's wife completes the joy.

Arms and legs open and close. The couple inhale and exhale, their diaphragms rising and falling as they relax into the ancient dance-like postures. They sense a connection with nature and inclusion in the cycle of days, seasons, years. Present moments, fully lived, expand into timelessness.

Tai chi could be performed by a couple of any age. Millions of Chinese people, many of them well into their nineties, gather outdoors every morning to "move the chi."

Practitioners credit the regimen with sustaining physical fitness, increasing mental alertness, and encouraging spiritual awakening. Practice puts them in touch with the vital energy of the body. Because the haiku is signed and I know the poet, I visualize Randy and Shirley Brooks instead of an elderly Chinese man and woman. I know that their marriage is strong and of long duration. Clearly this is a love poem, a beautiful tribute to the poet's wife. I have no sense, though, of intruding upon a private moment. The haiku is both restrained and expansive. The harmony it celebrates comfortably includes the reader.

¹ Quotation from "Consonance as the Genesis of Humor in Haiku" *haijinx* Vol. I, Issue 2, Summer 2001.

The morning glory is an early autumn kigo in Japan. In America it has a long blooming season and is likely to be prominent from July through October or even longer. The language of poetry encourages us to imagine a particular morning in late summer or early autumn and a similar season in the lives of the people portrayed. That tai chi is a lifetime art suggests associations with the continuity of this particular marriage and the promise of the relationship's opening through all seasons to the possibilities of each new day.

Kigo connect individual haiku to others that use the same images, creating a powerful literary context that can add layers of meaning and ongoing resonance. Here are three of my favorites about morning glories:

with morning glories
a man eats breakfast
– that is what I am

Basho
trans. by Makoto Ueda

*

morning-glory –
the well-bucket entangled
I ask for water

Chiyo-ni
trans. by Patricia Donegan and Yoshie Ishibashi

*

leaving all the morning glories closed

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

In Japanese this flower is called asagao, which translates as “morning face.” The subtle difference reminds me that while haiku has become a universal genre, the languages in which it is composed and read will add their nuances and patinas. That is as it should be. Each superb haiku about morning glories will find a unique place among the others. Randy's new one interacts meaningfully with the three classics. The editors of *The Heron's Nest* are pleased to begin the year 2003 by sharing it with our readers.

— Peggy Willis Lyles
January, 2003

POEMS

finding a way
through the forest
winter sunlight

Connie Donleycott

*

horned owl
near the window
a curtain inhales

Elizabeth Howard

*

first morning –
dunking the last
of the homemade bread

Emily Romano

*

overcast sky –
adding more driftwood
to the bird blind

Cherie Hunter Day

*

cry of the killdeer
river stones
worn smooth

Timothy Hawkes

*

New Year's Eve
falling snow quiets
the final hour

Marian Olson

*

wee hours –
the leaves on the roof
shift again

Barry George

*

upscale condo
a red fox drinks
from the swimming pool

Lynne Steel

*

winter morning
a ring of cattails
holds the mist

Jennie Townsend

*

winter clouds
a neighbor's résumé
left in our mailbox

Joann Klontz

*

the old cat rubs
her nose in the French lavender –
morning dew

Maria Steyn

*

misty morning –
the young heron's feet
spring green

Kay F. Anderson

*

careful steps
rocking the boat
rocking the top of the ocean

Gary Hotham

*

almost dusk
an open door
to the lighthouse

paul m.

*

the lagoon egret –
sound of clothes
washed on stones

Gabriel Rosenstock

*

towering pines
a bobcat prowls
in the early mist

Allen McGill

*

clearing sky –
a young gull
tests the wind

Cindy Zackowitz

*

the last telephone pole
a herring gull perched
on one leg

Jack Barry

*

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

Michael Meyerhofer

*

scarlet sunset –
a fighting cock's feathers
ruffle in the breeze

John W. Wisdom

*

car horns
thistledown floats
through traffic

Stephen Engleman

*

the cool side
of corn husks
kitchen shade

Burnell Lippy

*

moths on the door
I close
and lock

John Stevenson

*

summer stars
the trumpet glinting
from its case

Lenard D. Moore

*

change in weather
talkative strangers
on a park bench

Francine Porad

*

cabin steps
fresh birch seeds
since morning

Hilary Tann

*

thin summer moon –
a waft of burnt insect
from the halogen bulb

Mark Brooks

*

one firefly
my childhood
before my eyes

Carolyn Hall

*

stars appear –
a flower vendor
stringing jasmine

K. Ramesh

*

thunderclap
a blue reflection
in the dog's brown eyes

Anna Tambour

*

rainy darkness
in the cobbled street
the blind beggar

Angelee Deodhar

*

childhood home
she spins maple seeds
off the front porch

Michael L. Evans

*

summer's end –
my children try to teach me
how to smile

Matt Morden

*

cantaloupes for sale
the farm girl's eyes
over her newspaper

Randy M. Brooks

*

geese winding south
yellowjackets buzz
the empty barbecue

Mary Fran Meer

*

building a puzzle
three days
of rain

Michael McClintock

*

last day together
a boat breaks up
our reflections

Moushumi Chakrabarty

*

the call of wild geese
a field of pale goldenrod
leaning southward

Stephen Engleman

*

new love
still some green
in these autumn leaves

Naia

*

fall migration
the phone lines busy
gathering birds

Kirsty Karkow

*

fallen leaves
slide over the spillway –
another daydream

Cherie Hunter Day

*

election day –
folding and unfolding
umbrellas

Nina Wicker

*

winter daybreak –
the shadow of a bird
darts into the bedroom

Dietmar Tauchner

*

rusted plow –
a few husks of cotton
left in the field

John W. Wisdom

*

first snowflakes –
the caged raven
playing with its food

Cindy Zackowitz

*

autumn evening
the neighbor's turtle tank
glows

Sabine Miller

*

open window
everything I know of the world
in falling leaves

Naia

*

falling acorns –
the deer's
ears

Carolyn Hall

*

winter light . . .
his war medals
in a shadow box

J. C. Herring

*

winter dusk
the sleeping child surrounded
by origami cranes

Francine Porad

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snowy night
sometimes you can't be
quiet enough

John Stevenson

*

new home
our footsteps find the grass
beneath the snow

paul m.

*

late summer –
the sound of the stream
running dry

Helga Härle

HERON'S NEST AWARD

snowy night
sometimes you can't be
quiet enough

John Stevenson

The *mot juste* is “snowy.” There is not only falling snow, it is abundant. The trees, lawns, sidewalks, fences, houses, cars—all things in the scene are snow-covered, possibly even the poet. Snowflakes, large ones, fill the writer's vision. Because the rest of the haiku draws attention to the lack of sound, the snowfall must be straight down. Without a storm's wind, the flakes flutter from the dark sky.

The reader doesn't know just where the poet is. Still, there is probably some man-made light. It is not important to know if the source is car headlights, street lights, or a lighted house. Sound, its presence and absence, dominates the poem. It is about the former that John Stevenson shows his regret.

John did not take a traditional approach when crafting this haiku. The last two lines are a conclusion by the poet observer, an opinion. He speaks in the indefinite second person. Yet, this technique reveals John's awe at the majestic perfection of the snowy night and extends it to me. The expansive “you” invites all readers to share the poet's moment of insight. It works and shows yet again that there are rules that are not rules. Read aloud, the poem also pleases. The medley of three sibilant S's is punctuated by four intruding T's.

Sometimes the very presence of the haiku poet or another person changes what is being observed. The intrusion may be exquisitely painful. The kayak paddle makes a splash as it enters a lily-filled cove. A walk in autumn woods is interrupted by leaves so loud

underfoot they seem to echo. The sound of a distant hammer, a jet ski, or an airplane makes a deer jump, a fish startle, or a dragonfly take off.

I easily recognize the writer's emotional discomfort as he disturbs the snowy scene; I am drawn in by it. The quiet, and the sheer beauty of this night, should not be disturbed. The scrunch of new snow compressed under a booted foot; the car door shutting; the beep as the car locks; the poet's breathing-all of these things are just too loud.

— Paul MacNeil
February 2003

POEMS

daybreak –
a white dog
crosses the snow

Cindy Zackowitz

*

winter sunset –
a taxi cab
stops in front of me

Emiko Miyashita

*

the road home
a star too bright
to be a star

paul m.

*

meltwater –
a trout leaps
the falls

Timothy Hawkes

*

iris garden
the golden spider's
giant egg case

Elizabeth Howard

*

empty birdfeeder
the shimmer of falling snow
as a sparrow lands

Jean Jorgensen

*

winter dusk
she paints her nails
deeper red

Tom Painting

*

roar of snowmelt
beneath the footbridge –
first dogwood blossom

Kay F. Anderson

*

birdsong –
the shimmer of rain
on the lake

Catherine Bullock

*

a child's smile
ringed with dirt –
spring planting

John Barksdale

*

dawn
caught in a dewdrop –
the empty swing

Gene H. Murtha

*

Death Valley
a tumbleweed
faintly green

Yu Chang

*

sunrise clouds
a rat burrows
into earthquake rubble

Lynne Steel

*

barefoot
in the dandelions –
warm rain

Jasminka Nadaskic Diordievic

*

morning tea –
a warbler's song drifts
through a wind chime

John W. Wisdom

*

Las Vegas
all the lights fading
into sunrise

Karina Young

*

desert wind
the potter's fingerprints
impressed on an ancient urn

Allen McGill

*

washing day
wind whips the judo jacket
through its moves

Rob Knell

*

labyrinth path
a change in the wind
with each turn

Kirsty Karkow

*

ripening kale
a white cabbage moth
lands again and again

Stephen Engleman

*

Japanese garden . . .
a bamboo staff left
in the bamboo

Bruce Ross

*

this house
is my last home
bougainvilleas in bloom

Naomi Y. Brown

*

the flatness
of watermelon seeds
August dusk

Burnell Lippy

*

peony bud
cut for the grave . . .
wren song all day long

Randy M. Brooks

*

mole crabs
in the palms of my hands
the retreating surf

Cherie Hunter Day

*

moving day –
their pregnant cat
left behind

Emily Romano

*

midday heat
snap of the shoeshiner's rag
against the toe

Lenard D. Moore

*

the waiting room –
an ant on my lapel
cleans its antennae

Sabine Miller

*

afternoon warmth –
the reflections of horse heads
in muddy trough water

Rebecca Lilly

*

dark blues –
the empty halves
of a sea shell

Gary Hotham

*

autumn sun
a fly captured
in amber

Michael Ketchek

*

train berth
hot tea from a clay pot
tasting of earth

Rajiv Lather

*

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

Connie Donleycott

*

sand speckled
by autumn rain –
her hand in mine

Curtis Dunlap

*

Indian summer –
the doe turns
into the wind

Merrill Ann Gonzales

*

autumn wind
my arms around the child
within

Naia

*

dawn . . .
a lorry driver washes
his face by the highway

K. Ramesh

*

gray sky –
smelling the air for rain
or smoke

Anna Tambour

*

desert petroglyph
autumn rain falls
on the sun

Victor Ortiz

*

autumn drizzle –
I chop the carrots
into finer bits

Aruna Lakshmanan

*

last berries –
the weight of a squirrel
on the branch end

Aruna Lakshmanan

*

dead tree
the last leaf
chirps

Anna Tambour

*

alpine air –
losing the few stars I know
to the skyful

D. Claire Gallagher

*

the jaw ache
from a temporary crown –
winter rain

Cherie Hunter Day

*

winter sun
the blur of stones
beneath river ice

Marian Olson

*

morning frost –
broken Venetian blinds
in the house of the murder

Paul Wigelius

*

hope
without knowing what for
autumn colors

John Stevenson

*

winter sunrise –
the random tilt
of beaver-chewed trees

Cindy Zackowitz

*

rugby scrum
a cloud of breath
floats above

Peter Williams

*

evening visitation
the smell of winter
on coats

LeRoy Gorman

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FEATURED POEMS

village square —
old faces borrowing angles
from the stone

H. F. Noyes

*

her only nipple
begins to harden
a new year

vincent tripi

*

written exams —
into the silence
the scent of peeled orange

Florence Vilén

HERON'S NEST AWARD

village square —
 old faces borrowing angles
 from the stone

H. F. Noyes

The poet speaks of angles in a poem that is aurally and visually angular. The words “square” and “angles,” the sharp cut at the end of the first line, and the sparseness of all the words save one — these factors lend physical and lingual shape. Use of the present participle is the key to the poem’s musicality. Rounder in pronunciation than the remaining words and having a third syllable, “borrowing” slows the pace. I immediately read “village square” aloud several times to enjoy its rhythm, and quickly became fascinated by the implication of the last two lines.

With apparent ease and a perfect economy of speech, H. F. Noyes describes an intriguing occurrence, one that is representative of humanity’s interactive relationship with its surroundings. Though the animal kingdom was the first to participate, humans are major players in this ancient and continuing phenomenon. The poet sums it up with one word: “borrowing.” Not only do our creative outward expressions reflect our inner states of being, we seem to take on the appearance of our milieu, whether it be artifactual or nature’s creation.

All things, including humans, show the effects of time and the elements. Nowhere is this more evident than among people who spend much of their lives out of doors. I first began to notice this as a child growing up in a South Georgia farming community. Working long hours season after season, in relentless heat under a glaring sky, the people who worked the farms lost the bloom of youth by the time they reached their early twenties. The lean, wiry men and women became more sun-dried with each

passing year. By middle age, their faces and necks had become leathery and as furrowed as the plowed fields, and all those who stayed lean developed a certain angularity.

In many traditional Greek towns, the stone-built houses, stone walls, and cobblestone streets have been preserved and are still in use. I imagine H. F. Noyes as he strolls through a village square, absorbing the sunlit beauty of whitewashed stone, red tile roofs, and large earthenware pots spilling with colorful blooms. Perhaps he sits agreeably among some of the elder residents, men and women of indeterminate age, who live in the houses their ancestors built. He sees that the faces of his companions, like the ancient buildings, reveal the essence of the village.

Whether we experience it in a mountain burg, a small farming town, a fishing village, or a bustling city, most of us will be able to share the poet's insight. In his excellent book, still here *, H. F. Noyes shares a comment from a letter he wrote to Vincent tripi: "Growing old gracefully is giving back to life what was never ours." With "village square," the poet seems to be showing us that we are no more separate from our habitats than any other species.

— Ferris Gilli
March, 2003

POEMS

cold sky
my boots grind stones
in the dry wash

Victor Ortiz

*

clanging buoy —
how many voices
does the sea have?

William Cullen, Jr.

*

cold rain —
tips of new tulips
rim the muskeg

Billie Wilson

*

Spring thaw . . .
the ewe wants to be petted
in all the old places

vincent tripi

*

a door-to-door salesman
lengthens his stride —
the scent of wisteria

Sandra Simpson

*

winter beach
the glint of white
in the raven's eye

Carolyn Hall

*

the cattails
lose their heads
March wind

Tom Painting

*

night rain
the new puppy suckles
in his sleep

Maria Steyn

*

one white lily
in the koi pond —
Mother's Day

Joann Klontz

*

the observatory dome
opens wide —
moths

Michael McClintock

*

even without dewdrops
all those hairs
on the caterpillar

Michael Ketchek

*

tobacco harvest —
the first drops of rain
on a tin-roofed shack

John W. Wisdom

*

desert oil field
pump silhouettes
glow in the sunset

Naomi Y. Brown

*

resting here . . .
long after someone gave a name
to this ocean

Gary Hotham

*

wind in the trees
my dreams also fly
over the hill

Doris H. Thurston

*

distant lightning
cottonwood seeds drift
over the dry earth

Lynne Steel

*

clouds part —
a mantis silhouette
through the sunlit leaf

Allen McGill

*

beyond the lights
of the amusement park
rhythm of the sea

Adelaide Shaw

*

first evening cool
a preening goose
spreads one wing

Jack Barry

*

limestone ledge —
winding through autumn colors
the sound of a creek

Robert Gilliland

*

through the open door
of the outhouse
mountain fog

Bruce Kennedy

*

autumn woods —
the bird's twitter
chainsawed

Rob Knell

*

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

Scott Mason

*

Indian summer
a house sparrow's poop
pings a chime

Robert Gilliland

*

first winter night —
stifling heat
in the chicken shack

Lenard D. Moore

*

lake in the mist —
hearing it reclaim
a fish

Melissa Dixon

*

alarm call
I too
 look for the hawk

Kay Grimnes

*

late-night quarrel
 the moon
above it all

Kay F. Anderson

*

Halloween —
a passing plane
lights the fog

Helga Härle

*

the long night . . .
a gecko echoes
another gecko's cry

J. B. Leong

*

the longest night
a snow-covered pine
bends toward earth

Pamela Miller Ness

*

shortest day —
all of the yellow
beaten out of eggs

Matt Morden

*

Christmas Eve —
my children pretend
to snore

Curtis Dunlap

*

morning twilight
stars fade
but the cardinal . . .

Stephen Engleman

*

the bite of radish
in the dinner salad —
year's end

Cherie Hunter Day

*

the shortest day —
an orange traffic cone
where the oak stood

Sabine Miller

*

first snow man
his nose lost to
a passing horse

Angelee Deodhar

*

morning light . . .
the curtain edges
darken

Harold Bowes

*

New Year's Eve —
a man digging a pit
strikes his shadow

K. Ramesh

*

New Year's Day
three fancy toothpicks
for the avocado pit

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*

New Year's Day
my overalls stained
with last year's garden

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bicycle tracks

Cindy Zackowitz

*

New Year's Day —
bleaching work shirts
back to white

Matt Morden

*

funeral's end —
a pine bough sloughs
its burden of snow

Timothy Hawkes

*

ice storm —
the great buck's antlers
devoured by mice

George Dorsty

*

freezing rain
one unwed year
into the next

Gary Steinberg

*

late for work —
the flutter of leaves
under my wiper

Aruna Lakshmanan

*

week after Christmas
an empty throne
in the mall

John Stevenson

*

snow-covered cornfield
the wild geese
in rows

Hilary Tann

*

single living
I allow the tea kettle
a full whistle

Carmen Sterba

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Robert Gilliland
Austin, Texas

Kay Grimnes
Alma, Michigan

Carolyn Hall
San Francisco, California

Timothy Hawkes
Tokyo, Japan

Gary Hotham
Laurel, Maryland

Helga Härle
Stockholm, Sweden

Bruce Kennedy
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Michael Ketchek
Rochester, New York

Joann Klontz
Swedesboro, New Jersey

Rob Knell
Nowra, New South Wales, Australia

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Michael McClintock
South Pasadena, California

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Pamela Miller Ness
New York, New York

Sabine Miller
Lagunitas, California

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Raleigh, North Carolina

Matt Morden
Hermon, Wales

H.F. Noyes
Politia, Attikis, Greece

Victor Ortiz
San Pedro, California

Tom Painting
Rochester, New York

K. Ramesh
Adyar, Chennai, India

Adelaide Shaw

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Sandra Simpson
Tauranga, New Zealand

Lynne Steel
Hillsboro Beach, Florida

Gary Steinberg
Mahwah, New Jersey

Carmen Sterba
Kamakura, Japan

John Stevenson
Nassau, New York

Maria Steyn
Johannesburg, South Africa

Hilary Tann
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Doris Thurston
Port Townsend, Washington

vincent tripi
Greenfield, Massachusetts

Florence Vilen
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FEATURED POEMS

bird house empty of seed
even the jays
look for Bernard

Francine Porad

*

old tombstone
losing its name
faint first star

George Swede

*

heat lightning
the shuttle snaps
across the warp

Kay Grimnes

HERON'S NEST AWARD

bird house empty of seed
even the jays
look for Bernard

Francine Porad

It is most unusual to use a proper name in a haiku. Since a majority of readers would be unlikely to know who the person is, there would seem to be an unbridgeable gap between the poet and the reader, which of course, runs contrary to haiku sensibility. Yet this poem is proof that a proper noun can be effective when obviously symbolic of a close personal relationship. That Francine refers to Bernard by name makes this poem far more poignant than if she were to have written impersonally of "him."

"Even the jays," (brash and careless as they are) sense that something has changed. Where there's usually food to be found, there's none. But this haiku isn't about birds. It isn't about Bernard either, nor is it just about Francine, who is now facing a void in her life. Even the emptiness she feels (the emotional crux of this poem) tells but half the story. By themselves, each of these elements say little of what the poet wishes to express. By putting them together, however, Francine Porad has painted a vivid picture of indisputable truth: the only constant is change and to survive we must be adaptable.

The emptiness that the jays discover is only that in a feeding station. The poet describes emptiness felt as a result of profound loss. Even though there are readers who don't know anything of Francine Porad, of her life and her works, they cannot help but glean that Bernard is someone important to her and that he is gone. Those who do know Francine are aware that Bernard was her husband and that he recently passed away.

To one degree or another relationships involve dependencies and compromises. Some are so subtle that they aren't noticed until one partner is no longer physically present. The recognition of Bernard's absence accentuates the fact that he continues to exist in Francine's life. They were married for over 50 years. Memories of him are sure to arise again and again, often quite unexpectedly, and sometimes in odd places.

Along with "empty," "even," and "Bernard," the word "seed" is important to this haiku. Through it, Bernard is seen to have been a provider. Not only did he provide for his family, he routinely fed the birds. What power Francine creates by juxtaposing Bernard's absence (emptiness) with something so full of life as a seed! In this poem, seed can be thought of as physical, intellectual, and emotional nutrition for a relationship. The bird house is not the only house that is empty.

Ultimately, this poem is about change and the spirit necessary to adjust to ever-changing circumstances. Even at a difficult time of loss, Francine Porad is so sensitively attuned that she recognizes her feelings objectively and has the courage to express those feelings through art and poetry. This makes me happy. It affirms that she is indeed thriving.

— Christopher Herold
April, 2003

POEMS

first warm spell —
I gaze into the sky
where the shuttle streaked

Lenard D. Moore

*

our neighbor sings —
spring snow melts
into the muskeg

Billie Wilson

*

rain . . .
a cup of chamomile tea
and The Tale of Genji

Naomi Y. Brown

*

cherry blossoms
today the courage
to speak to her

paul m.

*

sweet breeze
the quince tree flutters
with red parrots

Anna Tambour

*

spring breakup
my missing button
in her sewing box

Tom Painting

*

water sounds . . .
my memory wanders the coast
of a summer lake

Carmen Sterba

*

kitchen mop-up —
the peace of moving out
in widening arcs

H. F. Noyes

*

telling it
like it is
one black crow

Hilary Tann

*

bird watching —
naked boys in the canal
make a pose

Rajiv Lather

*

kindergarteners
cracking peanuts with
a rocking chair

Gary Warner

*

nursing infant —
the odor of wet wool
in the subway

Anita Wintz

*

breaking heat wave —
the slow return
of wind chimes

Adelaide Shaw

*

July 4th —
small talk over beer
with a redcoat

H. Gene Murtha

*

afternoon thunder
green sprouts
from the hay bales

Carolyn Hall

*

new plans for the day —
water running away
from the rain

Gary Hotham

*

dentist office
the orchid stem
flowerless

Yvonne Cabalona

*

country diner
a ceiling fan turns
paper snowflakes

John Stevenson

*

blowing rain . . .
colors blend
on a garden pinwheel

Connie Donleycott

*

sundial
time pauses
for a cloud

Greg Piko

*

meeting a hummingbird
on the way to the bath
my nakedness

Sabine Miller

*

scuba diving
cloud shadows
on the coral

John Stevenson

*

campsite faucet
the day's last sunlight
drips away

Elbert Pruitt

*

nightfall
prairie wind
rattles roadside reflectors

Gary Steinberg

*

in the dark
the mountain
loses its name

Tony Beyer

*

noon heat —
moving grass
swings the sky

Jasminka Nadaskic Diordievic

*

giggles of children
the golden retriever
shakes off the river

William Cullen, Jr.

*

honeysuckle —
the silent flight of fruit bats
above the river

Sue Mill

*

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

Victor Ortiz

*

Autumn moon . . .
everything i own
fits in the canoe

vincent tripi

*

family reunion —
wild turkeys
among the headstones

Curtis Dunlap

*

Late day shadows —
the gravedigger hangs his coat
over the stone angel

Rebecca Lilly

*

poised for prayer —
the bonsai pine
in its tiny pot

Mark Smith

*

the corner
where nothing grows —
moonlight

Brian Gierat

*

Raw wind
and right on cue
the scrawny dog that limps

Patrick Sweeney

*

hazy afternoon
hedge trimmers ratchet up
the cicada frenzy

Elizabeth Howard

*

my friend's wake . . .
a bookshelf labeled
"To Be Read"

Allen McGill

*

opening the door
to let the old dog out . . .
moonlight on my toes

Maria Steyn

*

a foot of snow —
the cat out loving and
where is the garden Buddha?

vincent tripi

*

New Year's Eve bath —
I fail to become
a swan

Fay Aoyagi

*

winter rain
gulls swim into
the hockey goal

Celia Crook

*

trickling pool . . .
a snapper's stillness
among the stones

Robert Gilliland

*

sub-zero
geese flow backwards
with the swollen tide

Matthew Paul

*

windless day —
kissing snowflakes
on her hair

Yu Chang

*

first day of spring —
the faded strike zone
on the schoolhouse

Brian Gierat

*

winter tide
an abalone shell
too deep to reach

Vanessa Proctor

*

distant church bell . . .
snowflakes vanish
into dark water

Timothy Hawkes

*

playing chess —
a crow lands
on a patch of snow

Dietmar Tauchner

*

winter thaw
the neighbor throws toys
back across the fence

Jennie Townsend

*

first fine day
a mother and her baby
babble back and forth

Robert Gilliland

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FEATURED POEMS

spring morning
the raven goes
where the wind went

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

*

small town —
the smell of
everyone's wood

vincent tripi

*

Ground Hog Day
arthritis loosens its grip
on my thumb

Yvonne Cabalona

HERON'S NEST AWARD

spring morning
the raven goes
where the wind went

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

The life force surges through each line of this vibrant haiku. Season, time of day, raven's flight, and vanished wind fuse to celebrate the pure joy of being. I love the spontaneity and movement. My spirits are caught in soaring exuberance and drawn to the grand expanse of sky.

Edgar Allen Poe's raven is a creature of "bleak December," compressing loss and negation into its dreary "Nevermore." Elizabeth Searle Lamb's seems quite the opposite. The last two lines of the haiku are like an incantation, evoking thoughts of Native American shamanism and tales of the raven as creator, trickster, navigator, bringer of light and fire. Above all, the raven of the haiku is a real songbird, a lover of high places, acquainted with wind and space. Its wild and powerful flight provides the energy of the moment within the context of rebirth and renewal. If its darkness encompasses deeper, harsher aspects of nature and reality, the contrast only accentuates the strength and lifefulness of its grand wing beats. This particular "spring morning" embraces creature, poet, and readers in a heightened moment of experience and awareness.

Here are two other haiku by Elizabeth Searle Lamb that rival "spring morning" in the expression of élan:

field of wild iris —
the pinto pony
kicks up his heels

the meadowlark
holding down the fencepost
with song²

Each in its own way, pony, meadowlark, and raven engage us in the thrill of being.

A founding member of The Haiku Society of America, Elizabeth Searle Lamb was editor of Frogpond from 1988-1991 and again in 1994. Many poets who are now submitting to The Heron's Nest sent their work to Elizabeth during those years, and treasured her personal responses. She often signed her notes, "May haiku bring you joy!" "Spring morning" is imbued with precisely that joy and shares it generously with receptive readers. I believe Elizabeth would be glad for those of us who love reading, writing, and experiencing haiku to adopt her benediction as we communicate with each other. Whatever the season, wherever you are, may haiku bring you joy!

— Peggy Willis Lyles
May, 2003

² Lamb, Elizabeth Searle, *Across the Windharp: Collected and New Haiku* (New Mexico: La Alameda Press, 1999) 55 and 51.

POEMS

spring clouds
piled all over the mountains —
new puppies sleep

Billie Wilson

*

headstone
a dash
between the years

Francis Masat

*

the lingering sound
of a bell
sun on old wood

Lynne Steel

*

alone
with my Cheerios
and another missing child

Charles Trumbull

*

misty window —
a child draws the rain
with slashing lines

Ljubomir Dragovic

*

fast freight —
a yellow dandelion
between blue rails

Zinovy Vayman

*

burial ground —
offshore kelp billowing
with the tide

Cherie Hunter Day

*

despite
my forgetfulness . . .
pink geraniums

naia

*

birthday morning
the moth on the mirror
in a different place

Sabine Miller

*

grey morning
the shire horse's fetlocks
caked with mud

Celia Crook

*

freshly washed hair
scent of the wind
rushing past

Giselle Maya

*

new to the islands
she sniffs
the hibiscus

David Gershator

*

war jitters
brush-stroked hollyhocks
stand at attention

Francine Porad

*

so many stars
through the pruned grapevine
the buzz of mosquitoes

Angelee Deodhar

*

dawn
I come face to face
with a mountain

K. Ramesh

*

maple shade —
young girls follow their recipe
for mud pies

Stacy Smith

*

open drawbridge —
counting the masts
of ships unseen

Helga Härle

*

twilit path
a tarantula
lifts a leg

Emily Romano

*

first light
I pretend to shave
my son's lathered face

H. Gene Murtha

*

Monday morning —
a flaw in the shadow
of the sugarbowl

H. F. Noyes

*

upcurls of morning fog . . .
the waterfall's lather
on boulder moss

Rebecca Lilly

*

walking for my health —
the mutter of ducks
beneath the pier

Carolyn Hall

*

autumn afternoon —
a tramp warms his back
against a headstone

John Ower

*

fluttering
at the edge of the farm
surveyor's flags

Hilary Tann

*

a distant tractor
long into the evening . . .
curlews

Ray MacKenzie

*

ripe blueberries
the morning mist
knee high

Lynne Steel

*

parrot or fruit bat?
examining the shape
of the apple core

Anna Tambour

*

sunset . . .
the shimmer
of dragonfly wings

Timothy Hawkes

*

pickup truck
an old retriever
laps the wind

Tom Painting

*

a sheep dying
in dirty straw
its blond eyelashes

Jack Barry

*

dwindling light
my childhood home
a parking lot

paul m.

*

retirement options
first ice
rims the campus pond

George Swede

*

sunset on ice
my slow shadow
by Giacometti

Paul Wigelius

*

winter windstorm
a tea kettle whistles
on the woodstove

Connie Donleycott

*

frozen sky —
the star over home
bigger than the others

Jasminka Nadaskic Diordievic

*

my father's globe
so many countries
with wrong names

Gary Warner

*

one last look
through the old apartment
a dry sponge . . .

John Stevenson

*

musical over —
the chill an exit door
lets in

Gary Hotham

*

winter evening:
neither of us bothers
to remove the tea bags

John S. O'Connor

*

crackling frost —
fox kits tumble
in the moonlight

George Dorsty

*

snow on thin ice
skid marks
where the hare turned

Paul Wigelius

*

winter night —
the understanding eyes
of a lumpy teddy

Carmen Sterba

*

New Year's Day
the cat leaves a hairball
on the bed

Sabine Miller

*

false spring —
the wavering reflection
of a broken branch

Cindy Zackowitz

*

ship horns
footprints crisscross
the misty beach

William Cullen, Jr.

*

trial separation
ice distends
the rain gutters

John Stevenson

*

winter rain —
a long trail of ants
to the honey jar

Barbara Campitelli

*

winter rain —
I search for ways
to be four again

Gary Steinberg

*

the word "Father"
in Tatsuko's haiku scroll —
winter camellias

Fay Aoyagi

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spring scents
my dog and I walk
through different worlds

Kirsty Karkow

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slave cemetery
the tug of the current
on willow fronds

Carolyn Hall

*

stone garden —
this morning the islands
float on snow

Kuniharu Shimizu

*

wood sorrel
a bumblebee works
the last patch of sun

Robert Gilliland

HERON'S NEST AWARD

slave cemetery
 the tug of the current
 on willow fronds

Carolyn Hall

Past and present. Carolyn Hall tugs us into history, a trip of at least 150 years. Still found in a few places, the horrible practice of slavery that is as old as human society was finally outlawed in the English-speaking part of the world during the 19th Century.

The river of Carolyn's experience is itself rich in symbolism. In Colonial times, rivers were central to transportation and commerce. The poet sees the willow tree in the present, leaves draping pliantly into the water from characteristically bent branches. It is a languid scene of late spring on into summer. The last two lines of the poem (especially with the word "tug") are expressive and evocative and would complement many a haiku setting. Discussing the haikai poetics of Basho, Haruo Shirane writes: "The suggestion here is that poetry must emerge from the interaction between the immediate experience based on direct observation, which provided new perspectives and approaches but which alone was insufficient to create lasting poetry, and the broader experience embodied in the *utamakura*, in the associations of the poetic place, which bore the collective memory."¹ Carolyn has spurred emotion of such power that it could overcome many haiku. Her skill with language and its delivery has transported me to the place of her insight and renewed my own personal experiences as well as my cultural memory.

Carolyn may have visited one of the Caribbean islands once colonized by European nations, or toured a historic plantation of the Southern United States. Last fall I spent part of a day at Montpelier, the family home of James Madison, the fourth President, and author of most of the U.S. Constitution. He lived in upland Virginia, about a day by horse from Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. Around 1720, Madison's grandfather Ambrose was the first to saw a tree or plow the land there, or rather it was his slaves who did the work of the plantation. Some farmed, others served in the main house or assisted in James Madison's smithy, manufacturing nails for hard currency. The wooden cabins of the slave quarters are long gone. Archaeologists have found their sites and, at some distance (in what is now horse pasture), the slave cemetery. I saw it outlined by tape in research grids. I stood there alone, out in the sun. There were no

benches. A few hundred yards away, President Madison has a stone marker in the “white” cemetery. If any, there was only a wooden marker for the burial place of a slave. All trace of the individual is now lost.

The slave times are past, yet the river, the land, and the poet remain. Oscar Hammerstein (in the Broadway musical “Show Boat”) has a lyric referring to the Mississippi River [as “He”]: “He don’t plant taters, He don’t plant cotton, an’ dem dat plants ’em is soon forgotten. But Ol’ Man River, He jes’ keeps rollin’ along.”

— Paul MacNeil
June, 2003

POEMS

spring breeze —
the smell of new tires
from the bike shop

Brian Gierat

*

little loose cloud
and the blue balloon
finding each other

H. F. Noyes

*

clinic appointment . . .
I stop
to pet pussy willows

Kay F. Anderson

*

white marble
I am small at the feet
of Lincoln

Deborah P. Kolodji

*

snarled traffic . . .
a mosquito buzzes
in my ear

J. B. Leong

*

spring landscape
a water colorist's brush
tints the stream

Kirsty Karkow

*

fragrant irises
the boy asks
where babies come from

Ryan Jones

*

the chorus
before the cranes . . .
spring sky

Christopher Patchel

*

spring ends
the old acacia
remains leafless

Rajiv Lather

*

anemones
shedding petals in the stream —
wind-streaked clouds

Ray MacKenzie

*

standing in the brook —
painted toenails
lure a turtle

Emily Romano

*

steep trail
a wild rose catches
my breath

Connie Donleycott

*

idle afternoon . . .
the deepening hole beneath
the woodpecker's beak

naia

*

storm lull
freshly crumpled paper
creaks twice

George Swede

*

porch swing
the occasional drip
of gathering dew

Lynne Steel

*

first phlox
a dewdrop on the tip
of my nose

Robert Gilliland

*

crevasse
my shadow's head
disappears

Ernest J. Berry

*

storm clouds roil
across the prairie
she marks her place

Billie Wilson

*

from childhood
the firefly jar —
light hair in it

vincent tripi

*

false dawn
a ruffed grouse drums
the woods awake

Tom Painting

*

cat's faint tread —
the light
before sunrise

Barry George

*

first day of school
the Latin teacher
coated in chalk

John S. O'Connor

*

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

D. Claire Gallagher

*

shooting star —
a night bird
cries out

George Dorsty

*

roaring sea —
blue anemones
along the path

Odd G. Aksnes

*

meditation hour
the rain
changing rhythm

Ion Codrescu

*

a strange language
these querulous crows
and no peace anywhere

Elizabeth Searle Lamb

*

full moon —
a shadow under the curl
of each wave

Adelaide Shaw

*

morning wind
shadows of gulls
skim the dunes

Anita Wintz

*

breakwater rocks —
where I left off yesterday
the morning tide

paul m.

*

ebb tide
the sand castle moat
still showing clouds

George Swede

*

seaside café
the wind ripples
my oyster soup

Greg Piko

*

again negotiations fail
the clay path broken
by a mushroom

Anna Tambour

*

our first meeting —
a snowflake melts
on my lips

Sonia Cristina Coman

*

bedtime story
my grandfather's fingers
touching the Braille

John W. Wisdom

*

morning sun —
fish scales glisten
in the otter scat

H. Gene Murtha

*

his passing —
the magenta chrysanthemum
still fresh

Kay Grimnes

*

end of twilight
duck wings whistle
above the path

Celia Crook

*

Tracings of snow
on the forest boughs —
a horned owl's face

Rebecca Lilly

*

icy wind
the garbage can rolls
back and forth

Bruce Ross

*

weekday morning
gulls gather
round the ice-fishing hole

Hilary Tann

*

first warm day
the boys show off
a handful of grubs

Jennie Townsend

*

no room for doubt
the swallow's
red throat

Tony Beyer

*

snowdrops
on the grave
a yew's shadow

Ray MacKenzie

*

flickering candles
a wren chirps
between hymns

Allen McGill

*

signs of spring
the expiration date
on fat-free milk

John Stevenson

*

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the teenager guns
his engine

Yvonne Cabalona

*

spring wind
a man with wooden hands
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Paul Wigelius

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Sabine Miller

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the valley darkens
farm by farm

Allen McGill

*

Hokusai's Wave
a child shapes his fingers
into claws

Pamela Miller Ness

*

cold spring rain
a yellow wheelbarrow
starts to shine

Robert Gilliland

HERON'S NEST AWARD

storm clouds
the valley darkens
farm by farm

Allen McGill

Allen McGill has crafted a haiku that resonates well beyond the duration of its brief eight words. The opening line instantly invokes the image of an ominous sky. In just two words we have all the information we need to begin to paint a picture in our minds' eye. Then our attention is directed downward, to where we can see the effect of the clouds on the ground below: shadow meets earth. Finally, the image is put into context when we learn that these events are unfolding in farm country.

The haiku suddenly takes on a human face. The ground darkened by passing clouds is the source of someone's livelihood. The clouds, in turn, are either harbingers of life-giving rain or a cruel joke of nature. Such is the dependence of the hard-working farmer on things that are beyond his or her own control.

I must mention that I see another possible reading of this haiku, one that hinges on the word "darkens." Had storm clouds merely passed over the valley, as they undoubtedly did long before farmers sought to cultivate it, they would have warranted little notice. The clouds, however, cause one farm to darken after another, leaving us to wonder: precisely what are these clouds?

In the U.S., the past century has seen a continuous flow of population from farms to urban centers. Those who remain to work the fields face fierce international competition and sagging prices. Often they must struggle to keep land that has passed from generation to generation. By extension, clouds in the form of foreclosure have appeared

over farm by farm, with little sign of daylight. Brought on by drought, clouds in the form of dust covered the U.S Midwest during the Great Depression. Clouds in the form of pesticide-resistant insects threaten farms continually. Allen may not have intended any of these tangents, but his haiku is an easy harvest for the fertile imagination. Such is the richness of a great haiku.

Allen McGill's words are seeds that germinate and quickly grow in many directions, providing sustenance to all who partake of them, as well as comforting shade to all who pass on by.

— Paul David Mena
July, 2003

POEMS

the hang time
of grasshoppers
lazy afternoon

Christopher Patchel

*

invisible door
the orphan opens it
for his brother

Ernest J. Berry

*

Summer night:
the store owner buys something
from his own machine

Patrick Sweeney

*

flickering light
on a vase of wildflowers —
sound of the wind

Ray MacKenzie

*

midsummer —
childhood pathways
lost to wildflowers

Billie Wilson

*

gaunt children
selling old bayonets —
noonday sun

Kylan Jones-Huffman

*

evening cool —
my two small images
in the cat's eyes

Carolyn Thomas

*

shimmering fireflies
the overgrown field
since Father's illness

Linda Jeannette Ward

*

woodland stroll
the same bird call
always just ahead

Adelaide Shaw

*

sunny rain —
colour of finches
matching the leaves

Anna Tambour

*

post to post
a woodpecker searching
the meadow fence

Elizabeth Howard

*

fingerlings —
a water moccasin
poses as a reed

J. C. Herring

*

dowser's hands —
the pull in a switch
of willow

Cherie Hunter Day

*

wind gust —
my children's breath
while they sleep

Curtis Dunlap

*

foghorns
a fish in the silence
between

Kay Grimnes

*

Cowbells clonking
on a torpid afternoon —
the muddy river ford

Rebecca Lilly

*

smoke over the river
the restlessness
of crows

Marje A. Dyck

*

dying maple
just enough leaves
for the wind to rustle

Yvonne Cabalona

*

tundra swans
in the mist
snowflakes

Marje A. Dyck

*

winter fog
car after car
onto the bridge

paul m.

*

screeching gulls —
under the tangy sea scent
odors of decay

H. F. Noyes

*

moonlit stroll
her demons, my demons
the sea

Gary Steinberg

*

Christmas dinner —
the handle broken off
a tradition

Gary Hotham

*

cool morning —
dumped coffee grounds
steam beside violets

Emily Romano

*

first warm day
looking for eagles
and finding the sky

Hilary Tann

*

outgoing tide
a funeral
at the cliff's edge

Victor Ortiz

*

winter sickness
my daughter tucks me in
for the first time

Matt Morden

*

yet some new snow
from the treetops
bird by bird

Helga Hërle

*

morning twilight
a breeze lifts the palest
of the ivy leaves

Robert Gilliland

*

church cemetery
a wasp starts its nest
in Mary's hand

Merle D. Hinchee

*

sunny Sunday —
carpenter bees working
the new shed

Nina Wicker

*

railway station . . .
a banyan tree's roots
yet to reach the ground

K. Ramesh

*

garden pond
a koi nibbles
at spring rain

Michael L. Evans

*

dandelion bouquet —
I wash the bitterness
from his hands

Connie Donleycott

*

gentle rain . . .
apple blossom footprints
around the teacher's desk

Piper

*

aspen plumes
shower Sacagawea's statue —
midday silence

Naomi Y. Brown

*

late afternoon
up to its belly in hyacinths
a pregnant buffalo

Angelee Deodhar

*

May sun
I'm the one
the puppy comes to

John Stevenson

*

a small cup
with a broken handle . . .
Baby's Tears

Robert Major

*

animal skull
the child fingers
her eye

Tom Painting

*

fruit-cellar coolness . . .
mama pits cherries
with a paperclip

Kay F. Anderson

*

green grass
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John Stevenson

*

the dogwood
and the cat's meow
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Katherine Cudney

*

first night
in the new bedroom . . .
wisteria

John S. O'Connor

*

soft rain
hopscotch pebble
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Ryan Michael Jones

*

Special guest
moving the cherrywood bowl
into sunlight

Carol Purington

*

summer rain —
her kimono tied
loosely

Sandra Simpson

*

she asks me
if I love her —
evening star

Dietmar Tauchner

*

summer begins —
the sound of a stick
dragged across a fence

Brian Gierat

*

cabin fever
I spin the child's globe
until it blurs blue

Carol Purington

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late wisteria
the stepladder
wobbles

Robert Gilliland

*

twilight
the poultry truck returns
with empty cages

Carolyn Hall

*

The bee dies
 separate from its stinger —
 and i ?

vincent tripi

HERON'S NEST AWARD

Late one afternoon, it was my job to stand well back and call out guidance to my husband as he pruned a tall ligustrum. He wanted to give it a rounded shape, to match its mate on the other side of the front porch. Even before he silenced the trimmer's motor and asked me to come "steady" him as he climbed even higher, I was thinking of Robert Gilliland's lovely haiku:

late wisteria
the stepladder
wobbles

At first, this seems an unlikely coupling of images. What in the world does "late wisteria" have to do with a stepladder, and one that wobbles, at that? Nothing-and everything! I imagine the poet outside. Perhaps he is cleaning windows or painting a wall or repairing a hole made by a woodpecker along the eaves. Perhaps a bit of pruning or adjusting a downspout. My knowing exactly what job he's doing is not important to the levels of meaning below the surface of the poem.

While the poet is intent on his chore, a familiar scent comes to him now and then on a breeze. Finally he pauses and acknowledges the source. Ahh, the wisteria, still in bloom. Then, just as he takes another breath of sweet fragrance, the ladder wobbles. I can't help but perceive Gilliland's poem as a metaphor for the ups and downs of our lives. So many times, when we are contentedly taking care of business, or just as we are thinking what a pleasant time we're having, the unexpected catches us off guard. The day wobbles. Isn't that the way of it? Sometimes we come crashing down, but usually we find our balance and keep going.

There are several varieties of wisteria, a genus in the pea family. The aroma of its showy purplish or white racemes may be intoxicatingly heavy or tantalizingly faint. But it might be best known for its climbing woody vines that can grow as thick as tree trunks. The main trunk is actually a combination of twisted and coiled stems. Wisteria can tear down balcony banisters and damage roofs and gutters. If allowed to grow unchecked for many years, the huge stems can lift a house right off its foundation. When I was a child, an ancient oak that supported a huge wisteria was “Tarzan’s jungle” for my friends and me. We used to climb the large, twisted stems like monkeys. Some of the smaller ones that hung down from the oak branches had grown into stiff crooks and circles and loops. We used them like the hanging bars on a swing set.

For one who knows wisteria, this poem is sure to bring out a sense of contrast between the strength of the plant and the wobbliness of the ladder or person. Similarities between wisteria and ladders and between the plant and people also come to mind. The flowers tremble or “wobble” even when there’s no wind. In its growing season, the new tendrils reach out, grasping anything in their path. The heady beauty and perfume of wisteria can make people feel wobbly and, of course, a person on a ladder that begins to wobble will reach out to grip something firm.

The opening words “late wisteria” are pleasant and inviting. Following the clear caesura, the poet creates a little tension by leaving “the stepladder” alone on the second line. As I see it, the final telling word, “wobbles,” does not end the poem, but rather leaves readers with several intriguing possibilities. At this point, we can let our own experiences show us what might happen next, or we may simply enjoy the small drama’s bit of mystery.

This haiku is rich with implied color and scent. For me the appeal of “late wisteria” is not so much in what it says, as in what it does not say. The author concisely sets up the scene for readers. He shows only enough to draw us into his moment so that we can

make it our own. I am delighted that memory and imagination allow me to participate in Robert Gilliand's elegantly rendered haiku.

— Ferris Gilli
August, 2003

POEMS

withering heat
schoolyard tetherballs hang
against their poles

Yvonne Cabalona

*

blazing sun
the fly caught beneath
a wine glass

Louis Pirro

*

invisible fence
...
no sign of the dog

Hilary Tann

*

a shorebird's red bill —
the tide rushing
into a mussel bed

paul m.

*

quiet waves
the herring gull's
pink legs

Kay Grimnes

*

the longest day
slowly the cat
licks each paw

Pamela Miller Ness

*

thunder . . .
the white side
of the leaves

Timothy Hawkes

*

a gull slips
on the polished handrail
rolling thunder

Allen McGill

*

beachcomber
grains of sand fill
her smile lines

Connie Donleycott

*

leaving for home —
strands of seaweed wrap
around our ankles

Carmen Sterba

*

sandstorm . . .
the scent of rain
from somewhere

Rajiv Lather

*

a week of rain . . .
into the stranger's yawn
a train whistle

Curtis Dunlap

*

supper cooking —
a wind with storm in it
comes through the wheat

Billie Wilson

*

dusty mullions —
early twilight creeping
from living room corners

D. Claire Gallagher

*

the wave
curls on and on
Indian summer

Greg Piko

*

boarded-up drugstore —
grass lengthens
between concrete cracks

Lenard D. Moore

*

desert chill
the ocotillo's long reach
to the stars

Cherie Hunter Day

*

bread rising . . .
a crumb
in an old book

Anna Tambour

*

lunar eclipse
I remember my last
menses

Yvonne Cabalona

*

moonlight
crossing the tide flats
in someone's footprints

William Cullen, Jr.

*

autumn walk —
our cat greets us
at a neighbour's house

Maria Steyn

*

cold wind
the woodpecker taps
faster and faster

Margarita Engle

*

our holiday home
the hoot of an owl
reminds me of him

Celia Crook

*

first peepers
blue smoke blowing
into dusk

Jack Barry

*

morning light
through bone-china bowls —
a bluebird song

Nancy Stewart Smith

*

thin clouds
streak the sun . . .
rumors of lay-offs

J. B. Leong

*

threat level orange —
wild ducks land
on the White House lawn

Timothy Hawkes

*

a thud on the glass —
awake
from my dream of flying

Sabine Miller

*

open window —
through the moon-filled night
the mockingbird

Mary Lee McClure

*

fresh grave
the bare earth covered
with cut flowers

Tom Painting

*

departure day
the car covered
with pollen

Dietmar Tauchner

*

Easter afternoon —
the sides of a dairy cow
heave in labor

D. Claire Gallagher

*

Mother's Day
that first breath of air
outside the door

John Stevenson

*

fly fishing —
the frog
too

Brian Gierat

*

Memorial Day
in the moment of silence
a mourning dove

Kirsty Karkow

*

spring morning
we argue about crab apple
and cherry blossoms

Hilary Tann

*

Leaving the paddock
the colour of dandelions
coming with me

Andrew Lansdown

*

spring afternoon —
even the river stones
turning green

Cindy Zackowitz

*

Memorial Day . . .
cut flowers lie
in ranks of white

J. C. Herring

*

cattails bursting
a red rowboat tangled
in willow branches

Lynne Steel

*

sunlit meadow —
fritillaries
just frittering

Emily Romano

*

a lizard tail
released in my pinched fingers
the scent of thyme

Katherine Cudney

*

the pregnant woman
shifts on the bleachers . . .
extra innings

Deborah Baker

*

scent of roses —
the healer's hands
grow warmer

George Dorsty

*

dogday night
one bug zap
at a time

Christopher Patchel

*

the bride
on her way to the groom
scent of rose

Gillena Cox

*

blistering heat
a child frightens me
with a rubber spider

Angelee Deodhar

*

street fair
colors from the suncatcher
touch the mime

Connie Donleycott

*

fiery sky
swifts spiral
into a chimney

Sabine Miller

*

hot night —
the orchestration of crickets
and tinkling ice

Adelaide Shaw

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FEATURED POEMS

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

Connie Donleycott

*

country road
I quietly cross
the Equator

Kuniharu Shimizu

*

twilight
a child's pail taken
by the tide

Cherie Hunter Day

HERON'S NEST AWARD

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

Connie Donleycott

It's my turn to write commentary on the poem we editors unanimously voted our favorite for September. I begin as I normally do, sitting quietly for a few minutes, letting go of thoughts, letting myself settle . . . Now, for the poem. I read it several times, both silently and aloud. Research is always the next step for me. I try to learn more about a plant or animal named, the history of a location, the climate in that region, or anything else in the poem with which I'm unfamiliar. I read Connie's poem again. Wonderful! But there's nothing in it that I don't already understand.

Wait a minute! When was the last time I plopped myself down on a swing? Why, so long ago I don't remember. Jumping up, I grab my keys and hurry down to the car, eager to get started on my research. Ha! What fun this is going to be! I start the car . . . Wait a minute! I'm already short-changing myself! Off goes the engine. My bike is in the garden shed. Down it comes from the rafter hooks. So much dust! Off to the kitchen for some rags. Shoot! The tires need air! Now, where did I store that pump? Not in the holder on the bike, not on the shelves, not in the footlocker . . . I'm getting impatient. How childish of me! Wait a minute! Of course! Even this impatience is part of the experience! Ha! My research is going well. Anyway, here's the pump, sticking out of an old planter box. At last! Tires inflated (but not nearly as much as I am), I climb on and coast down the driveway.

No one else at the playground this morning and, yes! Just the right sort of equipment here too. Three canvas swings hang motionless between heavy chains. I settle into the

middle one and walk backward a couple of steps. Leaning even further back, I kick my legs out and feel the first rush of air. Ahhhhhhh! Point those toes! Pull on the chains! Now, tuck and lean forward! The swing swings back. A little higher with the next arc, and the next. What d'ya know! It's got a squeak! The rush of air gets stronger, a tickly sensation developing in my stomach as I sweep forward. The sand pit and shrubs vanish behind me as I reach toward the top of an arc . . . then back they come, rushing into view. Higher! Higher! Some free-fall now at the highest point as the chains slacken for a moment . . . a jerk as my slung weight slams them taut again. Back I go . . . then forward again, faster yet! Now the tall maples across the sidewalk vanish and . . . yes, here it is in all its blue glory! The sky! The whole sky! Nothing but the sky!

Boy what fun that was! That was yesterday. I decided to put off writing until today so I could hang out longer at the playground. The monkey bars were kinda neat, but I barked a shin. A couple of kids showed up and one agreed to help me play on the see-saw. What an oddity I must have seemed to them! Well . . . yeah! And man, you shoulda seen me whack the tether ball! (Both kids enjoyed beating me at that game.) The slides were way cool too! There's so much I'd forgotten!

And now I see that I've forgotten to write about Connie's poem. Heck! Well, what can I say that she hasn't said better and in far fewer words? For a more thorough commentary, I recommend that y'all get on out to your local playgrounds!

— Christopher Herold
September, 2003

POEMS

sultry morning
the child's rag doll
slumped on the veranda

Pamela Miller Ness

*

touching the tree
where we carved our names
water shimmers

Angelee Deodhar

*

eiderdown
on the river
August moon

S. T. Boyle

*

a snail
thrusts out its horns
soft rain

Dietmar Tauchner

*

thunderheads
the clam dropped by a gull
misses the rock

Kay Grimnes

*

reading a Harlequin
in the shade of a tree —
the heat

Margaret Chula

*

grass on the graves
a whippoorwill
far away

R. D. McManes

*

risqué story
the undersides of fig leaves
brightening with moonlight
D. Claire Gallagher

*

fresh palette
a fisherman whets
his blade

Darrell Byrd

*

autumn ocean
the wind
in a wave

Piper

*

tern feathers
in the surfcaster's hat —
autumn sunset

George Dorsty

*

rock strata
the space in the photo
between grandma and me

William Cullen, Jr.

*

daylight moon —
faded chalk stars
on the sidewalk

Harold Bowes

*

foghorns . . .
I'd forgotten how close
we live to the river

Joann Klontz

*

morning mist —
a train whistle mingles
with the Moravian band

Curtis Dunlap

*

the car packed
one last pebble
cast into the sea

paul m.

*

pay day
the field hand bends over
his lotto scratcher

Yvonne Cabalona

*

new school year
the sound of the stream
returns

Greg Piko

*

September morning
none of the students
has failed . . .

John Stevenson

*

lunch with my ex . . .
a kingfisher preens
in the bare orchid tree

Michael L. Evans

*

fallen leaves
the child in her
gives a kick

Tom Painting

*

coyotes
the strange shape
of moonlit mist

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Carmen Sterba

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Kay F. Anderson

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Gary Hotham

*

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Elizabeth Howard

*

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*

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Tomislav Maretic

*

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the trumpet vine

Robert Gilliland

*

summer solstice
a roofer lays new slates
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Matthew Paul

*

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Cindy Zackowitz

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to her womb

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*

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into shadow

Hortensia Anderson

HERON'S NEST AWARD

summer garden
the full stretch
of the hose

Connie Donleycott

Haiku poets open themselves to the significant flashes of insight available through direct realization of everyday experiences. A sound, smell, or taste can awaken them to the profound suchness of a moment in time. Disparate images converge to convey resonant intuitions that link nature and human spirit. Haiku becomes a way of life, and the poet who lives in quiet harmony with that way trusts the sparest presentation of essential details to engage the sensory involvement of readers and make them participants and co-creators.

Connie Donleycott's "summer garden" is a splendid case in point. She names the season and setting, knowing readers will supply tomatoes, cucumbers, peas and beans, sunflowers, dahlias, marigolds, onions, and melons — whatever colorful images of lush abundance the context brings to mind. Each reader can easily stand in the garden he or she imagines, ready to become part of the poem.

This time it is a kinesthetic response that provides the tug into haiku awareness. The garden hose reaches its limit and signals resistance with a backward pull. Gardener, poet, and reader register "the full stretch" and instinctively appreciate the expansiveness of summer's bounty just as they recognize its demands. They sense the unstated likeness of the summer garden to full adulthood, that season of greatest human productivity and of challenges that test and stretch individual capacity. Perhaps the instant of heightened understanding includes consciousness, too, of states of being that require the full measure of human energy, physical, spiritual, and emotional.

Because the poem is lean, simple, and imbued with *karumi* (lightness), we are left with a smile and a comfortable sense of adequacy. Just beyond the margins, though, lies recognition that when plenty becomes excess the equation shifts. Strain replaces tautness, and enough is suddenly too much. The pull of the hose is a gentle reality check.

The poet knows about heat and effort. She appreciates the rewards of planning and nurturing. At an instant's signal from a hollow rubber tube, she recognizes limitations as well. We can imagine, if we want to, just how far an adjustment of the nozzle might extend the reach of life-giving water or what other methods a gardener might use to care for plants that have grown beyond ordinary reach. Haiku, after all, are open-ended and allow the reader to move back and forth in time on the pivot of the present moment. Past and future merge. So do small and large, local and universal. A sensation that quivers briefly through the body informs the mind and spirit.

Connie Donleycott writes clearly and honestly about real things in the real world, especially the ordinary activities of daily life. With characteristic freshness, she shares this moment of heightened awareness in her summer garden so effectively that her readers are blessed with a richer understanding of their world and themselves.

— Peggy Willis Lyles
October, 2003

POEMS

white hydrangeas
motherhood is missing
from my resumé

Fay Aoyagi

*

vacation's end —
windshield wipers in synch
with the radio

Curtis Dunlap

*

autumn wind
the leaves are going
where I'm going

John Stevenson

*

oh! oh! oh!
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on a woodcut

Kirsty Karkow

*

the highs and lows
of our conversation
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Katherine Cudney

*

on a slip of paper
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Dietmar Tauchner

*

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still migrating

vincent tripi

*

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Victor Ortiz

*

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every time
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Helen Russell

*

quiet day
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Lynne Steel

*

family reunion
fragments of old photo albums
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Hilary Tann

*

winter moon . . .
fading echoes
of the coyote's howl

Naomi Y. Brown

*

crows bicker
in the morning light —
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George Dorsty

*

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the deep valley
in a chopping log

John Tiong Chunghoo

*

cloudy sky —
a little boy imitates
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K. Ramesh

*

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William Cullen, Jr.

*

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Carolyn Hall

*

city morning
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up the wall

Jim Kacian

*

farmer's market
the bee balm lady
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Elizabeth Howard

*

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Paul Pfleuger, Jr.

*

moonbeams —
the thin legs
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Timothy Hawkes

*

frog song . . .
a bromeliad
gathers rain

Bobby Richardson

*

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a kite string leads down
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Matt Morden

*

sunglare
the rasp as my clam rake
uncovers tin cans

Allen McGill

*

tea-colored creek —
live salmon make their way
past the dead

Cindy Zackowitz

*

willow shadows
the drip of water
from a moose's chin

Kay Grimnes

*

mockingbird . . .
not a hint
of this record high

Robert Gilliland

*

the wave turning back —
the deep blue
of the seashell

Gary Hotham

*

up from the harbor
fish smells follow
the donkey trail

H. F. Noyes

*

midsummer stream
a grackle dips its beak
in shimmer

Robert Gilliland

*

sunlit lake
her face
after baptism

Christopher Patchel

*

summer writing camp —
sound of a skill saw
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Lenard D. Moore

*

late-day sun
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laced with webs

Pamela Miller Ness

*

eucalyptus trees
sway in the hot wind —
a taste of grit

Adelaide Shaw

*

summer evening
a muskrat rests its head
on driftwood

Jennie Townsend

*

afternoon haze
the slow wind-up
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Timothy Hawkes

*

unemployed
a pillar of mayflies
swirling in the sun

Nate Haken

*

ninth-inning tie
the slow shadow of the pitcher
approaches the mound

Jerry Kilbride

*

windy dusk
a dog waits by
the collapsed bridge

Marili Deandrea

*

airless night
dust from the window frame
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Zinovy Vayman

*

scent of lemon
the glint of a sunbeam
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Sue Mill

*

home from the lawyer
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Elizabeth Howard

*

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H. F. Noyes

*

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*

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*

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Naia

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Deathbed . . .

my old friend's imitation
of a firefly

vincent tripi

*

ice moon —

the cat grooms away
my touch

Linda Jeannette Ward

*

lily stamens

almost touching
cicada cry

Burnell Lippy

HERON'S NEST AWARD

Deathbed . . .
 my old friend's imitation
 of a firefly

vincent tripi

July second, 1826, in a custom-made bed (extra long), in an alcove between office and bedchamber, in a house he designed, the third President of The United States fell into a coma. Very ill for five days from an intestinal malady, probably cancer, Thomas Jefferson was attended by his physician, daughter, family, and friends. The house slaves listened from adjoining rooms and from the basement through the dumbwaiter. For the next two days, Jefferson regained consciousness several times and clearly asked what was the date. Told it was the second of the month, then the third, he fell back insensate each time. When his question was answered that it was the fourth of July, he sighed, and was dead at age eighty-three. He lived until the fiftieth anniversary of the formal signing of The Declaration of Independence he had authored.

vincent tripi's haiku brought to mind this story still told by the docents at Monticello in Virginia. More personally, I was also transported to memories of several deathbeds of my own loved ones.

The one-word setting, "deathbed," is an extremely powerful beginning for this poem. It evokes images surrounded by ritual. The solemnity and import of the process of dying is quite universal across cultures. With the first line set apart from the rest by an ellipsis, a reader pauses to ponder the natures of death and living. Using a second concise image, tripi tells of friendship. The relationship between the two people, one dying, one surviving, has been a long one and a reader may infer that neither principal is young.

The poet himself is indeed central to the poem. He shares this experiencing of death

with his friend. The poem's third part is the concept of "firefly." In the dark, a firefly is bright then gone again, flying on in blackness. Its reappearance is a flash in a different place. Haiku as a genre can contain such a figurative image. tripi employs it so lightly that its resonance brings me back to the intensity of the opening image. Rather than just mentioning the insect for the setting, perhaps as a line unto itself, he shows the metaphor directly. The technique is masterful, much more subtle and effective. The poet states that what he sees is an imitation. The haiku succeeds because of this gentleness of touch; it avoids an obviousness that would ruin the sharing of deep emotions.

How powerful is this simple evocation of experience so basic to humans. Light and dark . . . consciousness here and gone . . . life and death. How rich was this friendship, this love.

— Paul MacNeil
November, 2003

POEMS

wood smoke
draped in the treetops
All Souls' Day

Tom Painting

*

holding each other
holding us
the drift of cloud and moon
Stephen Engleman

*

late-night foghorns . . .
straightening the cut line
on a pan of brownies

Connie Donleycott

*

night of no moon —
from the trawler's lamp
one small pool of light

H. F. Noyes

*

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

Gary Hotham

*

ancient cedars
the dog bends her head
and sniffs

Glenn G. Coats

*

cicada chorus —
a circle of freshmen
share a smoke

Curtis Dunlap

*

approaching winter —
I leave the seashell
at the bottom of the purse

Cindy Zackowitz

*

night scaffold —
the workman slightly bigger
as a shadow

Barry George

*

war news
the underbelly of a moth
pressed to my window

Carolyn Hall

*

insomnia
the break-up
moth by moth

Alice Frampton

*

my neighbor's bicycle
locked to the fence —
drifting plum petals

Michael Dylan Welch

*

idle conversation —
swallow shadows
crisscross the sand

George Dorsty

*

spring twilight
buds of water lilies
still submerged

Paul Wigelius

*

evening rain
the deaf dog sleeps
with a paw on my foot

Allen McGill

*

the cool breeze
between spadefuls of gravel
a nightingale's song

Tomislav Maretic

*

childhood garden —
scent of the magnolia
that once stood here

Stephen Toft

*

cattail slough
a slight seepage
in the weave of tracks

Elizabeth Howard

*

tea garden
the Dr. Doolittle in me
whispers to a turtle

Fay Aoyagi

*

a field of crickets . . .
stepping in the spaces
between their songs

Stephen Amor

*

rocky portage
someone familiar
in the stranger's face

Ryan Michael Jones

*

summer afternoon
the boys tell stories
about someday

Jennie Townsend

*

wild oats —
the missing fence rail
at the donkey's feet

D. Claire Gallagher

*

lichened shrine
a farmer studies
the roof thatch

Hilary Tann

*

dust cloud
the dump truck weighed down
with wilderness

Robert Gilliland

*

elbow deep
in a cold stream
fool's gold

Kirsty Karkow

*

thesis
the sounds of childhood
through my study window

Carolyn Rohrig

*

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awaking to a crowd
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*

only a chimney
and dust of adobe bricks
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Elizabeth Searle Lamb

*

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the peanut vendor's bell
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K. Ramesh

*

summer heat
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Jeffrey Winke

*

distant thunder —
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Mary King

*

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Lenard D. Moore

*

lingering heat —
out of a small shop
the smell of the past

Dietmar Tauchner

*

muggy morning —
turning over a beetle
in the corn maze

Nina Wicker

*

almost ripe
the pineapple that was
so hard to draw

Sue Stanford

*

a week of rain —
peppermint drops
fused in a clump

Emily Romano

*

Cambodian sunset
children bathe
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*

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*

postal form —
the gift value of a bottle
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Anna Tambour

*

summer's end
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packs up to leave

Carmen Sterba

*

mile after mile
of barbed wire . . .
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Timothy Hawkes

*

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*

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*

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*

the first cool night —
nearly forgotten faces
alive in dreams

Adelaide Shaw

*

shooting star —
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walking home from church
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FEATURED POEMS

faint stars . . .
the cabby speaks
of home

Timothy Hawkes

*

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

Linda Jeannette Ward

*

there must be light
where they come from —
chestnut blossoms

Gabriel Rosenstock

HERON'S NEST AWARD

faint stars . . .
 the cabby speaks
 of home

Timothy Hawkes

This wonderful haiku begins by setting a dream-like tone. The “faint stars” imply a night sky that demands attention by virtue of its very ambiguity. One knows that the stars are there, but there is something obscuring that reality, leaving the reader in a state of muted anticipation. Is it an overcast sky? The surface light from a city that never sleeps? The possibilities far surpass the simplicity of the words that imply them.

And then, the cabby speaks of home. A man with a lonely job, just trying to make an innocent connection during the hustle and bustle of yet another day. Perhaps English is not his first language, and his native country on the other side of the planet. One imagines him engaging an unwitting stranger in a decidedly one-sided conversation, all in an attempt to transcend the miles that separate him from home.

As one who grew up in New York in the seventies, two “taxi” themes are permanently ingrained in my memory: Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver* (1976) and the song *Taxi* by Harry Chapin (1972).

In the movie *Taxi Driver*, Robert De Niro plays the part of Travis Bickle, a loner who takes a job as a cabbie during the night shift because he is an insomniac. He offers very few facts about his background. He is a 26 year-old ex-Marine with a clean driving record. He is a faceless person in a crowded city. Out of an acute desire to somehow escape his isolated life, he obsesses over a young campaign worker, played by Cybill Shepherd, and then a child prostitute, played by Jodie Foster. In the movie’s dramatic

conclusion, the child is forcibly “rescued” from her pimp and reunited with her family – a homecoming that Bickle will likely never experience himself.

Harry Chapin’s *Taxi* is sung in the first person, drawing the listener into the story of a cabby, who by chance is reunited with an old flame. The encounter reawakens the memory of their youthful aspirations: “She was gonna be an actress, and I was gonna learn to fly.” Their brief time together concludes anticlimactically. Before the ride ends the two would-be lovers are again safely distanced from their dreams and one another: “There was not much more for us to talk about.”

Timothy Hawkes’ cabby, under a canopy of thinly veiled stars, has a similar vision of home – a place of youthful ambition and endless possibility. In seven brief words, this haiku is a portrait of nostalgia, warmth, and ultimately, hope.

– Paul David Mena
December, 2011

POEMS

hunter's moon
wind in silver waves
through the beach grass

Allen McGill

*

shouting couple
wave after wave nears
the seawall

Francine Porad

*

a load of salt hay —
tucking in the roses
for the long sleep

H. F. Noyes

*

she keeps speaking
into the stillness
autumn stars

Gary Steinberg

*

long shadows
many places
to cross the creek

paul m.

*

steel grey sea
an old woman cuts kelp
from the rocks

Vanessa Proctor

*

still water —
the grebes rise
breast to breast

Cindy Zackowitz

*

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a path of moonlight
across the sea

William Cullen, Jr.

*

giving sound
to my creaky steps
old plank

Yu Chang

*

scrimmage —
the wide receiver catches
rain

Lenard D. Moore

*

evening fog
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of burning leaves

Dietmar Tauchner

*

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George Dorsty

*

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Alice Frampton

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Elizabeth Howard

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Sue Stanford

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Gary Hotham

*

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of pine pollen

Cherie Hunter Day

*

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Katherine Cudney

*

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Carolyn Hall

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Michael Dudley

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Michael Dylan Welch

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Connie Donleycott

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Lynne Steel

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VOLUME 5, VALENTINE AWARDS

OVERVIEW

I'd like to thank all of you who voted for your favorite poems in Volume IV of *The Heron's Nest*. I am not exaggerating when I tell you that nearly everyone who participated sent strikingly similar remarks along with their votes. It was unanimous that choosing ten favorite poems from 635 was a real challenge. At the same time, much gratitude was expressed since the task of rereading so many haiku turned out to be a worthwhile experience. Much more was discovered and appreciated the second time through. I'm happy to acknowledge that, although voting for favorites was not easy, participation proved to be pleasurable and an education.

The most interesting and exciting result of this year's Valentine Awards is that readers' and editors' choices are in perfect accord! At the beginning of December, when voting was just getting underway, we editors huddled and chose our favorite poem and two runners-up. This was done so that we could write our commentaries early, avoiding an overload of work come January 15 (the voting deadline). On January 16 points were tallied and, amazingly, readers and editors chose to honor the same three poems. Not only that, the point totals received by these three poems reflect the editors' order of preference exactly! Voting also resulted in a three-way tie for the 3rd Runner-Up. I am delighted and gratified at such concordance.

I'd like to mention again this year that there are three important purposes for our annual Valentine Awards. The first is to afford poets an opportunity to help shape the evolution of haiku beyond what is accomplished in their individual writing and publishing of work. Poems voted to be favorites serve as guiding lights to editors as well as to other poets. These haiku exemplify what is generally held by our readers to be valuable and effective. The second purpose goes along with the first. Thoroughly reviewing a given volume of *The Heron's Nest* (with the intention of voting for favorite

haiku) produces valuable insight about which techniques work, and which do not. Therefore, the voting process is a means of triangulating what is important to us as individuals. The third purpose is to honor those poets who have gifted our readers and the haiku community at large with exceptionally powerful work. The images, moods, and emotions in their haiku continue to resonate long after other poems have faded from consciousness.

We received well over 12,000 poems for consideration last year. About 5% of them were accepted — 635 poems by 179 poets from 24 countries. In light of this, to have appeared in *The Heron's Nest* is of itself a fine accomplishment. Poems selected as Editors' Choices, or for *Heron's Nest* Awards are worthy of considerable praise. Last year the average number of poems accepted from a poet was about four. There were 59 poets represented by a single poem. Cindy Zackowitz had the most poems accepted (15).

In this year's voting, 261 poems received a total of 2,907 points. At least one point was received by each of 122 poets. The average number of points garnered by a poem was eleven. The Grand Prize winning poem received 92 points. The average number of points garnered by a single poet (for combined works) was 24. The Grand Prize winning poet accumulated 173 points.

We value all who have appeared in *The Heron's Nest* this past year. We have greatly enjoyed corresponding with you, encouraging you, and learning from you. Poets who appear in this Valentine Awards issue have achieved something of considerable significance. You deserve a loud and lengthy round of applause.

— Christopher Herold

GRAND PRIZE – POET OF THE YEAR

Dear John,

Good news. Readers of *The Heron's Nest* have voted you the Most Popular Poet for 2002. Eleven of your thirteen poems from Volume IV received votes as people registered their favorites, and the final tally shows you the clear winner of this heart-touching award. I know you will be quietly pleased, quietly proud even. You should be. We haiku poets are fortunate in our readers. They are appreciative and discriminating.

Congratulations, John! But beyond that, thank you. You richly deserve this honor. You involve us in a world that was always ours, but that we might not notice so keenly without your gently drawing our attention to what is right before our eyes. Your haikai twists refresh our perception and encourage our human capacity to expand and connect.

In *Nest* poems last year, you asked questions that continue to resonate.

shooting star
what do fish
see at night?

a hard rain
what cloud
could have held it?

peony bud
can an ant
relax?

I can imagine witnessing that shooting star with you and making the leap as you perceive its likeness to a fish in the dark sea. How simple then to leap again and wonder about what fish see looking above them at night. I follow your unstated comparison. In

ways we can barely fathom, those fish are like you and me, seeing their version of what we see as we look up at the vast night sky. Alive to a moment, you convey vibrations that go far and deep, interconnecting human beings with the universe. Coleridge described poetry as "the best words in the best order." Great poetry leaps, I think, delivering the stars and the sea.

You take us along as you move through the sometimes lonely landscape of being human.

childhood home
twilight
as I arrive

and validate our daily lives by calling attention to ordinary things and human hopes.

almost spring
the untouched mousetraps
in the attic

summer night
the sound of a car
about to go by

parkas
out shopping
for a wedding dress

You help us appreciate the other side of things.

coming home
on the train
. . . the backyards

fireworks
I close my eyes

for a second look

You ponder our connection with other creatures and imbue readers with your insights.

right now
while we chat
fish in the deep ocean

Amish country
the deer beside the road
stare at us

Thank you for reminding us of how nature calls to our humanity and of the individual's longing to connect with other people.

a change in their voices
children finding
a fledgling

warm evening
an open door
to someone's living room

Yours are superb haiku, John, genuine contributions to world literature. They are as challenging as they are accessible and inclusive. That makes them particularly deserving of recognition from the sensitively-tuned readers of *The Heron's Nest*. The editors take pleasure in gathering these thirteen in one place for everyone to enjoy again.

—Peggy Willis Lyles

FAVORITE POETS

1ST RUNNER-UP – PAUL M.

A familiar voice to *Heron's Nest* readers, paul m. takes First Runner-Up in the selection by his peers. The majority of votes by his name was for top-voted “migrating whales,” yet eight of his other 11 haiku this year garnered support.

When reading paul's haiku, I often feel as if I am traveling, perhaps hiking to new places along with him. Some poems chronicle movement:

melting snow
the distance between
someone else's steps

creek crossing . . .
the uneven footing
on the other side

Action is not direct; the poet has paused to note particular things. His phrasing in each haiku is tight and even spare. These poems are set in nature and usually with a recognizable season. One or two things are observed quite closely.

ripening blueberries
a river carries sunlight
down the valley

cherry blossoms
the parish priest
straightens his collar

trailhead poppies –
but today
with butterflies

a skiff

broken loose –
wild flowers

The paul m. touch is light on “author’s message.”

spring rain
an old stone wall
between pastures

dusk
pelicans and cormorants
share the rocks

Haiku, like proverbial “beauty,” is in the eye of the beholder. This writer shows us a scene, apposes focused elements, and leaves work for the reader. These poems carry emotional content. It occurs not on the surface, not easily picked up. Rather, the reverberation of his wording and its order allows the pleasure of finding so much more.

migrating whales
all our footprints
wash away

I sense that paul m. knows his subjects well and has perceived their little truths. He is moved. So am I.

—Paul MacNeil

2ND RUNNER-UP – PEGGY WILLIS LYLES

Last year, when I invited Peggy Willis Lyles to become an editor for *The Heron’s Nest*, my only reservation was knowing that this would mean losing her as a contributing poet. A presence in the haiku community since the early 1970s, Peggy Lyles has long been among one of its most gifted members. Her haiku are rife with keen perceptions and brilliant insights. She composes with a deft and gentle sensitivity that I’ve come to

recognize even before seeing her name on the page. Thank goodness we can still read Peggy's work in other haiku journals.

Fortunately for *Heron's Nest* readers, our new editor's poems appeared through August, a month after she officially became a heron. In the August issue, Peggy's haiku was a beautiful lead-in to her editorship:

a cool current
where the river deepens
summer sky

As with nearly all haiku, this one can be interpreted in a number of ways. I like to imagine Peggy swimming in the river. She enters the cool current and decides to float on her back, whereupon she becomes aware of a wide expanse of clear summer sky. She may have been standing at the river's edge, however, noticing first a change of blue where the water deepens, then the blue of the sky. Since Peggy was just then joining us in *The Nest*, I couldn't help but be lavishly self-indulgent in another interpretation: "a cool current," (*The Heron's Nest*); "where the river deepens," (a commitment to participate with us in efforts to nurture haiku and haiku poets); "summer sky," (seemingly limitless possibility).

Eight of Peggy's nine poems in Volume IV received vigorous nods from readers. Most favored was the subtly rich, award-winner from March:

gray morning
the weight of mist
in Spanish moss

Two others for which thumbs were raised high:

crashing waves
power walkers

swing their arms

deep chords
from the practice room . . .
a bee stirs applemint

These poems exhibit perfection in the art of implication. The first reveals a connection between a natural force and an aptly named exercise. The second connects a man-made sound to a visual image implying sound. What wonderful olfactory overtones!

A personal favorite also much appreciated by readers is

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

I am seldom struck by such depth and sustained resonance in a brief, haiku's worth of connection. The poet feels summoned by the flowers. She responds, bending to look more closely. As if in slow motion, she sees the scarf slip from her shoulder and she herself slips into the past. More to the point perhaps, she feels her mother's spirit surround her in the present moment — a woman who must have loved natural beauty. Like mother, like daughter.

Peggy's life is imbued with talent, wisdom, and compassion. To work with her is to know this first hand. How clearly it shines through her haiku! When I say we are supremely grateful, I speak for all of us herons in *The Nest*.

—Christopher Herold

3RD RUNNER-UP — ANNA TAMBOUR

In 2001, Anna Tambour's first work to appear in *The Heron's Nest* presented unusually fresh imagery and mesmerizing aural quality:

power blackout
frogs boom
in the billabong

Two months later, Anna won her first *Heron's Nest* Award. With "faint thunder," she uses the concrete imagery of setting and action rather than obvious direction to alert readers to a seasonal change:

faint thunder
a snake sloughs its skin
in the creekbed

Anna's haiku appeared in six issues of our journal last year, winning the *Heron's Nest* Award in May and again in June. Through haiku, Anna reveals her remarkable fellowship with the natural world. As does "faint thunder," her June 2002 winner eloquently demonstrates that she is perfectly in tune with the cycles of nature and the wildlife inhabiting the vast Australian Outback. As the waters approach the flooding stage, perhaps the poet's pulse beats faster in worried anticipation. Moving her focus to a tiny creature, she is filled with awe at her sudden feeling of kinship with it:

creek rising—
a treefrog's heart beats
against the windowpane

With simple, concise language and never using words of emotion, Anna draws readers into her experience. Eager to share her world with us, she uses vibrant imagery with natural ease to evoke a sensuous response from readers. She skillfully invites us to hear the sounds that enhance the quiet of an Outback evening:

cool dusk
kookaburra chatter
from a tree's silhouette

moon sliver
the sound of dew
dropping from leaves

sharp moon
the sound of a cow
chewing dry leaves

Even something as mundane as a meal on the boil is revealed as unique and mystical through the poet's perception:

afternoon burble
the yin yang of two beef tongues
in a pot

While not all of Anna Tambour's poems contain traditional kigo, most do evoke a sense of season. The poet reminds *Heron's Nest* editors, "All life here is predicated on the opportunity to thrive, given the chance. The flora and fauna have never heard of kigo, so they celebrate life as they have the chance, and procreate with the same urgency." Deeply concerned for the land and its wild inhabitants, she closely monitors them following droughts, fires, and floods. After devastating fires raged in the Australian forests last year, coming within ten yards of her home, Anna rejoiced when signs of new growth appeared, reporting, "The burnt ground wherever we walk is covered with trees now, the size of dandelions." Using stark and startling contrast, she confirms the presence of animal life:

blackened forest
a mushroom

gnawed white

I believe that her award-winning poem of last May reveals the essence of the poet herself:

preoccupied –
my hand fills with
dog nose

The *Heron's Nest* editors are grateful to Anna Tambour for sharing her extraordinary experiences and poems with us and with Heron's Nest readers.

– Ferris Gilli

GRAND PRIZE – POEM OF THE YEAR

migrating whales
all our footprints
wash away

paul m.

If you have not yet read Ferris Gilli's super commentary in the November issue, I encourage you to do so. She reveals much more about this fine haiku by paul m., and she does so from several interesting vantage points. I've chosen to write mostly about the emotional impact of the poem and its resonance.

Not just "our footprints," but "all our footprints." When struck by the knowledge that nothing lasts forever (everything else doesn't), how much more valuable, and intense the moment at hand becomes! Whales are spotted offshore at about the same time that the poet is noticing waves washing away footprints. These two observations are simple

facts which, viewed separately, would not result in the depth of insight they bring when seen together. We are handed only two observations. No other sensory input is mentioned, although we may well smell the briny air, taste it on our lips, and hear the sound of waves and of human voices. These are things implicit in the scene presented. Noticing the whales and the footprints simultaneously gives rise to implications that were not lost on paul m.. Nor are they lost upon readers of the resultant haiku. We see through paul's eyes. Our minds and hearts follow the path of his revelation. The poet in us delves beyond simple facts to make more profound connections. One connection is recognizing that what is seen right before us (waves constantly washing away whatever impressions have been made) is a phenomenon happening at that very same moment on beaches all around the world. Another connection is that, regardless of their superior physical size, whales have become an endangered species. May not the same hold true of superior intellect? Despite the brainpower of humans, we continue to beat paths which may well result in our own self-destruction. No matter how dominant, no matter how imposing someone or something may appear, whether human, whale, giant sequoia, or mountain, we are all subject to a far greater power. All of us will pass away.

Much of the time we move through life without thinking these sorts of thoughts. Instead, we direct attention to personal matters: goals, hopes, fears, basic survival. Yet moments inevitably come when we unexpectedly find ourselves regarding a broader reality. Daily routines, and those things we thought of as factual, real, or dependable, are regarded anew, as transitory and only relatively true. At such moments, when we feel significantly smaller and more interdependent, it's natural to take inventory of our lives, make adjustments, and sometimes even change direction entirely. It is precisely at such times, if the muse takes action, that a work of art may be produced. In paul m.'s case, the work of art is this magnificent haiku.

—Christopher Herold

FAVORITE POEMS

1ST RUNNER-UP – BILLIE WILSON

winter nears –
in the dog's eyes
the wolf

Billie Wilson

Employing just a few key words, Billie Wilson's haiku is both immediately accessible and evocative of many layers of meaning. Foremost is the relationship of dog to wolf. All varieties of dogs and wolves are closely related and are interfertile. It is wolves, however, not dogs, that are historic icons of evil. Our canine companions are remarkably domesticated, adopt their humans as pack members, bark at strangers, and defend the leader's territory. They are tamed. And yet . . .

Billie senses a duality in her dog – kinship both with humans and “the wild.” Jack London explored these relationships in his novel *The Call of The Wild*. “Buck,” a dog raised with humans, is attacked by wolves. He fights and kills the alpha male and becomes leader of the pack. London's implication is that domestication is a very thin veneer. Communally, wolves hunt for food. They also kill coyotes and dogs as competitors. Any single wolf entering their range will likely be killed. Neighboring wolves are often in violent, tribal conflict.

The first line of the poem is expressive of deeper meaning. The dog-to-wolf relationship resonates within the context of “winter” and as that season “nears.” Shakespeare's setting of murder and internecine conflict in the play *The Life and Death of King Richard III* begins with Richard's soliloquy: “Now is the winter of our discontent...” To become king, Richard kills even his young nephews. Full-blown war results between English armies.

In homage to Shakespeare, John Steinbeck chose to title his Nobel Prize winning novel *The Winter of Our Discontent*. In it he writes: “The law of the fang is not repealed.” Steinbeck explored the paradox of man’s conflicted nature and stylized this philosophical dilemma within the thoughts of one character, Ethan. A same individual has the capacity for moral and immoral behavior, for selfless acts of good and base violence against others. London peopled his *Call* with characters either cruel or loving toward Buck. Sometimes a break occurs between idealism and brutish behavior of individuals or groups. This: the winter of civilization. Humans are animals only partially domesticated.

—Paul MacNeil

2ND RUNNER-UP – ANNA TAMBOUR

preoccupied –
my hand fills with
dog nose

Anna Tambour

Anna Tambour reveals her affinity for non-human creatures with appealing ease and beautiful concision. Her no-frills account evokes a strong sensory response in this reader. The poem will be especially resonant for dog lovers, but just about anyone who has been in the presence of a friendly canine for any length of time can relate to the author’s experience.

In his fine commentary for the poem, which won the May 2002 Heron’s Nest Award, Christopher Herold describes its strengths: the successful use of a line-ending preposition to create momentary uncertainty; a specific rhythm that works for the poem; and the direction to an instant of time and a precise location. Those qualities combine to create another powerful element, a sharp sense of immediacy. Anna

Tambour brings me right into the moment with her. Satisfyingly nudged from my preoccupation with the unusual and intriguing first line, I swap the poet's hand for mine, as it "fills with/dog nose."

Dogs read the state of the world through their noses. That amazing sense of smell finds lost children, earthquake victims, termites, and pipeline leaks, and is even being used to detect cancer in its earliest stages. But the family pet adds another element to its agenda: regularly updating all it knows about the people who provide it with food and shelter. And even the quietest, most polite creature must have a way to remind a person of its presence. These vital activities frequently involve a cold nose being thrust against human skin.

I happen to know that Anna Tambour and her husband belong to Rosie, a lovely Red Kelpie whose breed was developed for herding Australian livestock. Rosie is courteous at all times and very protective of her people. She is surely a pro at asking and getting answers to questions like, "What have you been eating? How are you feeling today? Did you actually touch that wombat?" Rosie uses her nose.

In seven words, this author has captured the soul and essence of a satisfying human/canine relationship. Anna, thank you for reminding me of that joy.

—Ferris Gilli

READER'S CHOICE, 3RD RUNNER-UP (TIE) – CONNIE DONLEYCOTT

woodland path—
a small flower
bends our knees

Connie Donleycott

At first glance, it could be said that this wonderful image "bends" a well-worn restriction against anthropomorphism in haiku, but it could also be argued that its clever use of words serves to bring this image into sharper focus, much like bending down to closely examine that which would otherwise be overlooked. That a small flower would be growing along a woodland path is hardly extraordinary. That the travelers would be compelled to stop and look at it prompts us to pause and ask the simple question, "why?" Our minds conjure an arresting beauty that sets the flower apart from its surroundings. The bending of the knee suggests not only the adjustment of one's height but also the solemn respect and reverence commanded by such beauty. Connie Donleycott has happened upon a rare gem in the most common of places. It is this elusive moment of reflection and unexpected discovery that is at the very heart of haiku.

—Paul David Mena

READER'S CHOICE, 3RD RUNNER-UP (TIE) — HORTENSIA ANDERSON

loneliness —
a piece of driftwood
keeps returning

Hortensia Anderson

Hortensia Anderson takes us to the water's edge and holds us there awhile. I'll imagine the Atlantic and set myself a bit apart from others who might be on the sand looking out across it. Maybe I have found a secluded strand and am alone as well as lonely. More likely, other human beings are near by. Loneliness can surface even when one is surrounded by friends and family members. It is probably a universal human feeling, a constant for some, a matter of occasional tides or surges for others.

One person facing the water. That is an image that resonates with loneliness. The piece of driftwood is another. Put the two together, toss the wood, add the passage of time,

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and watch the wood return. Again. And again. The repetition augments the sense of loneliness and is true to its nature. The mood is autumnal, the wood cold and wet, worn smooth by its time in the water. Its appearance is bleak, stark-and full of character. It is representative of its kind and yet unique, suggesting the rawness of human pain and the strength and tenacity of the human spirit. Loneliness keeps coming back; the lonely person does too. Does the poet identify with the driftwood, tossed to the waves and relentlessly returned by them? Does she associate driftwood with the sadness that returns no matter how deliberately it is cast away? Is there a certain comfort and even company in the return of that piece of wood — an acceptance, perhaps, of things as they are? The ongoing movement leaves the haiku appropriately open-ended, with plenty of time and space for the empathetic reader to enter it and move around.

—Peggy Willis Lyles

READER'S CHOICE, 3RD RUNNER-UP (TIE) — JIM KACIAN

family album —
the black and white
of my youth

Jim Kacian

The complexity of this haiku lies in its simplicity-with only nine words it unfolds a past, a present, and a future as rich as the album of memories it depicts. On the surface, we see what might be a sentimental journey through old photographs. The fact that the pictures are black and white elicits few surprises given the passage of time, but a moment's reflection suggests that perhaps it's not only the photos that are being described this way. Are we hearing a longing for the days when the choices set before us were so clear and concise? Are we to understand that the past is a colorless palate to which pigments and tones are added as we experience life? Or are we being confronted with America's segregated past, easily forgotten except by the camera? The most literal

interpretation of this haiku evokes a sense of innocence etched in monochrome, but it's not too difficult to believe that the author is handing the reader a paintbrush with which he or she can apply the shades and colors that resonate most distinctly for him or her. With this wonderful haiku, Jim Kacian has opened a door through which each of us can enter, each with an infinite number of destinations.

—Paul David Mena

SPECIAL MENTION

Several poems scored far above the average, and a few poets accumulated high overall point scores for their respective bodies of work. It is clear that these poets and poems have made deep and lasting impressions and richly deserve to be honored by inclusion in this Valentine Awards issue.

religion aside
there are plum blossoms
and pussywillows

H. F. Noyes

*

nine-month belly —
she slowly unwraps
the heirloom crèche

D. Claire Gallagher

*

7th floor, cubicle 9 —
a butterfly drifts
past the window

Timothy Hawkes

*

studio window —
a fly walks
from cloud to cloud

Kuniharu Shimizu

*

Tiananmen Square
I buy a kite
shaped like a bird

Linda Robeck

*

empty tracks
a stranger and I
looking in the same direction

Yu Chang

*

winter landscape
one more raven flaps out
of her paintbrush

Marian Olson

*

spring mist —
a mallard paddles
through our stillborn's ashes

H. Gene Murtha

*

spring twilight—
the unexpected weight
of a swept snail shell

Yvonne Cabalona

*

curve by curve
I follow her down
the river

Jim Kacian

*

harvest moon
the groom inhales helium
from a white balloon

Victor Ortiz

*

honeymoon
we wade into the current
of a great river

Kirsty Karkow

*

bullfrogs—
the widow looks out
her parlor window

William Cullen, Jr.

*

cloudy afternoon –
a chrysanthemum blooms
in the paper-folder's hand

K. Ramesh

*

muddy barnyard
the old farmer waltzing
with a wayward cow

Elizabeth Howard

*

New Year's Eve . . .
rhythm of a push broom
high in the stadium

Michael McClintock

*

winter forest
the mist
of a whisper

Connie Donleycott

*

landing
the heron's neck
curves into itself

Ruth Yarrow

ABOUT *THE HERON'S NEST*

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

PHILOSOPHY

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

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

STAFF

Christopher Herold, editor
Ferris Gilli, associate editor
Peggy Willis Lyles, associate editor
Carol O'Dell, administrator
Paul MacNeil, associate editor
Alex Benedict, webmaster

TECHNICAL NOTE

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