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HAIKU & TANKA

old notebook
one more page
fuels the fire

altes Notizbuch
eine weitere Seite
nährt das Feuer

mistletoe —
the familiar lip
of a cold bottle

Mistelzweig —
der vertraute Hals
der kalten Flasche

spring fever the thermometer's long red line

Frühlingsfieber des Thermometers lange rote Linie

Collin Barber

licking the postage stamp
bitter taste
of yesterday

beim Lecken der Briefmarke –
der bittere Geschmack
von gestern

Jenny Barnard

Über Firnfelder –
Der Schrei des Raben
erinnert mich
an mich

across patches of snow –
a raven's cry
reminds me
of me

Wolfgang Beutke

Neujahrstag –
wo einst die Mauer stand
schmutziger Schnee

New Year`s Day –
where the Wall once stood
dirty snow

Morgensonne
das gefrorene Gras
gegen den Wind

morning sun
the frozen grass
against the wind

Gerd Börner

low-flying cloud . . .
the retired airman clips
his topiary swan

tieffliegende Wolke ...
der pensionierte Pilot stutzt
seinen Buchsbaum-Schwan

midsummer deadline--
the pen melting into
my palm

Hochsommer-Frist --
der Stift läuft aus
in meiner Hand

full moon
learning again
how to knit

Vollmond
ich lerne wieder
wie man strickt

Helen Buckingham

a tiny boat
crossing the sea
with room just for one, maybe two

ein kleines Boot
draußen auf dem Meer
mit Platz für einen, vielleicht zwei

fresh nightwind
arm in arm walking
on sunfeet

frischer Nachtwind
wir gehen Arm in Arm
auf Sonnenfüßen

Sandra Casares

red vineyard
vanishing in the sun
the grape pickers

roter Weinberg
in der Sonne verschwinden
die Traubenpflücker

Andrea Cecon

reunion . . .
the scent of wild lilacs
in our bedroom

Vereinigung ...
der Duft von wildem Flieder
in unserem Schlafzimmer

Susan Constable

höhenluftkurort
eine frau mit kopftuch
kippt mist auf den haufen

mountain health resort
a woman with scarf
tipping manure onto the heap

Mario Fitterer

a jumbo jet
above the steeple –
ascension day

ein Düsenflugzeug
über der Kirchturmspitze –
Himmelfahrtstag

the highest bud
on the passionfruit vine...
moonrise

die höchste Knospe
am Passionsfruchtstock ...
Mondaufgang

a shower
of jacaranda blossoms –
rain dreaming

ein Schauer
von Jacarandablüten –
Träumen im Regen

rain!
i dance barefoot
between snails

Regen!
Ich tanze barfuß
zwischen Schnecken

cinders fall
on red hot poker –
abandoned shack

Aschenregen fällt
auf Fackellilien –
verlassene Hütte *

* Red Hot Pokers (Fackellilien) ist eine in der Vorstellung existierende Interaktion zwischen dem Diktator Adolf Hitler und dem Philosophen Ludwig Wittgenstein. Tanya Ury und Rolf Steiner lesen willkürlich ausgewählte Auszüge auf Englisch, aus 'Mein Kampf' 1924 und 'Bemerkungen über Farben' (Remarks on Colour) 1950, geschrieben in England.

Hitler und Wittgenstein gingen beide als 14-jährige in die gleiche Schule im österreichischen Linz; beide wurden auch im Abstand von 6 Tagen geboren, der eine am 20.4.1889 und der andere am 26.4.1889.

The Poker Game, eine weitere Performance Tanya Urys, in der sie die Rollen von Hitler und Wittgenstein spielt, entwickelt die Themen von Red Hot Pokers.

Lorin Ford

early snowfall --
I shake a spider
from my boot

früher Schneefall --
ich schüttle eine Spinne
von meinem Stiefel

distant train
a night breeze rustles
the blinds

der ferne Zug
ein Nachthauch rüttelt
an den Fensterläden

falling snow
a lullaby drifts through
the doorway

Schneefall
ein Wiegenlied weht durch
die Türöffnung

his lined face
at the window ...
fallen oak

sein zerfurchtes Gesicht
am Fenster ...
gestürzte Eiche

Laryalee Fraser

Schießplatz im Wald.
Wie der Schnee kurz dunkler wird
mit jedem Knall.

Hunting ground.
The snow darker
with every shot.

Abbruchhaus.
Der Bagger reißt eine Tür
in den Himmel.

Condemned house.
The wrecking ball breaks a door
into the sky.

Herbstwind.
Ein Mann bläst seinem Sohn
auf dem Grashalm vor.

Autumn wind.
A man blows to his son
on a blade of grass.

Volker Friebe

lying in bed
on the night of a storm
even when I close my eyes
especially when I close my eyes
I see snow

Ich liege im Bett
in stürmischer Nacht
auch wenn ich die Augen schließe
besonders wenn ich die Augen schließe
sehe ich Schnee

autumn morning –
sequins sparkle
on the girls' hijabs

Herbstmorgen –
Ziermünzen funkeln
auf den Hidschabs der Mädchen

Barry George

späte Herbstsonne –
Schatten von Blättern
auf Blättern

late autumn sun –
shadows of leaves
on leaves

Gabi Greve

marijuana

smoke drifting from the café
sun breaking through clouds

Marihuana

Rauch dringt aus dem Café
Sonne bricht durch die Wolken

John Hawkhead

Loss

on the pavement where
he stood with his wife for years
greeting passers by
alone now in his house boat
he wears his cherished wife's clothes

Verlust

am Gehsteig stand er
jahrein, jahraus mit seiner Frau
grüßte die Passanten
im Hausboot nun ganz allein
trägt er die Kleider der Verstorbenen

Lorne Henry

Schneefall ...
die Weite
zwischen den Flocken

snowfall ...
the distance
between the flakes

Ramona Linke

spring thaw
the silence in the roar
of the waterfall

erstes Tauwetter
die Stille im Rauschen
des Wasserfalls

Frosch im Hals: HNO-Arzt

frog in the throat: otolaryngologist *

* The poem reminds us of Bashô's famous frog-haiku: **furuike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto** ("the old pond – a frog jumps in, water's sound" [translated by Makoto Ueda, Bashô and his Interpreters, Stanford University Press, 1992] since the Japanese word 'oto' ('sound') also appears as an allusion in 'otolaryngologist'.

Bob Lucky

alone in the park,
rocking on my knees
the moon

allein im Park,
auf meinen Knien schaukelt
der Mond

Vasile Moldovan

sunrise
a robin's chest
peaks over the bush

Sonnenaufgang
die Brust eines Rotkehlchens
lugt über den Strauch

autumn's end
I take a puff from a bum's
cigarette butt

Herbstende
Ich nehme einen Zug
von der Kippe des Penners

long night . . .

the shadows between us

bury in skin

lange Nacht ...

die Schatten zwischen uns

graben sich in die Haut

Dustin Neal

hand poised

I stop to admire

the blowfly's colour

die Hand ganz ruhig

ich halte ein, um die Farbe

der Schmeißfliege zu bewundern

midday heat

I whistle

the ice-cream van's song

Mittagshitze

ich pfeife

das Eismannwagen-Lied

red dusk
a firefly spins
down hill

Abendrot
ein Glühwürmchen trudelt
den Hügel hinab

Graham Nunn

Crimson sun sets
Into an ebbing river
I pour a cup of tea

die tiefrote Sonne sinkt
in den versiegenden Fluss
ich gieße Tee ein

Lee Ann Stanford

summer's end
his goodnight kiss
softer than usual

Sommerende
sein Gute-Nacht-Kuss
sanfter als sonst

windblown cheeks
two red apples
on the teacher's desk

windgefärbte Wangen
zwei rote Äpfel
auf dem Lehrertisch

Marie Summers

Hahnenschrei
auf beiden Seiten der Mauer
quer durch Israel

cockcrow
on both sides of the wall
across Israel

Dietmar Tauchner

believing in miracles --
the door handle turns
expectant eyes
is it
my daddy?

an Wunder glauben --
der Türknauf dreht sich
erwartungsvolle Augen
ist es
mein Papa?

Barbara A Taylor

covered with dust
the sweet black berries
fully ripe

staubbedeckt
die süßen Brombeeren
ganz reif

bedekt met stof
de zoete zwarte bessen
volledig rijp

red berries
mixed with brown and green
grandpa's garden

rote Beeren
zwischen braunen und grünen
Großvaters Garten

rode bessen
vermengd met bruin en groen
grootvader's tuin

Geert Verbeke

Noch ein Espresso
vor dem Abschied...
Schneefall

one more espresso
before leaving ...
snowfall

Udo Wenzel

Januartag -
Kinder pflanzen Christbäume
auf dem Spielplatz

January day --
children plant Christmas trees
in the playground

Blüten im Winter -
der Imker murmelt etwas
von Tod

blooms in winter --
the beemaster murmurs
about death

Loreleys Felsen –
ein japanisches Paar
summt das Lied

Loreley`s Rock --
a Japanese couple
hums the tune

Angelika Wienert

Trauer Gottesdienst
langsamer der Gang der Zeit
gebrochenes Licht

funeral service
slower the course of time
refracted light

Klaus-Dieter Wirth

Notes.

All haiku by Wolfgang Beutke, Mario Fitterer, Volker Friebel and Ramona Linke have been translated from German into English by the Chrysanthemum Editorial Team.

The english versions of the poems by Gerd Börner, Dietmar Tauchner, Udo Wenzel, Angelika Wienert and Klaus-Dieter Wirth are translations of the authors.

Anmerkungen.

Die Texte von Collin Barber, Jenny Barnard, Helen Buckingham, Sandra Casares, Andrea Cecon, Susan Constable, Lorin Ford, Laryalee Fraser, Barry George, John Hawkhead, Lorne Henry, Bob Lucky, Vasile Moldovan, Dustin Neal, Graham Nunn, Lee Ann Stanford, Marie Summers, Barbara A Taylor und Geert Verbeke wurden vom Redaktionsteam aus dem Englischen ins Deutsche übertragen.



HAIBUN

Gone

The nightclub spits me out onto the no-mans-land of the street. It's too early to be morning and too late to be night. The air is fresh and the road slick from rain I didn't hear. A broken biscuit moon is sinking into the skyline.

Back in the bar I was fading, but out here amongst the hopeless cases and too young faces, my head is clear. Full of thoughts and possibilities. I catch a glimpse of a shapely set of legs, stepping into a taxi. Turn to see her smile.

flash of red
tail lights turn the corner
and slip away

Graham Nunn

Rite of Passage

I work alone late tonight. I'm consulting at the IT department of Elkerliek Ziekenhuis, a hospital in The Netherlands. When ready to leave, I discover that my usual exit is locked. I wander empty corridors until I come to what appears to be the hospital lobby. Again locked doors. Here I encounter what I had not thought to exist: a Dutch person that speaks no English. Somehow he discerns my problem and points to a door I hadn't noticed. I try it and it opens. With a wave of gratitude toward my benefactor, I depart.

leaving holland
just now I see
the windmills

New Catalog

Visiting Dad's sister in West Virginia was like visiting a foreign country. Aunt Mildred didn't have indoor plumbing. There the males went to the mining site to use the communal showers. A blast of water, soap up, another blast to rinse off. Don't remember what the women did. And then the outhouse.

christmas coming
excitedly paging
the new catalog

Winter's Approach

A carpet of browns and yellows. Birch leaves. Some dark around the edges. Like ancient parchment. The rain has stopped. But not the fall of leaves.

indian summer
the smoke I exhale
is just that

Zane Parks

Eltern, Kinder...

Pilze gefunden,
sie gleich wieder versteckt
vor den anderen

Das verbotene Schwein,
Mann, konnte das rennen!

Im Graben
vor Schreck das Gesicht
zum Piloten

Versprengt
über fremde Häuser:
Eltern, Kinder...

Irgendwann kam keiner mehr
aus der Gefangenschaft

Da war doch noch
dieser Schulausflug,
die alte Brücke?

Wie weich und weit Mutters Augen wurden, wenn sie beim Mittagbrot erzählte und dabei gar nicht bemerkte, wie wir in der ihr fremden Sprache dazu schwiegen. Ihre Erinnerungen traten ein wie alte Bekannte, setzten sich ohne Umschweife zu uns an den Tisch. Die Verkäuferin mit dem Hitlergruß, der sanfte Lehrer, der ältere Bruder – kaum wiederzuerkennen war er gewesen. Alle hatten ihren Auftritt. Später verschwanden sie dann zwischen den Falten der Vorhänge, von wo sie bis in den Schlaf hinein prüfend auf uns herunterblickten. Der Krieg, das

war mal in Deutschland, verstand ich, und gewiß so furchteinflößend wie
der zähnefletschende Hund zur Abendstunde.

Vater erzählte nie. Dafür kämmte er uns stumm das Haar. Meiner Schwester
das blonde, mir das schwarze. Einmal, zweimal und nachher wieder.

Einmal noch
so berührt zu werden
zu verstehen
was zwischen uns stand
fiel von mir ab

Ingrid Kunschke



FEATURE – MARLENE MOUNTAIN

18 recent links

i weed into the heat into a caterpillar weeding a leaf
katydids insist the other patch stays awake
unexpected yet not a chill covers the field of goldenrod
a maple finds a way into october to red
problems multiply on purpose a room without a view
lettuce and carrot juice new healthy health scares
a tired day clothes on the line barely wander around
he drives me crazy the crazy man in dc
a cold shoulder toward iran which shakes hands with iraq
on the brink another christian war
her humor. poor george born with a silver foot in his mouth*
the soldier died to return
dry spell the pond reflects an unfinished place to live
a few egg-laying dragonflies hang around
takes my non-superstitious breath away friday the 13th freeze
100000 bits of junk in orbit a bit more at home
autumn catches up the colors of rust behind the shed
the weather its scattered mood

Notes.

*former governor ann richards [1933-2006] about vice president bush

'recent links' are my haiku links extracted from 'one-line linked haiku'
pieces written with a writing pal. i arrange the extracted haiku
links in a long/short pattern. these from one 36-linked piece. marlene mountain

line 10, 17, 18 are previously published in Roadrunner VII.1, February 2007

18 neue Verbindungen.

ich jäte in die hitze hinein in eine raupe die ein blatt jätet
laubheuschrecken dringen darauf dass das andere rasenstück wach bleibt
unerwartet immer noch bedeckt keinerlei kühle das feld der goldrute
ein ahorn findet einen weg in den oktober zum rot
probleme vervielfältigen absichtlich einen raum ohne aussicht
kopfsalat und karottensaft neue gesunde gesundheitsschrecken
ein müder tag die klamotten auf der leine rühren sich kaum
er macht mich verrückt der verrückte in washington dc
die kalte schulter gegenüber iran der dem irak die hand reicht
am rande ein weiterer christlicher krieg
ihr humor: armer george geboren mit einem goldenen löffel im mund*
der soldat starb um zurückzukehren
dürrezeit der teich spiegelt einen unfertigen platz zum leben
ein paar eierlegende libellen hängen herum
raubt meinen nicht abergläubischen atem freitag der 13te frost
100000 stücke müll im orbit ein paar mehr zuhause
herbst fängt die rostfarben auf hinter dem schuppen
das wetter seine verstreute stimmung

Anmerkungen.

*die frühere gouverneurin ann richards [1933-2006] über vize-präsident bush

'neue verbindungen' nenne ich meine haiku, die aus 'einzeiligen verbundenen haiku'-stücken, mit schreibkumpels verfasst, extrahiert wurden.

ich ordne die extrahierten haiku-verbindungen in einem lang/kurz-muster an. diese stammen von einem 36-verse stück.

Aus dem Englischen übersetzt vom Chrysanthemum Redaktionsteam.



INTERVIEW – JEAN ANTONINI

THE EXISTENTIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Interview with JEAN ANTONINI

by Dietmar Tauchner

DT: Could you please give us a definition of what a haiku is like? What makes a haiku unique?

JA: A haiku is a poem characterised by a very short form (about 17 syllables) and a caesura, expressing an existential fact (a person, a reality, an event)
A haiku is unique when it constitutes a new expression of existential experience.

DT: What kind of techniques are necessarily required for a haiku? Does a haiku need a fixed form?

JA: I wouldn't use the word "technique" when talking about haikus, but rather the word "skill". The haiku demands two skills: very close attention to existential experience and expert use of language.

It seems to me that the fixed form of the haiku is interesting partly for the limits it imposes on the creation of the poem, but also for its social effects. A fixed form enables those who use it to get together, to form schools and associations, for it is common to all of them.

DT: What are the themes of a haiku? Are there any topics not appropriate to the genre?

JA: The themes of the haiku are those that occupy existential consciousness. Consequently the haiku is not really appropriate for expressing social relations or abstract and conceptual themes.

DT: How important these days are the rules drawn up by the old Japanese masters, especially Bashô and Shiki?

JA: I do know well the books written by the Shōmon school, having read them in French, and also the rules concerning the haiku gradually elaborated by Bashō. He was very ambitious for this poem, and he made it the expression of existential consciousness for which the tercet is still renowned today. These rules (here and now, a link with reality, lightness, permanent and changing) are still valid today. It would be good for them to be expressed in a more modern way, so that the haiku can evolve and find contemporary means of expression.

I know little about the rules of Shiki, which have not been translated much into French.

DT: How important is the traditional background for haiku-writing, and how important is the requirement of "atarashimi"?

JA: I don't know the term "atarashimi". If, for the future of the haiku, this question concerns the balance between attention to the past and desire for the new, it seems to me that this balance is very important. And from what I see in Europe it leans too much towards the past at the moment.

DT: About the future of haiku. What should be avoided, what should be emphasized?

JA: To encourage the development of the haiku we must encourage the development of open-minded personal writing. So what has been done in the haiku field must be more widely publicised (translations from Japanese and English) and also in the field of poetry in general, particularly new experiments in writing.

DT: What about the acceptance of the genre in France today?

JA: The positive aspect is that the haiku is nowadays much better received by readers, and several poets more known for their other work have started to write haiku, too. The French Haiku Association was founded in 2003.

The negative aspect is that there is strong resistance to the haiku in

institutional literary circles (publishers, agencies for creation and distribution), no doubt for protectionist and nationalistic reasons. This obviously doesn't help the circulation of French haikus.

DT: Will haiku ever be accepted as an independent literary genre in western countries? If yes, what is important to gain that acceptance?

JA: The genre will be accepted in Europe when serious personal work is written. Efforts made by haiku associations should be as open and as serious as possible on the literary level. They should aim to show that the emergence of the haiku genre in western countries corresponds to the development of research into contemporary poetry in these countries (the search for brevity, fragmentation, rhetorical minimalism and the "snapshot" approach).

DT: Why are you writing haiku? What do you hope to achieve by that? Could you give us some examples of your poetry?

JA: I think this genre first interested me because of its marginal situation in France relative to the mainstream literary scene here. It fitted in well with my own marginal situation as a scientific researcher.

This marginal situation meant there would be no criticism from the literary scene, allowed me to write without being subject to institutional censorship (the Anglo Saxon phenomenon of "doctrinaire approach").

After that, taking part in international festivals and conferences corresponded completely to the scientific research culture which I knew already.

Moreover the foreign aspect of the haiku opened up another culture for me, one marked by Buddhism in particular, which I found personally enriching.

For me my first haikus were the fruit of existential attention and writing, which created a unity between two spaces, that of life and action and that of writing, reflection, meditation.

After that I developed more social activities around haikus (festivals, conferences, articles, an anthology, an association) which led me to try to open out in my writing, always bearing in mind that the haiku could only develop through the invention of ways of writing adapted to contemporary life.

Here are some examples of my first haikus.

The first mowing
the year's rust
disappears in the grass.

Calvary
at the parting of the roads
which one shall I choose?

Springtime respire
an odour of murder
petals from the cherry tree

The world is a great mystery
he says looking at
a patch of leeks

Snow on the valley
the baker's young wife
presses her forehead against the window

Here are some examples of recent experiments:

c) with onomatopoeia, orality, moving towards poetry as sound

Slices of orange
the heart forgets so quickly
the splish polosh splash

The blonde cashier
cric cric cric cric cric cric cric
thankyouverymuch goodbye

A vivid robin
pecks on the bathroom window peck
looking for air peck peck

Pitit pitit pi
the pleasure of white clouds
pit pitit tit pit

Dididididi
Tritri tritritri didi
Trididididi

d) by research into the self-world relation through fusion, negativity and the relation between fiction and reality.

The crow's heart
Don't think that it's real
you're writing 'in autumn'

Black insects
settle on my back and my arms
Crush them, quick

They always speak
foreign, and so do I
Autumn clouds

Clouds, the blue sky
algae on the sea floor
my body is chemical

I would like to snow
light flakes in the sky
60th birthday

e) by research into “prose haikus” which explores physical, preverbal relations with reality:

When I blow my nose, I close my eyes.

Every time I look at the clock, the hand has changed place.

The old brown shirt that I don't like to iron as well as the others, the iron ignores it.

Getting out of the shower, when I have wiped my face, I am almost dry.

When I chew steak, it makes a noise in my head.

DT: Which haiku poet has exerted the greatest influence on you as a poet, and why?

JA: Poets and writers have influenced me by their attempts to put into language what was not yet there: the complexity of the human heart (Dostoyevsky) the confrontation with what is impossible to say (Clarice Lispector), the acceptance of oneself as a simple, imperfect being (Robert Walser) , the ability to seize emotion as it surges up (Buson, Issa), the attention to history in poetry (Bashô), the ability to transform the haiku through a planetary imagination (Ban'ya Natsuishi).

DT: Finally, do you have any advice for other haiku-poets?

JA: It would be presumptuous for me to give advice to other poets. In my opinion poets of whatever nationality they be should read a lot, with an open mind, and be familiar with the work of other poets. They should trust in their own selves, for original work can only come from there. They should cultivate audacity and freedom in their writing, for these are the qualities which help us to discover what doesn't yet exist in language.

Jean Antonini

Born in Paris, in 1946; graduated in Chemistry and Biochemistry from Paris VII University.

Stays in Cuba (2 years), in Algeria (3 years) ; living in Lyon, France, since 1980.

3 children from 2 marriages.

Physics and Chemistry teacher ; writing workshop director for 25 years.

Secretary of French Haiku Association.

Publications

- *Touches from fields and cities* (haiku), Aube Publications, Lyon, 1982

- *Sensational exercises* (haiku), Eliane Vernay Publications, Geneva, 1984

- *Ternes* (impossible to translate : *Ternary and dull*) (haiku), La Bartavelle Publications, Lyon, 1987

- *Body Diary* (prose), La Bartavelle Publications, Lyon, 1994

- *French Haiku Anthology*, Aléas Publications, Lyon, 2003

- *Ipse fluvio* (poetry), Aléas Publications, Lyon, 2006

You can read some of my haiku in English, German, Japanese in the journals

HERMITAGE 2005, GINYU no 28 o

Note.

English translation by Richard Bateman.

Text revised by Klaus-Dieter Wirth and Kilmeny Niland.

CONSCIENCE EXISTENTIELLE

Réponses pour Dietmar Tauchner

de Jean Antonini

DT: Pourriez-vous nous donner s.v.p. une définition du haïku? Qu'est-ce qui le rend unique en son genre?

JA: Un haïku est un poème caractérisé par une forme très courte (17 syllabes à peu près) et une césure, exprimant un fait existentiel (personne-réalité-instant). Un haïku est unique lorsqu'il constitue une expression nouvelle de l'expérience existentielle.

DT: Quelles techniques sont absolument nécessaires pour composer un bon haïku? A-t-on besoin d'une forme fixe?

JA: Je n'utiliserai pas le mot «technique» à propos du haïku, mais le mot «compétence». Le haïku exige une double compétence: extrême attention à l'expérience existentielle, usage expert du langage.

Il me semble que la forme fixe du haïku est intéressante, d'une part pour les limites qu'elle fixe à la création du poème, d'autre part pour ses effets sociaux: une forme fixe permet à ses pratiquants de se regrouper, de former écoles et association, car elle est commune à tous.

DT: Quels sont les sujets d'un haïku? Y a-t-il des thèmes pas propres à ce genre?

JA: Les thèmes du haïku sont ceux qui occupent la conscience existentielle. Le haïku est donc une forme peu appropriée à traiter des relations sociales et de tous les thèmes abstraits et conceptuels.

DT: Quelle est l'importance des règles établies par les anciens maîtres japonais, en particulier Bashô et Shiki, pour nous aujourd'hui?

JA: Je connais bien, pour avoir lu en français les livres de l'école du Shōmon, les règles peu à peu élaborées par Bashō concernant le haïku. Il avait une très grande ambition pour ce poème et il en a fait l'expression de cette conscience existentielle qui fait toujours la fortune du tercet aujourd'hui. Ces règles (ici et maintenant, lien à la réalité, légèreté, permanent et changeant) sont toujours d'actualité! Il serait bon qu'elles soient exprimées de façon plus moderne afin que le haïku puisse évoluer et trouver des formes d'expression contemporaines.

Je connais mal les règles de Shiki, peu traduit en France.

DT: Quelle valeur attachez-vous à la base traditionnelle en vue de la composition d'un haïku et comment jugez-vous de la condition du 'atarashimi'?

JA: Je ne connais pas le terme «atarashimi». Si cette question concerne, pour le futur du haïku, l'équilibre entre l'attention au passé et la volonté de renouvellement, il me semble que cet équilibre est très important. Et il est, pour ce que j'en connais en Europe, trop déplacé vers le passé pour l'instant.

DT: Quant à l'avenir du haïku, qu'est-ce qu'on devrait éviter, qu'est-ce qu'on devrait mettre en évidence?

JA: Pour favoriser le futur du haïku, il faut favoriser le développement de travaux d'écriture personnels ouverts. Donc, bien faire connaître ce qui s'est fait dans le domaine du haïku (traductions du japonais, de l'américain), et aussi dans le domaine de la poésie en général, et faire connaître des expériences d'écriture nouvelle.

DT: Qu'est-ce qu'on peut dire sur l'acceptation actuelle du haïku en France?

JA: Aspect positif: la réception du genre haïku en France s'est beaucoup développée dans le lectorat et plusieurs poètes, connus par ailleurs, écrivent des haïkus aujourd'hui. L'Association française de haïku s'est fondée en 2003.

Aspect négatif: il existe dans les milieux institutionnels littéraires (éditeurs, agences pour la création et la diffusion) une solide résistance à la réception du genre, sans doute pour des raisons protectionnistes et nationalistes. Ce qui ne

favorise pas la diffusion du haïku d'origine française.

DT: Le haïku sera-t-il accepté un jour comme un genre littéraire indépendant à l'Ouest? Si oui, qu'est-ce qui est le garant de ce développement?

JA: Le genre sera accepté dans les pays européens quand des oeuvres personnelles sérieuses auront été créées. Le travail des associations de haïku doit être le plus ouvert et le plus sérieux possible, sur le plan littéraire. Il doit tendre à montrer que l'émergence du genre haïku dans les pays occidentaux correspond à l'évolution des recherches dans la poésie contemporaine de ces pays (recherche de la brièveté, de la fragmentation, du minimalisme rhétorique, de la notion d'instantané, ...)

DT: Pourquoi écrivez-vous des haïku? Quel en est votre objectif? Pourriez-vous nous donner quelques exemples de votre plume?

JA: Ce genre m'a d'abord intéressé, je crois, par sa situation marginale relativement au «milieu littéraire» en France. Il correspondait bien à ma propre situation marginale de chercheur scientifique.

Cette situation de marginalité poétique m'assurait une absence de critique des milieux littéraires qui me permettaient de travailler l'écriture sans être soumis à la censure institutionnelle (phénomène de pensée unique» des anglo-saxons).

Par la suite, la participation à des festivals et colloques internationaux correspondait tout à fait à une «culture de recherche scientifique» que je connaissais.

D'autre part, l'aspect étranger du haïku a été pour moi une ouverture sur une autre culture marquée par le bouddhisme en particulier, et donc un enrichissement personnel.

Mes premiers haïkus furent pour moi l'occasion d'un travail d'attention existentielle et d'écriture, qui générerait une unité entre deux espaces: celui de la vie, de l'action, et celui de l'écriture, de la réflexion, de la méditation.

Par la suite, j'ai développé des activités plus sociales concernant le haïku (festivals, colloques, articles de revue, anthologie, association) qui m'ont amené à une recherche d'ouverture dans mon écriture, avec le souci que le haïku ne pourrait se développer que dans l'invention d'écritures adaptées à la vie contemporaine.

Voici quelques exemples de mes premiers haïkus.

Premier fauchage
la rouille de l'année
disparaît dans l'herbe.

Calvaire
au carrefour de deux routes
Laquelle choisir?

Le printemps respire
une odeur de meurtre
Pétales de cerisier

Le monde est un grand mystère
dit-il en regardant
un carré de poireaux

Neige sur la vallée
La jeune boulangère
colle son front au carreau

Voici quelques exemples de recherche d'écriture récents.

a) par les onomatopées, l'oralité, le rapprochement avec la poésie sonore.

Rondelles d'orange
Le cœur oublie si vite
le splich poloch splach

La caissière blonde
cric cric cric cric cric cric
Au revoir Merci

Un rouge-gorge vif
poc dans la salle de bain poc
cherchant l'air poc poc

Pitit pitit pi
plaisir des nuages blancs
pit pitit tit pit

Dididididi
Tritri tritritri didi
Trididididi

b) par une recherche sur la relation je-monde dans le sens de la fusion, de la négativité, du rapport fiction/réalité.

Le cœur du corbeau
Ne crois pas qu'il soit réel
tu écris «en automne»

Des insectes noirs
se posent sur mon dos, mes bras
Vite, écrase-les

Ils parlent toujours
étranger, et moi aussi
Nuages d'automne

Nuages le ciel bleu
des algues au fond de la mer
mon corps est chimique

Je voudrais neiger
flocons légers dans le ciel
60^{ème} anniversaire

c) par une recherche de «haïku en prose» qui explore des «relations corporelles préverbales au réel».

Quand je me mouche, je ferme les yeux.

Chaque fois que je jette un coup d'œil à l'horloge, l'aiguille a changé de place.

Que la vieille chemise marron je ne veuille pas la repasser aussi bien que les autres, le fer à repasser l'ignore.

En sortant de la douche, quand j'ai essuyé mon visage, je suis déjà presque sec.

Quand je mâche du beefsteak, ça fait du bruit dans ma tête.

DT: Quel haïkiste a exercé la plus grande influence sur vous et pourquoi?

JA: Les poètes et les écrivains ont eu de l'influence sur moi par l'ambition qu'ils m'ont transmis de faire entrer dans le langage ce qui n'y était pas encore: la complexité du cœur humain (Dostoïevski), l'affrontement à ce qui est impossible à dire (Clarice Lispector), l'acceptation de soi-même comme un être simple, imparfait (Robert Walser), la capacité à saisir l'émotion dans son jaillissement (Buson, Issa); le souci de l'Histoire dans le poétique (Bashô), la capacité à transformer le haïku par un imaginaire planétaire (Ban'ya Natsuishi).

DT: Enfin, pouvez-vous donner quelques conseils à d'autres poètes de haïku?

JA: Il serait bien présomptueux de ma part de donner des conseils aux autres poètes. A mon avis, il est bon pour un poète de quelque nationalité que ce soit de lire beaucoup, avec un esprit ouvert, et de connaître le travail des autres. Il est bon de se faire confiance car un travail original ne peut venir que de soi-même. Il est bon de cultiver audace et liberté dans son écriture, ces qualités aident à découvrir ce qui n'existe pas encore dans le langage.

Jean Antonini

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Séjours à Cuba (2 ans), en Algérie (3 ans); habite à Lyon depuis 1980.

3 enfants de 2 mariages.

Enseigne la Physique-Chimie; anime des ateliers d'écriture depuis 25 ans.

Secrétaire de l'Association française de haïku

Publications

- Riens des villes et des champs (haïku), éditions Aube, Lyon, 1982
- Exercices sensationnels (haïku), éditions Eliane Vernay, Genève, 1984
- Ternes (haïku), éditions La Bartavelle, Lyon, 1987
- Journal de corps, éditions La Bartavelle, Lyon, 1994
- Anthologie du haïku en France (haïku), éditions Aléas, Lyon, 2003
 - Ipse fluvio (poésie), éditions Aléas, Lyon 2006

On peut lire quelques-uns de mes haïkus en anglais, en allemand, en japonais sur

Hermitage 2005, Ginyu n° 28..



ESSAY

The Trickster: An Introduction to Patrick Gallagher's Haiku by David Grayson

Patrick Gallagher has been writing haiku for over a decade, and has been active in two historic haiku groups in California -- the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society and the Haiku Poets of Northern California. Readers familiar with Gallagher's haiku and senryu know that an offbeat sensibility and a lively sense of humor are hallmarks of his poetry. I'd like to examine the use of humor in Gallagher's poetry, and introduce his distinctive voice to readers who may not be familiar with him.

Like the trickster figure of mythology, humor appears in a variety of guises in Gallagher's poetry. Many of Gallagher's senryu are exuberant and even a bit zany.

the buzz!
this must be a very important
fly (1)

In this senryu, a key word -- "buzz" -- jumps out at the reader. "Buzz" is a colloquial, onomatopoeic word that shows the poet is unafraid to appear less than decorous. Larger concepts are filtered through the playfulness, of course. The senryu mocks the seemingly inconsequential fly, and in so doing implicitly acknowledges the fly's (and poet's) essential place in the world.

warm water spray
from the heated toilet seat
modern Japan yah (2)

In this poem, the word "yah" functions as an exclamation point. Like "buzz," "yah" is an informal word that gives the poem a playful feel. This senryu illustrates the layers of tradition and modernity in Japan -- and how an even well informed Westerner might react to this dynamic.

In both poems, Gallagher's humor revolves around -- and is partly rooted in -- a single, unconventional word. These words also provide the added benefit of making

the poem more present. That is, they draw the reader in so that he or she feels that they are actually in the scene. (3)

At the other pole, Gallagher employs a more sober humor, too. In many of his poems, the humor is bittersweet.

a bench in shade
the old couple plotting
their next moves (4)

quiet moon
the bachelor boys
moved away (5)

The first senryu quietly laments the pains of growing old. The second poem mourns not only the departure of the lively, young neighbors but also the loss of bachelorhood itself. Each is wistful, and exemplifies the comedian Carol Burnett's well-known observation that "comedy is tragedy plus time." (6)

While these two poems don't hinge on a single word, they nevertheless exhibit skillful word choice. For example, the words "plotting" in the first poem and "moon" in the second are older words with Anglo-Saxon roots. Typical of such words, they are visceral and vivid. (7) Also, although more subdued, each poem hovers on the edge of the exuberance evident in the other poems. If the poems were a little longer, the reader could easily imagine that the restraint would fall away and zaniness would burst out.

This contagious exuberance is a hallmark of Gallagher's poetry. Whether bittersweet or just downright funny, Gallagher's poetry is full of surprise.

Notes.

(1) Mariposa 5, Fall/Winter 2001. p. 15.

(2) Owen, W. F. (ed). If I Met Basho. San Francisco: Two Autumns Press, 2005. p. 8.

Note: This haiku originally appeared within a haibun; see Contemporary Haibun Online, Vol. 1 - <http://www.poetrylives.com/CHO/ahhv1/Gallagher.html>.

(3) This use of non-conventional words also occurs in Gallagher's non-humorous poetry, too. For example, summer night

the cha!-ch-ch, cha!-ch-ch .

of switch engines

Source: Higginson, William. *Haiku World: An International Poetry Almanac*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1996: p. 107.

(4) Owen, W. F. (ed). *If I Met Basho*. San Francisco: Two Autumns Press, 2005: p. 8.

(5) *Raw Nervz*, Vol. II, No. 3 (Fall 2001): p. 30.

(6) Wikipedia - Wikiquote: http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Carol_Burnett.

(7) Gardner, John. *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991: p. 98.

Soft Cheese

by Jim Kacian

World haiku is one of the success stories of contemporary literature. In a time when much of postmodern art consists of personal rants or the blanching of meaning from media, haiku simply and proudly rises above the chatter. Poets in over 50 countries and in more than 70 languages participate in an aesthetic wave emanating from the same source. The initial impulse was discovered in Japan a millennium ago, and more or less codified there a century or four ago. Today we measure first our grasp and then our reach against the benchmark established at these times, even if we no longer look there exclusively for our own current directions.

But this success comes at a price, as all successes must. I am uplifted by World Haiku's indifference to geographical and governmental barriers, and delighted with its optimism, idealism and good will. It is human nature to be pleased when the things we take most seriously, and care most about, "arrive" in larger cultural and human terms, and we are well justified to celebrate such occasions. However, though I am convinced of the social, linguistic, political and personal achievements of World Haiku, I confess to being uncertain about its literary accomplishments. I do not wish to here lessen our enthusiasm in what has been accomplished--you all know, presumably, that I have been a spokesperson for World Haiku, and have put considerable time, effort and resources towards organizations that might foster it. So mine is not a disinterested appraisal. Yet it might prove a salutary one, if my experience can prove useful to others. Please look upon what follows as a cautionary tale, not my prediction of what must happen, but my avowal of what I think we'd be wise to avoid.

The crux of my concern for World Haiku has to do with an old matter in literature--specifically, is it a local product which must be understood in its own time and context, or is there some portion of it which can be taken onto a different stage, to be generally received, understood and accepted by people of several, or even all, cultures? Some sterling

arguments can be had on both sides, and it is probably sufficient to say that I have been a believer in the latter: some art is common to us all and can be appreciated by everyone.

I don't wish to suggest that I've completely changed my opinion over the past few years--I have shifted to a degree, but still think it possible.

But what I have come to consider to be of even greater importance is the question of integrity: how true to the poetry is my understanding of this art? Take, for instance, an internationally acclaimed body of work--the Eddas, say. What am I responding to when I read them? I'm sure it's possible to convey the narrative thrust, the context, the characters and their motivations. But what of the poetry? Is it possible to appreciate the poetry, or merely the agglomeration of these other elements attendant upon it?

One of the measuring sticks of the success of poetry is its irreducibility to prose. Said in another way, however a poem provides its impact and effect cannot be explained or duplicated with other words. This seems to me a very specific accomplishment, inextricably bound up with the language, culture, context and era in which the poem was written--in other words, a very local effect. How is it possible to create this same effect in another language, another culture, another time? I think it is nearly impossible.

Nearly, but not entirely. I know that energetic approximations have been accomplished that go far beyond what we usually refer to as translations. On a very few occasions, I have been pleased to discover poetic analogues in which a translator either recreates a piece wholly, or else through some sufficiently close parallel, through which the poetry--that knot of linguistic, informational and syntactic energy--is preserved, and in some cases actually improved. But these have been quite rare. In most instances, translation has been utilitarian, accurate, necessary--but not poetic.

This is not intended to disparage translators--theirs is a thankless task undertaken in vain. Yet they persevere and permit us at least to glimpse the alchemy of other languages. They deserve more thanks than we can offer. And for much of what we need--names, dates, number: in brief,

prose--they can often prove nearly flawless. But grasping the protean magic of poetry is a very great deal to ask.

So what we get, in general, is a rendering of the idea of a poem, and a hint, perhaps, of what its magic might be, but not necessarily the magic itself. We've all had this experience--we'll pick up a journal from Serbia, or Japan, or France, and read the work therein, and wonder why this poem or that has been published. The easy answer would be to say that most people just don't understand haiku and that nearly anything can get published. And there is some truth to this argument. But it does not encompass the whole truth: there are many people who know exactly what they're doing, and who are achieving fine results in their native language, results worthy of sharing and publishing, but the poems as they come to English simply don't work. This is not simply a matter of the translator failing to grasp the import of what is happening--most commonly the translator is the poet himself. It might be a lack of facility with a second language; in fact I'm sure this is a serious problem. But even granting a fluency that is rarely to be found, there is still the truculence of poetic effect to reassemble itself after being squeezed through the filter of another language and culture. This is one very large issue that has weighed on me for some time. It need not defeat World Haiku, but it does mean that at least some of what we recognize when we recognize the poetic genius of others is the granting of good will. I trust your poem is worthy in the original, and acknowledge the rough outlines of it here in translation. Polity aside, however, this is not a very satisfying solution. Unless we are willing and able to master those seventy languages, however, it might be the best that we can hope to attain.

So what does get accepted globally as good haiku? Aside from accepting of quality of work on the basis of the reputation of the poet involved (not to be dismissed, but still not our own evaluation), there are the poems that seem to work across borders. This, I admit, has been my own hope for success for the genre: surely there will be enough experiences common to human beings that we will recognize them, identify with them, lionize them. And so it has happened. But I find myself still somewhat

disenchanted with the result. Perhaps this is simply a failure of my own imagination, but what is most inculcated by such work is not that we hold poetry in common (we do, but what that means still seems to escape our demonstration), but that we hold this behavior or that circumstance in common, and so our haiku can seem, en masse, to be more sociology or psychology than poetry. Does this matter? Not at all, if the goals are those we mentioned at the beginning: social, linguistic, political, personal. And again I wish to state that these are incredibly important attainments: I cannot think of a better argument that human beings around the world can not only get along but thrive together than the World Haiku movement. But they remain accomplishments not of poetic, but rather political, or at least social, will.

I am often reminded that my country, the United States of America, is often blamed for the homogenization of culture. This is true in part, and untrue in part, and there is both good and bad to be found in the process. But I admit of my embarrassment when I think that many people around the world identify America with the McDonald's which has just moved into the space in the city square that used to house the Ministry of Culture, or such. It is dispiriting to know that sociologists now use the price of the Big Mac as a marker to determine the actual value of currency around the world. Of course even these homogenized products vary: the Maharaja Mac sold in India lacks beef or pork, the bun used in Great Britain contains a great deal more sugar than elsewhere, and so on. But the product is ubiquitous, and so local cultural response to it is useful in real, social terms. And so to my cautionary tale.

I would like to remind you of the story of Camembert. I mean the cheese, once the prized local delicacy of a very few Norman villages, now the ubiquitous symbol of French marketing success around the world. This is the story of the globalization process, and yes, I mean it to be a close analogue to the haiku product we are all in the business of creating. Camembert was "invented" most likely some time in the eighteenth century. This does not mean that the industry hasn't created a discovery myth, a patron saint, and a history. But it is all fiction, intended to help market a product, not to reflect an actuality. More to the point,

no one has anything but the faintest idea of what the original Camembert was like. There is no reliable historical evidence, and of course no samples have survived. There are records of many cheeses that emerge from the Pays d'Auge, some few of which are referred to as Camembert, but nothing which can actually be ascertained to be the original, or even the model.

There are some criteria that determine what a cheese is: milk fat content, type of injected mould, water drainage, etc. These vary, as you might expect, a great deal when a product is not fixed. And, so far as is possible to tell, Camembert was as random as any other cheese in those early days. Different from Pont l'Eveque and Neufchatel, certainly, but different from one another as well.

When the railroad came to Normandy, everything changed for the dairy farmers. Now their product could get to Paris in hours instead of days, and in relatively good condition. Being ambitious, they began experimenting with the variables of their product, with an eye to calculating the best payoff per hectare of land. The conclusion was easily in favor of Camembert, and so that's where they threw their energies.

The cheese they produced was a good product: everybody wanted it, indeed wanted more than they could produce. So things began to change: instead of using only their own milk, Norman farmers began milk cooperatives. This made it possible to make more product, but also meant that the distinctive qualities to be gained from localized conditions were lost. And, machines were created to do the forming and salting of the curds, meaning more could be produced, but the skills of precise measuring and rolling by hand were disused. The result was a more uniform, but less distinctive, product.

Then there was research to make certain that only a white crust would form: this required pasteurization, which further diluted the unique elements which artisan dairy farmers had brought to their product, though it meant a purchaser far away could be assured they would get a uniform, though blander, cheese. Finally, the entire system was mechanized, and the need for human interaction became almost negligible.

Machines now squirt, time, salt, roll and package the creamy, innocuous curds for mass markets. Norman farmers are rich, but is there a genius cheesemaker amongst them? Who knows? Who will ever know again? Actually, let me add to that my own personal ending. When I visit my mother I pass through another small town where exists a farm that produces the best goat cheese (including a goat camembert) I have ever tasted. I stop every time I go through. My great fear is that other people like the cheese as much as I do, and that the farmers will be tempted to begin a collective, start mass-producing the cheese, and lose what it is that makes them so distinctive. They have assured me they have no such plans. But wouldn't most of the Norman farmers have said the same at one point?

As a final comment about this, it should be noted that artisan cheesemaking is making a comeback. It is now possible to find unpasteurized, small yield Camembert in these same Norman villages, as well as in Canada, Germany, Japan, and the United States. These cheeses bear little resemblance to the mass-produced item, and sell for three or four times as much per pound, despite their relative unreliability. What they have, that generic Camembert do not, is opinion. We are willing to pay a great deal for a good opinion.

Which returns us to our own product. World Haiku may be facing a similar circumstance, and possibly to the same ill effect. And perhaps the only real solution is what honest cheesemakers have realized: it is only possible to make truly opinionated cheese locally. I believe this is probably the case for haiku as well. After all, nobody sets out to write haiku that is universal, true for all times and places. Instead, haiku visit us in our locales, and if we nurture them, roll and salt them lovingly and with good intent, perhaps they will form properly and find a buyer in the big city.

And perhaps none of this is at issue anyway. Perhaps haiku, like cheese, are simply consumed, and once we have eaten them, we might reflect back on the truly excellent, perhaps with longing, but always with appetite restored after a time for more, along with the hope that it will be the next one we will judge the best ever, and so tell stories about.

When Haiku Was Poetry

First Western Responses to Haiku in English

by Jim Kacian

Haiku is a "special case" in literature, and this is not necessarily a good thing. There was a time when this was not so. I hope that by reflecting upon this time we might gain some perspective into our current practice, and also perhaps some insight into how we might most profitably move into our future.

There is a somewhat unreal element to what I wish to discuss here, so I have adopted the fairy tale as my medium. I hope that the unreality of this form does not suggest that the consequences of the conditions examined here are any less real. But you be the judge.

Once upon a time--see, now you know this is an authentic fairy tale--once upon a time, many years before there was a Haiku North America, long before there was a Haiku Society of America, long before there was a Modern Haiku or a Haiku Handbook, long before there was a Los Altos Haiku Group, before Harold Stewart turned his marketing skills to haiku, before anyone had heard of Reginald Horace Blyth, Eric Amann or Harold G. Henderson, people were reading, writing and understanding haiku in places other than Japan. These people were called poets, and theirs was a professional interest: haiku was a serious poetic form in Japan, and a professional poet was obliged to have a look at it, to see what sorts of things might be done with it, and whether or not it might be made to serve some poetic purposes in our culture. It is our tendency to look back upon these benighted times from our position of cultural advantage and regard the efforts and understandings of these people as lacking in certain essential characteristics. Pity them, we condescend to say, for they knew not what they were doing. They did not know the delectation of the kigo, the frisson of the kireji. They, poor fools, were lucky enough merely to get most of the words right, and in something approximating the correct order. They did not know what we know. How can we expect their work to measure up to our own?

How indeed? How is it that in this day of haiku enlightenment the bulk of haiku published in English remains imitative of Japanese originals four centuries old? How is it that in our time haiku is regarded as a child's exercise, a popular plaything, a cultural buzzword and bagatelle, anything but serious poetry? How is it that today few of the very best poets in English will have any truck with the genre for fear that they will be considered trivial? I take very much to heart the late Czeslaw Milosz's comment: "Haiku is extra-literary." This, it seems to me, is a critical perception, and I intend to explore this more a bit further on.

But for now, back to the fairy tale. It is the juxtaposition of these two images (in the very best haiku tradition)--the uninformed but unencumbered poet exploring an unfamiliar genre in hopes of incorporating its values and techniques into the mainstream practice of English language poesy, on the one hand; and the well-informed but disparaged haijin whose expertise serves to distance her farther from the poetic community, on the other--which makes up the substance of this talk. How have we come to this point? What has been gained? What lost? What of importance can we recover to legitimate haiku as a viable English-language genre?

Let's begin with the latter of these two images: ourselves. We perhaps consider we hold haiku as a common interest, but I suggest it's not so simple as that. For instance, if I asked each of you to supply a list of your ten favorite modern haiku,--let's say 1950 to present--my guess is that there would be relatively little overlap among them. On the other hand, if I asked for your ten favorite haiku of all time, there is a much greater likelihood of congruence in your answers, with Basho appearing on nearly all, and Issa, and perhaps Moritake and Kikaku. Isn't it a curiosity that these poems, written so long ago in a foreign culture and to foreign purposes, would remain exemplars and favorites in the United States today? And why is this?

Obviously they are excellent poems (which does not, of course, guarantee them to be favorites). And they do embody their culture, the genre, and the poets' sensibilities well. But I think the reason they remain vital

year after year, generation after generation, is because it is exactly their excellence that we are taught. They are among the first poems we come to appreciate as we approach haiku. They are part of our way of and to haiku. And this, I contend, is what we share: not haiku so much as haiku education.

Modern poems don't have this same cachet for us. Modern poems are still in the process of becoming reified and authenticated and absorbed into haiku education. Some few in English have made it, and these are the few that would have any chance of making it onto our top-ten lists. And for the same reason: we would have grown up and into haiku through our contact with them, and so they seem inevitable, just right. They, in fact, define haiku for us, and are the standards against which we measure all future encounters with the genre.

So where did we acquire this education? Those horrible little poems some of us were made to write in third grade--that certainly wasn't our inspiration. Even then some of us could tell the teacher was missing the point of the poem, that it was not a counting exercise or a device to trigger the use of adjectives, but rather a response to our encounter with the world that could not be adumbrated through a routinized and sterile structure. If anything, such exercises deterred our interest in poetry, and surely some excellent poets have been lost through early contact with Sister Helen Michael.

Most of us are self-taught haiku lovers, which means we came to haiku in two primary ways: through books, and through community.

The most recent mass educator, the internet, can be construed to be both. One way or another, we have been each others' teachers, and to an inordinate degree, a very few writers and educators have shaped the discourse we have shared. The building of an edifice such as haiku from such a small number of primary sources has many effects, not the least of which is powerful community, because in this way we all have the same experiences, the same values, the same history, the same understanding, the same goals. Haiku community is one of the chief characteristics of what has been termed "the haiku movement", referring to the growth of haiku in the United States and around the world over the past

thirty-five years or so. Arising from such origins, it's no surprise that it should be a considerable force in determining what haiku is conceived to be, as well as what it is possible for it to be.

What are these books that have created the haiku movement? They are just the books you suppose them to be: the haiku anthology and *The Haiku Handbook* and the *Red Moon Anthologies* and *An Introduction to Haiku*. These books, taken as a whole, have done more to shape the community's notion of what haiku is than all the individual collections of haiku ever printed. We trust that if an individual collection has a poem that is really good, it'll find its way into one or another of these anthologies or primers. In fact, we can go further than that: the very idea of what we mean by "good" is shaped by what appears in these volumes. If we have a poem in one or several of these books, we have written a definitive, a seminal, poem. So in fact I don't need to read John Willits' *Reed Shadows*--I just check the haiku anthology and the very best of the poems in his collection will be there, right? Neither do I need to plow through hundreds of minor poems by Basho, because Blyth has assured me, in his intro to *Haiku*, that "I have published here all the haiku I have found worth translating." I don't need to concern myself with the extravagances of form because Higginson in *The Haiku Handbook* has told me ". . . an overall form consisting of seven accented syllables, plus unaccented syllables up to a total of about twelve, would yield a rhythmical structure native to English and at the same time approximate the duration of traditional Japanese haiku. A major grammatical pause between the second and third or fifth and sixth accented syllable would provide the sense of division created by the Japanese kireji." We are grateful for such thoughtfulness, such research, labor, love of the material. And even if our praxis differs, the parameters of the subject have been set: we are no longer discussing the free range of what haiku in English might be, but whether or not seven syllables in a 2-3-2 beat structure approximates Japanese prosody. And when we write, or edit, we consider, not the poem itself, but the poem in the context of the known paradigm. This is a powerful trope, as powerful as any educational trope. I ask you to answer off the top of

your head: who discovered America? And even if we know better, the first response most of us have come into our minds is "Columbus". What a surprise to the thousands of sentient beings already living here.

The result is a diminished range of possibilities, which has consequences, some of which are not best for the future of haiku, or for our own practice. Consider, for instance, the example of Marlene Mountain. Those who know her work recognize that Marlene has written copiously for the past thirty-five years and has hewed a style that is idiosyncratic, polemical and contentious. Hers is not the usual haiku fodder, and while not everyone's taste, Marlene certainly offers a different take on what haiku can be in English. But if our only resource to Marlene's work were the haiku anthology, we would have only two of her poems from the past quarter-century to consider. This is not to say that Marlene is ill-treated--she has twenty-two poems in the anthology, as befits her. But a casual reader would come away with a considerably different conception of what Marlene has been doing with her talent than what has actually been the case. They might feel she's become very occasional, when in fact she is more prolific, and more outspoken, than ever.

And what sorts of poems did make it into the haiku anthology in Marlene's name? Why, the classics, of course: the ones by which modern English haiku is defined. In short, our favorites. This circular conception of value is inherent in the very way we view the genre.

The result of this sort of education is homogeneity. Every poem is different, of course: even if the words of two separate poems are identical, the fact that an the same poem might be written by two poets from their entirely different selves makes those poems quite different.

I'm not talking about plagiarism, of course, which is quite another matter. What I'm talking about is more the outward manifestations of the poems: what they look like, what their nominal subject matter is, that sort of thing. It is interesting to consider a study conducted by George Swede a few years ago. In it he compared the frequency of the various line formats over a five-year span in the major haiku journals *Modern Haiku* and *frogpond*. What he discovered is no big surprise: in *Modern*

Haiku over 95% of all the poems published between 1995 and 2000 were three lines; one-liners made up the bulk of what was left, and two-line, four-line and organic arrangements comprised a negligible percentage. frogpond was a bit more broad-minded, but only a bit: some 86% of poems published in the same period were three-liners. One-liners were the bulk of what remained, and there were enough anomalies to account for a couple percentage points.

This should hardly surprise us. After all, haiku are three lines, right?

Well, perhaps they are, but are they three lines because that's what they should be, or because that's what we see being published? After all, this is not the norm in Japan, where nearly all haiku are published in a single vertical column. This is an anomaly which has arisen in English, and which has been repeated often enough to now seem like the norm. And the more this is reinforced, the more sense it seems to make.

It is instructive to consider that the popular notion of what comprises a haiku is a three-line poem consisting of five-seven-five syllables.

We, the enlightened members of the haiku movement, smile gently when we hear such an idea being mooted: we know better. But what is it, exactly, that we know? Perhaps we've refined our arguments, but the basis of our knowledge is that same as those whose uninformed considerations we pity.

It is also worth noting that things have not always been this way: as recently as the 1970s there was a great deal more experimentation with form, content, punctuation, technique, every aspect of haiku. Unless, however, you are willing to read through back issues of the journals of the time, and few are--that's what those anthologies are for, right?--you are unlikely to find very many of the poems which arose in those years. They have not caught the public's imagination in the same way that the novelties of, say, Basho, have done, and for the reasons we mentioned earlier: we did not come of age with the poems of the 1970s, most of us, but rather with the poems of the 1670s. As a result, we don't recall the work of LeRoy Gorman and Marco Fraticelli and Keith Southward and that crew, and must in fact reinvent their wheel anew. Today there is really only one journal which consistently seeks the novel and outré in haiku, and that is Raw NerVZ. While there is some dissent, most people do not

value *Raw Nerve* in the same fashion they value *Modern Haiku* and *Frogpond*. In another study, conducted by Charles Trumbull early in this century, it was discovered that *Modern Haiku* and *Frogpond* far outstripped the other journals in terms of influence, and in desirability as a place to publish. Other journals had their advocates, of course, but for the vast majority, publication in one of the big two was the pinnacle of haiku success. And again, well over 90% of the poems published in these two journals combined were three-line poems. If you want to get published there, chances are good you're going to send them a three line poem.

Okay, so that's us. We have become homogenized, for better or worse. Standardization is not necessarily a bad thing. I recall the story of the great Baltimore fire early in the nineteenth century. It was apparent to fire officials early on that this was a serious blaze, and the Baltimore FD could use all the help they could get. The call went out to all the neighboring communities, and twenty five surrounding towns sent their machines. When they got there, they all got a chance to watch the city burn down. Seems that Baltimore had a different hydrant supplier than all the other towns: none of the hoses could hook up, none of the trucks could pump water. They might as well have brought marshmallows.

So standardization can be useful, can help us define something, for instance. As you know, the HSA recently approved new definitions for haiku, *senryu* and so forth for the society's use. As we might expect, this raised a fair amount of controversy. It is very difficult to pin down a living thing, to articulate the all of something while it is still in flux. No two definitions are exactly the same, and getting a group to vote, or unvote, on any one definition is a struggle. On the other hand, the previous definition was woefully inadequate. So the society was in a bit of a quandary, and had no really good solution. But this is only a problem for a society, or a dictionary maker. Poets don't write to standards, or at least not generally. They write to necessity. The best shape for a haiku might be three lines, but it isn't three lines which constitutes the need for the poem. It's a byproduct of

the decision-making process the poet uses. If the poet always goes to the default of three lines, then a certain sureness, a traction, is gained, and a range of possibility is lost. Is it a fair trade-off? Sometimes, sure.

What happens is we start confusing what's arbitrary with what's essential. Is three lines essential? I would bet if we polled the room we would find nearly all of you would say no, but at the same time if we looked at the bulk of your work, we'd also find a huge preponderance of it appears in that form. And again, three lines is not an issue to the Japanese, with their one-line form. When does something which is not essential but almost universally defaulted become seen as essential? This is one of the biggest questions of contemporary philosophy, and I doubt we'll answer it today. But we at least know why it matters from our own experience.

There are other issue, of course--kireji, kigo, even syllable count--and all these issues have been codified by our haiku education. Even if we rebel, the conversation, the very nature of our rebellion, is shaped by what has come to be seen as the norm. And the norm has come to us from a very narrow origin.

But things haven't always been this narrow. Or perhaps even more, things used to be even narrower, and in that narrowness there was greater freedom. Let's consider now that other image in our juxtaposition, those poets who first encountered haiku before there was a movement to tell them what they were looking at, how they should look at it, what is all meant, and how they should respond.

So in our fairy tale, haiku education is the dragon. It might be a kindly dragon, and it might be a nasty dragon--depends on your point of view, after all--but an dragon nonetheless. Because this is an authentic fairy tale, you probably know what needs to happen.

There was a time, our fairy tale continues, when haiku was not a way, a path, a search for satori, an apotheosis, a one-breath poem, or any of the other epithets that have come to weigh it down latterly. There was a time before dragons, the golden age when haiku were just words on a page from another culture, another time, and poets were free to respond to

them without prejudice, without the burden which knowledge imposes, without a sense of duty. There was a time when we didn't know what haiku was, and so were free to invent it. And that's what we did.

Not surprisingly, the first inventors of haiku in English were people who were studying the culture of Japan, usually also living there.

Lafcadio Hearn, for instance, is revered by the Japanese for the work he did in preserving their folk stories, his true interest. But in collecting and editing these tales, he also ran into a considerable amount of poetry, and so was obliged to register his take on what haiku might be. It is now thought that Hearn never translated any haiku directly himself (he never learned to read kanji, and would therefore always depend on such aid). Instead, his colleagues worked with him to realize a poem, though Hearn would of course have had final say in any article appearing under his name, and it is useful to see what sort of poem he approved. Consider the first example on your handout.

Oh, this firefly!--seen by daylight, the nape of its neck is red!

There are several interesting things to note about this poem, one of the first to appear in a Hearn piece. First of all, it is rendered in a single line--analogous to the Japanese original. At the same time, it seems to contain the tripartite structure within a bipartite structure, as most classical Japanese haiku seem to do. There is a clear stop, ensured through punctuation, after the first "phrase", and a resulting "short-long" asymmetry to the whole. All this seems familiar. There is also a certain amount of "poetic language" (the "Oh!" which begins the piece) and bombast (the multiple use of exclamation marks) which we probably would eschew today, but to some degree these are style issues. The rendering of the subject matter is straightforward, expository, and with little emotional (read, adjectival) emendation. Most damning is the shifting of the order of the words--in the original Japanese, hotaru (firefly) appears at the end, not in the beginning as here. It is, in short, a pretty good, though not perfect, translation. We might compare it with Blyth's translation.

By daylight
The fire-fly has
A neck of red.

and later:

By daylight
The firefly is nothing
But a red-necked bug.

This pair of translations is instructive. The first is closer to Hearn's version in that it sticks close to the bare basics of the original (that is, is more literal). It has become a three-line poem (this is, of course, half a century later, and we have "learned" a few things in the meantime), and the order has shifted a bit. But still there is no particular gloss to the rendering. The second version, which I confess I love, introduces a telling use of idiom to communicate the information available in the Japanese original to the English reader. It too shifts the original order of words, which literally would be something like "by daylight nothing but a red-necked bug the firefly". This sort of decision-making is the stuff of translation, and I think it is a sign of Blyth's growth as a translator that he was willing to take a chance in this way. It also speaks to his confidence to communicate, undoubtedly based on reaction to his earlier efforts.

Getting back to Hearn. I've included a few other of his translations.

With hands resting on the ground, reverentially you repeat your poem, O
frog!

and of course:

Old pond - frogs jumping in - sound of water

Again we note the single line, the absence of padding, the bow towards the prevailing poetic notions of the day.

It is too much to say that Hearn is responsible for the vogue for haiku that arose in Europe and across the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century. Many other factors, most especially the cult of Japonisme, the exposure to ukiyoe, the reaction by painters, especially the Impressionists, to the new aesthetic coming to light from contact with the long-closed East, led inexorably to awareness of the literary arts and values of Japan. In addition, museums and universities began adding extensive departments and collections to their existing holdings and faculty which featured the recently acquired artifacts of this "newly discovered" culture. People like Ernest Fenollosa, Samuel F. B. Morse and Basil Hall Chamberlain provided theories and translations which made intersection between eastern and western concepts palatable to the western mind, though of course they did a considerable amount of distorting to help their cases. This is how Chamberlain, for instance, in searching for a western analog, came to refer to the Japanese haiku as an "epigram". It was many decades before this notion was entirely dispelled, and, having dispelled it, we now are in danger of missing the similarities which did indeed inform Chamberlain's choice. We might consider the epigram the intellectual cousin of haiku: where haiku features feeling and intuition, epigram features thought and logic. They are dissimilar in material, but share brevity and pithiness, and many techniques of creation. But in the vacuum of understanding which surrounded haiku at the time, Chamberlain's statement, which stood without competition, caused a great deal of misunderstanding.

The times and the timing perfected the opportunity for such a creature as Sadakichi Hartman. Hartman was a poetic freelancer, similar in many ways to Oscar Wilde. He was friend to both Walt Whitman and Ezra Pound, and may, as much as anyone, have started the craze for composing haiku in English which preceded Pound's appropriation of the genre for serious literary enterprise.

Hartman offered such poems as:

Butterflies a-wing--
Are you flowers returning
To your branch in spring !
after Morikami

In spring, who can tell
Do we hear Ueno's bell
Or Asakusa's !
after Basho

At new morn we met !
Two weeks I've waited in vain.
To-night! Don't forget.
after Unknown

There are many interesting features to these poems. Firstly, all are three line poems. Somewhere between Hearn and Chamberlain (who, in order to reinforce his epigram characterization, translated haiku into couplets), on the one hand, and Hartman, who published in popular magazines and wrote a book of haiku theory with examples in 1914, a change had come about. Was it Hartman who caused this change, through his own reckoning of what worked best for haiku? Or was it, perhaps, the early translations of Yone Noguchi, a fascinating character whose work formed the basis of Pound's (and Amy Lowell's, among others) understanding of haiku. Or perhaps other early translations by Japanese like Inazo Nitobe, Minoru Toyoda or Hidesaburo Saito, or non-Japanese like W. G. Aston, Clara A. Walsh or Curtis Hidden Page, all of whom favored three lines? Was the dragon beginning to rear its head? Somebody needs to take care of that dragon. In any case, what we have with Hartman's translations is three lines, rhyme (like, often, Chamberlain, and always Saito and Page, and unlike Hearn or Nitobe), lots of punctuation, especially for emphasis!, and a lightness of touch which Hearn and Chamberlain never achieved. These are truly poetic renderings. I call them renderings rather than original poems, despite the fact that

Hartman published them as original, because I think it is obvious that these poems were cribbed from other sources. Surely the butterfly poem is Moritake's, and the spring bells belong to Basho. I've been unable to find the original to the third of these, though I know I've read it before, and if anyone has an idea of who might be the original author, I would appreciate hearing from you. One other interesting point is that this third poem is more senryu than haiku, and might possibly be the first such poem to appear in English.

So what we have, then, is an awareness of a new aesthetic, generated by expatriates and scholars, amplified by a burgeoning translation practice, which is beginning to take the public fancy. By 1910 thousands of bad haiku by hundreds of amateur poets had been written, and long-suffering editors undoubtedly put off the eating of their persimmons until they have slogged through the next couple thousand, as Shiki famously wrote, though with a good deal more tact than I have just displayed. There is a mania for things Japanese, and thousands of westerners took up bonsai, ikebana, and haiku. These things became part of our popular culture, only to be effaced when Japan became our enemy in the Second World War, and then reconnected in the decades which followed. Harriet Monroe comments on the many haiku which are submitted to her in an early issue of *Poetry*. So it is not out of thin air that Ezra Pound conjured his famous "In a Station of the Metro". This is the first great haiku in English, by every objective standard. It grows and resonates to succeeding generations in the same way as Basho's "old pond". It contains a striking metaphor as its payoff, and possesses allusive depth. What is most exceptional about it, however, is that it was produced when it was.

It is, simply, a quantum leap up from the quality of haiku being written or translated at the time. This in no way denigrates the work of the Japanese masters. Consider the Moritake poem we looked at earlier: we might appreciate the freshness of its conceit (at the time written, at any event), its spareness, and its allusive capacity. But we would be hard-pressed to appreciate these qualities if our only knowledge of the poem was this translation by the otiose Clara A. Walsh.

Where the soft drifts lie
Of fallen blossoms, dying,
Did one flutter now,
From earth to its own brown bough?
Ah, no! 'twas a butterfly!
Like fragile blossom lying.

'Twas't? Ah, but no! It is easy to lampoon such work, but harder to write recognizably within the parameters of a foreign genre, and still crisply within an American idiom that was free of such puffed air. Consider, then, as counterfoil to Ms. Walsh, this:

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
Petals on a wet, black bough .

Many interesting things to notice here: first of all, a title. Is it a three-liner or a two liner with a title. The way the poem is lineated underscores the division between the two images. The spacing of the lines slows the reader down. Even the punctuation is separated from the text, creating even more space around the words, and time. The rhyme, if there can be said to be one, is simple vowel repetition, not a true masculine rhyme. The length of line, and the texture, seems more akin to Hearn's work than Hartman's, and certainly Pound knew both. It is apparent that Pound thought these matters through, making decisions on the basis of what worked best for the material and not conferring with the dragon. The result: our first great haiku. This is saying a great deal, when we consider that Pound was merely a dabbler in haiku, on his way to Imagism and the Cantos, and who produced only one other haiku, the interesting but clearly inferior:

Fan-Piece, for Her Imperial Lord

O Fan of white silk,
clear as frost on the grass-blade,
You also are laid aside.

What is noteworthy here is the word count: 17. And since the words are all single stresses, we can argue here for a 17-stress (though not 17-syllable) example. But this does not include the title, which is clearly extraneous to the poem in this case, and perhaps might also be said to be unnecessary, though it does certainly set the stage. However, if the title is not part of the poem here, perhaps we should consider it not part of the poem in the "Metro" poem as well, which then becomes a two-line poem. And on it goes.

By 1913, English-language haiku might well be said to have become fledged, though certainly not mature. And, despite quite a lot of examples, there is still no definitive model to be found.

Following Pound, however, several poets arrive at a kind of consensus:

Amy Lowell

from Twenty-Four Hokku on a Modern Theme

Last night it rained.
Now, in the desolate dawn,
Crying of blue jays.

E. E. Cummings

For him the night calls,
Out of the dawn and sunset
Who has made poems.

John Fletcher Gould

Mid-Summer Dusk

Swallows twittering at twilight.
Waves of heat
Churned to flames by the sun.

Richard Aldington

The red deer are high on the mountain,
They are beyond the last pine trees.
And my desires have run with them.

Carl Sandberg

WINDOW

Night from a railroad car window
Is a great, dark, soft thing
Broken across with slashes of light.

All of these poets example haiku to be a three-line affair, sometimes titled, not rhymed, with a variable line length, content which may contain ideas but which is characterized by images, and a plain idiom. not very different from where we have arrived today. Some of these poets, Lowell and Gould especially, wrote many such poems. Cummings wrote only three that have been recorded for posterity, and Aldington and Sandberg only the ones reproduced here. Many other poets, less well known, also tried their hands at haiku at that time.

These attempts, none of which seem to achieve what Pound's "Metro" poem achieved before them, all seem to operate from within the framework of

haiku: they seem to be attempting to recreate what the poets thought haiku must be like in Japanese. The most interesting attempts, however, were by poets who were interested in seeing what they might do with the sensibility, but without forsaking their own, especially American, idiom. What results is work that hasn't been called haiku in the past, because it appears so different. But by now we have sufficient historical understanding to recognize what has been attempted, and achieved, in such works. Knowing the climate in which they were created, and the certainty that their authors were familiar with haiku, not only as a Japanese import but as an iterated genre in English, it is now possible to say that these works are direct responses to this importation, mooted in each their characteristic ways of realization. Here is a selection of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird", by Wallace Stevens:

I
Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

II
I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

IV
A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

Here one by William Carlos Williams, in its entirety:

Between Walls

the back wings
of the

hospital where
nothing

will grow lie
cinders

in which shine
the broken

pieces of a green
bottle

It's possible, of course, to spend an entire paper discussing Stevens' poem and its relationship to haiku, and perhaps at some future date we will do that. For now let it suffice to consider a single section: the first one. Could this possibly be more like a haiku? Untitled, except for the numeral, it is a three-liner, with a division after the first line like a kireji; it is concerned with nature and our relationship with it; it notices, even amongst the majestic, the small and insignificant. And it invests this commonplace with energy, privileging life above all that majesty, insisting on our noticing just that. This is full-blown haiku sensibility, without the need to imitate the Clara Walsh's of the world, and yet still responding in full poetic mode. We might consider Stevens's work the first haiku sequence in the language, a remarkable tour de force, a mature response to Pound's work. In a decade and half, English haiku had already produced two masterpieces. Williams' work is probably less overtly a response to the haiku aesthetic than a simple accommodation of a style to his needs. What is striking again is the sensibility, this time clothed in the unmistakable fabric of the poet's mature style. Nothing like haiku, in

its outward manifestation, but just like, in terms of its content, attitude and inclinations. And, of course, we are aware that the same poet produced "The Red Wheel Barrow", which in just the same fashion calls upon haiku sensibility to animate a poem in the characteristic style of the writer.

By the 1930s, haiku had been taken up by the best American poets: Pound, Stevens and Williams. Serious poets all, they considered haiku and its aesthetic worthy of their serious and professional attention, though it has to be admitted none of them continued in the genre. All the more amazing, then, and testament to the trueness of their poetic instincts, that they should have made such a mark with such a fleeting contact. We might ask, why were these examples not followed? Perhaps they were, and we have not yet recognized the work of subsequent poets as exemplary haiku. But more likely they were not. More likely what happened was what we discussed at the beginning of this talk: the dragon got 'em. It is, after all, a great deal to tackle when we consider every aspect of each poem we produce. This is why only the great poets rise about poetic, and haiku, education.

We all know how the fairy tale goes from here. General information concerning the genre began to become available. Harold G. Henderson published *A Bamboo Broom* in 1938, providing an inexpensive means of gaining some basic information, useful but also homogenizing. This was followed by Blyth's copious writings, and the works of D. T. Suzuki, Alan Watts, Jack Kerouac, all of which had the effect of turning haiku towards a way of self-realization, a religion, if you will, rather than a poetic. Certainly we cannot say of Stevens or Pound that their inclinations towards haiku were religious. But Blyth states outright "Haiku are to be understood from the Zen point of view." Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*, wherein he cites Blyth, and likewise his *Desolation Angels* which include the first full-blown examples of haibun in mainstream English prose, are books about the quest for self-understanding, and haiku is one of the ways in which the author follows this quest. Suzuki and Watts were polemicists for zen. In this way, haiku became bent towards a goal other than its own perfect realization. And any religious

practice, even one which defies its own religiosity, is characterized by its ritual. What can be more incantatory than the counting of lines and syllables, the repetition of magic charms like kigo and kireji? What happened to haiku is that it became enmeshed in other concerns which diverted it from poetic practice, and what was valued of what was, more often than not, its aesthetic, not its aesthetics. In mythic terms, the dragon rallied and turned pugnacious. People, coming to haiku, were educated to know that the practice of haiku in effect was the practice of this aesthetic, and that they must learn and appreciate it before haiku would be available to them. And so it was: I'm sure you all recall your initial responses to haiku, and how it seemed necessary to learn a special language and set of rules--dragonspeak--before you could find your way into it. This is a peculiarity of haiku, and of practically no other literary form. It is, in fact, more representative of a cult than of a poetic. A cult requires an initiation, to discover the worthiness of the applicant, to test resolve. Many have come to haiku and left it because they were not interested in these cultish overtones. They felt, perhaps, that haiku ought simply to be open, a means of expression, like other poetics. They were disillusioned, and left for other opportunities. But it is not a simple question. The fact is, haiku is different than other poetries. It does require some knowledge of the genre to understand it, not the least reason being that in its brevity, it requires the entirety of the genre to provide context so that a poem might be parsed. In no other genre is it more important to know what has been done before in this topic, in this fashion. So conceived, it is not too much to say that haiku, in reality, is one big poem, still growing, and we need to see it whole in order to know how our poems fit into its girth. Haiku, the world's shortest poem, is in reality haiku, the world's longest poem, with more yet to come.

So in truth, haiku needs both: the freedom to explore the genre without duty, as some of our greatest poets have done, and the homogeneity brought on from understanding the practice of the genre throughout the years. Exclusive insistence on one or the other of these will lead to a dead end: too much freedom, and quickly we will veer beyond what can be

recognized as haiku; too little freedom, and we will stultify into insignificance. This is our place in haiku history: what will we make of it? Perhaps we have gone a bit too far towards homogenizing the genre. Can we make the corrective back gentle enough that we don't miss our mark and veer towards the other extreme? Time will tell.

Meanwhile, haiku, once again, seems to be attracting serious mainstream poets to consider its merits. Paul Muldoon, a recent Pulitzer Prize winner, has written a book of haiku and has extended sections of haiku in other books; minimalist poets such as Cid Corman and John Martone would seem naturals to endorse haiku, and have, but also language poets, and those working in longer forms, have at least taken note. Consider the work of John Ashbery:

Come to the edge of the barn the property really begins there

Robert Grenier:

except the swing bumped by the dog in passing

A. A. Marcoff

the backlash of the salmon
leaping up the stream.
this is your past

Charles Henri Ford:

After the drama
Of delicate stored secretions
Soothing flatness.

And, of course, there are many more. The results of this interaction with mainstream poets seem to be an opening of content, as well as a serious consideration of the techniques of how haiku actually come to us, and how such techniques might be even further compressed. What is

required is a new language, something beyond dragonspeak, but not forsaking that tongue altogether, either--after all, it is our first language of haiku. One recent notable and important effort is Richard Gilbert's typology of haiku techniques, in his paper "The Disjunctive Dragonfly", which appeared in *Modern Haiku* 35:2. I have copies of the paper available if anyone is interested. This typology of disjunction offers a rigorous, literary (non-religious) way to think about haiku, and the language to be able to begin to discuss the ways in which these haiku work. It is, quite literally, the first swordstroke in what is the inevitable battle at the end of our tale.

This returns us, too, to Milosz's comment: "Haiku is extra-literary." If by haiku is meant only the products of the haiku movement, and by that we mean a homogenized product emanating from a singular aesthetic, I would agree. But it need not be the case. In fact, as we have seen, poets who have considered the haiku impulse primarily from the point of view of what works for them as poems, rather than how such work fits into an accepted mode, have produced work that is not extra-literary, but in fact essentially literary. This is, in my opinion, the future of haiku, and our means of connecting with the best poets of our and future generations.

The best poets, regardless of aesthetic, have sought what is truly essential in haiku: how such brevity can expand into significance and beauty, and how it can make the rest of the world conspire to enlarge it. We are poised just here, at the moment when we take this to be the heart of haiku, so that in future we will be able to say that our time, too, was a time when haiku was poetry.



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