

LYNX
A Journal for Linking Poets

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Pie In Pieces, thirty-three songs from the Midwest by Andrew Riutta ISBN 91-976430-3-3 River Man Publishing, Sweden. \$8 ppd. from the author, 6444 Cedar Run Road, Apt. 2, Traverse City, MI 49684. AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW RIUTTA by Larry Kimmel

A REVIEW OF M. KEI'S HERON SEA by Dave Bacharach

Raffaello's Azure by Ruri Hazama. Assisted by Amelia Fielden. Tankakenkyusha: Tokyo, 2006. ISBN: 4-86272-001-3. Perfect bound, 5 x 8 inches, 184 pages, bilingual Japanese & English. No price listed.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Woodward

Reeds: Contemporary Haiga 2006. Edited with Introduction by Jeanne Emrich. Lone Egret Press, 6566 France Avenue, Suite 1210, Edina, MN, USA 55435. ISBN: Not listed. Perfect bound, 5 x 8 inches, 102 pages, \$18 US plus \$2 shipping & handling in North America or \$4 shipping & handling abroad. Reviewed by Jeffrey Woodward

All I Can Do by Aya Yuhki, Sunagoya Shobo, Tokyo, 2006. Reviewed by Gary Blankenship

Growing Late by Tom Clausen. Edited by John Barlow. Copyright 2007. Snapshot Press, Liverpool, UK. ISBN: 1-903543-13-4. \$14.00 USD \$17.00 CAN 5 x 7.75 inches, 80 pp, perfect bound. Reviewed by M. Kei

The Calligraphy of Clouds, Contemporary American Tanka and Haiku by Yeshaya Rotbard. Copyright 2007. iUniverse, Lincoln, NE. ISBN: 0-595-42071-0. \$14.95 USD, 9 x 6 inches, perfect bound. Reviewed by M. Kei

Tanka Fields by Robert D. Wilson. Foreword by Michael McClintock. Copyright 2006. White Egret Press, Groveland, CA. ISBN: None. \$6.00 USD. 5.5" x 8.5" 32 pages, saddle-stitched. Reviewed by M. Kei

On This Same Star, selections from the tanka poetry collection WILL by Mariko Kitakubo. Translated by Amelia Fielden. Copyright 2006. Kadogawa Gakugei Shuppan Ltd.5-24-5, Hongo Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, 113-0033 Japan. ISBN: 4-04-651667-4. \$15.00 USD. 8" x 5" 190 pages. Reviewed by M. Kei

PARTICIPATION RENGA

Sad to say, but you, aside from Francis Paul Attard, have let the participation renga die. This is the end of this feature in LYNX. I hope you will at least read these last survivors of a marvelous experiment. A huge THANK YOU to everyone who participated. It has been glorious! jr

by AB - Alice Benedict; CC - Carlos Colón; CF - Vikki Celeste Fannin; cg - Cindy Guntherman; CSK - Carol Stroh Kemp; dht - Doris H. Thurston; DPK - Deborah P. Kolidji, DR - David Rice; DWP - Darrel W. Parry; EF - Eric Folsom; ESJ - Elizabeth St Jacques; FA - Fay Aoyagi, FP - Francine Porad; FPA - Francis (Paul) Attard; GD - Gene Doty; GM - Giselle Maya; GR - George Ralph; GV - Geert Verbeke; JAJ - Jean Jorgensen; JC - Jeanne Cassler; JMB - John M. Bennett; JR - Jane Reichhold; JS - John Sheirer; JSJ - Joyce Sandeen Johnson; KCL - Kenneth C. Leibman; LCG - Larry Gross; LE - Lesley Einer; LJ - Lael Johnson; MHH - Madeline Hoffer; ML - Minna Lerman; MM - Marianne Marks; MWM - Mary Wittry-Mason; N - Nika; NA - Nasira Alma; PC - Penny Crosby; PGC - Pamela Connor; PJS - P.J. Sharpe; PS - Pat Shelley; R - Ronan; RF - Robert Flannery; SCH - Suzette Hains, SD - Simon Doubleday; SMC - Steve McComas; TLG - Terri Lee Grell; TV - Teresa Volz; TW - Tundra (Jim Wilson) Wind; WEG - Elliot Greig; WR - Werner Reichhold; YH - Yvonne Hardenbrook; ZP - Zane Parks.

SOLO POETRY

GHAZALS

MASTERS

Shawn Bowman

As long as there is water, there are boat masters;
so long as water and fear, there will be moat masters.

In classical composition there is a motif
in which there is one note that another note masters.

Thankfully there are those of us who can't avoid wrong
and to them, in our ignorance, we slaves quote masters.

Any kite is grateful but remembers always wind,
the parade, struggling rope that the float masters.

I might be a bad influence, skipping the ballot,
but walking was the only way not to vote Masters.

Jeremiah Masters is a character who wrote
this ghazal and I, Shawn Bowman, wrote Masters.

YOU ARE

Shawn Bowman

They are mocking their own acknowledgement of who you are
And they are fast falling apart without the glue you are.

Use your mind, it is flesh and will remain here once you've gone.
Remember that on earth whatsoever you do, you are.

I speak in first person to the first century
Christian Am I Peter in sickness and health as the few you are.

A fish knocked my calf at my baptismal, stone slime licked my
Foot's arch and then the minister proclaimed : Brand new you are!

Shawn make no aim at becoming a prophet bold in words.
Do not forget that someone else is speaking too, you are.

BOUNCE

Shawn Bowman

"He's a healthy cat that I aim to name; 'Oaken' bounces
'Round my mind." Then he whispered the name he'd spoken: Bounces.

"Sweetie, here's that kangaroo you wanted."
She dreams of him who once woken bounces.

Me Neanderthal. Me high drop square stone.
Big stone. Look it! Look you! Broken, Bounces.

How about a little casual sex?
A few careless kisses, token bounces.

"I'm a traveler of a different sort" I said.
"Shawn," he said "Just come to Jersey. Hoboken bounces!"

DAYCLEAN

Gillena Cox

i heard a bird song at dawn
at dawn in the morning cool

the morning cool though it was
my hear felt oh so warm

oh so warm being now awakened
awakened my conscious being

conscious being hearing absorbing
all those many new day sounds

sounds of early morning vehicles zoom
zooming in early morning chorus

a chorus of the rooster's crow
crowing as if in response

response to the cheerie kiskadee
kiskadee kiskadee clear and cheerie

clear and cheerie after dayclean
after the dayclean her tune has sung

sung the first song of paradise
paradise first morning song

AS THOUGH

c w hawes

I was walking on a surreal plane as though I were in a dream
and I saw things as though I were free from this body.

In the petals and scent, the leaves and thorns, of this pink rose,
it is as though I touch and smell all that is Roseness.

A house, absent of color, falling in upon itself with windows sightless;
tears wet my cheeks and fingertips as though I am a child once again.

Running down the hall, legs pumping furiously, but I never move –
as though I'm destined for the shape with eyes red in the dark.

Gazing upon the billion billion galaxies swirling ever outward,
as though they are oblivious of the black hole waiting.

The warm melody the viola strings sing wrap me like a blanket
and I feel as though God's fingertips have played me.

The moonlit sea, still and shoreless, on which I float, suddenly I
know this is her love as though it were now water.

Faster than light I speed out of this universe as though I was lost
but now see my parents waiting for me.

On this soft summer morning, the seeker gently strokes his beard
and considers everything which meets his eye as though.

ONWARD

Ruth Holzer

Even today they urge you onward
with an ancient word of cheer: onward!

Geese in their hundreds against slate skies:
arrows of autumn glide in harmony onward.

Countless coins you have hoarded, then thrown
to the gods of the highway, steering onward.

There's an end: not the one you would prefer,
no matter how cautiously you proceed onward.

Hellbound – pursued, through day and night
hearing distant cries, Ruth speeds onward.

TO DANCE

Art Stein

Bottle half empty I'm now in the mood to dance
In days past I would often forsake food for dance

You ask what more to life than wine women and song
To complete the picture you must include the dance

So let us waltz again through a Strauss-blue river
Drink that intoxicating liqueur brewed by dance

Turning turning turning the semazens in turn
Salute each other before they conclude their dance

Those predatory thrusts of Argentine tangos
Bring wonderful elements of lust to the dance

As couples began to form the blind fiddler strikes
A jig so fast it seems almost too rude for dance

Blossoms in the fruit orchard are falling now our
Petal covered dance floor a prelude to the dance

The beginning of a stately pavane proceeds
With bows and curtsies cued by the dance

The sublime art of movement brings an aura of
grace to form I long to be renewed by this dance

HAIBUN

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

Ruth Holzer

Everyone else seems to know what's going on while I understand less and less all the time. Modern physics probably has an explanation for the world; I can't pay attention long enough to get it. I'll just continue with no clear idea about the nature of things, drifting through bewildering experiences, never to find the ultimate formula, the silver bullet.

walking around
with a hole
in my pants

LATE
Ruth Holzer

Before dawn I wake to find the bed empty. If only I had yesterday to live over, I would be sweet and meek. Never again would an angry word burst from me, I swear. No one is listening.

willow twigs
in a tumbler
blustery wind

SUMMER SOLSTICE
Jeffrey Woodward

I observe the school near the pond's surface at first, my eye caught by the occasional sparks of silver light that shoot nervously from the water, and then I see the shadowy and sub-aqueous cloud attempting to hold tightly to its pattern until, roiling at the surface, one can just make out the darker green of the predatory largemouth bass striking from the depths below:

the minnows
every which way
together

Amid the many sentimental paeans and happy homilies that I hear recited of Nature personified, I recognize, more often than comfort should like, not only the unity and balance of design but the brutal character and discipline of its economy.

So I reflect upon matters while watching my own reflection in the pond shatter in yet another sudden veering of the school of minnows.

On my walk to the pond and on my walk back, I pass a smattering of bits of brown fur and bits of white fur, some of the pieces of a rabbit's coat still bloody and further testimony of this day, these meditations:

summer solstice ...
a red-tail hawk
dines alone

INSTITUTE OF ARTS
Jeffrey Woodward

Whenever I visit the Detroit Institute of Arts, when I tire of taxing my mind and my eyes with contemplation of Cezanne's portrait of his wife, Hortense, or Botticelli's Resurrected Christ, or even the rather grandiosely didactic but celebrated Detroit Industry mural by Diego Rivera, I relax by visiting some of the rare puppets on display that make up a part of the Paul McPharlin Collection. McPharlin was probably the premier American authority on puppetry in the first half of the 20th century, a highly skilled puppeteer and puppet-maker himself, and founder of the Marionette Fellowship Troupe during the Great Depression years in Detroit. He also authored *The Puppet Theatre in America*, still considered a standard reference in the field. Unfortunately, McPharlin died in 1948 at the young age of 45.

It is no small thing to master an art, even if that art is rarely appreciated. So, again, I visit McPharlin's collection, the puppets carefully suspended under glass, looking now at an exquisite Chinese marionette, now at a rare French clown or even at one of McPharlin's own original and delicate creations:

for the marionette
deprived of its falsetto,
a dream of dancing

NEW DIRECTIONS
c w hawes

I rent a room with kitchen privileges. A mid-life change and I find myself in poverty. My job pays well. The money goes elsewhere. I have a few boxes of favorite books and can use the homeowner's stereo when he is out. White rice, potatoes, maybe a few turnips, rutabagas, and carrots stock the larder. I splurge on tea when I can and welcome all invitations to eat at friends' homes.

Tacked on my wall is this saying by the Chinese Sung philosopher, Wang Xinmin: "For the one who can obtain by chewing vegetable roots, that one can achieve a hundred things."

beyond four walls
lies the whole world
New Year's Day

THE GOOD LIFE
Roger Jones

Getting started this fall morning: kids almost late to school; a chore to find their clothes, backpacks, to get them dressed; schedules for me to make, appointments to remember. I step outside, with books and folders under one arm, keys and coffee cup in my other hand, coffee sloshing to the ground, the cell phone ringing in my pocket. I remember at twenty-five telling myself that no matter what happened, I'd never end up living like this.

stormy day –
a sycamore leaf
pasted to the windshield

HAIKU

a town speeds past
just now at the ground floor
a naked light bulb

Gerd Boerner

contemplating
all the possibilities:
first baseball game

c w hawes

getting wet
with my lover in the car
top down

c w hawes

old neighborhood
on the boulevard one elm
with green leaves

c w hawes

Eclipse over –
the wind returns
our trash can lid.

Alexis Rotella

Grandma gone –
her sausages still
in the freezer.

Alexis Rotella

Added to Grandma's
junk drawer –
a piece of string.

Alexis Rotella

Apple rings strung
across the beams –
their fragrance in my hoodie.

Alexis Rotella

Parade over –
the innkeeper scoops up
all the horse apples.

Alexis Rotella

Sound of our neighbor
digging night crawlers –
first light.

Alexis Rotella

Spring hillside –
one side snow,
the other dandalions.

Alexis Rotella

how the moon
wavers
in my tea cup

CarrieAnn Thunell

listen
to the silence
between each wave

CarrieAnn Thunell

SEQUENCES

FIRST DATE
Christopher Barnes

These dams
On which we edge
Suffocate.
That star –
Studded lip,
My temper tingles.

Look at the long range –
An eagle leering.

Kisses
Are promises shocked.
Those bell-bottoms tighten.

GREETINGS FROM LUNA PARK

James Roderick Burns

Every nation has need ... of escape from respectability-that-is, from
the world of what-we-have-to-do into the world of
what-we-would-like-to, from the world of duty that endureth forever
into a world of joy that is permitted for a moment

Richard Le Gallienne, 'Human Need of Coney Island ' (1905)

In the brittle light
of electric chandeliers,
the unseasonal hollow

of winter ballrooms
and colonnades glazed with snow
I pick up my pen at last.

*

Throughout this voyage
you have been much on my mind –
Alexander, son, adult.

Your majority
passed me like a gull darting
over a bed of oysters.

*

Through O'Malley's dark
I grope for the pile of shells,
separate from two dozen

three spotted weaklings,
arrange the rest to circle
the memory of your face.

*

I wake this morning
stiff as that undulating
stacked sea of metal horses,

empty as a bulb
greying out into the dawn.

Bars of sunlight stake my heart.

*

I am twenty weeks
beyond departure. Nine times
a glossy liner has crossed

expectant waters,
nudged my ha'penny absence
between the lines of the dock.

*

Like a rare whisky
I wait in bonded silence.
Maturity (I suppose)

attends the slow drop
of my spirit, but by night
I covet the angels' share.

*

On the slick boardwalk
I stamp my feet, feel down through
layers of wood and sharp sand

to the building swell.
A cormorant starts, lines up
for the coppered horizon.

*

They say a bright wire
lies thick as a giant's arm
beneath the black Atlantic ,

squeezing along words
like clots to the heart. Mine cramps;
in love's grip, I believe it.

*

I love your mother.
Even here, a thousand miles
removed for each slow decade

I love your mother

like powder in the barrel's
clean and splintering embrace.

*

Dog day Loop the Loop.
This sweltering memory –
wax-faced cuties, spitted on

gravity's needle,
the bump and lurch of hot rails –
sticks in my mind like cinders.

*

In the closing eye
of the kenetoscope, I
see myself disintegrate –

homo sapiens
in suit and hat, simian,
at last the snail's twisting shell.

*

The night manager
advised a midnight viewing –
half a million bulbs strung

above a stone moon,
nags with the breath of engines.
I smiled, walked out into sun.

*

That moment remains
sweet as a spilt gob of fire
ravaging through celluloid –

under the high arc
of the roller coaster tracks
her face, her bright moving hands.

*

The jostling crowd
inches up banked stairs to view
controlled disaster – shunt, slide

a fanfare of sparks
and this swift plunge into space.
She catches my hand in flight.

*

The weeks since that touch,
the walk through flame and embers
close out the notes of my heart

like accordions
folded away pleat by pleat
on a sinking pleasure boat.

*

The day manager
comes by with breakfast and bill.
I nod, place it on a shelf

resume my writing.
This may be delayed; please rise,
go out – read it in the light.

A TANKARD OF TANKA
carriannmarie

Even
The Blur Collar Review
won't publish
a poet who can't afford
the gas to minimum wage.

I've read
of a time before money
and status
when two artistic hands
could forage a life beneath stars.

Oh bamboo,
you did not weather winter!
From your stalks
I'll make a dozen sumi-e brushes.
You will blush pink with spring!

Zen poet,
wake from your reverie!
Your bike tire's flat,
you're unemployed,
the sorrel leaves are closing.

I am
without value
because I've nothing
to sell.
Dandelions are free!

We trade
life-force for status. Make
the company rich!
We drown in our plastics, poverty
and blue-collar pride.

Union
local # 123 for poets, artists,
and musicians.
Teamsters on winged horses
fly through my dreams!

Even the baristas
act superior. Degreed
in liberal arts,
Jane of all trades
has none.

UNA JARRA DE CERVEZA DE TANKA
carriannmarie

Aún
La Revisión de Cuello de Mancha
no publicará
a una poeta que no puede proporcionar
el salario mínimo de gas.

He leído
de un tiempo antes dinero
y posición
cuando dos manos artísticas
podrían adentrarse una vida bajo estrellas.

¡Ah bambú,

usted no capeó invierno!
De sus tallos
yo haré una docena de cepillos sumi-E.
¡Usted se ruborizará la rosa con la primavera!

¡La poeta
del zen, despierta de su ensueño!
Su llanta de la bicicleta plana,
usted está parado,
las hojas alazanas cierran.

Estoy
sin el valor
porque yo no tengo nada
vender.
¡Los dientes de león son libres!

Comerciamos
la vida-fuerza para la posición. ¡Haga
la compañía rica!
Nosotros nos ahogamos en nuestros plásticos,
la pobreza y el orgullo obrero.

La union
local # 123 para poetas, para los artistas,
y para los músicos.
¡Camioneras en caballos alados
vuelan por mis sueños!

Aún el acto de baristas
superior. Con un grado collegial
en humanidades,
Jane de todo comerciaba
tiene ninguno.

Looking for Mr. Doug Fir
carriannmarie

Nowhere
for tumbleweeds
in the city-
I long for open spaces
and roads less traveled.

A cabin

deep in the woods.
Each day
my hermitage dream
is clear-cut and paved.

As a blossom
longs for her bee
distant
and unrequited –
so I long for my hermitage.

Oh dream-love,
do not tarry.
I grow old
waiting for but five
acres of forest-grove!

With strong
limbs of Douglas fir
will my love
embrace me. With kisses
of mountain air and springs.

Who
is my lover?
Untamed
nature, retreating
from the bulldozers of Man.

No human
lover could hold as much
promise.
It is nature's own forest
I long to run off with.

Longing.
Such longing floods my heart –
to be embraced
by the tall Doug Fir-man
untill the owl calls my name!

EL BUSCAR SR. ABETO DE DOUGLAS
carriannmarie

En ningún lugar

para plantas rodadoras
en la ciudad –
yo mucho tiempo para espacios
y caminos abiertos viajé menos.

Una cabaña
profunda en el bosque.
Cada día
mi sueño de ermita
es bien definido y pavimentado.

Cuando una flor
largo para su abeja
lejana
y no correspondida –
tan yo mucho tiempo para mi ermita.

Ah el sueño-amor,
no demora.
¡Yo me envejezco
esperar pero cinco
acres de bosque-arboleda!

Con miembros
fuertes del abeto de Douglas
hace mi abrazo
del amor mí. Con besos
de aire de montaña y primaveras.

¿Quién
es mi amante?
La naturaleza indomada, retirándose
de las excavadoras de Hombre.

Ningún amante humano
podría tener tanta
promesa.
Es la naturaleza propio bosque
con que correr mucho tiempo.

Anhelo.
¡Tal anhelo inunda el corazón –
ser abrazado
por el Pino-Hombre alto de Doug
hasta el búho llama mi nombre!

THE SEA IS DROWNING

Gerard John Conforti

The sea is drowning voices
deep down where the sunlight
where past wars
have buried those forgotten
for centuries to come

Today, the walls
of this room
are not so lonesome
where I write poems
hidden away the joy

The shade is drawn
against the dark autumn night
where the stars
are not visible
and the pale moonlight is unseen

Go, my friend
into the stars of the universe
where there is peace
among the galaxies
where God is a comfort in your arms

BURIED YESTERDAYS

Sharon Rothenfluch Cooper

Solid as an oak
and beginning anew,
I hang my anger
on a telephone pole,
freedom, more than
a prize, a new way of life.

Fire scarred, I emerge
from the ashes, stronger
and wiser, unsheathed
a strength never imagined.

Laughter, once released,
bubbles to the surface.
Eyes sparkle with a mirth
repressed over the years,
his ego punctured.

I lean forward – lever
substance from shadow
and anchor myself
in a new generation,
walk the sky and marvel
at the clear silence,
feeling my own reverberation.

LEAF-LOOKING
Elizabeth Howard

planned in July
a leaf-looking trip
in the mountains

a cold snap
red ash berries
laced with snow

a view of the peaks
leaves sail past the window
like flocks of brown birds

sleepless night
shrieking winds
pummel the warped door

pulling back the curtains
a pair of hawks
in the red-rimmed sky

SEASONS UNZIPPING

Ed Higgins

bouncing rain
off the skylight
a light-gray alto

shamelessly red
May's tulips
unhinge the day

ripe wheat
swaying in August heat
the combine stalled

unzipping summer
in the grass
your lips to mine

winter-bare willows
lining the creek
twelve robins rest

GHETTO GAME

(A Holocaust Poem)

Thomas Land

Beneath a distant square of the sky
in the shadow of awesome, looming walls, a crowd of kids met
day after day
to test and learn in the well of twilight which boys in the
block were destined to die.

A few at a time. Our faces were grey
and small, our eyes were clouded with fear.
We hung the Book and a key on a thread:
for we understood the path of death just could not make it go
away.

We huddled close in our lonely dread.
The Bible slowly turned around
and with it, the key. They came to rest
at random to point at a ghetto child.
He would be first among the dead.

The block has grown, the world progressed.
I, the survivor, stand in the sunlight aware of the cloud in
every eye
as fear of the future grips the globe, rekindling the doom in
every breast.

THE TEACHER

Kirsty Karkow

he is so cool!
accommodating clouds
across the sky
life's incidents become
ornaments and weather

letting it go
accepting what life brings
when threatened
his dance across the stage
emotion for the fun of it

weightless
he somersaults and turns
in inner space
amused by changing views
and reveling in his trip

STONE AMID THE WATER WEEDS

M. Kei

how full the bay
lapping at the bowl
of earth
pilings and asphalt
unable to contain it

they aren't musical,
these blue herons,
but how mournful
the afternoon
without them

when they lifted
the old skipjack
her bottom fell out
just like the heart of anything
if too long neglected

my old gloves
fingers poking
through the tips
and winter
creeping closer . . .

every autumn
she brought the pots
of geraniums inside
hoping they would
bloom again

it's a lonely feeling,
wanting to hold
his hand
and walk through
the art museum

that stone
amid the water weeds
left on the beach
was once the heart
of a sailor

you'd better
know how to sail
on the Chesapeake
there is no room
to run

OCEAN CITY
Werner Reichhold

Ocean city the shore granted to shell games'
shine
on coupons
the wit in falsehood soldiers by invented actions
fastened to a belt
ammunition
on both partners

first choice last choice

math with no number an osprey's cry my own

come catarrh
from a galaxy of krill
a whale leaps
through its nocturnal desire
into light above the sea

the shape of a landing
to whom to give in
as a composer antedating white and black
keys of a piano
adjusting the air
through refutation
of sound texture

night with a egg-white and yolk before parted

awakened by an iPod
peep & show
it offers some vibrations
transforming the way you text
a pocket-weapon camouflaged

combat inside at home soon overseas
a song in my palm pivoting the delta beyond smooth

FOG
R.K. Singh

His presence
among the known faces—
evening fog

A thin fog
hides the wintry moon
rising slowly

Slowly clears
the morning fog
end of the year

Hides the sun
a dense fog in the morning:
waning winter

Stench of burning leaves
mounts with fog in the evening
asthmatic breathing

East faced
yoga in the fog
breathlessness

shrouded in fog
the lone pomegranate
in the backyard

Wrapped in fog
the flying plane
seen by sound

Feels the shadow
with wet fingers on the beach:
sound through the fog

THE WONDERLAND AMUSEMENT PARK
Robert Wilson

that sailor
writhing on the
pontoons like
a freshly caught fish
gasping for moments!

worms carving
darkness with a
shortness of breath

come morning,
the song of geese
peeling back
my childhood with
a surgeon's scalpel

a second hand,
the cicada,
with little time

peruse, sun, on

what's left of my sanity . . .
cicada's
song, mimicking
high power lines

painting over
the blackbird's complaint
with morning

on the inside
of a dream looking
out, and
no mirror to
tell me otherwise

night thickens . . .
licking her smile from
the bullfrog's tongue

i was in
vietnam when my
grandfather
passed away, eating
a bowl of rice

the world
surrounding you,
son, a
chinese restaurant
full of goldfish

was that you, son,
chasing stars with
a butterfly net?

my lover,
a pen plumbing
darkness in
the wonderland
amusement park

dark dreams
of crayfish bursting
with summer

winter's
drawing pictures
under the
table with a

milk carton smile!

will it hurt you
to lift a leaf while the
ants are working?

i'm no
longer hungry, trout,
seeing you
jump out of the stream
into this tanka

sunrise . . .
a minnow darts
through my smile

sunrise; a
would-be alice picking
rice through the
looking glass without
her friend the rabbit!

twilight . . .
a blossom whispering.
"some day"

a haiku can't
wax metaphorical
or humanize
animals when the
emperor is naked

morning frost . . .
she visits me wearing
a mask

she tosses
a cloud to me on
her way to
the marketplace . . .
winter moon

hoarfrost . . .
my shadow tossed in
a pile of laundry

from the darkest
depths of the mind
rabbit invites

me to drink tea
with a deck of cards

mother washes
dishes and onions in
the same breath

i came home
from work after dark
debating what
to do with the blackbird
pasted to its shadow

a harvest moon,
and no laborer to pluck
it from the sky

a heron, this
afternoon, waiting
for my
daughter to personify
its existence

what are you
thinking, goldfish, from the
inside looking out?

SIJO

I ask myself, how long will I count all the ways that I love you?
For the days and the weeks have rolled themselves into months and years.
I ask myself, is it fair to the one by my side?

c w hawes

Heart, I have a question for you: why are you never lonely?
She has gone so far away and the letters take so long.
Oh, rascal Heart, I should have known: you beat to her rhythm, not mine!

c w hawes

TANKA

one day
the hemerocallis
blooms
you and I my love
have but that same day

c w hawes

incessant clanking
of the hot water heater
old and tired
will I too make such noise
when I am old and tired

c w hawes

little words
just sounds made by a mouth
and voice box
why do they make me feel good
or so utterly bad

c w hawes

more deaths
in Iraq is the lead story
on the morning news
the war should be over
by next Mother's Day

c w hawes

He is an oak tree
I am the summer wind
in his branches.
We go down together
into the deepest roots

June Moreau

Saying goodbye
to my dying uncle –
his eyes
already
in another world.

Alexis Rotella

August drought
what I think I see
a medallion
on the garden faucet
a green tree frog

Elizabeth Howard

the story she reads
her child in hospital
for schizophrenia
this is the story
I write everyday

Elizabeth Howard

teeth of the groundhog
bristling by the bluff cave
the ancient one
who foretells weather
and atavistic aversions

Elizabeth Howard

Colorful maple leaves
twist and flutter in the breeze.

The change is upon me –
his deft and patient hands
coax me from hibernation.

CarrieAnn Thunell

Crumpled cranes
falter in the pine tree
I never could
get all those folds neat
enough for love to last.

CarrieAnn Thunell

As a wildflower
quivers before the wind
so my body
quivers at the mere brush
of his warm hands.

CarrieAnn Thunell

MOTHER
R.K.Singh

It's prayer to sink
into her flesh and bury
myself in her breast
to escape the faithless hands
that never became mother

Gulls along the shore
strut and posture, elegant
in afternoon gray,
like little politicians,
all empty ceremony.

Jeff Streeby

SYMBIOTIC POETRY

THE DRAGON'S BACK

Scott Metz

Dietmar Tauchner

leaves beginning to change all along the dragon's back
needles of hoarfrost on a larch at the funeral
the transparency wings gently attached gently removed
evening walk past an unknown flower that waves at me
out from under the woodpile old cherry petals
young vegetables sprouting where i remember only dung

LONELINESS

Max Verhart-Holland

Ginka Biliarska-Bulgaria

long lonely walk –
the cold deeper and deeper
in my fingers

unfamiliar woman
pulls the cap over her eyes

isolated farm
in every window
closed curtains

the leash is straining
to the breaking –point –
somebody's footsteps

more and more dead flies
on the windowsill

broken window
birds and voices
coming back to life

A DIFFERENT BLUE

Catherine Mair

Patricia Prime

haiku about shadows, in shadow on the boulder on the bollard a
discarded cardigan is he going to inspect it - stink from the river
climbing the carved sea elephant, two pink-hatted girls a different
blue - cornflowers against the sky on the other side of the stream -
swish of cows' tails light catching the horns of the black bull a
blaze of colour - the flame gladioli "Is it these glasses or are the flowers really so bright?"
as he pulls off his shirt - the man's bronze torso checking on the old
woman's safe return after the long walk - a cold shandy

FRAGRANT CURRY

Patricia Prime

Andre Surridge

at the restaurant
tearing the garlic nam bread
her polished nails
the crunch when he bites
a crispy beef samosa

through a window
the orange yolk
of the full moon
she lifts the rice pot lid
his face vanishes in steam

her bubbling laughter
the serving spoon hovers
over fragrant curries
down the steep winding stairs
she follows his shadow

satisfied groan
he loosens his belt
another notch
at the corner of the road
they turn to separate homes

COUNTRY PUMPKIN

Patricia Prime
Catherine Mair

either side of the entrance ... pumpkin orange flags
conversation interrupted - those thundering trucks
over cappuccino tourists discuss travel plans
"Victoria" splashed across her windcheater
autumn clouds, a circle of bricks encloses an oak
the motor cyclist takes a direct route across grass
café's hanging baskets - a lone petunia
two plasters remain on the old woman's wrist
a cat claws its way along a fallen branch
pushing the walker she decides on a hill climb

CHILD'S PLAY

Andre SurrIDGE
Patricia Prime

approaching storm
rattling church railings
a boy with a stick

the hand that guides
stays out of sight

a jointed figure
with its painted smile
swings skips struts

cold grey day
children sail their boats
on the canal

a cat scampers
along the cinder path
midges weave the air
heavy with the scent
of hawthorn flowers

a black dog
the low growl
of thunder

there is no way
to stop her from being afraid
of the noise
she hides in the stairwell
until her mother comes home

shopping bag
a packet of dolly mixtures
to share between us

it stops raining
we put on boots and coats
run outside
skipping as the sky lightens
we find the biggest puddle

a bus
passing close to the kerb
drenches us

a snail stretches
beside the fallen
oak leaves
how far away is childhood
and all those dreams we planned

THE BIG DAY

Andre Surridge
Patricia Prime

city café
he kickstarts the working week
with a short black
together with the breeze
she comes in out of the cold

warming her hands
on a radiator
the typist
balances her happiness
while waiting for his call

busy kitchen
the ceiling fan
slices the heat
sound of the oven timer
sizzle of cheese and bacon

cell phone
sending a photograph
she smiles to herself
five more sleeps to the big day
she practices her new signature

DUST BOWL DAYS
Sheila Windsor (U.K.)
Larry Kimmel (U.S.A.)

dust bowl depression

in cement city, a girl
with nothing but

romance on her mind
initials & hearts entwined
on her inside thigh

gun & cigar

in the spark of time

that the shutter is

O an un-lucky image strikes
for all time

foggy dawn

through a grime-smeared
casement window

a day
as dull as each before
threatens to take shape

stretch, yawn, & coffee

(a raw egg dropped in the sauce pan
drags the grounds to the bottom)

now, under a fried egg sky
a spume of dust on the road
to nowhere

flyish buzz

room to room
heels tap, thoughts drone

and only drops
of dragon's blood to guard
my glinting heart

the desert's bright

shines through a diaphanous dress
but nowhere to show

"in a scorpion's eye
i'll go 'round naked! out here,
i'd get burnt, sure"

jingle of coins

trickle of sweat

down a white-swan neck

in the shadow of Garbo
fading away, a school kid
with nowhere to go

empty truck stop

a midnight jukebox bounces off
the pink walls dimmed by grime

reading a confession mag
a lone waitress with fuck-me-red lipstick
& eye shadow like a bruise

each succulent green

a filigree, a crochet
silver edged

three snails lined up
by searchlight, and not one
prepared to talk

just an elfin boy

trying to make ends meet
call it 'moonlighting'

those grocery store holdups
but a man's gotta better himself
mr. dead bank dick

mirage

a fishing net
abandoned and torn

lilts on waves
ink-blue-black and spews
its catch of stars

mapped & unmapped,

their zig-zagged history ends
bang! bang!

in that great
pine box
democracy

22/01/07 - 07/03/07
graphic by Sheila Windsor

B _ C image _ A.JPG

murder! mayhem! #2
Marlene Mountain
Francine Porad

'overcast moon'

overcast moon mistakes carved in blue neon

a candle each night for a miracle each day

lull within a lull the pileated seems if gone to return

family party champagne and all

a skim of ice on the pond childish things put away

adult toys DVD disks play on a 40 inch TV

Texas George in living color Ebay's U S coin warehouse

a smirk grown desperate in darkness

'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.' *

no solutions an airstrike for looks

a plane's emergency landing rescue in the Hudson River

stuck in the mud a week's rain

flowing crowd for dinner Boondocks restaurant opens
to town and back especially back
Labrador litter the female with papers the male a mutt
lobbied by feds bowels of the giant lobbyist **
suicide bomb a woman and infant girl lie in a pool of blood
left by the coal miners goodbye notes

unpredicted flurries a green floor with won't -do projects
nothing scheduled today but my doctor
pm sharon's health held breaths of the good bad & ugly
his ambitious peace plans in doubt
men gather to sit down about something stand for little
lab technician x-rays retaken three times
a wren flits in and out of the shed a long grey-turning sky
sun-filtered room search for a rainbow
the yellow porch light surrounded by twenty degrees
early exit across the mountain falling snow
two more months to go downhill before the uphill slog
recent surge of violence in Iraq

my open-eyed stare at the monitor an IM correction
dim recess of my mind the checkbook
I transfer funds bills and gift cards cost an extra two cents
too late to send off a dusk haiku
autobiographical writing 'inspired by a true story'

found sculpture frozen pink

notes

* President F D Roosevelt, 1933 inaugural address

** Jack Abramoff

january 1-9 2006

I WANT RHYTHM 11:

Saturday, March 17, 2007 Yonge St. S of Wellesley

Blog prose by Nicole Stoffman

Haiku by R. W. Watkins

morning breaks

the street erupts with people

contagious as a yawn

As if by some miracle, Old Man Winter decided to take a vacation today so Jennifer and Catherine and I could dance along Yonge St from Wellesley to Shuter. Highlights include...

* Discovering Jennifer and Catherine. Jennifer is a Nia instructor and told me she felt liberated once she decided to acknowledge but not act on the inner voice saying, "this is stupid! what will people think of you?" She especially enjoyed the anti-establishment aspect of not behaving in the way our urban planning has dictated that we should behave. Jennifer has natural leadership qualities and kept smiling at people who were watching us and saying, "Yup! We're dancing in the street. Hooray for spring!"

scoring concertos,

crows arrange and rearrange

on five hydro wires

Catherine is a former clarinetist and Scottish folk dancer who has recently rediscovered a love of dance through expressive movement and Nia classes. Both of them inspired me with their movements which I really enjoyed copying and then transforming.

Simon Says

--the losing child

discovers dance improvisation

* Quizno's Sub (rating: ****): The glorious sun was shining down on us as we took to the stage at Quizno's (who knew?). This raised area in front of the door allowed us to do synchronized dances to "California Dreamin'". It's amazing to stumble upon a performance space like that. I feel greedily excited just thinking about all of the undiscovered stages out there in Torontopia just waiting for us to

dance on them.

avoiding cracks in the sidewalk,
street dancers step
on each others' shadows

*World of Posters (rating: ***): Great rock n' roll but no stage. Strange, but I never noticed before how HUGE the sidewalks on Yonge St. are (named after George Yonge, The town of York's secretary of war, in case you were interested). When the coast was clear, I let myself venture away from the storefront saying, "Hey! There's a sidewalk here!" Suddenly I felt as though I was onstage. In a flash, I gained insight into the need that caused break dance and the street dance aesthetic to evolve. I wanted to get down to the ground and cover it with movement, but I didn't have the dance vocabulary for that so I hopped onto a garbage bin and bent backwards off it then lowered myself to the ground. Jennifer loved to dance along the curb. She found her own private stage there.

alley cats caterwauling
walled-in dancer dances
in lonely flat

*Dancing to the Bagpipes!!! We were thrilled when we heard the pipes calling us through the din of commercial radio and heavy metal. "He's gonna feel so lucky", "This is his lucky day," "He's not gonna know what hit him" we said as we made our way towards our first busker. I was excited hoping that Catherine could lead us in some Scottish dance moves. "Do you mind if we dance?" Jennifer asked as she flipped him a toonie, "Sure," he replied, "I just don't know if I can play and laugh at the same time." Catherine taught us a traditional dance step in the round and another that's done two by two. We got a round of applause from the tourists at the end.

This piper plays in "Box Full of Cash" at Lola's on Kensington Ave in the market every Sunday at 6pm. I've heard them play before, they're really good and always soused; a rollicking mixed drink of pipes, barrelhouse piano and guitar licks.

old leaves dance,
swept off their feet
by drunken wind

* Toronto T-Shirt Company (rating: ****): The owner of this place was really happy when he saw what we were up to. "What are you doing?" he asked Jennifer. "Exactly what we appear to be doing, which is dancing in the street." He put on some GREAT salsa and house music for us. I taught them the basic salsa move but stopped there. You don't have to dance traditionally to traditional music, the three live dance performances I've taken in at Harbourfront over the past ten days have taught me that. Rubberbanddance Co. from Montreal breaks to classical symphonic music, Shanti Smith, the choreographer from the Mohawk nation, grass dances to spoken word, and The Danny Grossman Company dances modern to La Bohème! Having seen these sensational Canadian Dance artists inspired me to play with different levels, losing my balance and narration in my dancing today. Bless Harbourfront and the Premiere Dance Theatre. Amen.

improv ballet
in the Renaissance wing;
cherubs dance on air

(This blog would not be complete if I did not mention an interesting exchange I had with three teens about whether or not we were really dancing. At that moment, we were in front of a Chinese gift shop doing interpretive movement to classical music. "That's not dancing!", they explained, "You can't dance to music that doesn't have a beat!" I wish they'd stuck around long enough to let me tell them about Rubberbanddance!)

zen brain activity
how to dance
to Cageian silence

*4Life Natural Food, Kensington Market: Finally, as I swooped down on Kensington Market for my usual after-I-WANT-RHYTHM-coffee, I could hear Catherine's voice in my ear, "I still got dancing in me" she had said when I'd asked if we were ready to call it a day. That's how I felt. I felt liberated from the self-censorship that keeps me from dancing in the street all week. I felt supported by the fact that people like Jennifer and Catherine exist. So I danced in front of 4Life at Augusta and Nassau, one of the top danceable spots in Toronto. I explored. I choreographed. I played with balance and lyrics.

I performed. A door was opened today. I hope it stays open all week.

dance lessons
her young legs part
and she is seduced

A HANDFUL OF SAND
Magdalena Dale
Vasile Moldovan

a handful of sand
at the bottom of her heart
like in a conch;

only a pearl's necklace
born painfully after all

AMBUSH
Magdalena Dale

Vasile Moldovan

on the church roof
two white doves ready
to fly

in a lurking place the black cat
is lying in ambush

SIGN OF RAIN

Magdalena Dale
Vasile Moldovan

only a flower
with so many fallen petals
in midsummer

Reading in coffee suddenly
the first sign of rain

WINGS OF A BUTTERFLY

Magdalena Dale
Vasile Moldovan

wings of butterfly
my day-dreams flying
against the wind. . .

the sand castle
demolished thoroughly

ARTICLES

THE PLAYFUL MIND -What Makes American Haiku Different Ditmar Tauchner

I hope you will find my little speech of interest, because I honestly didn't undertake special research about the given topic, and having a new flame is also a very good reason for not finding enough time.

Anyway, since I used to write and read haiku in English as well as in German, I might be able to compare the German language haiku scene with the North American scene, at least to some degree. Though it is impossible to explain all the differences between both in such a short time, I will try to present a few personal thoughts about what makes American haiku distinctive.

Once I asked an English haiku poet about the differences between the American haiku and the English? He answered: Well, you don't find any worse poems in Frogpond or Modern Haiku, but all are quite similar, or follow the same pattern of making; but though you'll find some quite poor poems in the English magazines, they also have a broader individual range and taste."

This may be true or not, but in fact, in recent times we are given too many narrow definitions of what a haiku is. We should be careful with any definitions. A haiku is what we make of it. It will always be a reflection of our state of mind. If we only follow an established definition of how to create a haiku, we will be in danger of losing that aspect of "newness", a very important requirement for writing haiku. To say it metaphorically with Gary Snyder's words: "The path is what ever passes." I mention this, because sometimes I have the feeling that some people are seeking a final formula of what a haiku is or has to be. Of course, this has nothing to do with the American haiku movement particularly.

But what has this to do in particular with the American haiku? What are its main features? I would like to quote from Bruce Ross' Haiku Moment: "The fourth generation of American haiku: consistent lack of seasonal references, surrealist techniques and figurative expression are introduced, regular prosody is eliminated, and human, rather than nature, subjects are more emphasized, eroticism, psychological expression, and political and social commentary."

I think this quite significant for the American haiku, although you find all these in European haiku too, but not to the same great extent, and only recently. Especially the invention of the so-called "urban haiku," which has become more common in Germany only recently, with its, roughly said, modern subjects of sex and psychological, political and social expressions, which seem to be an offspring of the American haiku movement.

I noticed generally, as I began to learn about American haiku, that there was a willingness to try new forms as well as content and a strong ability to adapt the idea of Japanese short poetry, and to develop it further. Poets like Marlene Mountain have found a way to combine American literary style with the Japanese forms. As you know, Marlene pointed out that in her way of thinking, there is no "Japanese haiku." It needs a reference to an era, a date, or a poet's name, and so on. Also the well established techniques used for writing haiku are nothing more than techniques. The Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote: "My sentences are only a ladder to climb up; if you reached the point of meaning, you have to throw it away." The same is true for writing haiku.

I'm saying this to introduce a very important personal perception that I had when I came in touch with North American haiku for the first time - I found something, which I would like to call "the playful

mind"; a mind related to the meaning of haiku, which, literally translated, means: "playful verse". German poets, for instance, are more used to following fixed patterns, they don't trust experiments of any kind very much. This is very general, I know, but I consider it an interesting observation, anyway.

I suppose that American writers - I'm thinking here especially of the so-called "Beat-poets," - had and still have, the ability to adapt the genre because, historically, they are probably open to new ideas and short expression, (comics have not found their way into life in the USA, by mere chance) and because they are less bound by a long traditional list of what poetry has to be.

It is almost impossible to speak about the European haiku. Every country has its own history and language, and we only very recently started to introduce each country's haiku scene during the First European Haiku Congress in Germany. But one can say that in Europe it is still very uncommon to write, for instance, a one-liner, or a poem that is not related to the traditional subject of nature linked to human nature. Though I have to say that this is changing rapidly. For a long time, the German idiom haiku tended either to strictly imitate the few given available translations of the ancient Japanese masters, or tended to be written with almost no relation to the origins of the genre. In those countries, where German is spoken, it was impossible for a long time to find acceptance for a haiku not composed in the 5/7/5 pattern, and that is still the case in Austria, where I come from. This was the situation when I started to write haiku, only five years ago. So the aspect of "atarashimi" (newness) was absolutely ignored for several years. By the way, this was one reason why I began to write and publish haiku in English. Now I feel that a period of change approaches, because more and more poets are glancing at the international haiku scene as well as that of America, and feel attracted by new subjects and new forms.

To say it with the words of Ruth Franke, a haiku poet from Germany: "The new generation of European haiku poets becomes aware of the chance of this literary genre: grounded in the cultural background of each nation, it is capable of connecting people all over the world by sharing something like an universal human truth."

Finally, I would like to say that it is still very important to study the Japanese origins, but also to experiment with the form and subject; to integrate our own historical background in form and content, and also to glance regularly at the international haiku movement. Nothing has to be avoided and nothing especially has to be revealed. I think it is most important to be open for everything in our daily lives, to allow the open and playful mind. I want to encourage you all to keep a playful mind because: "The path is whatever passes."

I'm sure that you didn't understand one word of my speech because of my "Alpine English" - anyway, I thank you all for your attention.

*

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DIAL 5-7-5 FOR CLASSICISM:

In Defense of the Seventeen-Syllable Haiku
R. W. Watkins

Like it or lump it, we might as well face the truth: composers of haiku, tanka, and other Japanese forms of verse are no longer considered poets by the literary mainstream—if they ever truly were in the first place. Sadly, Japanese verse—like various classic European closed forms, epigrams, rhyming light verse—is no longer regarded as poetry by the editors and publishers from said mainstream. (More recently adopted Asian forms like Korean sijo and Middle Eastern ghazal were delivered stillborn, being considered as nothing more than non-poetic novelties or Oriental curios from the outset.) The term ‘poetry’ in the North American, British and Irish contexts now refers exclusively to free verse. Other forms of verse are now seen as separate literary forms—or even separate artistic entities—at best; at worst, they are now seen as pointless undertakings more reminiscent of parlor tricks to be performed by clever children. The form which is the focus of this essay, haiku, seems to be now interpreted as something more on par with Zen koans or esoteric incantations than anything resembling poetry. Ironically, this comes at a time when English-language haiku subject matter suddenly seems limited only by the human imagination.

True, the position of us Western haijins as poets has always been somewhat vicarious, to say the least. We have long been seen as extreme and eccentric inhabitants (even for poets) on the social, cultural and geographic fringes of Western society: elderly Buddhists and flaky New Agers who operate health food stores; ‘the last of the beatniks’—aging former lovers of Snyder, di Prima, Ginsberg and Kerouac; wacky wiccan women who dance naked through the woods with their 13-year old daughters in celebration of the latter's first menstrual cycle; middle aged male divorcees who wander the windswept back streets, measuring out their lives with elm growth and weather statistics; lonely young college boys and girls who have never had a lover, and teeter on the brink of suicide, committal or convent life; etc. Yet in spite of our reputation for being anything but pretentious, Atwood-imitating academics or politically correct, latte-slurping down towners (What's the point of a smoke-free coffee shop or jazz joint anyway?), there was always one thing we could count on: people knew the attributes of our craft. For the past 40 years or so, students as young as at the junior high level have known that haiku poets write a Japanese-derived verse form that captures a moment of higher human awareness and is written in 3 lines of 5 syllables, 7 syllables and 5 syllables respectively. Whether or not the original Japanese ‘syllable’ count and configuration was actually the equivalent of the 5-7-5 pattern is irrelevant. What is important is the fact that for approximately 40 years, 5-7-5 was our pattern, even if for the past 25 years or thereabouts it has been so only in the minds of students and the general public.

I say "for the past 25 years or thereabouts" because it was in 1980 that George Swede and Eric Amann published ‘Toward a Definition of the Modern English Haiku’ (Cicada: Vol. 4, No. 4; pp. 3-12), which, quite frankly, probably did for haiku what the brush did for curling and the helmet did for ice hockey: made life less arduous for the producer, but more confusing and alienating for the consumer. In their essay—which has since been republished with revisions and credited solely to Swede—the authors laid the blueprint for the contemporary Western haiku by (seemingly) accommodating virtually every deviation from the 5-7-5 format that had materialized over the previous 3 decades. The modern English-language haiku, they thus concluded, can be read aloud in a single breath, evokes a moment of deep emotion or insight in which some aspect of Man is related to Nature, relies mainly on simple images, and is always in the present tense. Such a prescriptive summation probably illustrates why grassroots-up democracy is only as dependable as the people being polled.

To make matters worse, whenever someone has attempted to apply a little ‘top-down’ structural order to this very open-ended set of guidelines, it has often only contributed to the confusion and

intimidation. Cor van den Heuvel, for example, has emphasized the fact that 12 syllables in English is actually more analogous with the 17 onji of the original Japanese version. He adds fuel to the fire in his forward to the third edition of *The Haiku Anthology* (Norton, 1999), insisting that: Though a few poets still write in the 5-7-5 syllable form, this form is now mostly written by schoolchildren as an exercise to learn how to count syllables, by beginners who know little about the true essence of haiku, or by those who just like to have a strict form with which to practice. (p. xxviii)

Now, as far as I'm concerned, this is merely an exercise in sheer snobbery bordering on historical revisionism. If it didn't also reek of self-fulfilling prophecy, I would have to dub it painfully laughable. (I have often wondered how many bards have stuck up their nose or middle finger at closed forms not because of any aesthetic disdain for syllabic, linear and metrical structure, but merely out of their own lack of talent and other shortcomings. I have a very strong feeling that the average free verse poet today would not be capable of composing a proper sonnet or ghazal in a month of amphetamine-fueled Sundays.)

Such conflicting, imprecise and structurally lacking definitions may have been fine and dandy in an era when the term 'poetry' was still inclusive, but in an era like the one we currently exist in—where poetry is synonymous with free verse—such a blueprint merely invites the composition of verse that holds a position in the haiku sphere analogous to the position free verse once held in the then-inclusive world of poetry. In fact, ironically, the general public's continued belief that the notion of haiku automatically entails the 5-7-5 pattern may be the only thing that prevents the modern English-language version from being defined as 'the shortest form of free verse'. (George Swede may not realize how correct he is, when observing in a recent online column from *Simply Haiku*: "The data suggest that in the English speaking countries of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, the haiku is no longer seen as an indulgence of Japanophiles or poet-tasters, but as a legitimate short poetic form..." and "the evidence strongly indicates that the haiku now occupies a secure niche in the great edifice of English poetry".)

So this is the basic reason why I believe the 5-7-5 syllabic form to be so very vital: If we are going to exist in a Western environment where the term 'poetry' denotes free verse exclusively, and resulting haiku—like other (traditionally/supposedly) closed forms—is now in a literary or artistic category all its own, then we might as well make the best of a bad situation, and devote a considerable portion of our talents to composing haiku according to the tenets of the original English-language form—albeit a faulty or outright erroneously derived one. This would enable haiku to transcend being ambiguously perceived as "just another way to write free verse" (as Larry Gross once described the possible state of the *sijo* if allowed to mutate too far from its original Korean blueprint)—a separate literary category that no longer produces examples of itself and now strives to be accepted back(?) into the world of poetry/free verse. Simultaneously, it would help us to avoid confusing and/or alienating the general public (i.e., potential readers) who have grown up accustomed to the 5-7-5 form of their secondary and post-secondary textbooks; a person might require some reference point if he or she were encountering a haiku outside the usual context of a haiku periodical or solo volume—the 5-7-5 format would probably provide that.

I should also stress the usefulness of the 5-7-5 structure as an unifying factor in the context of the haiku's ever-expanding subject range. As I have already noted, haiku is no longer merely the verse of cicadas, frogs, sunsets and cherry blossoms. The form's natural landscape now flows almost seamlessly from the mountains into the subways, from the frogponds into the workings of the human brain and genitalia. (I can't help but be reminded of those lines from Sonic Youth's 'Making the Nature Scene': "The city is a natural scape / Order in the details".) In fact, there is no true distinction any longer

between the traditionally nature-oriented haiku and the human-centered senryu along the lines of subject matter—the whimsical senryu's ability to be interpreted as light or satirical verse is its only true qualifier amongst most contemporary English-language haikins. Where there is no limit on subject matter, the haiku's propensity for (d)evolving into 'the shortest form of free verse' is only exacerbated by the lack of a standard closed form. The presence of a closed form would serve as an uniform filter, playing the Apollonian to the limitless subjects' Dionysian, in other words. And the best closed form to provide this Apollonian element would have to be the one with which the most people are already familiar, the one which has been officially instilled into the minds of the general public for at least the past 4 decades: the 5-7-5 syllabic structure. Erroneous as it may have been in its conception, at least it is indefatigably ours.

Mind you, I'm not suggesting for a second that all of us should 'revert' to the 5-7-5 pattern exclusively or otherwise face literary ostracism. What I am suggesting is that the editors, publishers and reviewers be more open to the traditional, and less arrogant in their approach to those who prefer to compose their haiku (and senryu) in this original English-language adaptation of the Japanese classic. As I've pointed out, in a Western climate where poetry is now synonymous with free verse, and haiku must stand as its own literary form awash in an endless sea of subject matter, any reference points and defensive uniformity that such haikins can provide should be welcomed, not mocked.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that I started out over a decade ago writing haiku, and from the beginning, I composed them in the traditional 5-7-5 form (or as close to it as I could get). Over the years, my output has (d)evolved into numerous mutations and variations, ranging from the two-liners found in 'Hitchcock Presents...' to the various 'eyeku' that will be collected in small flowers crack concrete; from the full-blown binary abstraction of '2001: A Space Haiku' to the 18 to 22-syllable experiments found in the 'Outlaw Haiku' section of my most recent chapbook, *In The Grip of Sirens* (co-written with Robin Tilley). Still, I much prefer the work I've done in the 5-7-5 pattern, and these days I'm utilizing it almost exclusively again. It's not for everybody, true; but as I've hopefully made

clear, it has its benefits in this day and age. I guess it's as someone once noted: I tend to stress traditional form over traditional subject matter. Then again, maybe I'm still just a schoolchild and unknowing beginner; but I don't think so.

(This essay is one of two edited excerpts from a longer paper entitled *Dial 575—57577 For Classicism*.)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Pie In Pieces, thirty-three songs from the Midwest by Andrew Riutta ISBN 91-976430-3-3 River Man Publishing, Sweden. \$8 ppd. from the author, 6444 Cedar Run Road, Apt. 2, Traverse City, MI 49684.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW RIUTTA
by Larry Kimmel

This past year, 2006, has seen nearly two dozen excellent new collections of tanka in English. One that has particularly taken my attention is Andrew Riutta's *The Pie In Pieces*: thirty-three songs from the Midwest. In part, my interest has been piqued by the affinity I feel for his subject matter. Having come from a rural background that still had a time-lag of about 25 years in the 1950's, as well as being a

working-class community where money was often reckoned in dimes and nickels, I could easily appreciate Riutta's people and their quiet, heroic struggle for daily survival. In this bite-sized interview I thought I'd ask Riutta just how *The Pie In Pieces* came into being.

LK: In an email last year concerning *The Pie In Pieces*: thirty-three songs from the Midwest, you said that the title was a key to the collection. Could you explain?

AR: It was my intention to have the title address the fact that so many of us measure our individual successes against a backdrop of credit cards and shiny SUVs: in other words, the "American dream." Seen from this perspective, it can be easy for one to bow their head and feel as if their accomplishments are somehow not good enough. For working-class families, something as small as a flat tire can be an obstacle to the usual hope. So, implicit in the title is the idea that there are people in this country who must simply take what they can get when they can get it, and try to feel grateful.

LK: Clearly, *The Pie in Pieces* is a carefully constructed poetic sequence. How were the selections made? How did you arrive at its overall structure and to what intent?

AR: First of all, I began with the knowledge that exceptional poems do not necessarily make an exceptional book. In other words, a book comprised of award-winning poems does not automatically qualify it as being capable of telling a good story, and this, more than anything, was what I set out to achieve. I never had the urge to use what I believed to be my best poems. Rather, I was much more interested in using poems that aren't perfect, that have burrs and rough edges — that depict my life honestly. Once I arrived at this, I went through my poems and began selecting the ones I felt would best carry the weight of the theme.

LK: The reviews I've seen of *The Pie in Pieces* agree that it is a "story" of a Midwestern family, beautiful in its austerity, and powerful in its honest, straightforward delivery. Are there any further aspects of *The Pie in Pieces* that you would like to point out?

AR: A few of my friends and relatives, although they wanted so much to read the book, expressed some apprehension in doing so because they have often found poetry to be inaccessible and unnecessarily complex. To their surprise—and joy—they discovered that the poems were very user-friendly. This was, indeed, one of my objectives; because I couldn't imagine writing a book about working-class struggles and triumphs that working-class people would be unable to approach.

LK: To round out this mini-interview, I'm curious to know when and how you first became aware of tanka, and why you choose to use it. Could you tell us something about that?

AR: I became aware of tanka maybe a dozen years ago, but did not discern it in a serious manner until just three years ago. I chose to use tanka for *The Pie in Pieces* because tanka does not look to approach anything beyond the circumference of the moment or mood it depicts. It was the only choice. Tanka does not carry with it the excess that can sometimes keep a poem from being honest. Also, one finds that the brevity itself adds a depth that is often lost in longer poems. Tanka, because of its simplicity, reveals how it is poetic moments—much more than clever words—that make poetry.

LK: Thank you for these keen observations on the nature of tanka.

AR: Thank you very much.

Dave Bacharach

M. Kei, poet and editor, resides in the land of his Native American ancestors along the Maryland coast in the Chesapeake Bay area. Besides attending to a regular job in addition to his prolific literary work, Kei has devoted significant amounts of time as a crewman aboard the "Martha Lewis," one of the last-of-its-kind oyster boats that still works commercially under sail. Kei's work on board that grand anachronism-work accented by salt spray, harrowing adventure, and grueling, dangerous manual labor-combined with his deep love of the bay, its towns, headlands, and meadows, has resulted in a collection of poems titled Heron Sea. Many of these poems have appeared in print elsewhere, but gathered together in company with new work, they make an indelible impression of a particular environment filtered through the intense sensibility of a poet.

Kei has divided the book into six sections, labeled respectively: Chesapeake County; Skipjack One; Love; Skipjack Two; Head of the Bay; and Threnody.

There are a total of 154 poems, 106 of which are tanka; the others are, for the most part, three-line poems the author prefers to call tercets, although quite a few make very effective haiku.

May afternoon,
every piling
with its seagull

This, the third poem in the book, is a haiku with an almost textbook structure, complete with kigo, fragment/phrase, and effective juxtaposition. But it exceeds mere example by bringing to bear Kei's characteristically precise observation of scene, so that in three lines the reader can visualize not just a place, but also its ambiance. It is the latter quality, the feeling evoked by a particular place at a particular time, that is so hard to achieve through language, yet Kei does it over and over in these small poems. For example, a little further along we find a haiku constructed of three solid images:

white drifts
in the stubbled field
snow geese

With its classic pivot line, this poem has not one but three kigo, each of which builds consecutively, in layers, to create an overwhelming sensation of winter. The choice of lineation demonstrates Kei's control of the medium. Lines one and three could easily be switched to design a successful but very different poem. But Kei puts the migratory birds at the end, reminding the reader of the cyclical nature of all things, and that this cold, bleak setting will give way to the lush green of spring and summer. Elsewhere, the three line poems rest upon reverberating metaphors that work both literally as well as by transference, as when boats, with their Freudian symbolism, become men's wives, or swing sets bereft of swings support only weeds; or junkyard wrecks "look good" in the morning fog. And then there are the simple exclamations of joyful excitement:

a bully breeze!
douse the jib, or
we're all going swimming!

However, as evocative as his three line poems are, it is in his tanka that Kei truly excels. In the wider five line form he is able to focus sharply on image and object, and then expand their meaning outward,

with a kind of telescoping effect. This skill is apparent in a poem that recalls his Native American roots, the age-old sustenance the Bay area has provided, and the loss of a personal and collective future:

in a small museum
i stroke my hands over
Native stones,
weights for nets
empty of dreams

These little museums exist all across America-musty, unfrequented, one-room bastions doggedly holding onto a small town's past. On a visit, the poet touches an artifact, triggering a realization that suddenly expands to encompass past, present, and future. Again, the charged last line works both literally and as metaphor: The nets are empty of fish, empty of hope, empty of a viable future, not only for the first people that fished these waters, but, with a reference to environmental devastation, for all of us. It is no accident that in this poem, Kei uses the small "i."

This way of expanding from the particular to a much larger but ever more cogent context occurs, not just within individual tanka, but across sections of the book. It is most clearly seen in the micro/macro sailing poems that progress from paper boats, to toy models, to huge transport ships. The sequence, spaced across the book, begins with a tanka in which the poet rises, literally and symbolically "to sail the moon/in a paper boat;" continues with descriptions of a model sailboat race ("a sudden gust/and the toy skipjack/heels hard"); and is completed by a tanka that brilliantly comments on the new and old forms of commerce:

leaving port,
the container ship's wake
rocks the sailboat
dredging for oysters
in shallow water

The breath of Kei's tone and style should also be noted. Even those poems that focus closely on a nautical way of life do so with a rich variety of perspectives and voices. The pure harshness of laboring aboard an oyster boat is perfectly captured in the objectively matter-of-fact description of its impact on new gear:

oyster season starts
with new yellow slickers
for the crew;
by the end of the first day,
they're torn and dirty

In complete contrast is a poem with the melody of an old English song. Metered with recurring "o" sounds, the rhyming third and fourth lines, and repetitive conjunctions opening lines four and five, this chant of nostalgia, without the least bit of sentimentality, eulogizes years gone by and a life spent on the water:

she talks as she sails
the old wooden boat
of oyster days

and summer bays
and watermen grown old

Different still is the stunning use of metaphor found in this superb tanka:

shaking the bats
out of the mainsail
a cloud of night
made homeless
by my hands

A few simple devices—the strong consonant endings of lines one and three; the assonance of "out\cloud" and "night\my;" and the alliteration at the ends of lines four and five—serve and support the brilliantly expressive central line, whose absolute poetry, once read and visualized, can never be forgotten.

It would be very easy to pick any tanka out of the book at random and find rich ground for the careful, analytical reader, or for the casual lover of poetry. Nearly every poem contributes to the overall impact, an impressive feat when collecting and collating works previously published over a wide venue. In such a work, there is always the danger that some poems will simply not fit, that they will appear to have been forced into place without any organic justification. Kei runs this risk the greatest in the section titled Love; one or two of the poems in that section stand out as relative strangers in a volume that otherwise manages a consistency of tone, image, and setting. The compensation for the reader is that even those exceptions are superb poems in their own right.

With Heron Sea, M. Kei has created one of the most important poetry of place collections of short form poetry in our time. It is not to be missed by lovers of tanka and haiku, by those curious about coastal ways of life, by any who have ever gazed out upon big water with an undefined, universal yearning.

Raffaello's Azure by Ruri Hazama. Assisted by Amelia Fielden. Tankakenkyusha: Tokyo, 2006. ISBN: 4-86272-001-3. Perfect bound, 5 x 8 inches, 184 pages, bilingual Japanese & English. No price listed.

One inspects this collection of tanka and essays by Ruri Hazama with mixed feelings --- wishing, on the one hand, to embrace unreservedly the author's generous spirit of a plea for tolerance of the differing aesthetic traditions of East and West while being moved, on the other hand, to remark how distant certain of the author's aesthetic concerns vary from the problems confronting poets in the West.

Ruri Hazama's sincerity and humility, however, must be judged beyond question, if one accepts this personal statement from her book: "Encountering tanka, I feel the interface of 1300 years, a sense of time immemorial. There has never been in the past, there will never be in the future, a single perfect tanka. One cuts a word chain into 31 links, thinking that something satisfactory may have been created thus; then, the very next day, the sense of it collapses."

Raffaello's Azure consists of thirteen sets or suites of five tanka each, two critical essays and brief prefatory and closing remarks by the author and Amelia Fielden, the Australian poet who assisted the

author in translation. The book is tastefully printed with a simple two-color cover; the typography is very tasteful and legible, although the translation, particularly of the prose, is labored and clumsy, a fact which does not support the reader's confidence in the fidelity of the English versions of the tanka to their Japanese originals.

One tanka from the sequence that bears the book's title will provide an entry and glimpse into this poet's world

when I gave birth
the dawn sky was
the exact blue
of Raffaello's paintings,
I'll always remember

The overt reference to the Florentine painter, Raphael (1483-1520), would be utterly obscure without further specificity by the poet. Does she refer to the "exact blue" of Raphael's skies, for example? One might presume so from the "dawn sky" of Ruri Hazama's text, yet many of Raphael's paintings are interiors while his exterior scenes are in nowise uniform in the color of their skies. In an Afterword some sixty pages later, however, the author relates: "My name, when written in Kanji, has the meaning of 'lapis lazuli.' Raffaello used the colour of this jewel when he painted the Virgin Mary's garments...." One wishes that this confession were a final clarification but, unfortunately, it is not, as this color as related to the garments of the Virgin can be found in his early Madonna with the Fish, the Madonna of the Pinks of 1507, the Alba Madonna of 1511 and others as well. Of course, Raphael also painted the Madonna frequently in attire of completely different colors.

What we have, then, is a skillfully composed poem with a deeply personal and hermetic reference that may be significant or may be meaningless, but the author provides the reader with no means of deciphering which the case may be.

The tanka that immediately follows the above example is

leaving blank
today's schedule
I cut
a grapefruit
precisely in two

which one recognizes immediately as a success. Why? The sensory impressions are direct and require no explication while the sensitive reader has here been provided by Ruri Hazama with the requisite context to construct a possible narrative and decipher the relation of a blank schedule to a grapefruit cut "precisely in two."

I cannot do justice to the poet within the constraints of a review. She composes or organizes her tanka into sequences and obviously does not view them as individual poems. An analysis of an entire sequence, however, would exceed the proper limits of a general overview and so I must be content to represent her virtues, as best as I can, through citing without comment only these few further examples:

the Shōnan Sea
is smoky jasper –

the Black Current
nears, sweeping
fish along in its wake

on the shining glass
of a revolving door
flower shadows
swallows' shadows
slip and slide

wild roses
with the breath
of green grass
tickling –
farewell my thirties

Ruri Hazama's intended contribution to the current dialogue between poets East and West is rounded off with two essays to close the volume. The first, "Thinking and Form," probably has limited appeal to the informed Western reader. Her reflections in this article on the impact of Western culture on the practice of leading Japanese tanka writers affords only a mirror reflection of the difficulties that tanka and haiku writers in the West face in attempting to integrate Eastern conceptualities into their writing practice and their personal lives.

The final essay, "Searching for a New Wave: Onoe Saishû's "My Own Thesis Predicting the Fall of Tanka," offers a historical overview of two seminal critiques of tanka that led to the development of tanka as we know it today. Ruri Hazama here compares Onoe Saishû's hypotheses, in 1910, that tanka were becoming more prosaic and colloquial while suffering a long decline with the later criticisms of Kuwabara Takeo (1946) that echo Saishû's earlier conclusions and call into question whether "the modern spirit may not be able to be contained in 31 syllables." Kuwabara's conclusion, not surprisingly, was that the old vessel could not retain the new wine and, therefore, tanka's future would be dependent largely upon the extended prosaic sequence as against the individual tanka with its traditional metrical norm.

That Ruri Hazama seconds the conclusions of the two earlier critics explains her own practice. The critical issue, in the end, must be how, if at all, this differs from much current tanka practice in the West. If it does so, is there any compelling reason why Western practice should imitate Eastern precedent? Unfortunately, Ruri Hazama does not take up that question.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Woodward

Reeds: Contemporary Haiga 2006. Edited with Introduction by Jeanne Emrich. Lone Egret Press,

6566 France Avenue, Suite 1210, Edina, MN, USA 55435. ISBN: Not listed. Perfect bound, 5 x 8 inches, 102 pages, \$18 US plus \$2 shipping & handling in North America or \$4 shipping & handling abroad.

The fourth annual anthology compiled by Jeanne Emrich, founder and first editor of Haiga Online, this handsome volume collects 85 haiga by 35 contemporary artists and poets in faithful four-color reproduction and establishes Reeds as the foremost publication of its kind in English today.

The sheer variety of the work in regards to haiku styles and graphic media employed is indicative of how diverse the as-yet largely underground phenomenon of haiga is in the West. In a brief and factual introduction, the editor cites this very diversity, pointing to the employment of graphic pen, colored pencil, sumi-e, watercolor, collage, and digital composition as well.

One mode of haiga composition notably absent from the collection is perhaps that most commonly found in print and online today: photograph and text. Emrich's submission guidelines for future annual collections which is appended to the collection tells us why. She prefers "handmade art" that blends "haiga's three essential elements: haiku, calligraphy, and a painting." She further adds that "haiku should not be merely a caption for the art nor the art an illustration of the haiku...." Her implication is that image and text, while one, should not be linked too closely but should demonstrate a principle of distance not unlike that of the fragment and phrase of a haiku, a resonance which requires of the reader/viewer a role in the creation, too: the perception of the manifold possible relations of these two complementary parts.

Haiga that achieve a perfect balance between image and text – the goal of the practitioner in this art – are quite rare. Most artists show more strength of conception and execution either graphically or lexically, depending upon prior practice and natural affinities. Perhaps for this reason, Emrich provides a generous sampling of collaborative works that unite the varied skills of the plastic artist and of the mature poet.

Manda, a French sumi-e painter and calligrapher, offers four delicately colored traditional haiga which combine her very professional hand with texts by Basho and accompanying French/English translations. Susan Frame, whose ability with a brush is already widely appreciated, links up with poet Andrew Riutta for five haiga of quite varying styles, beginning with minimalist sumi-e and calligraphy, the black ink sparingly placed against a white background, and concluding with a work of vibrant blue, green and lilac gouache or watercolor washes on rice paper that answer, but do not seek to represent literally, Riutta's haiku:

mayfly
a shattered world
through its wing

Another interesting and ambitious collaborative effort integrates, in five haiga, the mixed media of artist Peggy McClure, the calligraphy and translation of Shokan Tadashi Kondo and the original haiku of Raffael de Gruttola. Perhaps the most satisfactory offering by this team comes with the one haiga that departs from the dominant blue motif of the series for a brilliant orange accompaniment to the text

reddened sunflower
the embossed dream

of a full moon

Kuniharu Shimizu, who maintains the online haiga gallery, see haiku here, contributes those simple and unadorned digital haiga for which he is best known with the haiku of six different poets, including Francine Porad, Dimitar Stefanov (Bulgaria) and Sagicho Aihara (Japan). Another collaboration, between the Romanian artist Loretta Baluta Lorincz and Japanese haijin Kayoko Hashimoto, adds to the international flavor of this collection.

The many solo contributors in these pages can be roughly divided between specialists whose primary discipline is either plastic arts or poetry. Here, disparity between the execution in image and text is more commonplace, as one would anticipate, though such dissonance is far from uniform.

Space precludes discussing every artist at length, so I will seek to point out only a few highlights of the plastic artists followed by a few from the poets.

Maria Cozma of Romania has only one entry but it is truly exemplary for its graphic and verbal simplicity. The left hand side of her woven drawing paper is defined by a top-to-bottom column of the horizontal scribbling of a thick carbon pencil, a gesture not dissimilar to that a child might make when invited by such fine quality paper. The remaining two-thirds of the sheet would be blank except for the small and modest autograph of the artist immediately below her simple cursive text:

the old eraser
leaves a trace
on the drawing

Other than the pencil markings, only a red rectangular stamp with the initials "M.C." colors the paper.

Farther along the spectrum is the work of American Gary LeBel, one of whose seven haiga doubles as the cover of this anthology. LeBel's *métier* is largely mixed media with an emphasis on collage and photomontage. Each entry by LeBel testifies to his engaging mastery of color and his inventive visual composition. The poems that join these images, however, fall somewhat short of LeBel's considerable artistic gifts.

Moving along now to the haiga of persons known primarily as poets, established haijin Cor van den Heuvel offers two very elementary and casual pen-and-ink sketches on baseball themes while Marlene Mountain precedes him with two *sumi-e* compositions, the first of which weds a solitary vertical brush-stroke to the spare text

tree
lost
in
its
stretch

Scott Metz appears with six haiga in styles that vary from a conscious mimicry of the naiveté of children's drawings to modern minimalism and abstraction. His work is very uneven, both in the execution of word and image, but this may well be the necessary cost of his obvious willingness to

engage in risk and experiment. The best of his works that aspires to a child's innocent vision is

a child's drawing
the ladder to the sun
only three steps

which is followed by an illustration of the same: a red crayon ladder of three steps that reaches to and rests against a yellow Crayola sun. This would seem to violate the editor's precept that the art not serve only to illustrate the haiku, but this particular haiga is charming enough to avoid censure. Metz's best effort, however, is reserved for an abstract lime-green and speckled watercolor of the partial lateral line of a fish

dawn stars ...
releasing the first trout
underwater

Other very interesting offerings include Robert F. Mainone's haiga inspired by aboriginal North American petroglyphs. Ion Codrescu's gestural abstractions and Donnalynn Chase's collages with their delicate colors and feathery textures.

Two fascinating prose documents complement the art of the volume. Stephen Addiss, well-known author and editor of various books on haiga and haiku, contributes a brief but lively and informative historical essay, "Yomeiride: Haiga as Dowry." This article explores a work by Matsumura Goshun, a disciple of Yosa Buson, who produced a haiga that incorporates 13 haiku in the master's own calligraphy; Goshun's haiga is reproduced on the pages immediately preceding Addiss' article.

The other document, entitled "The Spirit of Haiga," is a lengthy interview conducted by Emrich with Ion Codrescu, a Romanian haijin long active and instrumental as a leader of various continental haiku circles. Codrescu's formal training as an artist and art historian is ably demonstrated in his wide knowledge of the many materials and techniques of haiga as well as haiga's historical development within the larger context of Eastern and Western art.

That no better introduction or comprehensive survey of contemporary Western haiga exists today is a fact sufficient to render this carefully edited and beautifully produced book a must for practitioners and students of the art.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Woodward

All I Can Do by Aya Yuhki, Sunagoya Shobo, Tokyo, 2006

Aya Yuhki's All I Can Do contains 26 free verse poems arrayed in Japanese and English in three sections. Each poem is accompanied by one or two tanka inspired by the preceding poem. The author's aim is to create a new poetics. She states: I secretly wish...a magnetic field of fixed form poem counter free verse, and at the same time that of written counter spoken style."

While Yahki's talent shines throughout the book, the most impressive poems are in the second section, "Walking." These poems are the most personal, about the author's history and family. In "Diapers" she speaks of being a new mother:

in those days there were no paper diapers,
diapers were made of old cotton clothes.
when hung on the veranda,
fluttering in the wind,
you laughed with your whole body like a fish

Yahki's language is rich, but she does not hesitate to use common, everyday speech. Her "Life" evokes Nishiwaki Junzaburo, arguably the best poet of the last century:

Old age: gains of sand falling from the edge of a cliff
Eyes full of wisdom
Eyes sloppy and motionless

The companion tanka, presented in Japanese in the traditional one-line form, are in the best tanka tradition while being modern, as in this companion to Tokyo Bay Wind:

blown
from the Gobi Desert,
where are you going?
the wind tousled
my hair just now?

The pivot line, "where are you going?", allows several reads of the tanka – full as written or as sets of haiku – as the best tanka often do.

The beautiful poem, "Diapers" was cited above. Its companion tanka is as lovely.

I counted the number
of tiny pink shell-like nails
on her fingers and toes
on right and left
hands and feet

The tanka is a complete examination of a mother's unconditional love.

In The Tanka Journal 26, Yuhki discusses English tanka, concluding the ideal English tanka counts ten foot in 2 2 2 2 stresses. While I appreciate her thesis, I appreciate more that her translations follow the best tradition of translators such as Kenneth Rexroth.

All I Can Do is an excellent and well produced work and would be an excellent addition to any collection of Japanese poetry or bilingual tanka.

Reviewed by Gary Blankenship

Growing Late by Tom Clausen. Edited by John Barlow. Copyright 2007. Snapshot Press, Liverpool, UK. ISBN: 1-903543-13-4. \$14.00 USD \$17.00 CAN 5 x 7.75 inches, 80 pp, perfect bound.

Growing Late is the latest masterwork for Tom Clausen and edited by John Barlow. Winner of the Snapshot Press Contest for tanka, the physical production values are elegant, understated, and classy. The tanka contained within the book are all winners, with each poem displayed one per page on crisp white paper. Growing Late is a highly recommended addition to your tanka collection.

Clausen's opening poem is the perfect poem to begin the collection:

my wife asks
what it is that I want—
there it is, that question
not even I
can answer

What follows are still more questions, answers, discoveries, and mysteries as the author grows old and feels the lateness of his hour.

all these years
in one house, one job
one town and in me—
too many changes to fathom
as I sweep away autumn leaves

we work briskly
into the momentum of the day
a long list of what to do,
once all there was
was to fall in love

This awareness of the passing of time and of things—and relationships—lost includes a melancholy nostalgia with a tinge of bitterness.

for years I had desire
to purchase things
that reminded me of my childhood
but now, even that
is gone

wondering if this
is what my parents felt

in their own time
seeing a better past
slip ever farther behind

Poem after poem demonstrates the mastery of a highly skilled poet willing to engage the unsentimental realities of his existence.

so much to do
I sit here
doing nothing—
below zero outside and
so much blowing snow

lunar eclipse
it comes to me
what is wrong at home—
something I did
or didn't do

Each poem has the fluid lines and solid grace of a sculpture. With the same sense of immovable permanence as a block of granite, they document the swiftly fleeting passage of our lives. Clausen is the rare artist that can make stone float. For that reason there is really nothing for a reviewer to say, all that is necessary is to open the book and let the poems spill forth at random, each one saying more about the poet's skill than any reviewer ever could.

Reviewed by M. Kei

The Calligraphy of Clouds, Contemporary American Tanka and Haiku by Yeshaya Rotbard. Copyright 2007. iUniverse, Lincoln, NE. ISBN: 0-595-42071-0. \$14.95 USD, 9 x 6 inches, perfect bound.

Calligraphy of the Clouds is one of the better done self-published books made available through, in this case, iUniverse. The physical production values are attractive, and the book is a satisfyingly meaty 133 pages for the \$14.95 price tag. Unfortunately, the poet's Introduction and the poems show a poet not quite ready to emerge from the workshop milieu.

The book is almost evenly divided between tanka and haiku, with the tanka being the more worthwhile. Rotbard, as his Introduction makes clear, is not knowledgeable about the practice of haiku, other than that it is a short, pithy poem in a pattern of 5-7-5 syllables.

Having settled that Rotbard's verses are not haiku, but tercets in the form of 5-7-5 syllables, we must address the question of whether they are good poems. The answer to this is, "almost." There is promise here, but it needs to undergo the strenuous training of a workshop. Nonetheless, there are times when Rotbard makes his chosen form work.

Absurd how a word
can catch a raindrop mid-air,
hold it there. Yet it does.

However, he doesn't know when enough is enough. The following poem needs no title and would be stronger without it:

The Miner's Canary

Our thread has a knot.
should we try to unravel it,
or just cut it out?

Rotbard's tanka are much better than his tercets, and there are some real gems here. Unfortunately, he makes the mistake of giving them all titles. In 'The Russian Immigrants,' the title is redundant; the poem itself gives all the information needed.

The Russian Immigrants

The old men gather,
they walk as one, talk and smoke,
as if on a street
that's not quite theirs, still strolling
in the shadow of Red Square.

Some of his tanka are good and need just a little tightening to make them the best they can be:

The Chinese Tailor

After hours, head bent
over that rhythmic needle,
he steps from the dark,
squints at the sun, imagines
boats swaying on the River Wei.

Rotbard is particularly good with romantic tanka. His images are direct and usually fresh. To write romantic tanka that are not drowning in romanticism is difficult, but he succeeds.

Luminaries

Really are two moons:
the one that sails through the sky,
and the one about
to let her hair down, shake free,
and then lie down next to me.

Piano

How I love to play
the piano of your back,
fingers poking at
the curved keyboard of your spine,
the music of your breathing.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of mediocre tanka as well. Rotbard has made the mistake of the emerging poet: hungry for publication, he has gone to press before his art is ripe. While there are tasty fruits to be plucked here, he should have shaken the tree hard first and offered us only the best.

Reviewed by M. Kei

Tanka Fields by Robert D. Wilson. Foreword by Michael McClintock. Copyright 2006. White Egret Press, Groveland, CA. ISBN: None. \$6.00 USD. 5.5" x 8.5" 32 pages, saddle-stitched.

Tanka Fields, by Robert D. Wilson, best known as the owner and managing editor of the online journal, Simply Haiku, and as the author of Vietnam Ruminations (haibun), is a collection of excellent tanka, but poorly presented.

The opening page presents us with a 'Foreward' which I was at first disposed to accept as a deliberate eccentricity, but the existence of other malapropisms suggest an editor depending too heavily on his spell-check instead of his grammar. Other oddities, such as beginning the poetry on the left hand page instead of the right, the sudden change in font and size at the end of the book, inconsistent ellipses, alignment errors, and other anomalies distract from some very excellent poetry that deserves a better presentation.

While most chapbooks are of variable quality with a few gems among a field of pleasantly ordinary verses, Wilson's good tanka are numerous and reach a consistently high standard, which only serves to make the errors mentioned above even more jarring. As presented here, Wilson's poetry invites us to immerse ourselves in the still waters of a deep soul, then drops rocks that make it hard for us to keep that contemplative mood.

Some of the most effective poems come at the beginning and reflect Wilson's experience during the Vietnam War. Few poets address war so well; Wilson is the bard of war for the tanka world.

gold buddhas
sitting on the echo
of muffled cries . . .
gunships setting fire
to the moon

a kinsman
to the reeds,

the egret . . .
planted in a
soldier's ashes

While many artists in many media have attempted to evoke the Vietnam experience, few have done it so economically and so effectively as Wilson. His sequence of poems leads to a short prose piece about his mother's reaction to his departure and her death; the flow is disrupted by an unnecessary tribute to another poet. I'm all for acknowledging our sources, but an end note would have been sufficient.

The second quarter of the book is a series of intimate poems, depicting the poet's love and loss for an unspecified other.

dining with you
on a plate of stars . . .
each one a memory
painted with what
could have been

i saw you,
this morning,
passing through a
salmon's shadow on
the way to coffee

Passing the half way point of the book, we stumble into a series of poems that are not as well sequenced as the first half. Excellent poems are here, along with poems that are not so good, and some of the juxtapositions make little poetic sense. Taken with the physical production values, it gives a sense that the poet was rushing to completion. Nonetheless, there are some good poems here. Especially good are the poems that evoke the Japanese sense of 'aware,' or the keen awareness of the ephemeral beauty of the world.

she lights a candle,
reciting a prayer
learned long ago
in a cathedral
made of paper

how could you have known
she'd take your jacket,
lock you outside
in the snow, and
drink mango juice?

The end section regains coherence and presents a progression of winter/death to spring/rebirth. The set includes a tanka that is one of my favorites and has been ever since I first saw it in an online workshop:

am i mad,
wanting a jellyfish
to teach me
how to breath
the tide?

Poems like these are well worth the \$6 price. The reader can but hope Wilson will come out a second edition that does justice to the poetry. There are few books I like well enough to buy twice, but if he did come out with a revised and improved second edition, I would snap it up.

Review by M. Kei

On This Same Star, selections from the tanka poetry collection WILL by Mariko Kitakubo. Translated by Amelia Fielden. Copyright 2006. Kadogawa Gakugei Shuppan Ltd.5-24-5, Hongo Bunkyo-ku,Tokyo, 113-0033 Japan. ISBN: 4-04-651667-4.\$15.00 USD.8" x 5" 190 pages.

On This Same Star is a bilingual Japanese/English edition of poems that were originally published (2005) in Japanese in the collection WILL by Mariko Kitakubo. Included in the selection are 263 tanka, out of the 330 tanka that make up the original. Kitakubo is one of the best known and most popular of the Japanese tanka poets working today; her translator Amelia Fielden is well known as both a translator and a tanka poet in her own right.

The works included in On This Same Star are arranged chronologically in sections. As Fielden states in the English introduction to the book, "contemporary tanka are customarily arranged in sections, under headings relating to one or more of the poems within the sections. I use that term, rather than 'chapter,' because there is no continuous narrative even within a section—albeit the overarching theme of the poetry here is Kitakubo's life."

Not explicitly stated in the introduction, but learned from the translator through private correspondence, the works are not strictly autobiographical. Although many are, some are fictional, or fictionalized. With a poet of Kitakubo's stature there is no way to tell which are which, but the poems about her mother's finally illness carry with them the unmistakable truth of authenticity.

ah, there's nothing
in particular
I want to talk
with Mother about—
and yet, and yet

Having attended my own mother's death bed, I know exactly what it feels like when there is nothing to be said, but you wish you could think of something to say.

For those readers who are used to modern English-language tanka that is heavily dependent upon nature imagery, Kitakubo's work will be a challenge. Nature in her poems is frequently present, but

treated far differently than the Romantic tradition that is a major topos in Western tanka.

through my hollow body
a breeze blows
gently shaking
my one frail altar
to the gods

the water
in the cistern
remains silent—
from my weary brain
a single bubble floats up

Not only are her images strong, they often feature striking juxtapositions and turns of phrase:

just like lips
storing hatred, then opening—
crisply
white lilies
come into bloom

in the hollow
of my palm
curl
aromatic cashews
the shape of fetuses

Both poems are excellent examples of ‘controlled ambiguity.’ The cashew poem is anything but vague, yet it does not yield its meaning to the casual reader. Is the fetus-shaped cashew a metaphor of the beginning of life, as both nuts and fetuses are the seeds from which new beings grow? Or is it a metaphor for death, the cashew an aborted fetus? Or does it mean nothing at all, simply being one of those things that make you go “hm?”

While Fielden eschews calling the ‘sections’ sequences, they are indeed ‘sequences,’ if by that term we mean autonomous tanka joined together by an invisible thread. ‘An Unfinished Letter’ contains the cashew poem mentioned above and is immediately followed by:

my ring finger
once showed that
being bound
and being loved
were one and the same

Each of the poems is a worthy poem by itself, but when juxtaposed with each other, the Labyrinth of

the poems grows more complex. Like the Labyrinth of Greece, there are mysteries lurking here, and monsters too. That sets Kitakubo's work apart from most Western tanka poets today; while many of her poems are beautiful, they are also disturbing and unique.

Reviewed by M. Kei

Poets wishing to submit tanka books for review may contact M. Kei directly at [kujaku@verizon dot net](mailto:kujaku@verizon.net).or Jeffrey Woodward at: j_l_woodward@yahoo.com.or send copies to Lynx, pob 1250, Gualala, CA 95445.

LETTERS

. . . My poems and short fiction have appeared in Duck & Herring Co.'s Pocket Field Guide, Monkeybicycle, Pindeldyboz, and Bellowing Ark, as well as the online journals Lily, Cross Connect, Word Riot, The Centrifugal Eye, The Heron's Nest, Contemporary Haibun Online, and Roadrunner Haiku Journal among others. I live on a small farm in Yamhill, OR with a menagerie of animals including a rescued potbelly pig named Odious. I teach creative writing and literature at George Fox University, south of Portland, OR. Thanks for your consideration, Ed Higgins

. . . PS - I've just published my first collection of tanka with Modern English Tanka Press, The Salesman's Shoes, and Lynx is credited in the acknowledgements. James Roderick Burns, Edinburgh, UK

Dear haiku friends, An hour ago I received the sad news that two days ago Wim Lofvers died. I knew he was ill and the end was inevitable, but still such news comes hard. Wim has made important contributions to haiku, nationally in the Netherlands as well as internationally, as a poet, as president of the Haiku Kring Nederland and as a publisher. Many of you have known him in one or more of these capacities. For seven years his biannual journal Woodpecker was one of the most important platforms for haiku poets from all over the world to show their work. Wim's small but ever so delicate series of Radish haiku books were highly appreciated. Wim was a kind man with a deep love for haiku. A funeral service will be held next Saturday, April 28th. Should you want to send your condolences to the family, the address is: Rijsterdijk 25 / 8574 VW Bakhuizen / Netherlands. Max Verhart

. . . Thank you so very, very much. I am humbled and ecstatic. Lynx deserves whatever praise it receives and it is a true joy to know that I will be a part of it. Also, I would like to thank you for giving the ghazal a place to exist. As a western individual I have found it a completely edifying form to explore. The ghazal's middle eastern spiritual history can be a bridge between peoples in our current times. Again, thank you, for your kind words and for the work you both are doing. Shawn Bowman

. . . Any Lynx reader interested in purchasing my book of tanka, but then you danced (favorably reviewed by M. Kei in the winter issue of Lynx), should send a check for \$10 to Jeanne Lupton, 2692 Sacramento Street, Berkeley, CA 94702-2336. Thank you! Jeanne Lupton

. . . Tanka Online which premiered February 1, 2007, is a website teaching poets new to the form how to write tanka. A collaborative effort by poets Jeanne Emrich, Michael McClintock, Tom Clausen, Margaret Chula (all of the USA), Amelia Fielden (Australia) and Mariko Kitakubo (Japan), it features essays and articles on writing and appreciating tanka, a tanka gallery, recommended reading, and more. Jeanne Emrich

. . . All my best wishes for a great haiku year. Please find attached the latest issue of our newsletter. Do not hesitate to send us any haiku and/or information relating to haiku for the next issue. Previous newsletter may be downloaded via our web site. In haiku spirits, Gilles Fabre

. . . I have just completed the 1000th haiga. At this time, I would like to thank all those who contributed haiku to my haiga project, and those who have been viewing my website. Kuniharu Shimizu

. . . The International Japanese Short Form Journal read by over 6,000 people worldwide SIMPLY HAIKU. The SPRING Issue.

. . . On 2/26/07, Jane Reichhold wrote: Just to let you know the books (The 5th Season) arrived in perfect condition! You are a good packer of packages.

Robin Gill: Not me, Lightning Source! I ordered from "My Orders" inside of Paraverse Press inside of Lightning Source. Sending "basic shipping" rather than UPS was an experiment, so i am glad it went OK. Unfortunately, it means i could not make corrections! So be sure and peek at the Errata for Cherry at my site – i am afraid the style of the page re epiphany right up front (sob!) needed some work and a few hundred pages later, i turned the god of wisdom into a stupa – a truly stupid mistake i vaguely recall catching and then i guess i got a phone call or something else happened and i forgot until my friend bill found it. Luis the scholar feels there is far too much me and stuff about the book in cherry though he praised it and me profusely and explained what i was doing better than i can in an online forum and may put something up on amazon soon. Copying some eggs of composite translations from the book, i find alot of improvement can be made to it = i need to put in two months of editing – about a dozen pages / day – to get the right words, to change some first-person sentences into aphoristic statements (not because there is too much me in them but for purely stylistic reasons). But i want to put in more natural history even more and, for that, need to work with the right biologists and fill in other areas and add pictures . . . i really need a team for it and my other books, and so my aim is to get to a japanese university with good links to a US or English university or vice-versa. With the 5th season,

my biggest fear was how another bill (higginson) would react to my pointing out the real significance of his poetic but slightly off translation; but i was real careful how i treated it (and i did really like it or i would not have put it up front - bill would do well to mistranslate more like that!) and he has written me after reading it and all is fine!

JR: What a tome!

RG: It is the exact same length as the large Topsy-turvy 1585, the Lightning Source limit of 740 pp – that makes about 3000 pp total in my 3 years and 3 months of publishing. How many publishers can say they have ten times more pages in their books than they have readers?

JR: I will review both books in the June issue of LYNX! [Sorry, Robin, I was simply not good enough to do your books justice in reviews this issue! jr]

RG: Wonderful! And LYNX, i have noticed, results in more sales than Simply Haiku.

JR: Completely impressed with your work. You are a genius! Now everyone will know it. What a gift you have given haiku literature!!!

RG: I would like to give a lot more, but i was serious about needing some funding (and more access to things like J-Stor over here or Iwanami's searchable Taikei, etc.) – i must concentrate on other writing more likely to sell or i will never be able to settle down. With the reviews, if you can get drafts out with a wee bit of time to spare and bounce them off me, i am sure i can make some improvements – in Japan, i did this for magazine and newspaper reporters who wrote about me and/or my work. I promise i never try to change anything said about me but only help to make certain points are made more effectively and beautifully – i try to imagine whether someone who does not know my work will get what is written and sometimes suggest little changes that make a large difference. (Robert did not bounce his cherry blossom epiphany review off me as was the case with fly-ku! and you might note it is not quite as well-written). Oh, and i just thought of something – please excuse a chumon for a review! – since LYNX, thanks to Ah Ha! is read by people who have one foot in the world of poetry outside of the japanese, i would so much like them to introduce my books – or try them out on – people who have no particular interests in Japanese poetry – i know next to nothing of that world of poetry and wonder if they would like reading my books even though i do not like reading much of their work! I do not know how to induce people to introduce books to others, though i am trying myself now – i have written a number of people who like borges for i think they will surely like me, but it is hard for i always poop out on these forums for i really want time to write my books . . . sorry if i have been a bit incoherent.
Robin Gill

. . . The premiere issue of Shamrock Haiku Journal, the new online magazine of the Irish Haiku Society, is now available. Shamrock is an international quarterly online journal that publishes quality haiku, senryu and haibun in English, and has a home page. Shamrock is calling for submissions from local, national, and international haiku poets for the next issue, which will be out in early June 2007. Please submit your work to Dr. Anthony Anatoly Kudryavitsky, Editor, at The deadline for submissions is May 31st, 2007. See submissions guidelines. We wish you a pleasant reading. Anatoly Kudryavitsky

. . . A small photo album of Constanta National Haiku Festival that includes photos of some noted haijin, including David Cobb (ENG), Colin Blundell (ENG), Jean Antonini (FRA), Sam Canarrozi Yada (FRA), Catherine Mair (NZD), Marcel Smets (BEL), Ion Codrescu (ROM), Florina Dobrescu

(ROM), and James W. Hackett (USA). • • Two haiga by Origa (Russian-American) poet & painter are New Year and Valentine.. Have You Read: Letters Between R. H. Blyth and J. W. Hackett? Pat Hackett

The Second European Haiku Conference in Vadstena, Sweden 8-10 June 2007
The Swedish Haiku Society (Svenska Haiku Sällskapet) plans to organize the Second European Haiku Conference in the medieval town of Vadstena 8-10 June 2007. Vadstena is located by lake Vättern between Stockholm and Gothenburg. It can be reached by train from Stockholm or Copenhagen to Linköping, where a chartered bus will meet to transport the participants to Vadstena (45 minutes). The conference will take place in the premises of Vadstena Folkhögskola (The Vadstena College for Adult Education). The conference hall and the dining room are in the same building just by the lake. Across a lawn are the lodging-houses. Registration fee per person is 1.800 kronor (165 Euro), including a single room with shower and toilet for two nights and the following meals: Friday 8 June dinner and evening coffee; Saturday 9 June breakfast, lunch and dinner; Sunday 10 June breakfast and lunch. Double rooms are available, costing 1.650 kronor (145 Euro) per person. The fees also include the use of the conference hall with coffee, fruits, writing materials. Participants who wish to stay over an extra night can do so at the price of 500 kronor (45 Euro)

which includes breakfast. The conference language is English.

Those who wish to participate in the conference are asked to inform me and the local organizer of the College, Ms. Anna Andersson, before 10 April. The early dead-line is requested by the College so that rooms can be reserved well in advance, as many conferences take place in the summer at Vadstena. The e-mail address of Anna Andersson is anna@vadstena.fhsk.se

The name Vadstena means "stones by the water" and refers to a manor building from the 13th century. In 1346 King Magnus Eriksson made a donation of the manor to a convent for Birgitta Birgersdotter, who in 1391 was canonized by the Pope as Sancta Birgitta. Since then Vadstena became an important centre for catholic pilgrims. In 1545 King Gustav Vasa built a castle in Vadstena which still stands by the lake.

The medieval town plan with its narrow, twisting streets have been preserved. The centre of the town lies 5 minutes walk from the College. The closest train station is Linköping, which can be reached by train from Stockholm's airport Arlanda, for instance from Arlanda at 14.10, reaching Linköping at 16.57. The same train leaves from Stockholm at 14.40. Linköping can also be reached by train from Copenhagen's airport Kastrup, for instance at 13.56, arriving at Linköping 16.55. The Stockholm airport for cheap flights (Ryanair, Wizzair) and chartered flights is Skavsta south of Stockholm. It has direct bus connections with Linköping, for example leaving Skavsta 14.30 and 17.25, arriving at Linköping 90 minutes later. A train from Nyköping close to Skavsta leaves at 15.02, arriving at Linköping 16.28. The Swedish Haiku Society has chartered a bus which leaves Linköping at 17.00, reaching Vadstena 45 minutes later. The bus will also be used for return transport to Linköping on Sunday 10 June, leaving Vadstena after lunch at 13.00 hrs so that participants can take the train to Stockholm and Arlanda at 13.58, arriving in Stockholm 15.40 and at Arlanda 16.07. Trains from Stockholm to Arlanda leave every 15 minutes. The first train to Kastrup and Copenhagen after lunch leaves Linköping at 14.00 hrs, arriving at Kastrup 17.23 and in Copenhagen 17.37. Further information about the timetable of Swedish Railways (Statens Järnvägar, SJ) is available on internet. The postal address of Anna Andersson is Vadstena Folkhögskola, Box 181, S-59 224 Vadstena. Telephone +46 (0)143-157 00. My postal address is Rindögatan 42, S-115 58 Stockholm. Telephone + 46 (0)8 661 76 47. Mobile +46 (0)70 910 9971. email

The Swedish Haiku Society hopes that many haiku poets from Europe will come to the conference as well as some special guests from Japan and USA.

PARTICIPATION RENGA

Sad to say, but you, aside from Francis Paul Attard, have let the participation renga die. This is the end of this feature in LYNX. I hope you will at least read these last survivors of a marvelous experiment. A huge THANK YOU to everyone who participated. It has been glorious! jr

VANILLA RENGA

A plain ol' renga with 2 / 3 lines for 12 links

smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

the chocolate and strawberry
carefully removed CC

on her back
running down the spine
whipped cream WR

Reddi or not
here I come! CC

sundae or son day
a confusion of words
is my delight JR

country store checkerboard
between two barrels CC

old men's lies
about fish never caught
women not kissed JR

square hole
in the ice CC

my straw finds its way
to the warm red
of a cherry WR

purple sky above the creek
praised much by the locals FPA

~&~

smoothing the sea

sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

crumpling the foil
to make a ball for the cat GD

recycling
junk mail
a new poem JR

plagiarized
punch line CC

copycats
serving the drink designed
by Martha Stewart JR

a chip in
the china plate CC

the sake cup
made valuable by the crack
gold-filled JR

four lanes of interstate
heading north CC

roads
leading us along as if
they knew something JR

obsidian we dare to touch
in fear of more fire WR

running from
sparks buried in rocks
the volcano erupts JR

in time at the cue
on the filming set FPA

~&~
smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

Firestone shredding

its tread CC

grating cheese
on the chopped vegetables
April lunchtime GD

Hellman's left
in the fridge CC

squeeze-bottle
collapsed on its
sticky innards GD

smell circles outward
from the skunk roadkill JR

the perimeter
if where I boxed
myself in CC

the bright light of opportunity
comes in the shine of gold JR

still at the death bed
eyebrows
waving from a surfer WR

hang ten
vigilante posse CC

justice in these days
sending the protest letter
by e-mail JR

asserting albeit playfully
miss on the punctuation marks FPA

~&~
smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

crumpling the foil
to make a ball for the cat GD

catch –
the door bell
and hers mingling WR

soles of sleep
pooled beneath JMB

the knitted sleeve
mended with knurled fingers

the same old dream JR

on my winter window
breath becomes frozen thistles WR

the flower
you bring me only
at night JR

on her back tattooed
fruits I dare to touch WR

smiling
she offers a taste
of her peach GD

fuzz
the scattered hippies CC

a gust
disperses
unlinked verses GD

with no season in mind
Buddha's finger up north WR

~&~
smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

crumpling the foil
to make a ball for the cat GD

recycling
junk mail
a new poem JR

plagiarized
punch line CC

copycats
serving the drink designed
by Martha Stewart JR

"The quality of mercy
is not strained, -"etc., etc. FPA

furrin accent
my kingdom
for a hearse CC

mid-summer breeze
Snowman's sneeze FPA

it'snot rain
the clatter of hailstones
on the window JR

I see my ground plan
only lead under my feet WR

dawn's early light
even the toy soldiers
bogged down CC

the ochre earth climbs
up a stalk of dried grass JR

~&~
smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

crumpling the foil
to make a ball for the cat GD

recycling
junk mail
a new poem JR

plagiarized
punch line CC

copycats
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"The quality of mercy
is not strained, -"etc., etc. FPA

furrin accent
my kingdom
for a hearse CC

mid-summer breeze
Snowman's sneeze FPA

it'snot rain
the clatter of hailstones
on the window JR

I see my ground plan
only lead under my feet WR

dawn's early light
even the toy soldiers
bogged down CC

forgetting all kings
watching the queen in her hive WR

~&~
smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

crumpling the foil
to make a ball for the cat GD

catch –
the door bell
and hers mingling WR

soles of sleep
pooled beneath JMB

the knitted sleeve
mended with knurled fingers

the same old dream JR

on my winter window
breath becomes frozen thistles WR

the flower
you bring me only
at night JR

on her back tattooed
fruits I dare to touch WR

smiling
she offers a taste
of her peach GD

fuzz
the scattered hippies CC

in the basement
infringements
of mice FPA

as everything exists
something devours it JR

~&~
smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

crumpling the foil
to make a ball for the cat GD

recycling
junk mail
a new poem JR

plagiarized
punch line CC

copycats
serving the drink designed
by Martha Stewart JR

a chip in
the china plate CC

the sake cup
made valuable by the crack
gold-filled JR

Rudolph the red nosed-reindeer
one foggy Christmas Eve guides FPA

the idea of gift-giving
learned from the three wise men
paid by plastic JR

I turn my last card
it's a joker WR

frogs in chorus
intransigent voices
transience FPA

wood turning around
in knotholes JR

~&~

smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

coin awakes
pulls the sheet up JMB

my river
your ocean
gone fishin CF

once before when two
alone felt united WR

he said
"your enemy is my friend"
and smiled JR

swabbed off its flank
lion's anesthetic pinch FPA

best part of the show
the film begins with the roar
of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer JR

better haiku if . . .
I only had a brain CC

scarecrow and the tin man

between them the wisdom
of the natural world JR

the food on the table
made of rocks CC

dozing through Orion
hounds in a dream
forgotten soon after FPA

gauzy gowns long gone
angels now in T-shirts JR

~&~

smoothing the sea
sunset's metallic gold
hammered flat Jane Reichhold

the chocolate and strawberry
carefully removed CC

on her back
running down the spine
whipped cream WR

Reddi or not
here I come! CC

sundae or son day
a confusion of words
is my delight JR

the players argue:
who cut the cheese? GD

barking spiders
the raspberry sound
joins laughter JR

all the red of sunset
in my watermelon WR

afterglow
its wash of purple
thistles in bloom FPA

leaves hearing

autumn fall JR

WHEELING ALONG

5-liners, verse or prose
ends with 12 links

a wheel keeps spinning
the hamster long dead
on its path
on my path
an inaudible breeze Werner Reichhold

closing eyes
against the sea that
swallows the sun
the ache of being diminished
by a most marvelous day JR

following
dotted lines
another mile closer
to my daughter's
final flight CC

I wanted to enter light
so I am planting a wildfire
and everywhere mad
there's hardly anything left
a sudden rain sweeps up petals JR

I see the color questions
unfurling in fern tops
pearl drops
the moon face
giving in WR

the day
my mother looked at a lake
I was conceived
my original mind came
from the pure waters JR

Narcissus
your reflection reflects
your egotesticle nature

"Have Mistletoe;
Will Travel" CC

migrating geese
their V in the sky
goes with them
the dents in my old skull
crushed by birth forceps JR

~&~

a wheel keeps spinning
the hamster long dead
on its path
on my path
an inaudible breeze Werner Reichhold

bands spiral by
the bright round moon
languid luminosities
whisper of
the coming storm EL

opens our eyes
with a wake of destruction
flooding
left by the hurricane
seems to be endless tears JR

Astrodome
a sea of cots
but back in Louisiana
the slow-moving tsunami
of budget cuts CC

just talk-words
seeping into the evening
childhood again
that man's hands on me
unable to speak still JR

mimosas, magnolias,
and the lone, tall elm
I am young again
golf club in hand
each tree a hole CC

first for a short time

then more intense
birdsong from her house
and white smoke curling up
guess after burning letters WR

winter seas
loud with the heavy
tossing and turning
a sound deep in the mattress
as you roll over toward me JR

~&~
a wheel keeps spinning
the hamster long dead
on its path
on my path
an inaudible breeze Werner Reichhold

April 15
hardly any time
left to meet
the deadline
for links CC

with poems
paying my taxes
the IRS
has nothing to do with
a goddess named Iris JR

flying
on wings of five lines
I expect landing
on noh grounds
the verse without me WR

see how she flies
and bestrides the dogmatic realm
of suffering
in infinite space where rays diverge
I'll move like cautious sunlight – open JR

golden-haired –
Supergirl soaring
through outer space
her future as bright
as blue Kryptonite CC

coffee latte
for the sportive couple
in a bubbling hot tub
the laptop announces a rockfall
when her friend lands at Mars airport WR

a night sea noise
full and turned to milk
moonlight spilled
from sky to shore
gift, symbol and goddess JR

~&~

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on my path
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each tree a hole CC

her ivory nakedness
lion greatness in her bed
yielding as a grave
pushing off all the riff-raff until
the captain looked just like him JR

still in flight
the goal knows it all
passing the keeper
when a circular moon
lights up the net WR

~&~
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on my path
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casting off their hearts
the highest hills blaze into mist
at the edge of ether
stripped of dignity they harden
forever talking with surfaces JR

early morning
in exchange for stars
cherry blossoms
we try to touch
flower dreams WR

GENTLY WIPING DUST

Alternate 3-line and 2-line links for 100 lines
Theme: impermanence, transitoriness

gently wiping dust from grandmother's photograph october windsong TW
warm fall days chill at sunset BJ
last rush of color outdoing itself virginia creeper PC
nights behind closed eyes images in red float by JR
taps at sunrise opening daylilies on their graves PC
flowers of our youth gone – everyone MM
mind wasting memories disappear one by one JAJ
haiku eagle gliding in a sea of chance LCG
meteorite streaks across the night sky sudden cool breeze MWM
morning sun on a bayou mist KCL
first snow already melting dancing barefoot JAJ
thinking of Tundra buying new shoes TLG
breath suspended overhead, the northern lights in slow dance JAJ
father and son pause for a long moment RF
SOFT SHOULDERS warning he glances at his wife their 50th year GR
finishing the school of hard knocks YH
digital display counting the failing heart GD
she tries to add up all the good times YH
battery low the calculator reads "ERROR" GD
the new player late for the first game RF
dealing cards to an empty chair careless of how they land GD
face-down \$10,000 poorer CC
richer for the experience bottoms up YH
"How do you stop a wino from charging?" CC
at the end of that rainbow no credit card cg
back to the diner waiting tables JSJ

old woman slips jelly packets into her purse cg
mistaking a condom / for a condiment GD
runs her tongue / over red lips, / snaps her purse shut cg
Quiet out at sea the boat sinks JMB
hot songs melt the wax from sailors' ears GD
listening to a star leaving the lake WR
heaving light beneath the wave JMB
fingerprint in the pink birthday frosting cg
watching a cow's spittle only eating grass WR
smell from next door something stronger than just tobacco JAJ
ashes as the police leave burning marijuana WR
flick. . . flick . . . flick stench of lighter fluid GD
dust behind the radio stiff rubber band JMB
neither shrinking nor growing my 8-track collection CC
returns in a dream rock face I photographed with no point in mind FPA
the sandstone nose washing away JMB
on a postscript warned of insomnia waves pound a hunter's moon FPA
my old manual the barely legible letters CC
h lf wh t e s id w as it ching JMB
literacy job applicant the misspelled words CC
seasonal sign along the interstate: "grape's for sell" GD
roadside vendors Barney pats his holster CC
a cell phone rings but in whose pocket or purse? GD

recalling a good favour
a bag of figs for a gift FPA

~*~

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ashes as the police leave burning marijuana WR
flick. . . flick . . . flick stench of lighter fluid GD
permeating . . . a stick of sandalwood CC
patchouli reek his receding ponytail GD
rainbowed the new bag of rubber bands CC
round and round the vase roses CF
steps I make moon by moon without sandals WR
in the direction of a skein of geese FPA
morning meadow a herd of sheep making an ewe turn CC
rockin' merrily around the Christmas tree FPA
neither egret nor heron the paper bag CC
pages of old books cloud patterns on a beach stroll FPA
brown stains trace the rain's passage through the roof GD

nasty work done badly
woodpecker reminding FPA

~*~

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rockin' merrily around the Christmas tree FPA
neither egret nor heron the paper bag CC
pages of old books cloud patterns on a beach stroll FPA
tide laps my toes polyhedron of footprints CC

looking for water in the sea
Euclid FPA

~*~

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the sandstone nose washing away JMB
oh-oh-oh snuff-snuff-snuffle caShoo GD
the red moon pales as it rises above the pollution GD
brownout at the chocolate factory CC
girls giggling fingers between each other's hairy shoulder blades WR
the apes find pleasure in grooming each other JR
"And. . ." she reminds him "No monkey business" CC

retain some of the day's bustle
in the wine shop with friends FPA

~*~

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bubblegum smack across her face JAJ
wiping her feet at heaven's gate Pat Shelley CC
"wind do not muss my hair" calm skies on the day of her death JR
the dropped marble rolls out of sight GD
Lew Marie: "Give me Marvin Gardens, or give me death!" CC
eminent domain: dog cringing from master's foot GD
bouncing off the rim clipped toenail CC
says she hates cobwebs the cleaning lady FPA
guests leaving she stays with pearls WR
idling engine I restart it CC
hybrids have it up the hill a standstill WR
ooo's and ahhh's my new rhyming dictionary CC
looking through my slang dictionary for the right word GD
on the tip of my tongue the truth trips me up JR
woman size she will give up her acreage abutting his WR

face in a puddle smiles back
sky blue of lapis lazuli FPA

~*~

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girls giggling fingers between each other's hairy shoulder blades WR
the apes find pleasure in grooming each other JR
"here – this tiny delicacy, crack it with your teeth" GD

after picking cherry blossoms
white under toe nails' red WR

~*~

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father and son pause for a long moment RF
breeze changing course weeds in the dark field bend again GR
up ahead another hidden curve ESJ
SOFT SHOULDERS warning he glances at his wife their 50th year GR
finishing the school of hard knocks YH
digital display counting down the failing heart GD
she tries to add up all the good times YH
was never very good at math MHH
one more short story attempt into the waste basket GR
sharp edges cutting through the trash bag shadows leaking out GD
thickening juice from the black beans can JMB
long time on shelf honey crystallizes sticky jar JSJ
mustard seeds pop in hot oil GD
it will be a cold day in July when I cook again YH
even the firecrackers refuse to light – a rainy fourth! dht
indoors all afternoon two boys play Civil War one gray; one blue RF
refugee children / strangers to laughter PGC
stray sniffing / stranded starfish – / gray sky's cold FPA
mackerel clouds reach every horizon piling the sea JR
broken thermometer poisonous mercury scatters everywhere JAJ
driving through a school zone spray of sparrows RF
waiting at the end of the block police speed trap JAJ
another hole in the cheese CC
small tear in the yellowed love letter folded, refolded cg
anthrax scare the office smart-aleck CC
we go to bed goose pimples appear wanted WR

bare feet find the linoleum CC
grano coffee ground heel thought JMB
sijo* jogging his memory in Central Park CC
as night falls still the fires of the two towers WR
unfiltered dust the masks of the rescue workers CC
disaster on TV close the windows GD
leaping the fence every pocket filled with apples CC
inclined to follow paw prints of a cat WR
excited the dog sniffs the grass in a widening circle GD
that voice is time unraveling CF
pink azaleas a "sweater girl" pops a button CC
the guided missile goes astray again JR
just the top of his head above the bunker CC

night for a long time
under cherry blossoms WR

FINIS

