

AMERICAN HAIKU



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AMERICAN HAIKU

Vol. IV, No. 1

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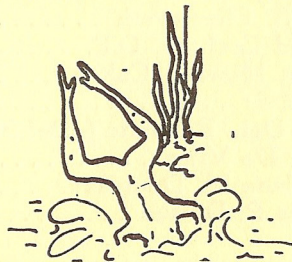
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NOTICE

In corresponding with AMERICAN HAIKU, please use your zip code. It is essential that we have it.



HAIKU PUBLISHERS' DIRECTORY

To our knowledge, the following editors regard original, previously unpublished English-language haiku as something more important than mere filler.

GREEN WORLD. Faye P. Niles, ed.
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Type haiku, one per page, on 8½ by 11 paper; include your name and address on each manuscript page; include stamped, self-addressed envelope for return. See AH, III, 2:3 for additional listings.

Awards

The editors are pleased to present the following haiku, which have been judged to be the best subscriber-haiku submitted during the months listed. AMERICAN HAIKU cash awards were \$10.00 each. Please note: our printer requires six to eight weeks to produce the magazine; therefore, it is impossible that our awards listing match our publication date. Our next issue (scheduled for early Dec., 1966) will contain awards for April, through September, 1966.

OCTOBER, 1965

From wind and moonlight

the bridge shelters the river—

and this leaky boat.

—O M B Southard

NOVEMBER, 1965

From this waterfall

another river rises,

weaving off in mist.

—Foster Jewell

DECEMBER, 1965

Tide in, rising breeze,
boats jerk and bob like puppies
worrying the leash.

—Paul O. Williams

JANUARY, 1966

Breathing heavily,
in and out—in and out—
the summer sea.

—Gustave Keyser

FEBRUARY, 1966

Locusts with chainsaws
are cutting our landmark oak
into fine sawdust.

—Gustave Keyser

MARCH, 1966

On the harbor bridge
old sailors' hands grip the railing,
steering for channels.

—Georgian Tashjian

STRONG VERBS IN HAIKU

by Gustave Keyser

One of the prime keys to optimum effect in haiku is strong verbs. This means selecting the precise verb forms to depict the nature and degree of action;—the inevitable verbs, the only right verbs.

Man is a creature of action; nature is all action. But this does not infer that everything is always crash-bang-slam! Sleeping, the most quiescent of all activities, is an action. Sitting in a chair at ease, reading and smoking, is a semi-quiescent action. Getting up and hopping about the room, shouting, is an intensely active action. The poet must use verbs accurately, to

denote the kind of action that is taking place.

Consider this haiku (**boldface** supplied):

Of the snow that **fell**,
some **lies** on a common bush
uncommonly well.

—Robert Spiess
(AH, II, 1: 59)

This is a completely quiescent scene. There is absolutely no movement. Aside from the technical facts—that the rhyme, alliteration, and touch of wry humor conjoin excellently in unifying the poem—this haiku is perfect

in its verb choices. The snow has already fallen and now it does what: "covers" a bush? "whitens" a bush? No, it simply "lies" on the bush—the precisely right verb for the mood of the poem.

Contrast that with this haiku:

The old, grey, woodshed
sits knee deep in cool fog
escaping the heat.
—Carrow De Vries
(AH, II, 2: 30)

This also depicts a quiescent scene and mood. The woodshed is personified, but "sits" is not the right verb for the implied volition of the woodshed in trying to escape the heat. "Squats" might have been more in harmony; but literally, nothing either sits or squats knee deep. It would have to "stand" knee deep. Since this haiku is

a 5-6-5 variant, the second line might even have read, "squats haunches deep," for personifying the woodshed. This is merely a comment, not a suggestion.

A good example of the semi-quiescent category is:

In the mellow light
shadows from a long dead tree
scratching at the dawn.
—Pauline Fehn
(AH, II, 1: 30)

The contrast of the stark tree (death) with dawn (life) produces a distinct mood, much like that of a slow procession of black-robed monks carrying candles. "Scratching" is exactly right to depict the long shadows of the branches, moving slightly in a morning breeze, reaching toward the spreading light of dawn. (In this case,

the verb is actually the present progressive of **scratch**, the **are** of **are scratching** being omitted and understood—a device frequently used in poetry.) Suppose the poet had said the shadows were “clawing” or “grabbing” at the light? This would have given an impression of intense action, completely out of harmony with the mood of the haiku.

Although there is slightly more physical action in this next haiku, it also is semi-quiescent:

The fall rain **whispers**

—and a grasshopper **hinges**
slowly down a thistle.

—Don Eulert

(AH, II, 2: 8)

Here is excellent verb choice. There is no visual action in “whispers”, only

the suggestion of an auditory sensation. The adverb “slowly”, following “hinges”, reduces the physical action to its barest minimum. And what more perfect selection could have been made than “hinges” for the walking movement of a grasshopper’s legs?

The next example produces a sense of intense action, our third category:

The red sun **kindles**

a crackling of tinted birds,
waking the garden.

—Carrow De Vries

(AH, III, 2: 22)

“Kindles” has particular strength and appropriateness here, in relation to “crackling”, the verbal used as a noun (actually a gerund), and “waking.” The total haiku, with its strong alliterative “k” sounds, gives a unified im-

pression of an intense flurry of action and color.

The display of action verbs in this next haiku is truly impressive:

Leaves **moil** in the yard,
 reveal an eyeless doll's head . . .
 slowly **conceal** it.

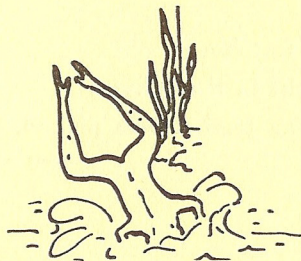
—Tohko

(AH, III, 2: 44)

The very strong “moil” precisely describes the churning movement of piles of wind-blown leaves. “Reveal” and “conceal” provide a haunting internal rhyme, as well as contrast. And few poets are as skillful as Tohko in the use of alliteration and assonance to unify and intensify the total effect of a haiku. The “l” and particularly the “s” sounds throughout this poem are perfectly in harmony with the seething movement implied.

In summary, the effectiveness of

haiku depends primarily upon the strength, the rightness, of the verbs. In fortuitous instances, the precisely right choices may occur in the poet's first draft of a haiku, but not likely. They have to be sought out through hard concentration—through reworking, revising the initial idea into its final best possible form. Contrary to popular belief, there are no such things as instant haiku;—at least, not top quality haiku.



7, 8 by Phil Adams

7—

Triggered by a step,
the partridge breaks from
the brush—
and a burst of sun.

8—

The dripping faucet,
chanting from the kitchen sink,
increases my thirst.

Intently watching
that girl in the subway
—my pocket was picked.

—Scott Alexander



10, 11 by Helen P. Avery

10—

Against bare black twigs
the moon presses its white face
—a prisoner, too.

11—

This ice-covered world
breaks in white puzzle pieces
along the dark stream.

12, 13 by Isole Townsend Baker

12—

A ring-tail raccoon
feasting on ripe persimmons
in frosty night air.

13—

Autumn's killing frost . . .
one tarnished-bronze persimmon
clings in defiance.

Wild lobelias
set the whole creek bank on fire—
hummingbirds hover.

—Eloise Barksdale

Out in the back yard
my child enjoys the music
of a squeaky swing.

—Marilyn Bolchunos

Shivering red bird
on snow covered cedar bough
brings winter warmth.

—Ernest Bubieniec

In this barren elm
a grass cradle, filled with snow—
shrill—the lullaby!

—Betty Calvert

18, 19 by Betty Calvert

18—

Winter solitude—
snow has silenced every voice,
but for this lone crow.

19—

The young willow dips
and sips the muddy water—
old bull-frog chuckles!

Gold leaves are lacquered
in windless air . . . crickets sing
thinly of autumn.

—Jeannette Chappell

A cat soft-steps grass . . .
on regal rugs behind walls,
kings mimic the pomp.

—L. Stanley Cheney

22 - 24 by Helen S. Chenoweth

22—

Winter's morning mist
walls the fishing boats—
a screaming gull breaks through.

23—

Each steel-gray wave
crested to a sun and gull—
tumbled to a tide.

24—

Those many mansions
of teredo worms enhance
the driftwood value.

Now there is a wound
where the passive earth is gashed
by the water-knife.

—Leonard Cochran, O. P.

The valley, a clock
ticking off with falling leaves
the sun's last hour.

—William Howard Cohen

28—

My son taps gently
at his willow whistle,
and rain strikes the new leaves.

27 - 29 by Kay Davis

27—

Wind tickles the pool,
and, wet shoulders shivering,
the boy learns to dive.

29—

The silent old men
sit in the pool hall window
and watch the town work.

The fresh, icy smell,
of stiff wash brought in to thaw,
fills the warm kitchen.

—Carrow De Vries

Bare fingers grow cold.
A curled leaf rides the ripples—
fish hide in shadows.

—Magdalene M. Douglas

32 - 34 by Cornelia P. Draves

32—

Houses all the same:
then with paint, porch or dormer,
each one scrawls his name.

33—

On the marble slab
a Christmas wreath gathers dust
in summer sunshine.

34—

Among the dead leaves
lies an empty doll carriage
turned upside down.

Rainy autumn day:

I watch caged children playing
and dream of escape.

—Pat Dresbach

My tidy neighbor,
sweeping my walk, sweeps away
the threads of my thought.
—M. Virginia Eustace



37 - 39 by Virginia Moran Evans

37—

The butterfly sleeps,
and you are indoors napping.
Two spendthrifts of spring!

38—

In cacti forest
of towering saguaros . . .
peering elf-faced owls.

39—

Migrating buntings
bring breath of ocean blueness
to Joshua trees.

Without its meaning,
it smells like a novel herb—
where the paupers live.

—Susan Forthman

41, 42 by Susan Forthman

41—

The hermit's house wrecked.
Finally that purple wall
has an audience.

42—

The vaporizer
hums the chorus of a song
I learned at the beach.

43, 44 by David E. Fulton

43—

Lying on dead leaves,
I watched a mockingbird sing
all songs ever sung.

44—

Lightning flash at night . . .
a pine appeared and vanished
in black silhouette.

ZEN IN HAIKU

By Clement Hoyt (Tohko)

Without attempting to define either Zen or haiku, we can examine the validity of a belief current in the United States—namely, that Zen makes a better haiku, if Zen is not actually essential to the haiku. We can divide the investigation into two parts: how the idea took root in the United States; and to what extent, if any, Zen is actually a part of haiku.

To begin with, the reader is asked to consider advertising and propagan-da and to remember how powerful sheer repetition, length, "the magic of print," and even physical weight show themselves to be hourly in our daily lives. He is asked to remember that the word 'weighty' has come to mean 'profound' or 'authoritative' be-

cause a big, thick book impresses the average person much more than a smaller, thinner one, whatever the contents of the latter may later reveal. Let us see how much these elements had to do with implanting the idea of the importance of Zen in haiku among some here in the United States.

At the moment (June, 1966), there are in print in English ten books that treat all phases of the haiku, written by those generally considered authorities. More than half, six out of the ten and all six big and very thick, were written by R. H. Blyth alone. They total 2445 pages. Of the remaining four books, two are by Harold G. Henderson: AN INTRODUCTION TO HAIKU and HAIKU

IN ENGLISH. One is by Kenneth Yasuda: THE JAPANESE HAIKU. The fourth, HAIKAI AND HAIKU, was produced by the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), whose Japanese Classics Translation Committee, formed of six members of the Japan Academy, guided two other committees: one, a Special Haiku Committee on which served sixteen scholars and aestheticians (professors at universities and colleges, and a well-known haiku poet); two, an advisory subcommittee of four English scholars, among whom was R. H. Blyth. With Henderson and Yasuda, this makes twenty-eight scholars and aestheticians, including Blyth as a subcommitteeman, bringing out four books totaling 657 pages covering the same field, as against 2445 pages in six tomes by Blyth alone, when he was no longer restrained by twenty-five fellow work-

ers, as in the case of HAIKAI AND HAIKU.

Thus, R. H. Blyth, one man, has produced sixty per cent of the current books on haiku and nearly four hundred per cent more material than all of the authors combined. True, Blyth's four-volume HAIKU and his two-volume HISTORY OF HAIKU amount to a kind of encyclopedia of haiku, but this only gives him greater space to buttress his opinions with a mountain of elements that have nothing to do with the correctness of his opinions;—that, in fact, by sheer 'weight' tend to gain acceptance of his opinions, whether they are correct or not. And the most important of those opinions have to do with Zen in haiku.

Blyth naturally laid the foundation for all his other books in the "Preface" to the all important first volume of HAIKU, where he devotes eight out of its fourteen pages not to the

haiku itself as would be expected, not even to Zen, but to Zen in haiku. In the body itself of volume one, he starts with Zen on page two, sheers back into it on page ten and continues this off and on to page 161. Here, headed "Section II: Zen, The State of Mind for Haiku," he devotes 107 pages to this theme. This amounts to about 130 out of the first 268 pages of a 422-page volume, presumably on the haiku, given instead to Zen in haiku. Space prohibits tracing the theme through the remaining three volumes of HAIKU, much less the two additional volumes of HISTORY OF HAIKU. What should strike the reader is that by sheer volume, sheer 'weight,' Blyth attunes his readers to Zen in Haiku.

Contrast his approach with that of others, easily his equal. In Harold Henderson's AN INTRODUCTION TO HAIKU (190 pages) there are

six pages, where he treats Basho, in which the reader can find Zen and its effects on haiku considered. I estimate that less than three pages, in actual page body, are given to Zen in haiku. And careful perusal of pages nineteen to twenty-one in Henderson will demonstrate to the reader that Henderson is most cautious in evaluating the Zen in Basho's haiku. He might weigh those few pages against the single sentence in HAIKU IN ENGLISH (44 pages) in which Henderson mentions Zen, in connection with "what came to be known as the Basho type of haiku" (p. 7). Kenneth Yasuda, certainly qualified to expand on Zen in haiku, if he felt the subject deserved it, in his learned THE JAPANESE HAIKU (232 pages), mentions Zen in one sentence on page thirty-nine, allots pages 170-171 and about half of page 179 to Zen and Zen in haiku. The word "Zen" is not

even listed in the "Index" of HAIKAI AND HAIKU (191 pages), although it occurs in the book's body where and when it should in historical and biographical sketches. The special significance of this fact lies in that twenty-two of all the haiku authorities involved in writing that book were Japanese nationals, who were not only the intellectual, scholarly and aesthetic cream of their country but also men who could be expected to have a far better sense of the proportionate, as to space required for the subject, than any Westerner. Please notice how close all are, both Japanese and Westerners, except one man. Let the reader note how far somebody (or everybody else) has to be out of proportion, even in the aesthetic sense alone, much less the mystical or metaphysical senses. But always bear in mind the impact of six thick books ranged against four much less

'weighty' (in the physical sense), as far as the average mind is concerned.

As sheer 'weight' may not be sufficient to warn the reader, and as he might consider Blyth qualified to teach Zen *itself*, as well as the place of Zen in haiku, let us see how Blyth contrasts, in proportion and statement, with some of the truly Great Ones of Zen.

D. T. Suzuki, professor of Buddhist Philosophy at Otani University, Kyoto, wrote, among many another, the book ZEN BUDDHISM. His is the extremest view in favor of Zen in haiku which I have found among Zen masters or scholars. Some of his statements about Zen in haiku and even haiku could be misinterpreted; yet even his—in my opinion—too extreme statements are light years away from Blyth's views. And that Blyth actually did stretch Suzuki's expressions on Zen in haiku and haiku itself

to the breaking point is betrayed in his "Preface" to volume one of HAIKU (p. viii). In the paperback edition of Suzuki's ZEN BUDDHISM (294 pages), only three pages and some odd lines are given to haiku and Zen in haiku;—a mere fraction of the space Blyth devotes to the subject.

Sohaku Ogata, Abbot of Chotokuin Shokuji Zen Monastery and professor of Zen Philosophy at Hanzonzo University, a Fulbright lecturer in American universities and author of ZEN FOR THE WEST (182 pages), gives exactly ten lines to the haiku and Zen in haiku. Remember, he is a Zen Master, much more than a professor.

Nyogen Senzaki, Japanese Zen Master, poet, author, aesthetician, calligrapher, lecturer and gentleman (in the true Confucian and Taoist sense of that much abused word), was hand-picked by his teacher, Soyen

Shaku, 79th successor to the Buddha and Abbot of two Zen monasteries, to bring Zen Buddhism to the United States. Nyogen Senzaki arrived in this country in 1905 and remained here until his death in 1958. (It was my fabulous good fortune to be his pupil from 1936 until he passed away, except for the two heartbreakingly ironic years I spent in the South Pacific, fighting his country, whose inestimable beauties he had taught me to love so much). To have a proportionate view of the relative importance he attached to Zen in haiku, get a copy of his ZEN AND BUDDHISM (91 pages). All of it is wrapped around a real Zen poem, SHO-DO-KA, which he translated. I can assure the reader it is not haiku.

He taught his pupils the haiku as a medium of literary or aesthetic self-expression. No one published haiku in English then. It was more generally

called the hokku. Nyogen Senzaki's pupils wrote them as they learned to arrange flowers in their own homes—and for the same reason. Then, too, they could attend or give hokku parties. They learned the haiku as a simple, unaffected sharing of inwardness with others. Nyogen Senzaki taught that the haiku was an art form all the more delightful because so perfectly suited for personal, even intimate self-expression, yet so spontaneous that the hag-ridden, socially conscious self, that despotic "I", was left far, far behind or below or out yonder—anyway, was lost—if only for an instant, as far as that self which we get so tired of bearing was concerned. **Everyone has the experience one way or another.** It is NOT confined to haiku, thank Heaven. It is haiku **only** when it is expressed as one. Nor Blyth and his disciples to the contrary, is it haiku **until** it is so ex-

pressed. There is nothing arcane about it.

In Blyth's "Preface" to volume one of HAIKU, it is clear he mistook the paradox of the Zen koan for the comparatively simple paradox of the Yellow 90's, as popularized by Oscar Wilde. In fact, I think he tended to confuse the flat contradiction for even the simple 90's paradox. The real Zen koan must have baffled him utterly. Consider the following: after the flat statement that "Haiku are to be understood from the Zen point of view", he climbs out from under by saying "the word 'Zen' is used in two different ways and the reader must decide for himself which is intended" (p. iii). His following 'explanatory' sentence only confuses me the more, to be frank. However, he helps out by announcing that he understands "Zen and poetry to be practically synonyms" (p. v). This props us up until

the reader runs into the statement that "haiku is haiku," a kind of law unto itself. He elaborates this into the haiku "has little or nothing to do with poetry, so-called, or Zen, or anything else" (p. iv). This is compounded by "If we say then that haiku is a form of Zen, we must not assert that haiku belongs to Zen, but that Zen belongs to haiku. In other words our notions of Zen must be changed to fit haiku, not vice-versa" (p. v). Not satisfied with this, he elaborates, "if there is ever imagined to be any conflict between Zen and the poetry of haiku, the Zen goes overboard" (p. v). He gets down to the real meat of his view with haiku "is a way of life"; "it is religion" (p. vi). He also informs us that a "Haiku is a kind of satori" (p. vii). I know the reader will be as stunned as I was, because satori, in Zen, equates with the Christian mys-

tic's confrontation or being "oned" with the Ultimate Godhead.

I goose flesh just thinking what Nyogen Senzaki would have said and done if any of his pupils ever had come out with anything remotely like that. (I still have a blistering letter from him written after I had sent him some poetry, haiku among it, that was just the least, tiny bit too zenned up. He wrote, "Stop writing poetry about Zen. Do not send me any more. You need to work harder on your Zen. When you work at Zen, work at it. When you write poetry, write poetry." There was more, but the reader gets the idea. I still can flinch, just rereading that letter. Yet this same unique personage painted one of my haiku in that heartwringingly elegant calligraphy of his, and sent it to an Osaka daily, where it was published, when I had written one the way one should

have been and he thought it had merit—as a haiku. Believe me, it was not zenned up haiku).

So that the reader can really understand what Blyth is preaching, he should look into Suzuki's analysis of Meister Eckhart's instructions on an attempt to reach confrontation, in Suzuki's MYSTICISM, CHRISTIAN AND BUDDHIST. Then the reader will know that the parallels between Christian and Buddhist mysticism are remarkably similar. Nyogen Senzaki urged his pupils to read St. Bernard of Clairvaux. He also said no one would ever understand Zen who did not know what Meister Eckhart meant when he wrote, "The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me."

Remembering that these parallels are very real, let the reader suppose a Japanese scholar and aesthete, living in Rome, became a convert to Catho-

licism. Suppose he went all-out over the sonnet and compiled an encyclopedia of them on all possible subjects. Then suppose that in his "Preface" he stated that the phrase "Catholic mysticism" was used in two ways throughout his encyclopedia, the reader to decide which was intended in each separate case, and simply left it at that. Suppose he went on to claim sonnets were to be understood from the point of view of Catholic mysticism, then said the sonnet had nothing to do with poetry, so-called, mystical Catholicism, or anything else. Nevertheless, though the sonnet was a form of Catholicism, one must never think the sonnet belonged to Catholicism; in fact, the truth was that Catholicism belonged to the sonnet. Suppose he added that our notions (Good Heavens! what an expression!) of Catholicism must be changed to fit the sonnet, not vice-versa; that if a con-

flict ever occurred between the sonnet and Catholicism, then Catholicism went overboard; that the sonnet was a way of life, The Way of the Sonnet and, in fact, religion, and that the sonnet was a sort of being "oned" with The Eternal and Unimaginable Godhead. Honestly, what would the reader think of such a Japanese convert to Catholicism? What would the reader think of such a Western convert to Zen, who did the same thing in reverse?

It is apparent that Blyth's theories about Zen in haiku do not stand up. By their very nature, they cannot en-

sure, except as others make him the High Hierophant of yet **another** sect of Zen (there are already several sects), the Patriarch of a new haiku-religion. Byth's monumental six-volume encyclopedia of haiku is invaluable—but **only** if the reader runs a mental blue pencil through every line about Zen, **except** when the word is used in an historical sense.

To the Zen Masters for Zen; to the haiku authorities for haiku: by 'weight,' by authority, by plain common sense, such separate study will lead to an inescapable conclusion—forget Zen in haiku.

45 - 49 by Ga-Go (Travis S. Frosig)

45—

On this dark day
the tomtit's silvery calls
sparkle in the rain.

46—

The sprouting field—
rooks' wings, gleaming blue-black,
flap from row to row.

47—

The dinner gong sounds.
Down from the mulberry tree
drop the missing boys.

48—

Rod and line lie prone
as the old surf fisherman
enjoys a good pipe.

49—

Night and the north wind.
A great ragged moon lantern
sways over the sea.

Bent almost double
the old man travels alone:
spring breezes brush him.

—Peggy Windsor Garnett

51 - 55 by John S. Haney

51—

Streamers of fine snow
unfurling from the hilltop—
shadows of the wind.

52—

A crow is cawing—
and morning is wrapped in the
gray folds of the wind.

53—

For the bird singing
in the niche in the tower
the temple was built.

54—

. . . while wavelets flut-flut
at water's edge—when the loon
cries out in the night . . .

55—

A white heron
flapping intently through morning
against the dark pines.

Frog I tried to catch;
from under a thorny vine—
his unblinking gaze.

—Lorraine Ellis Harr

57, 58 by Evelyn Tooley Hunt

57—

Men and mocking-birds
discuss last night's frost damage:
"See there! Look at there!"

58—

A cornet, sobbing,
interprets the sound of blues
with worn black fingers.



Four bright zinnias
atop the dark piano
make one brilliant chord.

—JDeLB

60 - 62 by Foster Jewell

60—

After all these weeks,
in this vase of withered weeds—
still wind-blown rhythms.

61—

Wild geese are honking
even on the silent screen
of this mountain lake.

62—

No desert wind now . . .
still these sand waves in sun glare
weave in slow motion.

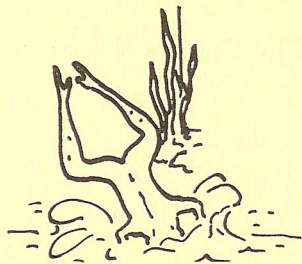
64—

Pencil and paper
no longer belong to me
so says the cat's paw.

63, 64 by K. W. Johnsgard

63—

The wind slants down
screaming through this ageless cove
in pursuit of a gull.



65, 66 by Walter H. Kerr

65—

In soft storms of dusk,
lightning bugs: and, following,
the sound of children.

66—

The sound in the walls
of scratching, scratching,
scratching—
then no sound at all.

67, 68 by Gustave Keyser

67—

While I try to work
a jay outside keeps whistling
for me to join him.

68—

Above gilded domes
of the orthodox temple . . .
the moon's veiled face.

BOOKS RECEIVED

HAIKU IN ENGLISH. Harold G. Henderson (Japan Society, Inc.: New York, 1965).

The purpose of Harold G. Henderson's HAIKU IN ENGLISH is "to propose certain guide lines, and suggest certain ideas, which could be of help to those who wish to produce haiku in English." The book discusses three major topics: one, the Japanese haiku; two, what is, or should be, a haiku in English; three, what an English-speaking person should do in or-

der to write (or teach) haiku in English. In discussing these topics, Mr. Henderson calls upon a lifetime's experience as translator, critic and commentator on the Japanese haiku (in recent years, on the English-language haiku, as well) and draws upon the opinions of poets, teachers, editors, etc. HAIKU IN ENGLISH is essential reading for anyone truly interested in haiku. Free to responsible users, from the publisher, Japan Society, Inc., 250 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. 10017.

Reviewed by James Bull

Rural covered bridge
painted and weathered . . .
now blends
with autumn woodlands.

—Albert Scofield Knorr

After the measles,
bright eyes at the window pane.
Outside . . . a snow man.

—Elizabeth Searle Lamb

71, 72 by Elizabeth Searle Lamb

71—

Dry dirt blows away,
a farmer dreams of rainfall,
rain's feel . . . forgotten . . .

72—

Pigeon-prints in snow . . .
an old man smoking a pipe
enjoys their company.

73 - 76 by Anne Landauer

73—

Trapped in thin ice,
a wild duck waits patiently
for the sun to rise.

74—

Splash! and a child's foot
topples the building he sees
in a pavement pool.

75—

Out of the dense fog
the white lake steamer floats in
like a sudden ghost.

76—

Manhattan black-out:
moonstruck skyscrapers rising
out of black canyons.

77, 78 by Phyllis A. Leshner

77—

The sea is flooding—
the snow is at the tide-line
and wolves howl again!

78—

Black squaw-ducks floating
on a slow moving mirror
reflecting the sky.

79 - 81 by Sam L. Martin

79—

A black wind races
through a gnarled and naked
pine . . .
the owl blinks and shrugs.

80—

A lean timber wolf
unravels thin gray ribbons
of sound on the snow.

81—

Guttural wren songs
melt the gray snow that is left
under the shadows.

The flustered wood mouse—
slide of snow-cover
from mountain cabin to porch!

—Barbara O. Moraw

Bonfire of nature
in transient design lures boys
the long way home.

—Barbara O. Moraw

The woodpecker taps
a black stripe path up the tree
hunting frozen worms.

—Willene H. Nusbaum

85, 86 by Emily Otis

85—

When wild geese divide
the single sky with their wedge
the wind rushes in.

86—

The moon's breath freezes.
Two branches saw together.
Cats claw at strange doors.

87, 88 by Catherine Neil Paton

87—

Intricate the design
etched on toadstools—vanishing
with the morning frost.

88—

The sea is reckless!
White frills of her swirling blue skirt
torn on rough rocks.

Blue morning-glory
lifts a bright trumpet skyward
proclaiming the day.

—Charlotte C. Philips

Pine needles draw tears
to the eyes of my daughter
who thought they were soft.

—Russell Reaver

91, 92 by Rosemary (R. Jeffords)

91—

In Washington Square
game tables wait, vacant—
checkmated by winter.

92—

A child comes running,
spring spilling through her fingers.
Jonquils are in bloom.

Was I gone that long?
Now the long grass stands waiting
and the sumac red.

—Herta Rosenblatt



HAIKU EXPERIENCE VS. HAIKU POEM

by James Bull

In tracing the development of haiku experience to haiku poem we must consider at least three things: the poet's original experience; his changing focus; and his evolving combination of image and sensation.

For this purpose, Gustave Keyser has been kind enough to comb his notebook for all written drafts of his

The flat stone I shy
goes zip skipping on the pond
playing dragonfly.
(AH, I, 2: 26)

Although they are reproduced below in the order in which they were written, it must be remembered that the

author engaged in what he calls "mental gymnastics . . . between draft revisions."

ONE

Zippering dragonfly
touches the glass-surfaced
pond . . .
circles spread, then fade.

TWO

Zippering dragonfly
skips over the glassy pond . . .
circles spread, then fade.

THREE

The dragonfly zips
skipping over the pond . . . wide
circles spread, then fade.

FOUR

Like a dragonfly
the stone I cast zips skipping
over the glass pond.

FIVE

Like a dragonfly
the stone I shy zips skipping
over the glass pond.

SIX

The flat stone I shy
goes zip skipping on the pond
playing dragonfly.

In identifying the poet's original experience, we find that in all versions of the haiku certain words are constant: "dragonfly"; "pond"; and some form of "zip." From the second version on, some form of "skip" appears. Thus, for the last five of the six versions, we have "dragonfly . . . zip . . . skip . . . pond." It seems apparent, then, that the poet's original experience involved the sound and action of a dragonfly as it moved about the surface of a pond.

In tracing the poet's changing focus, we note that in the first three versions, based upon the "pictographic" evidence, the poet centers on the sound

and movement of the dragonfly. In addition, he attempts to show what happens as a result of the dragonfly's action—"circles spread, then fade" on the surface of the pond. The internal **contrasts** are movement against stillness, with what the author calls "the deeper premise of the inevitability of time's passing—the fading away of the circles and the pond becoming mirror smooth again—the permanence of the pond against the transitoriness of the dragonfly." In the first three versions, in contrasting transience and permanence, it appears that the author fails to achieve the unity of effect which he desires.

In the last three versions, based upon the "pictographic" evidence, the poet has shifted his center to the action of a stone, as it shys across the pond. In this series, he concentrates upon internal **comparison**, linking the

action of the stone with that of a dragonfly, to which it is analogous. In versions four and five, the analogy is clumsily handled with simile; in the last version the analogous actions are unified through personification—the stone's "playing dragonfly."

The poet's change in basic focus is a significant one. It must have occurred between drafts three and four, because it is in draft four that he makes a connection between the zip-skipping of a dragonfly and the zip-skipping of a stone. Thus, with the fourth draft, we have a new haiku, a "flat stone" haiku, utilizing the same basic elements as the "Zipping dragonfly" haiku.

Now, as someone has to throw the stone, the poet must enter the picture. This action creates a problem: how to minimize the ego; how to unify the ego, the objects, and the actions. The

answer lies with the verbs. "I cast" of the fourth draft is too Herculean, too labored (and one gets a "plop" from a "cast" stone). In the fifth draft, the only change is the verb—"shy"—the perfect choice, because the rhyme of "I shy" tends to make the author one with the action. "Shy" must be the key, for upon analysis, one realizes that he has to shy a "flat stone" if he wants to achieve a zip-skip action. So the poet writes: "The flat stone I shy." He wants to heighten the sense of sound, so he utilizes "z" and "p" alliteration in "goes zip skipping on the pond." He has now animated the stone in terms of sound and action, so he recalls the dragonfly, sees the analogous relationship, and unifies the whole by means of personification in the last line: "playing dragonfly."

In each of the last three drafts, the

author maintains the unity between dragonfly and stone—similarity of actions and sounds—thus demonstrating that Keyser could not have arrived at the final version of his "flat stone" haiku without first working through the three versions of the as yet imperfect "Zipping dragonfly" haiku. And from the standpoint of change of focus, the chief point seems to be that whereas the poet began with the experience of a dragonfly zipping across a pond, he ended with a stone zip, skipping on the pond. Furthermore, in the first version there is no stone, while in the final version there is no dragonfly.

Throughout the various versions of the haiku, one can trace a gradual evolution of images and consequent sensations. In every version, the images utilized appeal to sight and

sound. In the first three drafts, the images are, by line,

sound
sight
sight

And in those three versions, the sight image of the third line (circles spreading and fading) is a result of the image in line two (the touching or skipping over the surface of the pond). Thus, the poem is not unified, because line one (the **sound** of zipping) is a separate image, not echoed elsewhere in the haiku. In the last three versions, the sound image is moved to line two, the middle of the haiku, where it is juxtaposed with a sight image as well as surrounded by sight images in the first and third lines:

sight
sound-sight
sight

As for the **sensations** created by the various sound and sight images, in the first five versions, there are two basic sensations. In drafts one through three, we find action, followed by quiescence:

sound }
sight } **action**
sight } **quiescence**

In drafts four and five—thanks to the weak simile with its semi-sighted image, “Like a dragonfly”—we have a vague sensation, neither of action nor quiescence, followed by action:

semi-sight } - - -
sound-sight }
sight } **action**

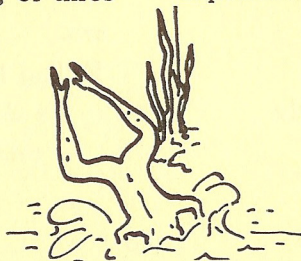
Finally, in the last draft, we have a sense of action throughout:

sight }
sound-sight } **action**
sight }

Thus, by dropping the quiescent circles on the surface of the water, and by burying the zipping sound within the haiku, the poet achieves a unity of sensation—action—a sensation which is heightened by internal and external rhyme, by internal syllabic rhyme, and by alliteration, to say nothing of three

different specific rhythms (one for each separate line) which give an echo of various rhythmic patterns created by various skipped stones.

It is apparent that the easy spontaneity of Gustave Keyser's haiku is deceptive, for his experience, his focus, his combination of image and sensation change drastically in the course of composition. Among the many conclusions which could be drawn, perhaps the most significant is that there is a vast difference between a haiku experience and a haiku poem.



94, 95 by Anne Rutherford

94—

A sparrow flying
in the first unfolding mist,
his wings lit with gold.

95—

The yellow jasmine
cascading over the roof
covers old shingles.

96, 97 by Charles Scanzello

96—

Snowball in hand,
the urchin smiles reverently
at a passing hat . . .

97—

Falling incessantly to earth,
the dancing flakes
merge with their shadows . . .

98 - 102 by Charles Shaw

98—

Flying Johnnie's kite,
I suddenly find myself
forgetting today.

99—

Day dies in shadow,
first darkening at the edge
like burning paper.

100—

A quartet of gulls,
atop a rain-ridden roof,
discuss the weather.

101—

A loose window-frame
rattles in the cold night wind,
conjuring specters.

102—

Black against crimson—
the ancient cathedral's spire
silhouettes day's end.

104—

It seems so fitting
to eat stalks of sour rhubarb
beneath a cold moon.

103, 104 by Joy Shieman

103—

Weighed down with worries,
he smiled to see park-children
laughing on seesaws.

Dawn on the desert:

a rose breaking through the night
with a thorn of heat.

—Dorothy Cameron Smith

106, 107 by Marjorie Bertram Smith

106—

Autumn is golden

in garden and ripened field . . .
each seed a miser.

107—

Spring is water sound

sap dripping in old tin pails
near an ice-free brook.

108 - 111 by O M B Southard

108—

Deeper in the cave

the diminishing twilight—
and the smell of earth.

109—

The butternut-tree—

into the old cellar-hole,
now, it drops a leaf.

110—

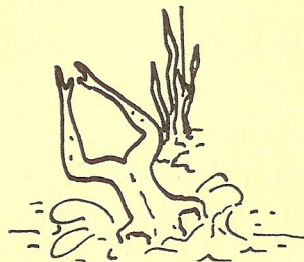
In a leafless hedge
the sparrows flock, their feathers
ruffling in the wind.

111—

Steadily it snows . . .
under the shadowy pines—
where are the shadows?

On his father's shoulder
he could have touched the moon—
with one more arm's length.

—Georgian Tashjian



113, 114 by Donald J. Tickner

113—

Others watched the lake—
but there . . . the old man's bald head
turning pink with the sun.

114—

Brushing off the snow—
beetle etchings in the bark
look like strange writing.

115, 116 by Thomas Tico

115—

a lonely park path . . .
only my grinding footsteps
and the birds' silence.

116—

Age-old odors assault
the nostrils in Chinatown,
frail wind chimes tinkling . . .

117 - 120 by Nicholas A. Virgilio

117—

After snowfall . . .

a child hopping in the footprints
of his father.

118—

Easter morning:

the sermon is taking the shape
of her neighbor's hat.

119—

The plantation . . .

Spanish moss sifting mist:
the smell of wisteria.

120—

An old rain barrel . . .

heat waves rising from the lid:
mosquito larvae.

The train's far whistle
is gone; yet the mockingbird
frets along the bough.

—Sid Vesper



122, 123 by M. H. Way

122—

Alley sunning palm,
fern leaf ginkgo whispering
coal age gossip . . .

123—

Raking sear brown leaves,
a withered man, dripping dew,
stops to sun gaze.

124 - 126 by Paul O. Williams

124—

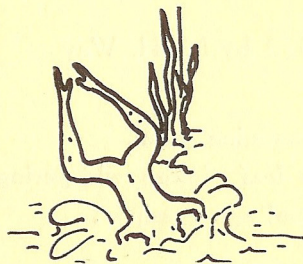
December air talks
to the walker, informs him
of his ears' edges.

125—

The cold switch engine
spurts from its black chimney
ghosts of ancient trees.

126—

The nest, like a cup,
tilted, swings from one last twig,
spilling out its snow.



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