

AMERICAN HAIKU



Vol. III, No. 1

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AMERICAN HAIKU

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

The ideas herewith presented are not new, in that they have been "pirated" (quite shamelessly) from many sources—books, letters and friends. They are not meant to be dogmatic, last-word, "One-True-Haiku arguments. They are part of the writer's constantly expanding view of haiku, not absolute rules. They are designed to do three things: one, to serve as a point of departure for those who have but recently developed an interest in haiku; two, to serve as part-background for two essays about haiku which appear in this issue of AMERICAN HAIKU; three, to serve as a springboard for elaborative essays which will appear in future issues of AMERICAN HAIKU.

The haiku is a poem. It is unlike Western poetry, in that it is neither conventional metric verse nor conventional free verse. Yet, it is regular verse, in that its 17 syllables (more or less) are set in a three-line pattern, arranged 5-7-5 syllables (as strict ideal **Norm**, not inflexible, absolute **Rule**; and in no case are the sense and rhythm patterns artificially broken to conform to 5-7-5, rule or norm. But,

in theory, in English, as in any language, once we accept the 5-7-5 norm, the linguistic, rhetorical and prosodic devices available to that language (with the exception of any which seem artificial in such a short form) are the sum total of the possibilities of the haiku form in that language. In haiku, as in any form of art, the tools of the form, properly used, make a good haiku great, a mediocre

haiku bad, a bad haiku wretched. Still, devices are devices, important for their effect, but that is all. Once they become obvious—that is, employed for their own sake—the devices detract from the haiku. Above all, they must never be obvious, artificial;—for the haiku is not an “arty” art.

The haiku is an artless poem. It is unlike Western poetry, in that it is neither contrived verse nor artificial verse; rather, it seems, almost, no verse. Although it has form, as noted above, in no case is the form ever imposed upon the haiku. True, no haiku can exist without form: yet, the form is not (of itself) the haiku; rather, it is (although we cannot really separate it from content) the vehicle which releases the haiku. Thus, one sees not the art, but the haiku;—for the form does not stand as a barrier between writer and experience, experience and poem, poem and reader. The haiku is not,

then, consciously “arty”; rather, it is matter-of-fact, direct, without strain. On the other hand, the haiku is not consciously artless;—for to be consciously artless is to contrive not to contrive. In haiku, all contrivance is artificiality; artificiality is insincerity; insincerity is fakery;—and fakery is the death of haiku. As the contrived is artificial, so the artificial is unnatural. Haiku eschews the unnatural.

The haiku is a natural poem. It is unlike Western poetry, in that it is neither of nature nor about nature; rather, it **is** nature. It permeates and is permeated by nature—the nature of **things**. And it does not eschew the thing called man—so long as the center of the haiku is beyond, outside the poem, as well as outside, beyond the mind of man;—that is, beyond, outside the human point of view, which is senryu. Yet, it is not a cult of nature; it is not a Way of Nature. The haiku

is not, in itself, an experience; neither is it a mere record of experience. Still, the haiku, in terms of form, technique and attitude, does not stand as a barrier between writer and experience, experience and poem, poem and reader. All are single, one: a unity—poet, experience, poem, reader—haiku. Haiku aims, then, at the unity of things; unity in variety—one thing, all things; THE thing. There is unity, when the center of the haiku is natural phenomena—not of, not about, but **is** natural phenomena. In spite of individuality, in spite of particularity, in spite of minuteness of the phenomena, the haiku aims at unity;—and through unity, the oneness of all things—universality. Yet, though the emphasis is upon natural phenomena, the nature of things includes man and human affairs. Man is always present in the haiku, even in the most objective haiku—as observer, as experience, as poem, as reader

—one. And man's presence need not be an impalpable presence, although, if obvious, his presence must not manifest itself in anthropocentricity—intellectuality on the one hand, sentimentality on the other;—anthropocentricity—the hallmark of ego, the handmaiden of artificiality, the henchman of contrivance. In haiku, humanity immersed in nature, not nature awash with humanity; an open, intuitive center in nature, not a closed, egotistic center in humanity. For man is but a minute particle of nature, and the most erratic particle, at that;—ubiquitous, perhaps, but hardly constant. Haiku looks to its center in natural phenomena, for a sense of constancy, of unity, of universality. And in so doing, the haiku aims not at Truth, not at Beauty, not at Goodness; on the contrary, the haiku aims at that which **Is**.

In sum, the haiku is a poem, an artless poem, a natural poem. —J. Bull

INDEX

Author	Pages	Author	Pages
Margaret Abbott	21	Jerome Cutting	25
Phil Adams	13-20	Kay Davis	26
Elsie Morris Allen	21	Carrow De Vries	10
Susan Bauernfeind	21	Florence A. Dietz	26
Martha Belknap	22	Jack H. Dorwart	26
Gertrude Ryder Bennett	22	Magdalene M. Douglas	27
Mildred Boink	22	Cornelia P. Draves	10
Iris O'Neal Bowen	10, 23	Burnham Eaton	28
Frances T. Brinkley	23	Robert Clay Elder	28
Sam Bryan	23-24	Lee Eldredge	28-29
James Bull	1-3, 46	M. Virginia Eustace	29
Helen S. Chenoweth	24	Helen A. Evans	29-30
Arlene Cook	24	Virginia Moran Evans	30
Pearl Holloman Cooper	24	Ida Fasel	11, 30
Chizuko Crocker	25	Douglas Flaherty	31
Cecile C. Cormier	25	Travis S. Frosig (Ga-Go)	31
Rae Cross	25	Wm. S. Gamble	32

INDEX

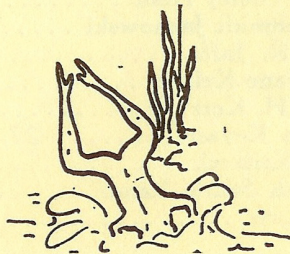
Author	Pages	Author	Pages
Zelda Crocker Griffin	32	Phil Leavitt	37
L. H. Hahn	32	Phyllis A. Leshner	37
John S. Haney	11, 33	George Little	11
Gloria D. Herres	33	Edith Lodge	12
Rose Herriges	33	Gertrude May Lutz	38
Phyllis Holub	34	Alice L. McBride	38
Clement Hoyt (Tohko)	12, 45	Cleone Montgomery	12
Elizabeth Humerickhouse	35	Barbara O. Moraw	38
Evelyn Tooley Hunt	9	William J. Noble	38
Elsie Schmidt Jachowski	35	Catherine Neil Paton	39
Aileen R. Jaffa	35	Ted-Larry Pebworth	39-40
Laura Jane Keister	11	Marjory Bates Pratt	10, 39, 41
Walter H. Kerr	53-60	Charles Shaw	41
Gustave Keyser	27, 34-35	Alan Smith	42
James Kritzeck	36	Dorothy Cameron Smith	42
Elizabeth Searle Lamb	36	Marjorie Bertram Smith	42-43
Carol Law	37	O M B Southard	8, 43-44

INDEX

Author	Pages	Author	Pages
Georgian Tashjian	9, 45	Joyce W. Webb	50
Donald Tickner	46-47	Mary lou Wells	51
Vida C. Ungaro	47	Lourine White	51
Nicholas A. Virgilio	47-49	Paul O. Williams	51
Irma Wassall	49	Adele Watson Wirtz	12, 52
M. H. Way	50	Virginia Brady Young	52

NOTICE

AWARDS—New American Haiku awards policy: one \$10 award each month. See page 63 for details.



HAIKU PUBLISHERS' DIRECTORY

To our knowledge, AMERICAN HAIKU is the only magazine exclusively devoted to English-language haiku. However, there are a few editors who regard original, previously unpublished English-language haiku as something more important than mere "filler." It is our intention to make their names known, once their work is brought to our attention. Thus, we will expand the service we render to those truly interested in haiku. It is with pleasure, then, that we present the first installment in our "Haiku Publishers' Directory."

POETRY DIAL. Lourine White and Frances T. Brinkley, editors. 491 N. Sixth Street, Piggott, Arkansas. Include a short biographical statement.

POETRY PENDULUM. Lourine White, editor. 491 N. Sixth Street, Piggott, Arkansas. Include a short biographical statement.

Some words of caution: always type your haiku, one to a page, on 8½ by 11 paper; always include your name and address on each manuscript page; always include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return.

Awards

The editors are pleased to present the following three haiku, which have been judged to be the best subscriber-haiku entries received during the submissions period ending March 30, 1965. The AMERICAN HAIKU cash awards were \$35.00, \$15.00, and \$5.00 for first, second, and third.

First

The old rooster crows—
out of the mist come the rocks
and the twisted pine.

—O M B Southard

Second

Two old mud-turtles
dozing on the river bank . . .
each in his own shell.

—Evelyn Tooley Hunt

Third

A year already—
and still this cup of water
does not taste of home.

—Georgian Tashjian

SPECIAL AWARDS

Each receives a one year's subscription to American Haiku.

Ignoring the hearse,
the starlings search the fresh dirt
by the open grave.

—Iris O'Neal Bowen

Our dusty screen door
hit by many rain drops smells
as nothing else does.

—Carrow De Vries

Around the corner
same old man hawking handful
of fresh yellow spring.

—Cornelia P. Draves

Through the March gutters
children sail their paper boats
to a far country.

—Marjory Bates Pratt

SPECIAL MENTION

Each receives one extra copy of American Haiku.

In the museum
wax eyes follow me about,
staring at my breath.

—Ida Fasel

Seagulls invisible—
their voices uttering
the mood of the mist.

—John S. Haney

In the flower box,
a fountain of dust erupting
from a feather ball.

—Laura Jane Keister

Still, stiller than before,
the after-rain outside
the greenhouse door.

—George Little

SPECIAL MENTION

Each receives one extra copy of American Haiku.

Slow motion in grass—
it might be the wind moving
but for two bright eyes.

—Cleone Montgomery

The last leaf takes wing:
a foliage of sparrows
clothes the winter branch.

—Edith Lodge

For the circus clown
summer is the long season
of his painted smile.

—Adele Wirtz

“Hush . . . ,” bamboo breathed.
Shadow and leaf shook.
“Hush . . . Hush,”
whispered bamboo.

—Tohko

LINE - UNITS IN HAIKU

By Phil Adams

While the haiku syllable-count discussion continues, we might also focus our attention upon one feature of American haiku form which most American Haiku poets, seem to agree upon: a haiku is divided into three units. Seventeen syllables or no, we can deal with haiku in terms of **line-units**.

And yet, in examining the first four issues of AMERICAN HAIKU, we find that if we have abused anything in our writing of haiku, it is the line-unit. There are three lines in a haiku, and this seems important in terms of symmetry, cadence, and, as R. H. Blyth says, the “. . . rise, suspense,

and fall of poetical meaning . . .” (HAIKU, I: 373). If our haiku are to be effective **three-line** poems, then the lines must function within the poems as units.

Ideally, the line-units should be either complete phrases or clauses, unless the smaller units within a line work collectively as a unit. There are some notable examples in past issues of AMERICAN HAIKU in which the poets have juxtaposed short phrases and words within a line, and, through meaningful association, unified the line and the whole of the poem. A good example of this is Ethel Green Russell's

At the street corner—
he with banjo, she with tin,—
arm in arm they stand.

(AH, II, 1:55)

There are two phrases in the second line, two units, but they also work quite effectively as a one-line unit. Furthermore, the juxtaposed units of the second line are reinforced by the third line, and in turn add a dimension to the haiku.

Practitioners of the traditional 5-7-5 form as well as experimentalists abuse line-units. Many writers of the 5-7-5 tend to bludgeon their words into that form, regardless of the final effect. And far too often the writers of experimental haiku ignore line-units altogether; sometimes, it seems, they pre-

scribe a variant form and then force their language into it. In doing so, they defeat what would seem to be their most logical reason for experimenting—finding a form in which their language flows naturally. Forcing words into any prescribed form is hardly acceptable in any event. Three lines provide little enough room for expression, and anything which might confuse or mislead rather than supplement and reinforce the gesture of the poem should be questioned.

Ending a line with an article is one of the more obvious abuses of the line-unit. Except for intervening adjectives, articles precede nouns, and they are always associated closely enough with them to be included in the same phrase. Consider Frank Ankenbrand, Jr.'s

The bridge, the mountain
are only half shared by the
swirling evening mist.

(AH, II, 1: 13)

The second line ends with an article. But there is no reason whatsoever for that article's being there (isn't the phrase "by the swirling evening mist"?)—except, perhaps, for the fact that it fits into the prescribed 5-7-5 pattern. Because "by the" is automatically associated with the rest of its phrase, it tends to pull the third line into the second unnaturally; in doing so, it jolts the symmetry and cadence of the haiku.

Another example of the use of an article to end a line is found in John S. Haney's

. . . and the heron
is inherent on the
rock in the falling rain.

(AH, II, 1: 36)

In this variant the writer is apparently attempting to play with the words "heron" and "inherent," juxtaposing the words at the end and at the beginning of successive lines. But even if this is the case, why end the second line with the words "on the"? They are obviously part of the phrasing in the third line, and, since the form is a variant to begin with, the complete phrase could be kept intact, allowing the language to flow naturally.

Ending a line with a preposition, a conjunction, a demonstrative pronoun, or an adjective seems to be equally dangerous. Take Patricia Woodward's

March wind roared in and
did a lively "Twist" over
the sleeping city.

(AH, II, 1: 69)

In the first place, the lines have been fractured and then jammed into a

5-7-5 formula, without any respect for the line as a unit. The first line ends with a conjunction, the second with a preposition. As such, none of the lines function independently (perhaps this should be called a "one-line haiku," but more of that later). "Over" belongs in the third line and "and" belongs in the second. Once having moved the "and" to the second line, the first line ends with an adverb, for "in" is part of the idiom "roared in";—and, of course, breaking up the idiom would destroy the line as a unit.

Another objection to the use of prepositions, adjectives, and the like at the ends of lines is that they tend to lead the writer to the "too-too poetic effect":

It isn't the cold,
or the dying leaves . . . It's just
that the birds have flown.
(AH, II, 2: 54)

In this haiku by Virginia Brady Young, "It's just" properly belongs in the last line, making the third line a complete clause. The phrase "or the dying leaves" has no meaningful relationship with "It's just"; hence, the second line lacks co-ordination. If the second line were written for "poetic effect" (hardly desirable at any rate), it seems a bit too artificial. Finally, one wonders whether the technique is meant to be "poetic," or whether "It's just/that" is included simply to fill out the 5-7-5 format.

As has been indicated in the preceding examples, one of the more dangerous abuses of technique is the artificial, arbitrary division of lines into a 5-7-5 syllable-count form: oftentimes it leads directly to the ludicrous. I have no doubt that Veris Wessel wrote the following haiku with the best of intentions:

When my husband snores
like an old bull frog, I pray
the dark to croak him.
(AH, I, 1: 58)

No matter how touching the sentiment, the artificial, seven-syllable division of the second line leads (as a dangling modifier often does) to a rather misleading statement. In retrospect, we know that the writer means to say "my husband snores like an old bull frog"; but because of the arbitrary line division, the reader is misled to the rather incongruous notion that "I [the writer] pray like an old bull frog."

A similar type of incongruity is found in Cornelia P. Draves'

To the song of birds
we nod and smile at the queer
epitaphs in stone.
(AH, II, 1: 24)

The adjective ending the second line

is awkward, simply because it ends the line and tends to act as if it were a noun. Here again, the basic problem is the artificial division of lines in order to maintain the 5-7-5 syllable-count.

Just as the arbitrary 5-7-5 division of lines is artificial, so also is the use of prose as either **connector** or **completer**. In Cornelia P. Draves'

Big gold-button moon.

Why of course that's what you are -
button in the sky.

(AH, I, 1: 19)

we find a good example of the middle line of the haiku being used as a prose connector. It is absolute prose. It offers nothing in substantiation of the basic metaphor, which can hardly bear repetition without something else to support it. Having presented the metaphor in the first line, the writer then fills out the 5-7-5 form with prose.

In a slightly different way, Harvey Firari yields to the prose temptation also:

In the milky pox
one star winked and died splinters.
I know. I saw it.
(AH, II, 1: 31)

In this instance the third line is a prose completer. It is both prosaic and redundant, offering only a prose confirmation of what has already been implied in the first two lines. Compare this with Tohko's

In that lightning flash,—
through the night rain—I saw it!
. . . whatever it was.
(AH, I, 2: 40)

In this haiku, the poet has made the clause "I saw it!" work poetically within the poem—the seeing is part of the momentary realization. And the third

line draws its strength from its juxtaposition with that clause. In Firari's haiku, on the other hand, the poetry lies in the first two lines; and the nature of the third line, five prosaic syllables filling out a 5-7-5 form, is something apart from the texture of the first two lines.

In a sense, the Firari and Draves haiku might be considered as having only two lines; but even then, the major problem of form remains the prosaic line which functions as a connector or completer. Of course, it might be argued, and argued well, that the matter of prose lines in haiku is a problem of content rather than technique. Nevertheless, in haiku, we must also consider the **manner** in which **three** lines function.

To my way of thinking, anything extending **beyond** three lines is not haiku. Dwain Berggren's

Cicadas
Children's voices
Fountain waters
Rise and fall
Rise and
fall.

(AH, I, 1: 14)

is not haiku—it is free verse. Even though there are seventeen syllables, neither the cadence nor the lines are of haiku nature.

We can also distinguish two other general categories of line-unit abuses: the **one-liner** and the **two-liner**. These types occur when the verse's form (and/or meaning) will not allow it to be read meaningfully as three lines. For example, the parallelism and variant form of Nicholas A. Virgilio's.

Not even a wisp
of breeze from a twirling
maple seed: this hot, May day.
(AH, I, 2: 43)

would indicate that he was very deliberate about the structural formation of this piece; but the poet, in the creation of his poetic effect, has made it practically impossible to read the haiku as anything but one line-unit. The phrases "wisp/ of breeze" and "twirling/ maple seed" pull the three lines together so tightly that it must be read as one continuous flow of words, with a slight pause after the colon. Furthermore, the third line is not a unit, in any sense of the word. Since the piece is a variant anyway, it could just as well be written as three line-units:

This hot, May day:
not even a wisp of breeze
from a twirling maple seed.

In doing so, we have lost the rather artificial "poetic" effect, true; but we have gained (without losing the delicate observation) the cadence, the movement of the "rise, suspense, and

fall of poetical meaning", as well as three meaningful, complete, and workable line-units.

The two-liner must be read as two line-units. John Tagliabue, for instance, in his

A winding river
of irises; a bee
busy traveling.

(AH, II, 2: 50)

has divided two line-units into three lines—the semicolon offering some indication that such is the case. "A winding river" must be followed immediately by "of irises", or the image provoked by the first line becomes not poetically ambiguous but misleading. "A bee/busy travelling", likewise, acts as one unit.

Although there is also an artificial break for the 5-7-5 form, Evelyn Tooley Hunt commits the same error in her

Yesterday locusts
lunched happily here . . . Today
hail jumps in the grass.

(AH, II, 2: 41)

The most common line-unit abuse seems to be the two-liner. Perhaps this tendency is the result of the long and rich tradition of the couplet in English-American poetry—but that belongs to another essay.

In summary, as they have been outlined here, the categories of line-unit abuses overlap; indeed, one fault often leads to another. It is difficult to be neat with one's classifications; but, then, there is a danger in being too tidy with categories. There is no mistaking, however, the fact that line-unit abuses can result in (1) obliteration of haiku symmetry, (2) breaking of haiku cadence, and (3) alteration of poetical meaning.

Fountains in the parks
dance for lame brothers creeping,
curb-caught, after rain.

—Margaret Abbott

Black and gray shadows
shiver across wind-wet eaves:
sumi rain in June.

—Elsie Morris Allen

18, 19 by Susan Bauernfeind

18—

Cherry red noses—
remote distinction between
children and snowmen.

19—

Not even treasures
of the tooth fairy can stop
the tears of my son.

The shower ceases—
green velvet draping the rocks
has lost its creases.

—Martha Belknap

This puffball came here
like a random thought, riding
the mustang of air.

—Gertrude Ryder Bennett



Warm rain—a robin
inspects the green grass carpet
—there, he pulls a thread!

—Mildred Boink

24, 25 by Frances T. Brinkley

24—

Early morning fog . . .
white rabbit tails scurrying
from the search-light sun.

—Iris O'Neal Bowen

A man winked at me
and suddenly I wished
my husband had seen.

25—

Two legs on three wheels—
a small shadow waves hello
to passing strangers.

Marsh lake deep in snow,
peeper heart beats marking time
in the mud below.

—Sam Bryan

Swiftly running creek.
Live-bait fishers hope to catch
straying memories.

—Sam Bryan

Midsummer's coolness
held in an Owari bowl—
reeds and pond lilies.

—Helen S. Chenoweth

Fall kaleidoscope;
swirling leaves playing leapfrog
with a gusty wind.

—Arlene Cook

On green, liquid hills
a porpoise rolls, leaps, and glides
into peaceful vales.

—Pearl Holloman Cooper

Before her mirror
—reflecting over words
for the springtime tryst.

—Chizuko Crocker

Bushes hung with snow
sway to and fro like small ghosts
with no place to go.

—Cecile C. Cormier

Sharp tap of white cane—
brief prelude to a tired knock;
brooms are cumbersome.

—Rae Cross

Blow, green wind; pester
these black twigs into nuggets
of nodding fool's gold.

—Jerome Cutting

35, 36 by Kay Davis

35—

Identical clumps
in a thin syrup of good-byes
wait for the train.

The first crocus winks
a period at the end
of winter's sentence.

—Florence A. Dietz

36—

In their bishop's miters
ecumenical waxwings
swarm my tree bare.

A summer morning:
the shouts of children are heard
muffled by the sea.

—Jack H. Dorwart

BOOKS RECEIVED

HAIKU POETRY. J. W. Hackett.
(Hokuseido Press: Tokyo, 1964).

In this fine collection of 150 original verses, Mr. Hackett successfully demonstrates that true haiku can be produced in English. For example, in "The fleeing sandpipers / turn about suddenly / and chase back the sea!" he relates the immediacy of the single moment to universality, to achieve at once both the finite and infinite values inherent in haiku. For the most part, Hackett adheres to the objectivity,

clarity, and simplicity he advocates; but sometimes his immersion in Zen mysticism leads him astray into statements marked by cultist subjectivity. But his objective haiku far outweigh his subjective lapses. His book is a valuable, important contribution to the development of English originals. The 56-page paperback, foreword by R. H. Blyth, is distributed in the U.S.A. by Japan Publications Trading Co., Rutland, Vermont, at \$1.25.

Reviewed by Gustave Keyser

An old man watches
as the casket is lowered—
sure he must be next.

—Magdalene M. Douglas

A small sound, not rain
not more snow, but frost-crystals
in taut twigs breaking.

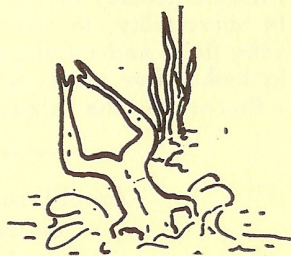
—Burnham Eaton

They would bash it down . . .
the old sandstone meeting house
that had built the town.

—Robert Clay Elder

Tattered boy and dog
play tag with ocean breakers
and zigzag footprints.

—Lee Eldredge



43, 44 by Lee Eldredge

43—

Low winter sun:
pedaling wave's translucent crest
are small black webbed feet.

But your eyes, Madame,
are more worth my attention
than the blue iris.
—M. Virginia Eustace

44—

On river's black depth
quicksilver moon-fish flicker—
withered leaves at dawn.

The all-nite cafe:
empty cups on the counter
and the clock—tick . . . tock . . .
—Helen A. Evans

48, 49 Virginia Moran Evans

48—

Rain blurs my window;
red petals blow from my vine . . .
Chinese watersilk.

—Helen A. Evans

Today our main street
is a polished skaters' pond.
Even pigeons slide.

49—

Moon fingers explore
the woods for leaves that followed
a pied piper day.

To see his daughter
he travelled a day and night.
"Back so soon?" she asked.

—Ida Fasel

52 - 54 by Ga-Go

When the deep snow melts
the river celebrates—
drunk on his own liquor.
—Douglas Flaherty

52—

For one brief instant
waves, crashing the rocky point,
pose as water lace.

53—

Rushing sandpipers
Notes that escaped Debussy
ripple for us here.

54—

There's no horizon!
Ships sail the iridescence
of a hazy sky.

The pink-footed gulls
and black-cut crows on the beach
amuse each other.

—Wm. S. Gamble

Surely it seemed wine—
to the beetle trapped within
resin of the pine.

—Zelda Crocker Griffin

In the moonlight, fox talk
and the sh-h, sh-h, sh-h of the rye
soft whispering, sh-h-h.

—L. H. Hahn



58, 59 by John S. Haney

58—

Wild geese are flying
an e e cummings structure
in the morning sky.

Winter-barren trees
snap their fingers at the moon—
syncopating wind.

—Gloria D. Herres

59—

At the edge of spring,
children watching a whimsic
kite wiggle its tail.

Alders, pencil-slim,
accentuate the white world—
quail break the still air.

—Rose Herriges

BOOKS RECEIVED

A NET OF FIREFLIES: JAPANESE HAIKU AND HAIKU PAINTINGS. With verse translations and an essay by Harold Stewart. (Charles E. Tuttle Co.: Tokyo, 1960, \$5.25).

For these translations, the Australian poet, Harold Stewart, has adopted the rhymed couplet. The results are unsatisfactory. The rhymed couplet is simply not suitable for haiku: the constant rhyming becomes cloying and saccharine; inversion and forced rhymes are prevalent; there is much

padding to serve the purposes of the couplet; and the delicacy and subtlety of haiku are lost in wordiness. Basho's famous frog haiku is unrecognizable: "The old green pond is silent; here the hop / Of a frog plumbs the evening stillness: plop!" The book contains a long essay on haiku history and technique, as well as 33 full-page haiga in color, from the long-out-of-print COLLECTION OF MODERN HAIGA. The latter are the book's main elements of interest and value.

Reviewed by Gustave Keyser

Fall's last rays of gold:
an old woman bending low,
picking bitter-sweet.

—Phyllis Holub

Swallows like scissors
cutting blue linen
fly over our rain stitched lake.

—Elizabeth Humerickhouse

The delighted child
watches the inchworm measure
length for a new dress!

—Elsie Schmidt Jachowski

In whirring sunshine
grasshoppers with yellow wings
arc fields of stubble.

—Aileen R. Jaffa

Young couple, standing
close in the rain . . . heads hidden
in one umbrella.

—Gustave Keyser

67, 68 by James Kritzeck

67—

Not a good likeness
and the edge of it is charred,
but it is my wife.

68

The kitchen maid sighs . . .
the bicyclist does not know
The latch is unlocked.

69, 70 by Elizabeth Searle Lamb

69—

The ragged urchin
sells shoe shines for a nickel.
The smile is a gift.

70—

How sparrows chatter!
I've heard these voices before,
at cocktail parties.

72, 73 by Phil Leavitt

All evening . . . the sound
of the silver fog rustling
among the cornstalks.

—Carol Law

72—

A star upon a branch
where a moment ago . . .
a leaf fell in the dusk.

73—

Profound well defined
strokes of calligraphy . . .
now have leaves on them.

It's not fair Gramma,
one child to find a marble
and the other not!

—Phyllis A. Leshner

With love, her hands move
among small treasured objects—
dust where no dust is.

—Gertrude May Lutz

Again it draws me
from the edge of sleep . . . this
white tide of moonlight!

—Alice L. McBride

Summer's hot playtime:
child's view of Weeping Cedar—
hidden toys, secrets!

—Barbara O. Morav

The merry-go-'round;
a horse track where all races
are brazenly fixed.

—William J. Noble

Small heap of feathers—
no swift flight flashing blue fire.
The cat stares at me.

—Catherine Neil Paton

Winter's sole garden:
those bright umbrella blossoms
bobbing through gray rain.

—Ted-Larry Pebworth

81, 82 by Marjory Bates Pratt

81—

As the sun rises
the tracks from last night's skating
make a golden pattern.

82—

No warmth, no color—
the moon favors my garden
with nothing but light.

BOOKS RECEIVED

MARKINGS. Dag Hammarskjöld. Translated by Leif Sjöberg and W. H. Auden. (Knopf: New York, 1964, \$4.95).

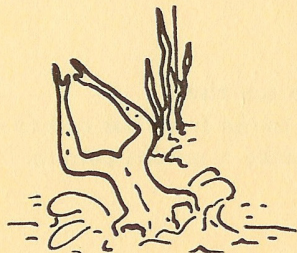
Twenty-three pages of MARKINGS are devoted to haiku. Although many celebrate nature and natural phenomena, the most interesting are autobiographical. The latter are of two kinds, one merging into the other: the first consists of reflections on childhood, which for Hammarskjöld must have been lonely and unhappy; the second consists of celebration (and often deprecation) of his awakening and then full-blown physical awareness.

At his worst, Hammarskjöld is guilty of writing 17-syllable prose or of reflecting a subjectivity hopelessly obscure to the reader. Fortunately, fewer than half of his haiku exhibit

either trait. At his best, Hammarskjöld is highly sensitive and perceptive, intensely spiritual (and physical), and capable of powerful statement.

It is interesting that W. H. Auden, who gave the translation its final form, remarks that "the number of syllables in any one line is optional, but the sum total of the three lines must always be seventeen."

Reviewed by Ted-Larry Pebworth



83, 84 by Marjory Bates Pratt

83—

An old black woman
carrying a fishing pole
strides down to the lake.

84—

Why these thoughts of spring?
Is it the smell of the air,
the light on the snow?

85, 86 by Charles Shaw

85—

Wet from last night's rain,
the pavements, collaged with
leaves,
wink back at the sun.

86—

A trick of lighting?
Don't be ridiculous.
You see with new eyes.

87, 88 by Alan Smith

87—

Gray waterfowl rise
from sheets of reflected sky,
like rain caught by wind.

The young go hatless.
The old smile, remembering
the wind in their hair.

—Dorothy Cameron Smith

88—

Hovering over
the marshes, a mist of green
has muted winter.

Yellow butterflies
bright at the edge of the road
cling to dusty weeds.

—Marjorie Bertram Smith

Engulfed with crickets
night is shivered with sudden
eerie silences.

—Marjorie Bertram Smith

Through the silent pines
a cloud of mist—and the sound
of a waterfall.

—O M B Southard

93 - 98 by O M B Southard

93—

'Peach-blossoms follow
the moving water', she said—
and then fell silent.

94—

Grove to grove, the hoots
of owls; along the Milky
Way—the dark places.

95—

On low clouds, the town's
dull glow; in the wet pavement
my dark reflection.

97—

'Put in a comma' —
a crab-apple hits the roof
and begins to roll.

96—

The grasshopper clasps
a green stalk; into the earth
she thrusts her bottom.

98—

Two snowy bushes:
one bent to the ground, and one
swaying in the wind.



The bright harvest moon
defines pumpkins in the field
as tangent echoes.

—Georgian Tashjian

100, 101 by Tohko

100—

Screech—a lamp is lit.
Tree limbs rasp on eaves again.
Screech! The light goes out.

101—

Before butterflies,
returning birds and small buds . . .
one yellow jacket.—

BOOKS RECEIVED

SPINDRIFT: POEMS IN HAIKU FORM. Sam Bryan. (Wells Printing Co.: Madison, Wis., 1964, \$1.00).

As Sam Bryan's subtitle indicates, SPINDRIFT is a spray of non-haiku POEMS IN HAIKU FORM. In the main, his are strongly imagistic poems, awash with Beauty. Yet, Bryan does include an occasional haiku: "Crawfish in a spring / Backing off beneath the cress / Watching as we drink." By contrast with his 133 other pieces, "Crawfish" is true haiku.

It is not anthropocentric; it is nature

oriented. It is not laced with descriptive adjectives. It is neither abstract nor intellectual; it is direct, immediate. The emphasis is upon experience, not reflection and comment. There is powerful, **unstated** tension—crawfish and drinker, eye-to-eye, neither wanting to lose sight of the other.

SPINDRIFT has value, for one might learn much about haiku by studying its non-haiku POEMS IN HAIKU FORM. It is available through the author, Sam Bryan, 2230 Keyes Ave., Madison, Wis., at \$1.00.

Reviewed by James Bull

This stark winter town
crouching by the mountain awaits
the moon's dilution.

—Donald J. Tickner

Nodding to the wind
a weed, dry and hunchbacked,
holds the first snowfall.

—Donald J. Tickner

Old cat's tiger dreams
dead—still, ruffled ears reveal
many dreams came true!

—Vida C. Ungaro

105 - 113 by Nicholas A. Virgilio

105—

How smooth the river
slipping over the dam—
the footprints of the wind.

106—

Rising and falling . . .
a blanket of blackbirds feeds
on the snowy slope.

107—

An old shanty . . .
moths festoon a fly-specked bulb:
the August moon.

109—

Giddy guitarist:
the fitful moon from fret to fret
on telephone wires.

108—

Carp muddy the lake,
and the rhyme of a cloud
becomes assonant.

110—

Lone red-winged blackbird
riding a reed in high tide—
billowing clouds.

111—

Pine needles fall,
and fine rain opens the pores
of the lake.

113—

March wind-blown . . .
its heart with the hawk—
but the kite-string . . .

112--

A crow in the snowy pine . . .
inching up a branch,
letting the evening sun through.

The gladioli
reached out smooth pink puppy-
tongues
to lick my fingers.

—Irma Wassall

Engineering snail,
building silvery causeways
over sharp rose thorns.

—M. H. Way

In double quick time
the bandsmen's white spats twinkle--
running sandpipers.

—Joyce W. Webb

117, 118 by Joyce W. Webb

117—

In the snowy park
the wind clangs a sign pointing
to the Rose Garden.

118—

The Fuller Brush Man,
once mature and dignified,
is now a brash youth.

119, 120 by Mary lou Wells

119—

Autumn. A leaf falls,
my breath is foggy . . . smoke curls
through the damp valley.

Tomorrow, I thought—
eying the plump pink cherry;
now, thought the bluejay.

—Lourine White

120—

July showers;
in the back yard children's laughter
splashes on flowers.

Old end-winter rain
putters around on tin roofs—
careless xylophone.

—Paul O. Williams

123, 124 by Adele Watson Wirtz

123—

A desert dust storm;
on her lap, in needlepoint,
yellow butterflies.

124—

A bent, aged man
gathering grapes for gay toasts
in sparkling champagne.

125, 126 by Virginia Brady Young

125—

Up at dawn
she discovers in the kitchen
the Grand Marnier
. . . uncorked . . .

126—

Home from a long
summer's wandering, the traveler
winds his clock.

R H Y M E I N H A I K U

By Walter H. Kerr

Since Harold G. Henderson gave the green light to end-rhymed haiku in English in his INTRODUCTION TO HAIKU, many poets have utilized this device without fully understanding or avoiding perils incident to its use—the perils of forcing, closing and artificiality. It is the purpose of this essay to point out those perils, to offer some suggestions for avoiding them, and to propose some substitutes for rhyme in haiku.

Rhyming's number one peril may be forcing—that is, for the sake of the rhyme, inserting words which could better be left out or changed. Compare these two haiku by Thomas Rountree:

Night: a dropping pear
starts the leaves to tossing stars
in the foreground there.
(AH, II, 2: 33)

On the weathered shelf
a self-cleaned cat in autumn
curls around itself.
(AH, I, 1: 41)

In the first, the word "there" is superfluous. Its only function in the haiku is to act as a rhyme for "pear", and that is not enough. Conceivably, "there" also projects the action away from the poet, but that is where the action is taking place. We know that,

without the use of "there"; and haiku economy permits no redundancy. On the other hand, in the second haiku, the rhyming "shelf-self-itself" sounds are integral to the thought and are not forced.

Other types of forcing include poetic inversion and the use of archaic diction.

City stone, city sky:
one rain-fragrant tree calling
"Here am I!"

—Catherine Hubbell
(AH, I, 1: 33)

"Here I am!" or "I am here!" would be natural usage as an exclamation. In this haiku, "poetic" inversion for the sake of rhyme amounts to the use of archaic diction. Thus, the rhyme is forced, artificial, unnatural—in sum, unjustified.

Spring flowers, ho!

Capped and shivering, quite surprised

by April Fool snow!

(AH, I, 1: 58)

The word "ho!" used, it seems, for the sake of the rhyme, detracts from this poem. While partly functional, introducing the contrast of the viewer's surprise at seeing the flowers and the flowers' surprise at the snow, it is too archaic for comfort. It diminishes the effectiveness of the poem.

Good rhyming practice manifests itself in natural sound and functional necessity, bringing about a more effective verbal notation of the haiku-inspiring event. The end-product seems predestined, inevitable. It seems no other choice of words is available to the poet. Consider the following in-

stances of inevitable rhyme in haiku.

Stinging snow flurries
whirl past the street light; head
down
a lone man hurries.

—Gustave Keyser
(AH, II, 1: 11)

A red neon light.
It, too, is shivering, this
wet October night.

—Jack Swenson
(AH, I, 1: 54)

Although the number one problem in rhyming may be forcing, it is possible that an even greater peril in rhyming is that of closing;—that is, rhyme, no matter how good, how inevitable, tends to give the effect of closing or completing the haiku. Technically, by rhyming we “close” the poem; but a

haiku must be “open.” While this definition is not on a verbal level, to use a technique that promotes a verbal closing tends to close in everything the poem contains:—and with haiku, this is fatal. Yet, if the poet can evoke the appearance of completion by means of rhyming tricks, he can also evoke the feeling of openness through the same tricks. For example, a possible way out of the closing impasse is to utilize the rhyming question:

If bloodroot petals fall
at so slight a breeze
why do they bloom at all?
—Larry Gates
(AH, I, 2: 18)

Another solution to the problem might be to eliminate the period after a rhyme. For example, in Gustave Key-

ser's haiku (quoted above), it might be argued that the omission of the closing period could have kept the action open. Actually, Keyser does not have to stoop to this type of typographical trick. The choice of words, the inevitability of the diction, contribute to the desired effect of openness. The haiku succeeds because of, rather than in spite of, the rhyme and shows what **can** be done, without resort to tricks.

Word juggling and rhyme trickery may seem inappropriate to the haiku aesthetic, inasmuch as spontaneity of concept and expression has become traditional. However, the very shortness of the form enables the haiku poet, by diligent study and practice, to create, on subconscious levels, the scaffolding which will support any future inspiration. For, if frequently practiced, any technique, even rhyming,

becomes automatic and does not interfere with necessary, spontaneous creation. Furthermore, rhyming can be valuable as a construction tool and as a construction material, when the fact of rhyming contributes to the desired haiku structure. For example, end-rhymes and variations (in haiku, as in other verse) can act as the converging pincers of a pair of tongs or tweezers, to grasp and bring into focus what was formerly invisible: by allowing the required sound to control the flow of thought, habit-rutted ways of looking-thinking can be by-passed and new awareness patterns established.

It must be remembered, however, that the act of rhyming is a combined intellectual-intuitive operation. More often than not, intuition chooses the rhyming combination and intellect acts as a control, censoring the trite jingle-

jangle. Yet, since rhyme (either internal or external) makes a neat package, and since the repetition of rhymed sounds has a strong appeal, even good poets run the risk of jingle-jangle rhymes in haiku:

Up in the wind they
fly far into the dark night—
swift wild geese in flight.
—Douglas Jory
(AH, I, 1: 35)

The words "in flight" are superfluous and only add unnecessary sing-song.

See empty shell of
lowly snail. It seems carved
from a piece of hail.

—Frank Ankenbrand, Jr.
(AH, I, 1: 8)

Reading this other than as a jingly, rhymed couplet is difficult.

Undoubtedly, after long practice in rhyming, the intellectual and the intuitive become so interwoven that it is difficult to distinguish which approach is dominant at any given moment. And herein lies another danger which even good poets risk in using rhyme in haiku—the danger of intellectuality. The choice must be intuitive, if it is to seem natural; the choice will seem artificial, if it is intellectual. Unquestionably, a serious dilemma for the haiku poet.

What, then, can the haiku poet do to avoid the danger of artificiality attendant upon the use of rhyme? What can he do to maintain a balance between the intellectual and the intuitive, with the scale tipped in favor of intuition? He can substitute off-rhyme

and buried-rhyme. He can utilize such devices as consonance, assonance, alliteration, repetition, and related end sounds. Let us explore these devices as used in haiku, remembering that they are probably but a fraction of the possibilities one could discover, if he were to conduct an exhaustive study.

An example of effective and unobtrusive off-rhyme is

Violets started
blue along the wall, and now
they cover the yard.

—Tom Bolling
(AH, I, 1:15)

The "started-yard" combination could be called split-rhyme. That is, by splitting the basic rhyming sound in one of the related pair of words and adding a

different sound in the middle (which is made possible, only by adding a syllable), the sonic relationship is maintained, without rendering that relationship obvious.

In the following examples, O M B Southard illustrates how a poet may use sound relationships effectively, in various combinations.

In the garden pool,
dark and still, a stepping-stone
releases the moon.
(AH, I, 1: 7)

Note examples of consonance: pool-still-rel(eases); stone-moon. Assonance: pool-moon; garden-dark. Alliteration: still-stepping-stone. By utilizing oral-aural effects other than pure rhyme, a great deal of sonic technique can be worked into a small structure

without becoming objectionable.

On a leaf, a leaf
is casting a green shadow—
and the tree-frog sings!

(AH, I, 1: 49)

By repetition (leaf-leaf) and buried-rhyme (leaf-tree-f(rog)), the poet engenders an effect that is pleasurable to the ear, without being too obvious.

Competent use of related end sounds is illustrated in Daniel Smythe's

The yearning flutter
of wings upon my window—
they, too, want the light.

(AH, I, 1: 46)

The end sounds are complementary (flutter-light). Note also the use of alliteration (wings-window-want).

One might examine the following haiku by Tohko, as an example which illustrates a brilliant interplay of several of the seven elements which I have suggested as possible substitutes for rhyme in haiku:

Those camellias,
grown by the town embalmer,
won the prize again.

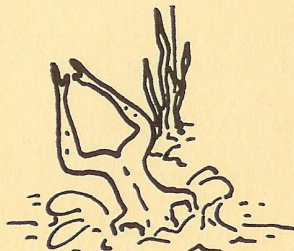
(AH, I, 2:40)

Consider these relationships: those-prize; cam (ellias) - em - balm (er); grown-town-won-again; those-the-the; by-pri(ze); the "ell" sounds in camellias and embalmer; the "z" sounds in camellias and prize and the "r" sounds

in embalmer and prize. There is no part of this haiku that is not related to another part by sound. And yet, how much of this relationship is evident at first reading? Very little. If one must use techniques of sound structure in his haiku, this is the way to do it.

To draw conclusions, then, based upon the points made in this essay concerning rhyme, its use and its misuse, concerning some possible substitutes for rhyme: (1) rhyme should be used only when it contributes intuitively, inevitably, to the poem; (2) current speech usage should be the guiding principle in determining word progression in the haiku, whether rhymed or not; (3) slant or off-rhymes, as well as buried-rhymes, are usually more effective than true

rhymes, either internal or external; (4) consonance, assonance, alliteration, repetition, and related end sounds are less obtrusive than end-rhymes, and they are, therefore, more intuitive, more natural, more effective; (5) structural use of sound in haiku is feasible but never easy and never done by chance, although chance relationships may occur.



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