

# AMERICAN HAIKU

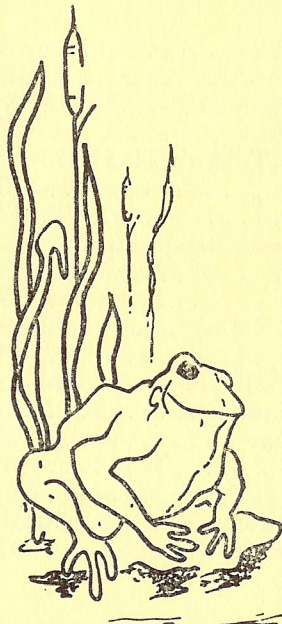


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# AMERICAN HAIKU

Vol. V No. 2



## POETRY EDITORS

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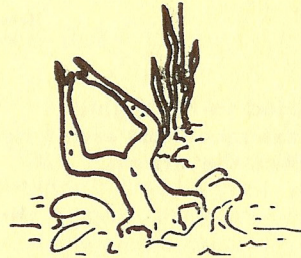


# INDEX

Author	Pages	Author	Pages
Madeline Beattie .....	11	John B. Hall .....	17
Mary D. Benner .....	11	John S. Haney .....	18
Pall W. Bohne .....	12	Lorraine Ellis Harr .....	18-19
Joanne W. Borgesen .....	3, 12	Anne Catto Holt .....	19
Sam Bryan .....	12	Clement Hoyt (Tohko) 21-31, 58-59	
Inga Gilson Caldwell .....	13	Joseph E. Jeffs .....	20
Joan E. Charbonneau .....	13	Foster Jewell .....	3, 20, 32
Leonard Cochran, O.P. ....	13	Leroy Kanterman .....	32
William Howard Cohen .....	13	Walter H. Kerr .....	33
David Dickinson .....	14	Gustave Keyser .....	33
Magdalene M. Douglas .....	14	Akira Kimura (Rojin) .....	42-49
Lee Eldredge .....	15	Anne Landauer .....	34
Marie Virginia Eustace .....	15	William E. Lee .....	34-35
Helen A. Evans .....	15	Dallas M. Lemmon .....	35
Thelma Finefrock .....	15	Mabelle A. Lyon .....	35
Tom Galt .....	16	Gloria Maxson .....	36
Molly Garling .....	16	Edna Meudt .....	36
Isaac W. Gasnick .....	17	Barbara O. Moraw .....	36-37
Sister M. Genoveva, C.S.C. ....	17	Kay Titus Mormino .....	37

## INDEX

Author	Pages	Author	Pages
Roger Mueller	37	Tom Tico	56-58
Jess Perlman	3	Joyce W. Webb	60
Marjory Bates Pratt	37	James Whelden	60
Spencer Rathus	38	Paul O. Williams	60
Willie Reader	39		
Sydell Rosenberg	40-41		
Herta Rosenblatt	49		
Anne Rutherford	50		
Charles Scanzello	51		
David Seegal	51		
Charles Shaw	51		
Joy Shieman	52		
Dorothy Cameron Smith	52		
Marjorie Bertram Smith	52		
O Southard	53-55		
Robert Spiess	4-10		
Jerri Spinelli	55		
Will D. Swearingen	55-56		
J. Alexander Thorburn	56		





# 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.

The last falconer—  
moving through the mountain  
snow—  
whispers to his bird.  
—Joanne Borgesen  
March, 1967

Flash flood in the night,  
and the moon last seen wriggling  
down the arroyo.  
—Foster Jewell  
May, 1967

Cliff dweller ruins . . .  
shadows going in and out . . .  
now and then, swallows.  
—Foster Jewell  
April, 1967

Even tall trees droop,  
surrendering to the sun  
in a cloudless sky.  
—Jess Perlman  
June, 1967



## THE HAIKU'S TWO DANGEROUS LINES

by Robert Spiess

All of its three lines are dangerous, for any single word, if it is even slightly inappropriate or slightly misplaced, can ruin a haiku. Yet the first and last lines of the haiku are deeper pitfalls to the incautious writer than the second line. Perhaps the two main reasons for this are their brevity and their placement.

As they are even shorter than the seven-syllable middle line, any inappropriateness in them stands out in bold relief, whereas the slightly longer

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This article is based on an address by the same title, delivered at the First Symposium on English-Language Haiku, at Wisconsin State University—Platteville.

middle line seems better able to accommodate a small flaw. But more important is the physical placement of the lines—a trap for the unwary writer.

Although the haiku is a titleless poem that achieves a unique effect by imparting its intuition directly through its seventeen-syllable unity, there is a tendency on the part of some haiku writers to commit the aesthetic error of making the first line of the haiku act as a title, the succeeding two lines becoming an explanation or description of the first line as title. A variation of this is to use the first two lines as a description and the last line as a tag title.

The following three poems are examples of haiku that tend to use the

first line as a title for the succeeding two lines:

Manhattan black-out:

moonstruck skyscrapers rising  
out of black canyons.

—Anne Landauer  
(AH, IV, 1: 37)

An ogre perhaps?

Old school building swallowing  
long lines of children.

—Lorraine Ellis Harr  
(AH, IV, 2: 22)

Ghosts of fireflies . . .

swirling snowflakes around  
my lantern posts.

—Frank Ankenbrand, Jr.  
(AH, III, 2: 17)

As can be seen from these examples, there are other effects of using the first line as a title: the haiku be-

comes a mere figure of speech or a brief description or a simple picture. The result is a poem with no real deeply felt intuitive significance.

The following two haiku are given as examples to show that a first line that is end-stopped with a strong punctuation mark does not automatically become a title:

The butternut-tree—  
into the old cellar-hole,  
now, it drops a leaf.

—O M B Southard  
(AH, IV, 1: 51)

A summer shower—  
soaking the brown button  
in the sunflower.

—Robert N. Johnson  
(AH, IV, 2: 27)

Three examples of last lines that tend to be titles are:



From a high cliff top  
beach bathers are seen below . . .  
scattered confetti.

—Margaret M. Gage  
(AH, IV, 2: 20)

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

—Paul O. Williams  
(AH, III, 1: 51)

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

—Helen A. Evans  
(AH, III, 1: 30)

Again, notice that these haiku are very thin in poetic value and are rather commonplace pictographs at best.

There are, of course, haiku that may be called borderline in regard to whether or not their first or last lines

act as titles. In the two haiku that follow, the first line of the first haiku and the last line of the second haiku probably could be considered titles, from a strictly technical point of view:

Nocturnal seascape—  
waves talking along ships' hulls  
and squaw-ducks quarreling.

—Phyllis A. Leshner  
(AH, IV, 2: 5)

The two poplar trees,  
slender and tall on the hill—  
a gate for the moon.

—John S. Haney  
(AH, IV, 2: 5)

However, I am not particularly conscious that they are titles, when I read the haiku. I believe that this is due to the overall better quality of these haiku: they show a greater poetic maturity on the part of the author and



perhaps in consequence have a more artistic or unified presentation that seems to mitigate against any tendency of the first or last lines to act as titles.

Nevertheless, as first and last lines, especially in haiku that are basically pictographic, can act as titles to haiku, writers should watch for this tendency in their own creations. Such title-like lines usually destroy the unity of a haiku, because they really are intellectual statements; thus, they are divorced from whatever degree of aesthetic intuition the other lines may have.

Other major dangers which haiku writers encounter, particularly in the third line of a haiku, are unwarranted explanation and jarring contrast—explanation which repeats that which has already been made known; contrast which violates the intuitive harmony and aesthetic unity of the haiku.

In the following haiku we find an

unwarranted explanation in the last line:

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

—Helen P. Avery

(AH, IV, 1: 11)

In this haiku the author **tells** us too directly and intellectually, instead of making us **feel**, that the moon and she, and possibly the tree itself by the power of winter, are prisoners.

Although the “r” sounds in the following haiku are very effective, the last line is too much an explanation, a tag-end in the haiku:

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

—Charlotte C. Philips

(AH, IV, 1: 40)

The writer uses an entire line in repeating what she has already revealed to us.

A haiku which demonstrates jarring contrast in its third line is Lee Eldredge's

On river's black depth  
quicksilver moon-fish flicker—  
withered leaves at dawn.  
(AH, III, 1: 29)

The dash at the end of line two may serve as a substitute for simile, an attempt at implied metaphor, as has been suggested elsewhere (AH, IV, 2: 52). However, it seems quite possible that the dash stands for a passage of time—night to dawn. In either case, the third line is an intellectual jump or mental jolt instead of an additional perceptive significancy to, or enhancement of, the mood of the

haiku or of the awareness expressed by it.

By way of contrast, the last line of the following haiku, even though it introduces a new subject to the haiku, perfectly enhances the mood established by the first two lines:

Above gilded domes  
of the orthodox temple . . .  
the moon's veiled face.  
—Gustave Keyser  
(AH, IV, 1: 34)

Here the Near-East-in-America aura of the haiku is carried through. None of the words used is essentially mysterious or exotic, yet in reading this haiku we are filled with a feeling of the foreign, the ancient and historical, the unknown and mysteriously strange, of the rituals and customs of another culture.

The final four haiku to be quoted



all have last lines that sound prosy or abrupt, or that convey information by an explanatory, intellectual statement; they disrupt the mood instead of continuing the poetic insight perceived in the first and second lines.

Clouds of mosquitoes  
cavorting in summer's dusk—  
curfew of moonlight.  
—Helen S. Chenoweth  
(AH, III, 2: 21)

The sticks on the ridge  
are still untouched with green,  
but the whole sky blossoms.  
—William Howard Cohen  
(AH, III, 2: 22)

Black against silver—  
a snowy winter twilight  
though April is here.  
—Judson Crews  
(AH, II, 2: 28)

A bronze oak leaf curls  
a fist upon my doorstep  
protesting winter.

—Florence A. Dietz  
(AH, II, 2: 30)

As demonstrated by the Crews and Dietz haiku above, a run-on third line probably is less likely to disrupt the mood of the haiku than a third line which is set apart from the second either by punctuation or by change in content. However, the poet must never use the run-on third line as a trick, merely to give the appearance of poetic value. For if a run-on of lines is not natural, it will show in the haiku as plainly as does a poor last line. In the few haiku quoted in this article, those having continuation of the second and third lines are not improved by such run-on, whereas both the grammatical break and the change in content in the third line in Gustave Keyser's haiku



do not vitiate it;—rather, the skillful handling enhances the haiku, as was noted.

Thus we see that the brevity and placement of the first and third lines of a haiku constitute traps for the unwary poet. Their placement at beginning and end of the poem tempt the writer to waste one third of his haiku as a title which tends to render the whole a figure of speech, or a description, or a picture. Further, there is a

tendency to utilize the third line as an unwarranted explanation of that which has already been presented or as a vehicle of contrast—a jarring contrast (often adding a new subject) to the first two lines—an intellectual jolt rather than an emotional leap. In sum, the poet must subject his first and third lines to critical examination as integral elements of the entire haiku—a total unity of intuitive feeling and expression.

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### CONCERNING THE HERON'S LEGS

With the publication of *THE HERON'S LEGS* by Robert Spiess, American Haiku presents a book of haiku by its chief poetry editor.

We are delighted with the praise it has received from readers, reviewers and poets—particularly poets.

*THE HERON'S LEGS*: distinctively designed; printed by letterpress on

quality paper; bound by hand in cord; limited to 335 numbered copies in the first edition; designed as an ideal gift; destined to become a collector's item.

*THE HERON'S LEGS* is available at \$3.00 per copy from the publisher, American Haiku Press, Box 73, Platteville, Wisconsin, 53818.

5 - 7 by Madeline Beattie

5—

Violets are up  
at the side of the stable—  
and one blue scilla!

6—

Where the old rail fence  
is overgrown and thorny—  
blackberries luring . . .

7—

Gray afternoon,  
hailstones pelting the window—  
this crackling jackpine . . .

A dusty cookbook;  
between the faded pages,  
four-leaf clovers.

—Mary D. Benner



Hanging up-side-down  
plucking thistledown for nest—  
this swaying goldfinch.

— Pall W. Bohne

11—

Waves, relentless waves—  
and the black rocks stand  
unchanged:  
sun on the gulls' wings.

10, 11 by Joanne W. Borgesen

10—

The feet of blackbirds  
pacing the grave's crusted snow,  
and making no tracks.

Stabbing bits of sun  
splintered on the leaves and grass  
as the catbird sings.

—Sam Bryan



Bird-foot violets  
climb the rocky south pasture  
whose rim meets the sky.

—Inga Gilson Caldwell

Green and sturdy leaf,  
but for one small brown corner  
nipped by the night's frost.

—Joan E. Charbonneau

Between the old plow  
and the ugly gray mushroom:  
bridge of spider web.

—Leonard Cochran, O. P.

On the other side  
of that wall of mosquitoes  
ripe raspberries!

—William Howard Cohen

17 - 19 by David Dickinson

17—

Into the meadow  
the junipers crawl in front  
of the marching pines.

19—

Spread after sunset  
across the slightly blue sky:  
a spectrum of shade.

18—

The second growth stand  
holds an old cellar hole  
and a lilac bush.

Trees brittle with cold—  
across the smooth pond surface  
skates a frozen moon.

—Magdalene M. Douglas



Summer's passing sound:  
eyes on zephyr darting off  
—the red dragon fly.

—Lee Eldredge

Still water, pale sky:  
a gouache in shadings of pearl—  
but for a gull's cry.

—Marie Virginia Eustace

In brimming gutters  
the shimmering silk of rain—  
and petals floating.

—Helen A. Evans

Purple weed flowers  
that bloomed all winter this year  
lie below spring snow.

—Thelma Finefrock

All down the long lake  
bare twigs black against the sky  
in autumn silence.

—Tom Galt

27—

Spicy scent of sage—  
released from summer's ovens  
by sudden showers.

26 - 28 by Molly Garling

26—

Deep in the forest,  
small, sun-dappled camouflage  
blinks a wary eye.

28—

Seventeen hands high,  
on a bleak rain swept hill,  
a lone sentinel.



The rice stalks swaying  
with heavy yield, our old men  
smile and stroke their beards.

—Isaac W. Gasnick

Skimming gull's arched wings,  
mirrored in the quiet lake . . .  
two pale crescent moons.

—Sister M. Genoveva, O. S. C.

31, 32 by John B. Hall

31—

How they laughed  
as they emptied the snowy  
branches  
onto their heads.

32—

I sit by the pond  
listening to the crickets  
singing the ducks to sleep.

33, 34 by John S. Haney

33—

Autumn loneliness—  
the cold fingers of morning  
shaping furrowed clouds.

34—

A bat zig zagging  
through the pine grove on the hill—  
the evening star.

35 - 37 by Lorraine Ellis Harr

35—

In and out they go  
ribbons the color of spring  
winding the Maypole.

36—

Resting in cool shade  
the weary old basset hound  
tolerates the flies.



38 - 40 by Anne Catto Holt

37—

Wind whips the scarecrow,  
lifting his tattered coattails,  
smacking him soundly.

38—

Ominous first snow;  
small birds shelter in the pine,  
layered row on row.

39—

Snow and freezing rain;  
and burrowed deep, the field mouse  
munches cached grain.

40—

Blue Lake waters run  
through Pueblo Taos and talk  
in the Tiwa tongue.

41, 42 by Joseph E. Jeffs

41—

Near the waterfall,  
children tilt their heads to see  
rainbows ride the spray.

42—

Leaf burning neighbor.  
Tonight the smell of autumn  
on my children's clothes.

43, 44 by Foster Jewell

43—

Screech owls fall silent—  
slowly from its hiding place  
creeps the light of dawn.

44—

Each sigh of the wind—  
whispers from the restless sand:  
the awaited owl?



## THE BORDER ZONE HAIKU

by Clement Hoyt

Since haiku and senryu can be opposites and often are, too many people think they always are. All too few realize a zone exists through which haiku sheer into senryu until the two are indistinguishable and that there has been such a zone for centuries. They imagine haiku coming to an abrupt end or line, beyond which is the senryu. In this article, I intend to make the existence of the border zone as clear as possible and destroy the idea of a rigid line lying between haiku and senryu.<sup>1</sup>

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This article is based on an address by the same title, delivered at the First Symposium on English-Language Haiku, at Wisconsin State University—Platteville.

The existence of a historical border zone is explained by tracing the origin of senryu. In his *EDO SATIRICAL VERSE ANTHOLOGIES*,<sup>2</sup> R. H. Blyth translates from, among others, the following satirical collections: the eighteen-volume *MUTAMAGAWA* (1750-1776), chosen from haikai

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<sup>1</sup> In "Haiku and Senryu" I myself used the word *line*, in stating my preference for those haiku which ride "down the line between haiku (poetry) and senryu (verse), that are haiku if read one way and senryu if read another" (AH, I, 2: 6). I wish I had not used the word *line*, for even in this context it is a misleading mental convenience.

<sup>2</sup> (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1961).

renga (poems linked 5-7-5:7-7, the same genre whose hokku or "starting verse" gave rise to the haiku), compiled by Keikiitsu (1694-1761); the Mankuawase collection (beginning 1757 and extending into Meiji times), chosen from maekuzuke (poems which consisted of 5-7-5 caps for a set 7-7 subject), the compilation begun and controlled until his death by Karai Hachiemon (1718-1790), whose pen name, Senryu (River Willow), was adopted as the name of the "new" verse form; the 167-volume YANAGIDARU (1765-1837), chosen primarily from the Mankuawase but containing about 60 poems "quite or almost the same" (p. 5) as the MUTAMAGAWA, the compilation begun by Senryu and the verses selected by him until his death in 1790.

Clearly, in the development of senryu, the historical relationship between the three collections is estab-

lished. Their relationship also reveals what had existed in haikai<sup>3</sup> and what continued to exist between haiku and senryu—a border zone—a zone wherein one sheers into the other.

It is natural that MUTAMAGAWA would contain border zone haiku, in view of its haikai renga origins.<sup>4</sup> One

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<sup>3</sup> The poems of the MUTAMAGAWA—according to Blyth, "a stepping-stone to senryu" (p. 7)—were chosen from haikai renga. They are "not very different from the haiku of the jinji (human affairs) section of haiku . . ." (p. 6).

<sup>4</sup> The reader is invited to consider the following border zone haiku in Blyth's EDO SATIRICAL VERSE ANTHOLOGIES: "Along goes the travelling suit" (p. 18); "The fire struck by a monk" (p. 21); "An ox is sitting" (p. 27); "The paper sliding-door having been shut" (p. 107); "On each thing put



would expect fewer such border zone haiku in the Mankuawase collections, thanks to their maekuzuke origins and Senryu's orientation, which was to select verses which had "a natural independence of each other" (p. 7). Nevertheless, such haiku do exist in the Mankuawase.<sup>5</sup> One would think that the YANAGIDARU, a distillation of distillations (both MUTAMAGAWA and Mankuawase—their origins in separate sources), would contain no border zone haiku whatsoever. Such is not the case; they do occur therein.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that the border zone haiku is not a recent development, in spite of R. H. Blyth's lament to the effect that to the detriment of both, haiku and senryu have shown a tendency to come together during the last half century.<sup>7</sup> The border zone is pre-1700, as the examples in his EDO

## SATIRICAL VERSE ANTHOLOGIES show. The same is true of Blyth's SENRYU: JAPANESE SA-

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out to dry" (p. 131); "The pine-tree on the peak" (p. 171); "As the leaves fall" (p. 177); "Pine-trees on the peak" (p. 186); and "The cicadas sing" (p. 216).

<sup>5</sup> Consider "The long summer rains" (p. 237).

<sup>6</sup> Consider "Flower-clad hills" and "The full moon shines" (p. 256).

<sup>7</sup> A HISTORY OF HAIKU, II (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1964), p. 342. Apropos the decline of senryu, in JAPANESE LIFE AND CHARACTER IN SENRYU (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1960), Blyth's chief complaint seems to be that modern senryu have become "softer and more sentimental, closer to haiku" (p. 178) and that since World War II "Senryu, rather too close to haiku, too tender-hearted, have been written in great numbers" (p. 195).

TIRICAL VERSES,<sup>8</sup> in which he carefully traces the constant drift of haiku toward senryu from the classical purity of those by Basho (1644-1694)<sup>9</sup> even among the poet's contemporaries and, astounding enough, his own pupils,<sup>10</sup> his successors,<sup>11</sup> on through Issa and to the modern master Shiki.<sup>12</sup> Further, he uses a verse by Kako, tentatively dated as in the 1700's, which he designates "indistinguishable" from Senryu (p. 7). How much closer can haiku and senryu get than to be indistinguishable?<sup>13</sup>

I consider Blyth's SENRYU: JAPANESE SATIRICAL VERSES truly valuable and I regard its being out of print as tragic. He devotes more than one quarter of that book (pp. 12-57) to contrasting haiku that have no senryu qualities with those that do. In doing so, he explores the whole twilight zone wherein haiku sheer into

senryu. The reader is given an understanding as to what is haiku without senryu qualities and haiku with vary-

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<sup>8</sup> (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1949).

<sup>9</sup> In JAPANESE LIFE, Blyth even speculates to the effect that perhaps "the senryu writers felt that Basho was himself leaning towards senryu in his haiku, in other words, poaching on their preserves" p. 141).

<sup>10</sup> Kikaku (1660-1707), a disciple of Basho, was a selector of maekuzuke. According to Blyth, his own haiku "are hardly distinguishable from the senryu he chose" for maekuzuke (JAPANESE LIFE, pp. 15-16). In the same work, Blyth quotes a haiku by Kikaku, "When I think it is mine," which he calls "practically a senryu" (p. 327). It is also noteworthy that Kikaku was the founder of the Edo School of haikai, which "placed more emphasis on man than on nature" (HISTORY, I, p. 289).



ing and increasing senryu elements. In the end, he is far better able to sense the stage when senryu elements predominate and the verses become haiku-like senryu and are no longer border zone or any other kind of haiku.<sup>14</sup>

With the exception of Blyth's works, among the books of English-language authorities on the haiku, one finds little evidence of border zone haiku. This is understandable, in that their books deal almost exclusively with the haiku, devoting either no space or very little space to the subject of senryu. In Ichikawa's HAIKAI AND HAIKU,<sup>15</sup> the senryu is not mentioned. In Kenneth Yasuda's THE JAPANESE HAIKU: ITS ESSENTIAL NATURE, HISTORY, AND POSSIBILITIES IN ENGLISH, the author makes one reference to senryu, a short paragraph quoted from a Japanese source, a statement concerning

the origin of senryu.<sup>16</sup> Harold G. Henderson, in his INTRODUCTION TO HAIKU, gives the briefest possible definition of senryu and gives an ex-

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<sup>11</sup> In JAPANESE LIFE, Blyth notes that the haiku of Taigi (1709-1771), a disciple of Buson (1715-1783), Basho's successor, "have a very pungent and senryu-like quality" (p. 62). It is noteworthy that in his HISTORY Blyth says that Taigi is "the greatest haiku writer after the Great Four, Basho, Buson, Issa, Shiki" (I, p. 289). See the same work for many border zone haiku by Taigi (pp. 289-308). In addition, Kito (1740-1789), another of Buson's pupils, produced many "comical or satirical verses" and Blyth quotes one of his haiku in JAPANESE LIFE to prove it: "The autumn of the barley" (p. 430).

<sup>12</sup> JAPANESE LIFE traces the development of senryu even beyond Shiki, up through 1957.

ample by Boncho (?-1714)—one of Basho's pupils—which he feels is more like senryu than haiku.<sup>17</sup> In noting "Characteristics of Haiku", however, he says in effect that there are many kinds of haiku and the adjectives he uses to describe them include the following: charming, satirical, humorous, sad, shallow, deep, gay, grave and religious (p. 2). Note "humorous", "shallow", "gay" and especially "satirical." These same elements exist in poems which Blyth, in his SENRYU, also calls haiku but in which he finds elements of senryu.

I am in full agreement with those who are dedicated to finer and finer haiku having no alien element. This article is not an attempt to corrupt the haiku in English and accelerate the recent decadence Blyth thought he saw. It is an expression of my own conviction that a border zone exists in which haiku, that really are haiku, sheer or

shade into what is beyond any doubt senryu, that these border zone haiku are delightful and that appreciation of

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<sup>13</sup> In this respect, Blyth's JAPANESE LIFE is most illuminating. Consider the following senryu: "From yesterday", which "is in the region where haiku and senryu become one" (p. 57); "In the tub", where "Here again senryu and haiku are one" (p. 58); "Drawing along", about which Blyth asks, "Is this not a haiku?" (p. 64); "The dry winter wind", a senryu "not distinguishable from haiku" (p. 530); and "The taro field", concerning which Blyth says, "No one would know this was a senryu unless told so" (p. 533).

<sup>14</sup> As demonstrated by JAPANESE LIFE, however, the distinction is not always easy to make. Sometimes, the distinction lies in "the lower tone, the language of the verse" (p. 457). Sometimes it lies in the lack of "any particular or prescribed season word" (pp. 457



them will increase haiku enjoyment.

Let us consider some examples of borderline haiku. To me, the best is the haiku by Chasei which Harold G. Henderson was generous enough to translate for my entirely experimental COUNTY SEAT.<sup>18</sup> I built that book around Chasei's haiku because I was certain that if an American had written the poem, it would have been called a senryu. Henderson's unusually fine translation is

More, even, than people—  
how many scarecrows there are  
here where I live . . .

I read it as heartwringing haiku when I see lonesome fields, each with its eerily pathetic scarecrow, stretching out all around a village in which too many humans are as lonely, lost, shabby, pitiful and aimless, through unavoidable circumstances, as any of

their own scarecrows. It is great haiku, to me. Then I can read it as hilariously satirical senryu when I see a village in

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and 464). Sometimes the senryu has a specific season word, but the distinction lies in that the season "is always the real subject" of haiku, while the subject of senryu is always "the mind of man" (p. 466). But even Blyth has difficulty in separating the two. In "Beautiful weather" we have a haiku, except for the imprecise designation of season which makes it senryu (p. 555); yet, in "A sudden shower", given as a senryu, we have a definite season word, and the center is not the mind of man—unless we make a deliberate effort to make it so (p. 567). Further, Blyth compares "A plum falls" (senryu) with Basho's "The old pond" (haiku), both possessing season word, neither having a center in "the mind of man", concluding that "The senryu in a way seems better . . ." (p. 563).

which preposterous human scarecrows look down on others as scarecrows, never seeing themselves mirrored in their own scarecrows. I am glad I am enriched by both readings. Lack of either would leave me poorer. Somehow, I am certain Chasei saw it both ways; how else could he have written that marvelous creation to have it read so perfectly either way?

In AMERICAN HAIKU there are many examples of border zone haiku. The following example falls right in the middle of this border zone, indistinguishable from senryu, if you like, but doubly appealing for that reason:

Hear my wind chime—  
someone on the porch  
is stirring iced teal

—Robert Davis Harris, Jr.

(AH, I, 2: 23)

As border zone haiku, I see this ver-

sion: the wind chime gives delicate melody, wild as little birds' and ethereal as well; the poet thinks he hears his chime, notices the wind is not blowing, realizes the sounds' source—and that the most commonplace realities, such as ice and tea, yield spiritual music as charmingly subtle as the most delicate instruments contrived to produce it. As senryu, one interpretation is as follows: as nearly all of us do on occasion, the

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15 Sanki Ichikawa, et. al., eds. (Tokyo: Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai [Japan Society for the Promotion of Science], 1958).

16 (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, Co., 1957), p. 136.

17 (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc. [Anchor], 1958), p. 69.

18 (Platteville, Wis.: American Haiku Press, 1966).



man is enjoying a self-conscious instant of rare "loftiness," saying to himself, "Ah, my wind chime"—when the moment explodes like a too-extended soap bubble with the realization that somebody is only stirring iced tea. I cannot understand how either version in any way weakens the other.

The second of the two issues of AMERICAN HAIKU which I brought out (II, 2), has been criticized as having far more senryu in it than haiku. I deny that they are senryu in the sense that they cannot be interpreted as haiku, insisting now, as then, that I would not have published them as haiku if I had thought them senryu. One singled out for particular criticism is by William J. Feeney:

Bases full, one out,  
tying run is at the plate.  
My son eats popcorn.<sup>19</sup>

In this haiku a devoted father, to whom baseball is a bore but whose son loves it, sacrifices an afternoon to take the boy to an important game. However, this commercial strain between groups of deadly serious men to whom the game means real money, the violent noise of the onlookers, as tensions built up elsewhere detonate, is not the vacant lot baseball the boy loves. He was going to play baseball with the fellows but he loved his father too much to tell him so. What he sees here repulses him, which he successfully conceals until, being just a little boy, he eats popcorn at the wrong time. Then the father sees that greater sacrifice, the widow's mite, offered to him as sacrifice in return for his own by his

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Johnston, "Insight and Awareness in Senryu and Haiku." (AH, III, 2: 58).

son. Interpreted as senryu, we have an intelligent but human father who boasts to his friends that he and his son are "pals." Naturally the son picks it up and is similarly superior around his friends. The game, of course, is to prove to both that they are "pals." The father really could not care less about the game. Then the boy reveals his true attitude by eating popcorn at the wrong time. The father realizes the son feels the same about the game as he does. Looking at his own "phoniness" mirrored in his son, he wonders what other "phoniness" of his own he will see similarly mirrored there before long. I think it is a very good border zone haiku. The word "My" swings it over and makes it predominantly border zone haiku. If "My" had been "The", the result would have been a crushing senryu on all adulthood. Even with "My" it can still be senryu, though less crush-

ing.

I consider the following poem to be either an excellent border zone haiku or senryu or both, depending entirely on the background one brings up to it or into it:

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

—Ida Fasel

(AH, III, 1: 30)

From the standpoint of any parent, particularly a parent getting along in years, whose grown children naturally have their own lives, this haiku is a heart-breaker. It is universal: the haiku of the animal or bird slowly, inevitably, hopelessly falling behind the herd or flock in migrations. From the standpoint of the daughter or any person who has experienced the suspiciously convenient forgetfulness and/or deafness of his elders, it can



be a hilarious though not malicious senryu. I am doubly rich, since I can read it as throat-clutching haiku one time and mirth-provoking senryu the next, being both the father of grown children and son of an elderly father, as well.

As stated above, my intent is not to

contribute to decadent alteration of haiku content. Rather, it is to insist on a fact—that senryu elements in haiku do not make it senryu unless they predominate. Further, my hope is to extend haiku enjoyment for those who realize this has been so for centuries.

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## CONCERNING COUNTY SEAT

American Haiku takes pride in presenting its second book, COUNTY SEAT, by Clement Hoyt, former editor-publisher of AMERICAN HAIKU.

Although some of its poems come close to border zone haiku, COUNTY SEAT consists largely of titled senryu, linked by a theme—the scarecrow—the figure of traditional, literary character-types which people any COUN-

TY SEAT (or village, or town, or city).

Another distinctive collector's item from American Haiku Press—illustrated by Vern Thompson; designed by Robert Spiess; photo-offset, with foldout panels.

Three dollars per copy from the publisher, American Haiku Press. Box 73, Platteville, Wisconsin 53818.

45 - 47 by Foster Jewell

45—

Still the moon descends:  
groping toward me, those shadows  
of saguaro arms.

47—

When nighthawks waken—  
when colors of gray smoke trees  
drift off into clouds.

46—

Silent woodpecker  
making the saguaro sing—  
clapping canyon walls.

On the water front—  
pile upon pile of slag heap  
and the smell of fish.

—Leroy Kanterman



49, 50 by Walter H. Kerr

49—

Slowed by willows,  
the road begins to follow  
the river's contour.

50—

They seem, in this light,  
to turn white, these maple leaves,  
waiting for the storm.

51, 52 by Gustave Keyser

51—

From what unknown source . . .  
this old brown brick half sunken  
in the garden dirt?

52—

These old grave markers  
all leaning at the same tilt . . .  
years of the west wind.

54 - 58 by William E. Lee

54—

Tinged with early sun,  
tall pillars of curling smoke  
hold up the blue sky.

—Anne Landauer

Snow falling softly  
in dark grape arbor tangle—  
finds an old ladder.

55—

When night wind dies down,  
a murmuring—not of leaves—  
under that maple.

56—

After weeks of rain,  
waking in the night to find—  
silence—that strange light.



57—

Bowing to applause,  
smiling with all that he has—  
the blind guitarist.

Black sky and green sea  
rumble in around the gull  
surfing down the wind.

—Dallas M. Lemmon

58—

Where six great pines stood,  
a line of used cars for sale—  
six oil-darkened stumps.

Ozark hills at dawn:  
on bird song imperative  
the blue mist rises.

—Mabelle A. Lyon

61, 62 by Gloria Maxson

61—

As if drawn in pain,  
    deep-fetched breath of silence—  
        then  
    long, sad sigh of rain.

An early redwing,  
    his tail a fan to the wind,  
    stands in stubbled snow.

—Edna Meudt

62—

Trees in early bud—  
    through a gossamer of green,  
    sharp young shoulder blades.

64, 65 by Barbara O. Moraw

64—

Circling gulls  
    and fishing boats work together  
    over swells of sea.



Over hoarse growl  
of sea, and battering winds  
of black winter, a bell!

—Roger Mueller

Through redwoods' dense shade  
a laser of flecked sunlight  
pierces, ricochets.

—Kay Titus Mormino

Old town, and old people  
standing on wooden sidewalks  
in their Sunday clothes.

Deaf-mutes conversing  
with their hands, with their faces,  
in utter silence.

—Marjory Bates Pratt

69 - 72 by Spencer Rathus

69—

The whoosh of the wind  
all night long . . . all night long  
the howling of dogs.

71—

Ah, this cold! This cold!  
And men look not at women  
on the gusty streets.

70—

Against this north wind  
a sparrow, puffed, hugs the trunk  
of a brittle oak.

72—

Calmly, so calmly,  
paper-white trunks of birches  
sway against this dusk.



73 - 76 by Willie Reader

73—

Shucking the corn—  
the wife sits still, a dry hand  
amid the threads of silk.

75—

In the rising mist,  
only the legs of the horses  
are touched with fright.

74—

Bright fools of April—  
patches of early bluebonnets  
quilt the winter range.

76—

The windmill hangs dusty—  
the cattle stand by the tank  
under a brown sky.

77 - 84 by Sydell Rosenberg

77—

A wrapping of snow—  
here and there in the ivy,  
a dark leaf showing.

79—

The night has white trees—  
mysterious bones stripped clean  
by knives of the sky.

78—

Holding umbrellas,  
children, like rows of mushrooms,  
glisten in the rain.

80—

More blue, more bright  
than their blue and white feathers—  
caw-cawing of jays.



81—

Yesterday's rain  
left this flat puddle smoothing  
the wrinkled leaves.

82—

As the sun sets,  
the old fisherman sorts out  
the fish he can sell.

83—

In the soft spring rain  
master and dog walk sniffing  
newborn fragrances.

84—

Fired into the air  
as high heels click down the hill:  
a flock of sparrows.

## JAPANESE LIFE IN CONTEMPORARY SENRYU

by Akira Kimura (Rojin)

The senryu, a deviation from the haiku, is composed on the same prin-

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“Japanese Life in Contemporary Senryu” appeared first in the BULLETIN OF OSHIMO WOMEN’S COLLEGE, no. 2 (Dec., 1964), and appears here in the first of two installments (the second scheduled for AH, VI, 1), by permission of the author, Akira Kimura. Presently a professor at Oshimo Women’s College, Hiroshima, Japan, he is the author of several books on English-language study for high school and college students. Professor Kimura (senryu pen name, Rojin), has studied the senryu for more than thirty years; from 1959 to 1964, he was senryu commentator and judge for Hiroshima Central Radio Station.

ciple as the haiku, and is said to be the shortest form of poetry in the world. Both have seventeen-syllable pattern (5-7-5), and therefore are identical in their forms, but their contents are distinctly different.

It would be extremely difficult to enumerate all the minute differences between these two types of poetry. Generally speaking, however, the haiku aims at depicting nature itself while the senryu deals with humans, or humor, in the broadest sense of the term.

How and why this peculiar combination of 5-7-5 syllables came into being, nobody knows for certain. It may have come from the nature of the Japanese language itself, or it may be a product of long linguistic evolution,



as many allege. But this much is clear—it had existed (though not in the form of poetry) long before the first haiku was composed in the 16th century, and it is the easiest form of syllabification for all Japanese.

This explains why most Japanese can express their sentiment in this form of poetry, which is intrinsically the easiest form of verbal expression for them. The most brutal of murderers, with no educational background at all, is expected to compose a haiku, a senryu, or a waka (another form of poetry of thirty-one syllables) just before execution; and often such a verse is a real masterpiece.

Here the author has tried to comment on some contemporary senryu. They were chosen, not for their poetical merits only, but for their usefulness in conveying an understanding of the traits and traditions of the Japanese people.

## I. A-Bomb and an Old Man

Adding eighteen years,  
now I remember my child  
of that day.<sup>1</sup>

—Rensho (1963)

It needs no explanation that, in a short form of poetry like senryu or haiku, one must weed out words not absolutely necessary. This omission of superfluity, however, often obscures the meaning or the feeling the verse aims to convey. Or, it makes the verse understandable only to a certain group of people who have had enough training in seeking out the implications.

It would be pretty hard to expect an average American or an English-

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<sup>1</sup> Juchachi wo/tashite ano hi no/ko wo

man to find out what this senryu (or rather the translation of it) means. But a Japanese could clearly see the meaning, especially if he lives in Hiroshima, as the composer Rensho does.

To him "that day" means "the day the A-bomb fell"—August 6, 1945, that is. On that day he lost his only child, and today, exactly eighteen years after "that day", he remembers his child in his meditation. He adds eighteen years to the age of his child who disappeared from him in the flash of an A-bomb, and thinks to himself, "If he were alive today, he would be . . ."

He is not an important man; only a bill collector for a small printing company . . . and pretty old. He is a meek, good-natured fellow, loved by everybody. He does not join the riotous anti-A-bomb parade programmed for that day, because he hates shouting

angry words and waving red flags on the streets.

Instead, he devotes the whole day to the memory of his child, and sits alone in his small room, thinking and meditating. With a submissive smile, he will repeat, if asked how he feels, "Now my child is with Buddha; and he wishes all of us to live—in peace."

## II. God Comes Down A-shopping

At a chinaware market,  
a salesman clinks a cup  
to an interpreter.<sup>2</sup>

—Kacho-shi

In Japan, foreigners (whites, in this case) are not just people from a for-

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<sup>2</sup> Tsuyaku ni/narashite miseru/toki-ichi.



eign land. They are looked up to as superiors—for their physical appearances as well as for their wealth. They are miniature gods of superiority to be copied in every way of life.

However, what most attracts the attention of common city merchants is not the superiority in their personal appearance or culture, but their superiority in wealth. A tourist, if he happens to be a white Caucasian, is bound to be regarded as a millionaire with a thick bundle of dollar-bills ready in hand. To an average Japanese shopkeeper, he is an inexhaustible source of money—**Kane-no-naru-ki** (a tree that bears money). He is a veritable god of wealth! He is too rich to be bothered by small losses—he can afford a little exploitation.

Even if the god should get irritated at the crafty salesmanship of the shopkeeper, that's an incident in another world and none of the business of a

shopkeeper in this world. A god belongs to another world, doesn't he? He is from another country, at least.

The chinaware market held annually at Arita is very famous, and many tourists who think themselves something of connoisseurs in chinawares visit this small city in northern Kyushu.

Here a chinaware salesman shows the god's interpreter his cherished merchandise, telling him how clearly it clinks in his hands—how it clinks with that subtle Oriental ringing which a chinaware from other lands can never imitate.

But he dare not speak to the god himself, who is too august to be spoken to. Instead, he turns to the God's interpreter, and humbly wishes the god will eventually notice the beautiful sound and nod his merciful

consent, plucking a dollar bill out of his bundle.

### III. Japanese Psychology in a Hot Bath

At a public bath,  
a jolly fellow, you'll find,  
to be a district attorney.<sup>3</sup>

—Keito

Of the many social facilities foreigners find peculiar to the Japanese, the most outstanding will be the public bathhouse. There gather all the people who cannot afford a bathtub in their respective homes. There they bathe in a large bathtub, rubbing and scrubbing the dirt off their bodies, washing their fatigue and worry off their minds. And after taking a prolonged bath, they feel refreshed and reborn, ready for a quiet night's sleep and the hard work of tomorrow.

What tremendous effects this act of

general cleaning up of body and mind has upon forming the peculiar traits and social customs of the Japanese people, few foreigners could even guess. Here lies the secret of their quick physical recovery and their prompt mental switchover as well as the strange sense of co-partnership with their fellow men.

Suppose you yourself are in a large bathtub, with a high ceiling overhead, with very hot water up to your chin, and with a host of people around you. These fellow-bathers, all absorbed in the business of rubbing and scrubbing, please remember, are all strangers to you.

Then you will notice a subtle psychological change come upon you.

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<sup>3</sup> Sento de/aeba kisakuna/kenji-san.



You find you now have the feeling of strange co-partnership with people around you; you feel yourself a part of those naked people sharing the same bathtub with you!

And, at the same time, you begin to feel (and this is important!) that you are **just a person**. You are freed from your present profession, your past personal history and your social status—these earthly ties are all gone the instant you jump in the bathtub with your fellowmen. You are just yourself—no more or no less. For, while you are in the bathtub, with only a small towel to protect you, what is the use anyway of the social position and prestige that you enjoy in the outer world?

Here a district attorney, usually a formidable person in his dignified uniform, talks joyfully to a casual acquaintance, who might possibly be the worst of ex-convicts. Each pays no at-

tention to such earthly trifles—while taking a bath.

Would you like once in a while to cast off everything, and be just a person among your fellow creatures? Go to a public bath! Time necessary? Thirty minutes. Cost? Five cents.

#### IV. She Dares to Say "No"

She compresses her lips tight,  
fully prepared  
to say "No!"<sup>4</sup>

—Hangyo

Japanese men completely lost their faces by the miserable defeat in the war, and, as a natural result, women proportionately raised their prestige.

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<sup>4</sup> Hiki-shimeru/kuchibiru "No" wo/you tsumori.

In the long history of two thousand years, Japanese women have played only very insignificant roles, but now they speak in a louder voice than ever before.

This may seem just another post-war change in the everyday life of the Japanese people, but really there is more meaning in it. More women's voice in everything—in politics, education, economy of the nation as well as in affairs of daily life—is slowly but steadily changing the nature of the nation's behavior. It is a piece of revolution powerful enough to shake the entire old social structure to its foundation.

However, the old tradition of conforming herself to everybody's wish still lingers in every woman's mind, and she has to make a strenuous effort, with her lips compressed tight, before she can give her answer in the negative.

## V. Conducting a Japanese Home

Old mother's displeased  
with her daughter-in-law's way  
of raising baby on cow's milk.<sup>5</sup>  
—Utatsuna

The practice of raising a baby on cow's milk was unknown to Japanese until about one hundred years ago, when this country was first opened to the West. But even after that, until quite recently, very few mothers could afford this luxurious, and consequently expensive, way of nursing their babies. Naturally, therefore, old women are generally still antagonistic to, or at least skeptical of, this way of feeding babies on cow's milk. They strongly

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<sup>5</sup> Gyunyu de/sodateru yome ga/ki ni irazu.



assert that motherly love comes from a mother's breast, not from a milk-bottle.

Such seemingly insignificant difference of opinion is often the cause of serious domestic disputes in Japanese homes today. If the husband's mother, the supreme commander of general domestic affairs, wins this argument, the young mother will have to restrain her wrath for long years to come with

a submissive smile. If the younger one has the better of the argument, the old mother will lose her face, which is catastrophic to all Oriental minds; she might go into hysterics—often disrupting the home.

In Japan, where progress—change, at least—is so hastily pushed on in all phases of social life, it is extremely difficult to adjust oneself even to one's own home life.

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The swing is rusty—  
towhee and thrasher play where  
leaves cover the sand.

—Herta Rosenblatt

86 - 89 by Anne Rutherford

86—

From the beaten path,  
these comfortable old shoes  
kick one more stone.

87—

The old tree is gone.  
Now in my neighbor's house  
a lighted window!

88—

Out of the gray rock  
of forbidding granite walls—  
this tiny fern frond.

89—

In the soft warm sand  
a little lizard sleeping  
. . . eyes not quite shut.



Water hugging spiders;  
their every nervous step—  
caused a ripple . . .

—Charles Scanzello

Desert water pipe,  
far circle of green haze, scent  
of orange blossoms.

—David Seegal

92, 93 by Charles Shaw

92—

A flash of lightning  
and suddenly a landscape  
pops out of darkness.

93—

Lazing on the shore,  
a small boy apes the echo  
of the ocean's roar.

In this winter fire,  
light leaping then returning,  
no flame quite dying.

—Joy Shieman

The summer crickets  
click their heels, the sound  
marching  
down the green valley.

—Dorothy Cameron Smith

96, 97 by Marjorie Bertram Smith

96—

A lone lookout crow  
speaks strident cautioning calls  
from a quiet pine.

97—

Red-winged black birds cling  
to gold-brown wands of cattails  
and claim the marshes.



## ANNOUNCING MARSH-GRASSES

Fans of O Southard (who has taken three AH awards), will be pleased at his return to the pages of AMERICAN HAIKU, after a year's absence, with eight new haiku in this issue of the magazine. None of the Southard haiku in this issue appear in his new book, MARSH-GRASSES, the third book published by American Haiku Press. Southard's MARSH-GRASSES is a

collector's item: designed by Robert Spiess; printed by letterpress on quality paper; bound by hand in cord; limited to 350 unnumbered copies in the first edition.

MARSH-GRASSES is available at \$3.50 per copy from the publisher, American Haiku Press, Box 73, Platteville, Wisconsin, 53818.

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98 - 105 by O Southard

98—

To the outrigger  
the mountain breeze brings a hint  
of ginger blossoms.

99—

Down the coral slope  
disappearing in the gloom  
a pale yellow fish.

100—

The wing-shot heron—  
again the wild cormorant  
has brought him a fish.

101—

In the mud wallow  
up to his fringed underlip—  
the work buffalo.

102—

Over the river  
butterflies chase each other  
and our skipping stones.

103—

Down, now, the live oak;  
among the wakened echoes—  
a turkey's gobble.



104—

Perched along a branch—  
beak to beak the waxwings pass  
a bright red cherry.

That little titmouse,  
unmindful of bird watchers,  
sings his many songs.

—Jerri Spinelli

105—

Overwhelmed by mist  
the rocky peak struggles out—  
and sinks back under.

107, 108 by Will D. Swearingen

107—

The old blind beggar . . .  
secretly dropping an alms  
into his own cup.

108—

At dusk by the pond,  
a dog chasing wild geese  
into the falling sky.

The old Brahma bull  
hugs the fence . . . waits for  
someone  
to scratch his tough hide.

—J. Alexander Thorburn

110 - 117 by Tom Tico

110—

A beetle rumbles  
out of the grass, hesitates . . .  
turns, and rumbles back.

111—

Yellow wildflowers  
spring from the rocky roadside—  
and battle the wind.



112—

The small boy chases  
his kindergarten drawing  
snatched by the spring wind.

114—

The crescent hidden . . .  
street lights illuminate  
the dripping cedar.

113—

On tenement steps:  
one fallen daffodil  
radiant with sun.

115—

Deep in the alley:  
a single blue iris  
blooms in the shadows.

116—

Two aged winos  
are sharing a small bottle  
in the spring sunshine . . .

117—

My aging mother  
tells of her happiest moment:  
swinging as a child.

118 - 123 by Tohko (Clement Hoyt)

118—

The fishermen gone,  
skiffs gossip among themselves,  
comparing stories.

119—

The heat-crazed plains:  
convulsed grass hallucinates  
a cool mirage.



120—

After long night rain,  
longer lonesome silence breaks—  
a nighthawk's mad screech.

122—

The dark, rainy noon . . .  
mimosa leaves folded shut,  
as they close at night.

121—

A nameless child's grave;  
out of it grows a man-high,  
deadly Datura.

123—

Church steeple repairs:  
on the ground floor, among tools,  
our bell seems too small.

Chilled by the March wind,  
the first groggy bee of spring  
finds the first crocus.

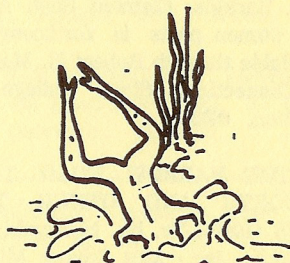
—Joyce W. Webb

The sky is so small.  
December four o'clock moon  
and sunset crowd it.

—James Whelden

Ages split this rock.  
Again the fluted fossil  
fills with rain water.

—Paul O. Williams





## HAIKU BOOKS AND MARKETS—OLD AND NEW

Ankenbrand, Frank, Jr. SCROLL OF BIRTHDAY HAIKU (1967). Art Press: New Britain, Conn. \$1.50 standard ed.; \$2.00 deluxe ed. Also HAIKU BROADSIDES (1967). Art Press: New Britain, Conn. \$2.50 standard ed.; \$4.00 deluxe ed. Each broadside contains ten haiku written by one of the following outstanding haiku poets: Frank Ankenbrand, Jr.; Basho (tr. H. Henderson); Nicholas Virgilio; Thomas J. Harkins; Clement Hoyt. A second series by women poets is forthcoming. All items available through Robert E. Massmann, Central Connecticut State College, New Britain, Conn. 06050.

Basho. THE NARROW ROAD TO THE DEEP NORTH AND OTHER TRAVEL SKETCHES (1967). Tr. by Nobuyuki Yuasa. Penguin Books, Inc.: 3300 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore, Md. 21211. \$1.75.

Bohne, Pall W. HAIKU WITH BIRDS

(1967). Bookhaven Press: 7718 Fern Ave., South San Gabriel, Calif. 91777. A miniature book. \$4.50.

Iino, Norimoto. HINTS IN HAIKU: JAPAN'S PULSE-BEAT (1967). Philosophical Library, Inc.: 15 East 40 St., N. Y., N. Y. 10016. \$4.95.

Los Altos Writers Roundtable. BORROWED WATER (1966). Charles E. Tuttle Co.: Rutland, Vermont. "A Book of American Haiku" by Helen S. Chenoweth, ed., and thirteen members of the only practicing group of haiku poets in the U. S. \$2.95.

McDowell, Nancy Joyce. EMBERS (1965). Larry Stark Press: 20 Mellen St., Cambridge, Mass. Out of Print. Also NEW SNOW (1967). Larry Stark Press. 50 cents.

Silvers, Vicki. ECHOES ON THE WIND

## HAIKU BOOKS AND MARKETS—OLD AND NEW

(1967). Candor Press: 103 Clements Ave.,  
Dexter, Mo. \$3.50.

Stark, Larry. ONE HUNDRED VIEWS OF  
THE CHARLES RIVER (1966). Larry Stark  
Press: 20 Mellen St., Cambridge. 75 cents.

Thorne, Evelyn. ANSWER IN BRIGHT  
GREEN (1967). Epos: Crescent City, Fla.,  
32012. "Five Seven Five" comprises about  
one fourth of the book. \$1.00.

### HAIKU MARKETS

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CORRECTION: Catherine Case Lubbe was  
the winner of the 1966 Nyogen Senzaki  
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No. 1 (1/67) erroneously credited the win  
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