

Shamrock Haiku Journal

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world

Issue 5, 2008

Shamrock



Haiku Journal
of the Irish Haiku Society

Dear Readers,

Shamrock Haiku Journal is entering its second year. Four issues comprised of works by 126 poets from all over the world appeared in the course of 2007. We are planning to publish more quality texts in the future. Keep sending us interesting material! Thank you.

Announcement

Shamrock Haiku Journal Readers' Choice Awards

We invite all the readers of Shamrock Haiku Journal to vote for the best haiku/senryu poem published in 2007, i.e. in the first FOUR issues of Shamrock (you cannot vote for your own poem, though). To vote, send an e-mail to [irishhaikusociety\[at\]hotmail.com](mailto:irishhaikusociety[at]hotmail.com) with "Best haiku of 2007" in the subject line. Please insert the full text of the poem you vote for (only ONE poem) plus the name of its author in the body of your e-mail. The deadline for vote is May 31st, 2008. The best poems will be named in the next issue of Shamrock Haiku Journal.

Re: "Haiku Calendar Ludbreg Contest 2008" Results

Having read some of the winning haiku from the "Haiku Calendar Ludbreg Contest 2008", we were left in a state of bewilderment. A few quotes from them:

"a bough full of Spring"

"little puppies forgot
their pawprints"

"his postbox is empty
again and again"

"Child's hand
in a joyous dream
reached for a bird"

This English-language haiku competition was held in Croatia, and had all-Croatian adjudicators. We are wondering if there is a slightest possibility that the organizers of such haiku contests employ native speakers of English, or at least advanced-level English speakers, as the adjudicators. Otherwise we'll be getting more of the same, i.e. prize-winning haiku written in shockingly bad English.

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Focus on

 France

Monday morning
a low-spirited mason
climbs his ladder

first mowing –
a year-old rust
disappears in the grass

falling leaves
in the autumn light
tranquillity

-- Jean Antonini (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

forgotten rake –
red leaves left unattended,
autumn in suspense

-- Anick Baulard (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a shell crater –
water in it accommodates
the whole sky

-- Maurice Betz (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

in less than a day
this white chrysanthemum
has turned purple

-- Patrick Blanche (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

the silence of dawn
snow falls
on snow

-- Philippe Bréham (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

under the Milky Way
a pale olive sapling
reaches skyward

shadow of the apple tree
each day it lengthens
with the autumn sun

-- Richard Breitner (transl. by Aisling White)

old oak at dusk
the sun momentarily
lends it a heart

-- Philippe Caquant (transl. by Aisling White)

farmers' young son –
parents present him
with a toy tractor

-- Philippe Caquant (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

deserted beech –
under a round log,
two lively ants

-- André Cayrel (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

summer storm
my neighbours' lingerie
hanging on

-- Jean-Claude Cesar (transl. by Aisling White)

tuesday's cigarette –
the lawnmower's four-stroke engine
works fine

-- Jean-Claude Cesar (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

drowsiness –
outside the train windows,
swaying corn

-- Henri Chevignard (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

opening my window
after the storm –
thousands of droplets

heat engulfs
the café terraces –
more eyes half closed

he folds his arms,
the man watching a monkey
with folded arms

original colours...
the same wallpaper
in old photos

lying next to scissors,
the tax form...

temptation

-- Dominique Chipot (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a star above the ocean
caressing the white sands,
bathing the waves

midday sun
its crystal light
caressing the satin

-- Mary Jo Claus (transl. by Aisling White)

always first to bloom –
this cherry tree
in the graveyard

into the bowl
that survived last night's earthquake
I place my wedding ring

front door, just closed –
how long shall they be apart,
these two butterflies?

spring snow –
it has melted on all the graves
but one

ocean outpost
for a couple of gulls:
the flat-top rock

-- *Gilles Fabre (transl. by the author)*

breathing spring...
the quail's nest built upon
a rusty grenade

having deciphered
the meaning of flowers
I've lost my way

-- Georges Friedenkraft (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

dried coffee drop
on a cold table –
end of the weekend

insomnia
the moon a bit less round
already

winter storm
grey clouds following
grey clouds

broken glasses
in rubbish bins –
first day of the year

first morning –
a veil of mist
covers all

-- Damien Gabriels (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

the menhirs
lined up toward something
that must have happened here

-- Guillevic (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

misty garden
an old man strews ashes
from his stove

melting snow
an old scarecrow's feet
in the water

-- Bruno Hulin (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

thrown to the deck...
in the eyes of a dead fish,
the horizon

receding from us
bit by bit –
the night

surrounded by people,
myself
walking the black dog

whispering to high tide,
those lying
on the seabed

-- Alain Kervern (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

end of the holidays
my computer
hums again

midnight in Marseille –
boats in the harbour
greet the New Year

-- Marylène Lallemand (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

village square
a hen, all alone,
takes a stroll

part of their journey...
two black beetles
crossing the road

her lilywhite
blouse...
the ides of March

not having heard the news,
dozens of butterflies
hover in the grass

a tree-top
tickling the nose of
a Giant Buddha

-- Daniel Py (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

October mist –
no boats around,
just hooting

everybody's crying
at today's funeral
the baby too

-- Luc Rose (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

sweet-scented summer –
the shadow of an ash-tree
sways the yellow grass

-- Francis Tugayé (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

full moon –
a slug on the rock
follows a shiny path

-- François Vaudour (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Addendum

A few French-Canadian Haiku

Sunday calm –
a sudden gust of wind
makes the cat flee

autumn morning –
inside the book by Buson,
a jay's feather

-- Janick Belleau (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

home from the fields –
our shoes resting at last
against the door

a cat in the rain
soaked to the skin
his eyes brim over

-- Yves Brillon transl. by Aisling White)

even as the bustards
take to the air
summer slips away

-- Yves Brillon (transl. by Roisin De Faoite)

the new lamp
highlighting scars
on the old wall

meeting by chance
after all these years...
our short grey hair

-- André Duhaime (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

lowland maples
my hand pauses its progress
on the white page

-- *Jocelyne Villeneuve (transl. by Aisling White)*

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Essay

French Haiku

by Gilles Fabre

According to George Swede's article in *Simply Haiku*, a certain Jose Juan Tablada of Portugal wrote a haiku sequence while visiting Yokohama in 1900. Also mentioned in this article is Hendrik Doeff, a Dutchman who worked for the Dutch East India Company in Nagasaki between 1798 and 1817; he taught himself Japanese, wrote two haiku and published a Latin transliteration of them in Japanese periodicals. These seem to be the first ever non-Japanese haiku. In 1903 the haiku movement started in the West, notably in France, where a group of writers published a collection of their work after visiting Japan on a cultural exchange trip and discovering the unexplored world of Japanese haiku.

Exhibitions of Japanese prints and artworks in the early 20th century also had a major influence on writers and painters. The above-mentioned collection titled *Au fil de l'eau (Going with the flow)* was written by a group of poets that included Julien Vocance and Paul Louis Couchoud in the course of their travels along French rivers and canals on board a barge. This is quite in line with the tradition of social gatherings and wanderings in nature that became customary in the haiku world. Here is one of the haiku by Paul-Louis Couchoud:

how will she reap
the whole field?
her sickle so small

Then an anthology of Japanese literature in French translation by Michel Revon was published in Paris in 1906 (according to other sources, in 1910). After that, quite a number of French magazines (among them, *La Nouvelle Revue Française*) started publishing haiku, including those written by the surrealists' guru Paul Eluard. Many worthy haiku were written by French poets during the First World War; they were later unearthed and published in Vocance's *100 Visions of War*, as well as in other anthologies. Julien Vocance's haiku can be rather emotional:

all night facing
the giant army,
two men in a hole

Some other well-known French and French-speaking poets were also involved in haiku writing. Louis Calaferte published a collection of haiku written in his garden. Philippe Jaccottet, using some notes taken while walking in nature, published a collection of haiku (*Airs*, 1964); he also translated some classical haiku. The travel-writer Nicolas Bouviers, who drove all over Japan, translated Basho's famous account of his travel to the North Provinces. Finally, Kenneth White, the founder of the International Institute of Geopoetics, a haiku enthusiast and an occasional haiku poet, acknowledged - like Jaccottet before him - that Basho's work and, generally, haiku had influenced his writing and the way of thinking.

A great deal of work was done by Alain Kervern, a master poet and a skilful translator, who provided French-speaking haiku poets with plenty of haiku texts and information on haiku and on nature (including lists of plants, flowers, animals, minerals, etc.). He published his *magnum opus* in five volumes, and it took him ten years to get it done. It is also worth mentioning that all the texts left by the Basho school (haiku and renga poems) have been translated to French by René Sieffert, and now are available in the shops, all the seven volumes! Most of them haven't been translated to other languages yet.

In the late 1990's, André Duhaime of Canada published his international haiku anthology comprised of more than 2,000 haiku from 24 countries (ten poets per country, on average), in their original language and in French translation. This anthology now is available online at <http://pages.infinit.net/haiku>

There is quite a number of haiku groups and associations in modern days' France and French-speaking countries. Among them, Association pour la Promotion du Haïku (<http://www.100pour100haiku.fr>) and Association Française du Haïku (<http://www.afhaiku.org>) that promote and share haiku by organising meetings and publishing haiku on their websites and in other publications. Haiku collections and anthologies are easily accessible. *Moundarren* has published more than 20 volumes by all the major Japanese poets, from Basho to Hozai Ozaki to Santoka

Taneda. Design quality of their books is irreproachable, and so is the quality of the translations.

Gilles Fabre's collection of haiku titled *Because of a Seagull* was published in 2005 by The Fishing Cat Press.



"Arbat" by Emilie Akoka (Paris, France)



Haiku & Senryu

lookout point
the stones
share our silence

tears
sweeping up
the old dog's coat

last words
green tea
darkens in the pot

mountain road
a floral tribute
on every corner

-- *Graham Nunn (Australia)*

the tilted alder –
toddlers meet
each other's stare

both of us
stock still:
the fox and I

the groundsman marks
where the bye line will be
two magpies

bluish snowdrops
the wrong hand
in the wrong glove

-- *Matthew Paul (England)*

wool skeins
the shades of winters past
sorted anew

the blossom wind
even broad bean flowers
tossing their heads

lost pet frog –
anonymous bumps
in the duckweed

the road home
all the old milestones
flashing by

-- Lorin Ford (Australia)

shallow stream
I wade deeper
into starlight

abandoned mill
the dark water keeps
its secret

talking in bed
I forget his name...
second husband

-- Roberta Beary (USA)

wrapped round the tracks
my shadow stands
for the passing train

sparrowhawk's return
the cat's grave
covered in feathers

down country lanes
at every corner
a flock of jackdaws

-- David Serjeant (England)

spring afternoon...
pigeons jostle for position
on the college roof

ghee stain
on the mattress –
an indelible moon

deserted car park
a woman with a pushchair
chases a pigeon

-- *Helen Buckingham (England)*

North wind
a dead spider adrift
of its tattered web

October moon –
in the old oak,
a white cat's face

summer mowing –
a spider crouching
in my trouser turn-ups

-- *Aisling White (Ireland)*

summer's end
the old swing hangs
a little lower

rolling prairie
a line of windmills
stirs the clouds

-- *Susan Constable (Canada)*

fingernail clippings
on a black marble worktop –
the New Moon

summer lingering –
in an opened book,
pressed flowers

-- *John Sheahan (Ireland)*

cloud breaks –
yellow leaves shake hands
with the sun

sudden shower
the bog stitched with
silver lamé

-- *Michael Gallagher (Ireland)*

shadow of a willow
the grass
feels colder

out of the empty sleeve steam

-- *Sergey Biryukov (Russia, transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

crows chasing the kite –
as it rises high,
they leave it

-- *Aju Mukhopadhyay (India)*

tiny frog...
a breaststroke kick
doubles its length

-- *Quendryth Young (Australia)*

old diary
the lock no longer needs
a key

-- *Nathalie Buckland (Australia)*

autumn wind
the patch of blue
scoots southward

-- *Laryalee Fraser (Canada)*

storm clouds
seaweed sways
as the seal passes

-- *William Gibb Forsyth (Ireland)*

midwinter dusk –
the wind has colours
and weight

-- *Kim Horne (Canada)*

wildfire
the urge to take
another breath

-- *Curtis Fisher (USA)*

empty stalls –
on the “for sale” sign
letters fade

-- *Glenn G. Coats (USA)*

rice in husk
drying on the street,
an eye out for chickens

-- *Michael Morical (Taiwan-USA)*

drive-through –
queuing behind
the seagulls

-- *Allison Millcock (Australia)*



Haibun

The Baldwin Hills Dam

by Adelaide B. Shaw (USA)

December 14, 1963. The peace of a Saturday afternoon shattered by helicopters. Police cars cover the streets, bull horns at full volume.

ATTENTION! DAM CRACKING! EMERGENCY! EVACUATE!

People rushing outside. What dam? Where?

"Didn't you know? In those hills."

"No, we didn't know. Just moved here two weeks ago."

courtyard Christmas tree –
silver ornaments
reflect the sun

EVACUATE....NOW...NOW!

Turn off the oven. Grab the two children, bottles, diapers. What else? We don't know. Take one car. Don't be separated. Lock the door. East? West? North. To my mother's house.

Rock and roll on the car radio. Jingle Bells and Rudolph. Where's the news? Another block, then another. A slow moving line of cars. Tense faces and short tempers.

"It's going....going...It's GONE! Gushing water... gaining momentum... cutting a swath down the hillside along Cloverdale Road." The announcer, reporting from

a helicopter, is breathless. "Still coming...292 million gallons...trees uprooted... houses breaking apart...cars tumbling."

Our apartment is not in the direct path, but still... In silence we worry.

Traffic begins to thin out as we travel further north.

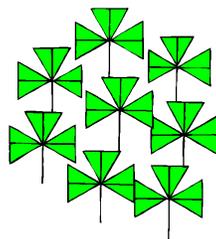
puffy clouds –
at a neighborhood playground
children play dodge ball

We watch the news at my parents' house. An hour and a half to empty the dam. Nine feet of water on the Village Green apartments. Five dead. Eighteen rescued from roof tops and collapsed houses.

Early the next morning we are allowed in the area temporarily. Already a sour smell from dirty water and debris. At our apartment door, a water line at two feet, but only a puddle inside. Our Volkswagen—the engine, clogged with grit.

It could have been worse.

Sunday church bells
to and from the door
the sucking mud



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Editorial

Attenzione: Poets

The editor of Shamrock Haiku Journal has recently returned from Tuscany where he and a few other haiku poets from several European countries had spent a week enjoying gorgeous seaviews, as well as wonderful Italian hospitality. The foreign part of the group learned a few Italian words, which always come in handy if you wish to communicate with the locals. One of the interesting words that we memorised was *attenzione* – it always appears on metallic plates next to a picture of a large-toothed dog.

There were a few situations where we thought about finding an appropriate Italian word – e.g. when an Italian poet lit a cigarette in the mines we were visiting, directly under the “No smoking! Explosive atmosphere” poster. Or when a certain Swedish female writer started whispering in other poets’ ears that Shamrock published the Swedish author Tomas Tranströmer without his

permission. If a person is subject to illusions and delusions of a very singular kind, the facts are not likely to prevail. Of course, we mentioned Tomas Tranströmer's written permission to publish his poems that we keep on file and are prepared to show to an interested party... All in vain. The dogs on metallic plates showed their teeth, the Swedish haiku poet had a sulky dogged expression on her face, and resorted to personal insults, in the "never defend, always attack" style...

Well, what can we say? *Attenzione*: poets!

Announcement

Shamrock Haiku Journal Readers' Choice Award

The following piece by **John Barlow (England)** published in our No 4 was voted the best haiku poem that appeared in Shamrock Haiku Journal in 2007:

fingerpost
a bee bumbles
through nettles

The runner-up was the following haiku by **Rose Hunter (Canada)** that also appeared in Shamrock No 4:

mid-morning sun
turning our chairs
bit by bit

A piece by **Petar Tchouhov (Bulgaria)** was voted the best senryu poem published in Shamrock Haiku Journal in 2007:

Father's Day
the little girl wants
a male doll

(First published in Shamrock Haiku Journal No 4. Translated by the author)

Many congratulations to the winners!

Focus on

Croatia

In this issue, we continue publishing haiku from the Balkans. As our readers surely remember, works by a few haikai from Bosnia, Macedonia and Montenegro appeared in our No 3. The current issue focuses on Croatia, the country where the haiku movement is one of the best developed in Europe. We commit to publishing haiku from Serbia and Slovenia, as well as works from other countries, in the forthcoming issues of our magazine.

water has risen
the stork
suddenly legless

silent people
with flowers
cemetery

-- Tomislav Marjan Bilosnić (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

all out!
wasps defending their nest
from an axeman

looking out the window –
on my neighbour's roof,
yellow dandelion

-- Zlata Bogović (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a raindrop lands
on my palm –
full moon

-- Borivoj Bukva (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

pretending to be asleep,
a little girl falls
into a doze

-- Marijan Cekolj (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

look at this clover
with folded green petals –
it prays to Buddha!

under the hooves
of a king's equestrian statue,
twenty pigeons

hundreds cherry petals
covered by two
magnolia petals

-- Vladimir Devidé (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

chirping crickets
wake up
the dawn

photographer falls –
what a nice picture
of the sky!

hopping in the yard,
a few sparrows and
and a breadcrumb

-- Dina Franin (translated by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Saturday cleaning –
the Hoover gorging
on rose petals

New Year's Day
falling snow
fills chestnut shells

twilight hour
a peacock folding up
his tail

desolate garden
a plum petal takes shelter
in an empty snail shell

-- *Željko Funda (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

farmyard –
bindweed tendrils patching
the old fence

-- *Željko Funda (translated by the author)*

boathouse in autumn
canoes and kayaks
dreaming of oars

-- *Anica Gečić (translated by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

empty nest on the roof –
up aloft, two storks
battle it out

storm wind
starting a spectacular dance
of snowflakes

-- *Anica Gečić (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

on the virgin snow,
a squirrel's trail
and pieces of nutshell

-- Franjo Hrg (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

up the grass blade...
a tiny snail has started
on a journey

on the hill-slope,
a tractor ploughing
the horizon

-- Ivan I. Ivančan (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

night calm –
the boat rocking
a drowsy fisherman

-- Julija Ivić (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

spider's web –
no hanging insects this morning,
only dewdrops

-- Ivanka Glogović Klarić (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

empty meadow
hay and its fragrance
taken away

sitting by the stove
my granny tells me stories
of her granny

-- Dubravko Korbus (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

crickets nowhere to be seen –
the bark of an olive tree,
chirping

-- Marinko Kovačević (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

shower has stopped –
the whole village
under the rainbow

-- Zdravko Kurnik (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

summer evening –
tin soldiers sleeping
on the mown grass

-- Vesna Kurs (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

hoarfrost on the lawn –
a dog warms up his paws
with his breath

guarding the vineyards,
silent
summer houses

-- Timjana Mahečić (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

invisible fruit-pickers –
their song
wandering through the fog

from one patch of lettuce
to another..
a glossy slug trail

-- Vjera Majstrović (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

despite everything,
her dog wags its tail
when we meet

in front of an inn
cows in the lorry awaiting
the driver drinking

hailstorm over –
broken flowers
exhale fragrance

winter moonlight –
shadows of trees marking
a path in the wood

for a moment
white butterfly has flown
into the dark tunnel

-- Tomislav Maretić (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

in the dusk –
a vanishing angler,
the glow of his cigarette

rainy street –
steps and voices,
fewer and fewer

-- Duško Mataš (translated by DV Rošić and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

on a park bench,
a dry leaf
on its own

this old woman's
straw hat –
flowers blossoming on it!

under the tower-clock
a man waiting
looking at his watch

-- *Duško Mataš (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

low tide
boys playing
on the seabed

-- *Marija Marela Mimica (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

girl wielding a broom
sweeps the courtyard,
dances with leaves

fragile and fluffy,
sparkling with silver frost –
the moonlit wire fence

so pale,
this sickle moon
above the glittering city

-- Ružica Mokos (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

hanging their heads
under the weight of rainwater,
first snowdrops

tram doors open –
enter sparrows'
chirping

-- Ružica Mokos (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

walking across the graveyard –
black marble
reflects me accurately

-- Ivan Nadilo (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

blizzard again
snowflakes covering
the postman's footprints

reflection of the moon
gently rocking a boat...
midnight hour

old grating
a spider web still catching
dewdrops

-- Boris Nazansky (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

snow gone
molehills
grow higher

-- Zdenko Oreč (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

plum petals landing
– so carefully! –
in nettles

a woman sweeping leaves
from her husband's grave
onto another

-- Ivan Pahernik (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

windy day –
a broom and a bucket,
all that's left of a snowman

summer storm
hurrying
the slug

-- *Sanja Petrov (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

a cow under
the apple-tree
gnawing on petals

-- *Zvonko Petrovič (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

slowing down
with each passing day,
old neighbours' footsteps

-- *Dunja Pezelj (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

birds leaving this place
the autumn wind carries along
a nest

-- *Ivo Posavec (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

cold morning –
from a passing car,
Eine kleine Nachtmusik

-- *Ljerka Postek Jalaca (translated by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

out cycling,
I pedal on to catch up with
the setting sun

-- Ljerka Postek Jalaca (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a boy at the puddle –
with his bucket he
scoops out the sun

-- Jasminka Predojević (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

spring in the city –
on the café table,
fresh artificial flowers

-- Zivko Prodanović (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

morning snowfall –
garlic in the kitchen basket
sprouting up

starless night –
in one of the windows,
flickering candle-light

-- Vida Pust-Škrkulja (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a bunch of ants
drinking sunshine
from a dewdrop

-- *Vjekoslav Romich (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

old country road
two cows pulling a cart
uphill

-- *Stjepan Rožić (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

a butterfly fluttering
above the bridge –
a child stops crying

-- *Mirko Varga (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

southerly wind
causing strife
between the boats

-- *Mirko Vidović (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

sunset –
winter waves rinsing
walkers' shadows

early March –
scarecrow in the field
frightening snowflakes away

autumn sunset –
the wind takes away
the birch-tree's golden tears

a hay-loft and a stable
resting against
each other

-- Djurdja Vukelić Rožić (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

sliding across the harp strings
of a weeping willow,
wind's fingers

empty seashell –
now
a raindrop's home

-- Djurdja Vukelić Rožić (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

morning walk...
I touch a leaf –
it sighs and starts to smell

narrowly missing each other
and the summer –
two girls roller-skating

summer lunchtime –
instead of a seagull,
a crow watches over the sea

sea-coast in autumn –
rippled water and
swaying tree-tops

autumn –
between two skyscrapers,
a trembling apple-tree

-- Jadran Zalokar (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

lazy day –
stretching itself,
the grandpa's couch

-- Božena Zernec (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Essay

Haiku in Croatia

Djurdja Vukelić Rožić

Haiku movement in Europe has started at the beginning of the 20-th century. Talking about Croatia, haiku were first published in this country much later, in early 1960s. The publication occurred in Split, and the haiku was written by Tonči Petrasov Marović. At approximately the same time haiku by Dubravko Ivančan of Krapina were published in Zagreb. By 1977 Croatia had its first magazine titled 'Haiku' now regarded as the first of its kind in Europe. 'Haiku' magazine was first edited by prof. Željko Funda and by Prof. Zvonko Petrović, both from Varaždin. It was comprised of short-form poetry from the countries of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, i.e. Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia. 'Haiku' appeared more or less irregularly, and the last issue of this magazine came out in 2004.

Utterly surprising is the number of quality haiku poets in this country, the population of which, according to the 2004 census, is 4.5 million people. In modern-days Croatia there are approximately four hundred haiku poets. Croatian haikin have formed four haiku associations based in Samobor, Zagreb, Rijeka and Ivanić Grad. Croatian haiku associations and universities organise various haiku competitions, both nationally and internationally. Haiku contests are getting increasingly popular these years. Croatian haikin were the proud winners of quite a number of haiku awards for their haiku written in their own tongue. Translations of their work into English and Japanese were awarded many prestigious haiku prizes abroad, e.g. in such countries as Japan and the USA. Their works has been collected in many prestigious haiku anthologies, and appeared in such haiku magazines as "Vrabac/Sparrow", "Haiku", "Galeb" (these three haven't been in circulation for quite a few years) and the recently established "Iris". There are also two Croatian websites publishing and promoting haiku: <http://www.karolina-rijecka.com>, and <http://www.haiku.hr>. Every year new poets try their hands at writing haiku. A few mainstream Croatian poets are also known to write haiku: to name but a few, Luko Paljetak, Enes Kišević, Pajo Kanižaj and the late Dragutin Tadijanović.

One of the most prominent haiku poets in Croatia is Prof. Vladimir Devidé,

mathematician and Japanologist. We must point out his devotion to and his successful efforts in promoting the genre, as well as Japanese culture and literature in general, in his home country. His work as a haiku poet spanned a period of nearly half a century. Nearly every library in Croatia has his books on the shelves, and they are always in demand. All in all, he has published 19 books, including collections of haiku poetry, books on Japan and on Japanese culture. He has also published numerous essays on haiku in Croatian and foreign literary magazines, made numerous appearances on the national radio and television, lectured extensively throughout the country, and was always there for younger poets to help them master the haiku genre. It is difficult to overestimate his work as a magazine editor and as the organiser of haiku symposia and festivals, not to mention that he was the founder of several Croatian haiku associations. Croatian haiku movement owes him a lot.

Croatian haiku associations have been busy in the last couple of decades organising haiku meetings, gatherings and competitions. The latter offered prizes for haiku written in Croatian and in English, and sometimes even in a few dialects of the Croatian language, e.g. in the Kajkavian and Tschakavian Dialects. Annual haiku gatherings take place in Samobor (the latest was the sixteenth), in Ludbreg, in Krapina (named after the late Dubravko Ivančan), in Milna on Brač Island, and in Kloštar Ivanić (the latest was the sixth). Both the haiku contest in Kloštar Ivanić and the Ludbreg Calendar Rokovnik are international haiku contests offering prizes for haiku written in English. On each occasion the organisers publish booklets containing the award-winning haiku.

The introduction of the Internet in 1990's helped haiku to take roots in Croatia. Unfortunately, quite a number of Croatian poets still don't own a personal computer. Those who are active on the web exchange information on a regular basis, and share their work with fellow haiku poets.

The Croatian language, as well as its dialects, has a structure somewhat similar to Japanese – at least, the number of syllables in Croatian words is approximately the same as the number of *onji* in Japanese words. This encourages Croatian haiku writers to use similar metric structures. Also, Croatian climate is very much like that of Japan. Both countries have four seasons, with distinctive differences between them. Jim Kacian once suggested that one of the probable reasons for Croatia having quite a number of quality haiku poets is the local lifestyle: many of the Croats still live in small towns and villages, and they remain quite close to nature throughout their lives. Many of those who are based in big cities have also holiday homes in a rural area. Scenic landscapes and the ever-changing Adriatic Sea can also account for the desire of Croatian poets to write about our beautiful country.

(translated by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Djurđja Vukelić Rožić is a member of The Association of Croatian Haiku Poets, Zagreb; she was the editor-in-chief of the "Haiku" magazine.



"Butterfly" by Zoran Turkalj (Croatia)

Haiku & Senryu

As our readers will surely notice, we publish in this section a few haiku/senryu by new Irish haiku poets: Sharon Burrell, Sean Donegan, Susan Kelly, Robert Naczas, Andrew Michael O'Brien. For most of them, as well as for our renowned writer and editor Pat Boran, this is the first publication in an international haiku periodical. We wish the poets the best of luck on their *haiku-no-michi*, i.e. on the haiku path!

first bleak day –
passing in parallel
wakes of geese

step by toddler step –
the intimacy
of pebbles

suddenly a leaf
still on the willow twig
turns kingfisher

-- Diana Webb (England)

hedge –
new shoots
out of line

cattle train...
the underground station
smells of grass

box of fabric –
sorting my
past intentions

-- Quendryth Young (Australia)

early autumn
the conductor too
coughs between movements

melting ice
a black crow has perched
on the lifebuoy

early spring
giggles from an iPod
in the lecture room

-- Lars Vargo (Sweden)

chilly morning –
geese in formation
over the Dart line

evening thunderstorm
housemartins nesting
in our balcony

depth of winter –
a train's headlights glowing
in the half-light

-- Sharon Burrell (Ireland)

ebbing tide –
the sandcastle
re-sculpted

clearing sky
pattern of pine needles
where a puddle was

-- *Nathalie Buckland (Australia)*

rainstorm –
roof leaks
water music

leafless trees –
a one-legged man
swinging between sticks

-- *Hugh O'Donnell (Ireland)*

she closes her eyes
to bite the apple –
autumn breeze

hazy day –
an old man
studies his palm

-- *Philip Miller (USA)*

water-logged field
the horses' new companions
seabirds

antique salesman
his wad of notes
smells musty

-- *Richard J. Turner (England)*

spring morning
the calf's slobber
catches sunlight

in the last of the light a hoopoe's crest

-- *Robert Lucky (USA)*

arctic winds...
the chimney
bubbles over

arctic winds...
a homeless man walks past
the shelter

-- *Charlotte Digregorio (USA)*

an unsought shovel –
it newlyweds
the first snowfall

woman at the wrong stop
waiting for
her bus

-- *Ayaz Daryl Nielsen (USA)*

parched fields
a purple peak stabbing
the clouded sky

plummeting in a spiral flap
of flightless wings,
new-born chicks

-- *Susan Kelly (Ireland)*

sinking in the bog,
the roof of a rusting car...
fragile fontanelle

children's playground
with its solitary swing
measuring the time

-- *Sean Donegan (Ireland)*

dream of a sparrow morning

-- *Pat Boran (Ireland)*

shroud of mist
night enters the shack
through a skylight

-- *Gautam Nadkarni (India)*

robin
hops across the grass
on its shadow

-- *Greg Schwartz (USA)*

late March –
in each window
a different season

-- *Robert Naczas (Ireland/Poland)*

named after
an Egyptian pharaoh,
this playful cat

-- *Michael Andrew O'Brien (Ireland)*

singer on the stage
dancing with
his shadow

-- *John Tiong Chunghoo (Malaysia)*

dad's bread...
another grey hair
in the mix

-- *Helen Buckingham (England)*

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Haibun

Day after Christmas

by Roberta Beary (USA)

We are at the mother of all sales, scrunched up against the hats, the no-good, the bad and the downright ugly. Try this one, she orders, and this, and this. There is no room to move, let alone try something on. With stone face, I lift my hands and obey. She is, after all, my big sister. Buy the red one, she points, yelling for all to hear, it makes your nose look less big.

snow-mush
my neighbor's tree kicked
to the curb

Landmark

by Roberta Beary (USA)

the cute redhead talks like this – dad walked out? when i was five? and might come back? even though it's a long shot? and the old guy next to her leans over and asks why mom gave him up but kept his sister and a nerdy college kid mumbles about finding his father passed out on the kitchen floor the cigarette burning in his hand and i tell anyone who'll listen the first drink was poured here 100 years before i was born.

a slight wobble
in the high wire...
winter crows

Book Review

"Ten Years Haikujane" by Jane Reichhold.

AHA Books, California, USA, 2008.

ISBN: 0-944676-45-6

Available via <http://ahapoetry.com>

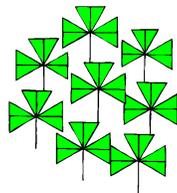
The new book by the renowned American poet Jane Reichhold brings together her haiku written between 1999 and 2008. Known to many as the author of "Enjoying Haiku: a Hands-on Guide" brought out by Kodansha International, she has published 31 collections of haiku, tanka and renga. Her translation of "Complete Haiku of Basho" is due from Kodansha International. The haiku in Jane Reichhold's "Ten Years Haikujane", generally seven to a page, are grouped under the year, in which they were written. The book can be viewed as a kind of haiku diary, remarkable for the sharpness of the author's vision but also very moving. The poems are deeply felt and beautifully crafted. Just two examples:

crystal vase
even the flowers
have a moon

a morning moon
lining up the planets
I dream of beads

Overall, the book is a worthwhile addition to anybody's haiku library.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky



Shamrock Haiku Journal

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world

Issue 7, 2008

Shamrock



Haiku Journal
of the Irish Haiku Society

Focus on

Serbia

old man -
his horse ploughing the last rut
and his shadow

-- Zoran Antonić (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

through an open door
into the ambulance,
a yellow leaf

scent of the sea -
so small the shell
in my suitcase

country feast -
between two songs,
a cricket's story

-- Rajna Begović (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

dewdrops gleaming
on chestnut buds -
not on each of them

-- Rajna Begović (translated by the author)

mulberry leaf
picked up by the wind -
a kitten plays with it

hand in hand,
a boy and a girl walk
through the field of wheat

a cock on the windowsill
viewing hens
in the neighbour's yard

one after another:
a procession of ants...
a hare jumps over it

boy's tight fist
has captured light -
a firefly

-- Dejan Bogojević (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

an owl's feather
on the old stump
absorbing moonlight

-- Branislav Brzaković (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a mountain passing to another
the blue flower -
wind

redness in her cheeks...
girl eating a frozen apple
this winter day

flickering flame...
on the opposite wall,
shadow of the hearth

-- Tatjana Debeljacki (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

abandoned house
a door wreath
still there

virgin snow...
a pine surrounded by
green grass

icy wind -
a bare lime-tree branch
scratches on the window

-- Ljiljana Djuricić (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

close of the day -
a naughty boy
gathers glow-worms

-- Ivan Kolarić (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

shirt hanging from a birch branch -
the owner sits
in its shade

in an empty
mug,
firefly glow

snow shaken off the tree -
the bent branch
goes up again

-- Dusan Mijajlović Adski (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

clearing in the woods -
the full moon highlights
a cemetery

taking a walk -
among rooftop antennas,
the newborn moon

-- Vitomir Miletić-Witata (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

November morning -
travelling on the motorway,
wisps of fog

falling snow -
a child draws the horizon
on the windowpane

from door to door -
the postman carrying letters
and first snowflakes

cloudless sky -
in the field, the wind shaking
an old scarecrow

-- Jasminka Nadaškić-Djordjević (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

underneath the moon
only these willow leaves -
each one shining

-- Aleksandar Nejgebauer (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

destroyed bridge -
only the rainbow connects
the banks of a river

mist clears away -
in the spider's web,
a string of pearls

-- *Aleksandar Ševo (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

snow up to my knees...
where's the path that
has brought me here?

a blackbird has perched
on the branch
hey angler, take a look!

beggar
gathering cigarette butts
a profusion of roses

city lights
a firefly pauses at the edge
of the forest

blooming season
a huge stump on the riverbank
unconcerned

-- *Tanja Stefanović (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

wading through the silence
of hospital lobbies
full moon

reaper swings his arm -
a cloud of petals from
ripe cornflowers

view from the terrace
a hilltop hut sinks
into the shade

train roaring by
the utter silence
of military graves

-- *Saša Vašić (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

clouds' reflections
drawing a shadowy landscape
on the stream bottom

abandoned house
giant snowflakes fall
into the chimney

the wind carrying
children's kites
and wild geese

cherry petal
falling through the shadows
of grass blades

--Vid Vukasović (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

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Essay

Haiku in Serbia

Saša Važić

The history of haiku in our region, i.e. in former Yugoslavia, began almost eighty years ago. In 1927, Milos Crnjanski published his article titled "Pesme starog Japana" ("Poems of Ancient Japan"), which contained not only his translations of classical haiku (mostly from English and French) but also some information on the history of the haiku movement. Published in the Serbian magazine called "Letopis Matice srpske", this was the first ever publication on haiku in our country.

However this poetic genre really took off in Serbia only about thirty-five years ago. The pioneering work of the first ever Serbian haibun, Milan Tokin (1909-1962), was a collection of haiku poems entitled "Godisnja doba" ("Seasons"). Strangely enough, this book hasn't yet been published in full.

At that time our understanding of haiku was enriched by the work of one of the most educated haiku poets, Vladimir Devidé of Croatia. He was a mathematician, academic and Japanologist. His opinions have often been challenged, however his contribution to the haiku development in the Balkans is undisputable. Vladimir Devidé has published over 150 essays on haiku poetry in some 20 national and international literary reviews and journals, and has given over 220 public lectures on poetry, as well as on the history of Japanese culture and, more specifically, literature. His anthology of haiku poems published in 1970 as "Japanska poezija i

njen kulturno-povjesni okvir" ("Japanese Poetry in its Cultural and Historical Framework") contains some 500 haiku poems by 100 Japanese poets in his translation into Croatian. This book, which still remains a valuable haiku textbook, introduced many generations of our poets to Japanese culture and spiritual life, as well as to the history of haiku.

In 1975 Aleksandar Nejgebauer (1930–1989), a translator, literary critic and Professor of English and American literature, published the first ever collection of haiku poetry in the Balkans. It was titled simply *Haiku*. His essay, "Metaphor in Haiku," was the first Serbian essay on haiku to be translated into English and published outside Serbia. It appeared in *Frogpond* in May 1980. The first haiku magazine that published a selection of haiku poems from Yugoslavia was *Haiku*, a Varazdin-based edition that existed between 1977 and 1981. In 1979, a certain Japanese scholar, Dr. Dejan Razic, published two important essays on traditional Japanese poetry: one on the development of haikai poetry from the very beginning to the times of Bashō, and another on Bashō himself, focusing on his role as a haikai poet.

The growing popularity of haiku in our country resulted in the establishment of haiku clubs and haiku magazines. The first Serbian haiku magazine, *Paun*, was launched in Pozega in 1988. It still exists under the editorship of Milijan Despotovic). The club called "Masaoka Shiki" existed in Nis in 1992–1993, and published its magazine titled "Haiku novine" in 1993, at first edited by Dimitar Anakiev, and then, from 1996 on, by Dragan J. Ristic. The club called "Shiki" appeared in Belgrade in 1992, with the most famous Serbian female poet, Desanka Maksimovic, as its honorary president. In Novi Sad, Aleksandar Nejgebauer edited the magazine called *Listak* in 1993. "Haiku Informator" existed between 1997 and 2002; "Haiku ogledalo", between 2000 and 2002. There were also other privately owned haiku journals: "Haiku pismo", edited by Nebojsa Simin in Novi Sad (1995–2001); "Haiku Moment", also in Novi Sad, edited by Zoran Doderovic in 1998, re-launched in 2002 as "Haiku Moment Info"; *Lotos*, edited by Dejan Bogojevic and Rajkovic, since 1998 up to date, *The Rainbow Petal*, an online haiku journal edited by Vid Vukasovic, Belgrade existed between 1997 and 1999, "Haiku Reality" edited by Sasa Vazic; "Batajnica", started in 2003, and a few more publications, all in all nineteen of them.

The national haiku association called The Haiku Association of Yugoslavia (now called The Haiku Association Serbia and Montenegro), has been founded in Belgrade in 1999. In 2001 it has started to publish a haiku magazine titled *Osvit*.

According to the statistics, there are about six hundred haiku poets in our country; they have published more than five hundred titles. Haiku from Serbian haiku contests held in about seven Serbian cities and towns were collected in about forty anthologies. Among these contests, the Yugoslavian Haiku Festival and International Haiku Contest, in Odzaci (held since accordingly 1987 and 1989); the Knjizevna kelija "Sveti Sava" Competition in Paracin that was held

between 1994 and 1998; the International Haiku and Haibun Contest organised by the Aleksandar Nejgebauer Haiku Club in Novi Sad in 1998 (and still running), and also the International Haiku and Senryu Contest held by the Lotos Haiku Magazine (which has been published in Valjevo since 1999).

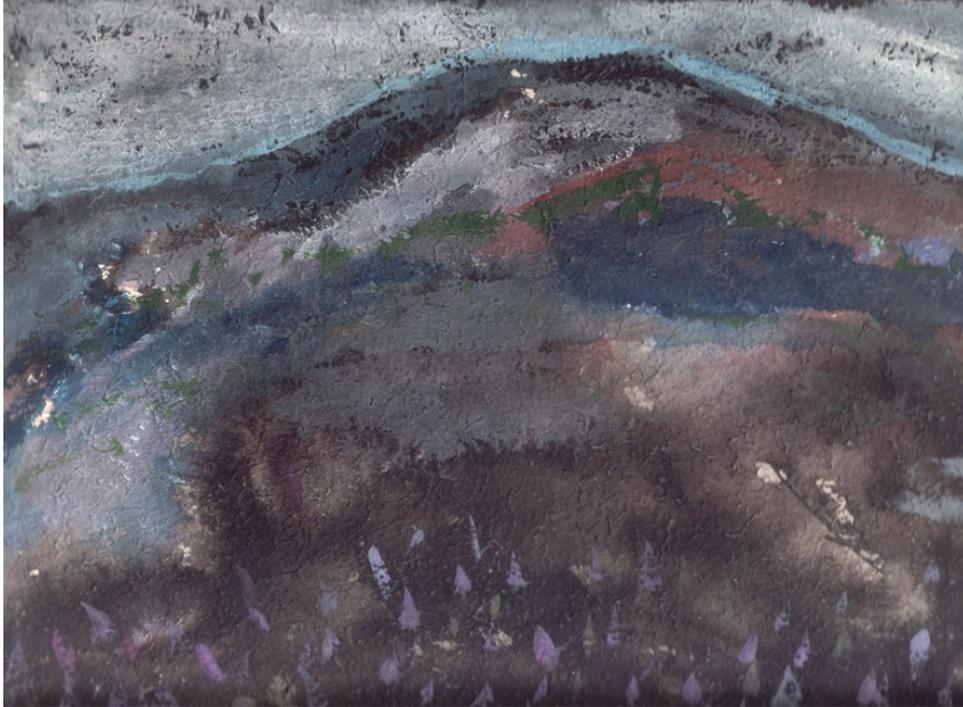
The first (exclusively) haiku publishing library entitled Matsuo Basho was established in Odzaci in 1986. This event marked a new splash of interest in haiku. In 1988 a new haiku library was founded in Odzaci. It was also named after Basho. Later (1993) it was transferred to another Serbian town, Kula.

The first Yugoslav haiku anthology titled Leptir na caju (1991) was compiled and edited by Milijan Despotovic. Another Yugoslavian anthology, Grana koja mase, that represented works of around 400 authors had the same editor and was published the same year. We should also mention KNOTS (1999), the anthology of south-eastern European haiku poetry edited by Dimitar Anakiev of Slovenia and Jim Kacian. A Piece of the Sky (Haiku from the Shelter, 1999) was another anthology edited by Dimitar Anakiev. Nebojsa Simin edited The Third Bank of the River / Treca obala reke (2000), an anthology of Serbian haiku translated into English, French and German, and also Haiku nestasna pesma (Haiku a Playful Poem, 2000). The latest anthology of haiku from our region was Iznad praznine (2002) edited by Dejan Bogojevic. There were also many translations of Japanese haiku into our language published in a book-form.

Haiku gained popularity among Serbian people of several generations, who all had different education levels and occupations. Some mainstream poets are known to write haiku, notably Desanka Maksimovic, Dobrica Eric, Momcilo Tesic, Miroljub Todorovic, Slobodan Pavicevic, Mirjana Bozin. Serbian haiku poets win on average about forty awards and commendations at national and international haiku contests per year. Not all of these competitions are professionally judged which, of course, casts the shade of doubt on the merits of some of our haikin. The editors of our haiku journals have developed very different tastes and elaborated different criteria of judging haiku. Many of our authors pay for the publication of their books, sometimes not even obtaining a catalogue number for them. These books never hit the shelves of our bookshops but are often used as gift items. The quality of their works is also very different. Many of them even translate themselves into English – sometimes not having mastered the language. Time and again these texts are being submitted to international English-language competitions, which can only damage the reputation of our haiku movement. Unfortunately, we don't have official haiku workshops that run periodically. Nor do we have critics who are ready to write about haiku happenings, so our haiku poets are often deprived of seeing their work reviewed. Apart from that, we seem to be moving forward on the path of haiku discoveries.

(translated to English by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Saša Vazić is the editor of Haiku Reality



"Predeo" by Slobodan Vitković (Serbia)



Haiku & Senryu

Among other poems, we feature here some haiku written during the ginko (haiku walk) organised by the Irish Haiku Society. It took place in the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin, on 28 June 2008. Of course, not all of the Irish haikin were present; so far as we know, some of them were enjoying a warmer climate than this. E.g. Siofra O'Donovan sent us a bunch of haiku from India.

tinder sticks
a last streak of green
in the aspen's leaf

wind-twisted leaves
the silent flit
of a lesser whitethroat

footfalls
the lizard pauses
mid-scuttle

still shadows
the cow's neck bent
into its flank

honey country...
a tortoise makes its way
across the road

-- *John Barlow (England)*

the shallows
a coot and its chick
ease into water

turnstones
among the rain-washed pebbles
channel light

evening murmurs
through the yellowing grass
pairs of antlers

long shadows
a wagtail undulates
over the outfield

-- *Matthew Paul (England)*

whale song
the twilight blues
deepen

cotton sheets
the sound of the sea
folding, refolding

esplanade palms
the chihuahua's master
walking tall

new in town
a thousand butterflies
without names

-- *Lorin Ford (Australia)*

cloudy day
the green of water
and the green of trees

old willow
a thousand branches holding
the spring wind

chilly morning
patches of fog pause
in thistles

heat lightning
a sunflower
kissing the sun

-- *Anatoly Kudryavitsky (Ireland)*

flattened grass –
white lilies stand taller
in the rain

too wet for birdsong –
canary yellow beet leaves
glisten in the rain

sunburst –
scent of wild garlic
fills the garden

rain-drenched lawn
a spate of water lilies
carpet the pond

-- *Martin Vaughan (Ireland)*

September sunset –
fiery fuchsia nestles
in hedgerows

warm rain –
lily pads surrendering
to watery graves

a canopy of
gnarled wisteria –
grey refracted light

heatwave –
two lighthouses exchange
hazy flashes

-- *Sharon Burrell (Ireland)*

footsteps shuffling
outside the temple doors
new moon

carrying my baby
through the pine trees
a monkey watches

water rushing
through the paddy fields
morning soup

Golden Maitreya
hands resting on his knees
rupees at his feet

-- *Siofra O'Donovan (Ireland)*

first snow
the garden Buddha
deeper

late afternoon
a fading photograph of sky
on the tin roof

troubled sleep
the half of the moon
I couldn't see

-- *John W. Sexton (Ireland)*

cicada...
her tapping foot
follows the song

willow
a sliver of moonlight
beneath a branch

-- *Cynthia Rowe (Australia)*

heat haze –
dragonflies silhouette
the sky

above the circus tent,
tumbling
swifts

-- *Juliet Wilson (Scotland)*

New Year's Day –
sunlight and honey
in a jar

her hands
working with flour –
the cloudless sky

-- *Hugh O'Donnell (Ireland)*

granddad's garden
still
the rosebush blossoms

midnight stroll
a gust of leaves
throws shadows

-- *Terry O'Connor (Ireland)*

chilly morning –
a scarecrow leaning
towards the greenhouse

hyacinth
in the regal flowerbed –
taking a nap

-- *Andrew Michael O'Brien (Ireland)*

between races
boy-rowers chasing frogs
in the tall grass

-- *Eileen Sheehan (Ireland)*

at my front door
nothing between me
and the full moon

-- *Mark Roper (Ireland)*

avenues of trees
growing longer
after the summer rain

-- *Breid Sibley (Ireland)*

cicadas
singing for a mate
soon to die

-- *Maureen Purcell (Ireland)*

daybreak –
daisies peeping
through wet grass

-- *Anne Morgan (Ireland)*

termite mound...
the camper van
in its shadow

-- *Allison Millcock (Australia)*

our first picnic
jacarandas moult
into the iced tea

-- *Scott Thouard (Australia)*

backhoe berm –
ant pauses before pieces of
broken pottery

-- *Richard Stevenson (Canada)*

soft gum
under the desks –
first day back

-- *Noel Sloboda (USA)*

a monkey tearing
clothes from the line
monsoon drought

-- *Michael Morical (USA - Taiwan)*

rain again
the season of
verdant mountains

-- *Gillena Cox (Trinidad & Tobago)*

hemlocks
entrance gate
off its hinges

-- *Jared Carter (USA)*

the gleam
of roof after roof
summer rain

-- *Dawn Bruce (Australia)*

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Haibun

Connecting

by Diana Webb (England)

She glances at books of poems but spends the money instead on thread and a choice of loose beads in sea-green, rose and amber. Perhaps it's the nymph's claim about her jewels picked up from childhood verse speaking classes that haunts her - 'Hush. I stole them out of the moon.'

As the small glass spheres slip one by one along the needle into the growing necklace, her reflections drift from bygone generations through parting with a lover to embryos in formation. A tranquillity, each moment hovers.

cobweb strung with mist
across stems of lavender –
span of light years

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Book Reviews

Basho: The Complete Haiku
Edited & translated by Jane Reichhold.
Kodansha International, 2008
ISBN 978-4-7700-3063-4, 432 pp
Available via <http://www.kodansha.eu>

After ten years in the making, it is finally out, the first-ever complete edition of Basho's haiku translated to English by the prominent American poet Jane Reichhold (whose own collection of haiku was reviewed in Shamrock No 6). "The haiku saint" Basho wrote one thousand and twelve hokku, and all of them can be found in this book, together with detailed notes on each of them and the English transcription of the Japanese originals. Perhaps Basho's haiku will from now on be cited by Reichhold's numeration system (at least, in the English-speaking countries), as it happened with Johnson's numeration of Emily Dickinson's poems.

In the Introduction, Jane Reichhold gives us an insight into Basho's poetic background, as well as into his religious life as a practicing Buddhist, and into his impact on poetry. She states that poetry was the great master's way of life, and calls him "genius with words".

In the main part of the book, Jane Reichhold divides Basho's creative life into seven periods and gives biographical information for each period, as well as accounts of the poet's travels. The poems written over the first period (1662 – 1774) are referred to as "early poems". The second period (1675 – 1679) addresses Basho's work as "the professional poet". Third period (1680 – 1683) is described as "A retreat to nature – a religious life" of Basho; the fourth (1684 – 1688), "Basho's journey in the way of the poet"; the fifth (1689), "Basho's journey to the interior", which includes poems written during the poet's journey to the Far North, i.e. to the northern provinces of Japan. Two last periods of Basho's life are described as "At the Peak and Still Travelling" (1690 – 1691) and "Basho Finds the Secret of Greatness in Poetry and Life" (1692 – 1694).

In her short introductions to each period, Jane Reichhold reveals creative influences on Basho, as well as the way Basho's works, in their turn, influenced his contemporaries. Her translations are always convincing, and stand up as excellent English-language haiku. She always uses common language, as did Basho himself, and it always adds to the quality of her translations:

today
this night has no time to sleep
moon viewing

- or this one, which Harald Henderson once called "the most discussed haiku in the language":

summer grass
the only remains of soldiers'
dreams

We liked the economy of most of these translations. The only thing a haiku purist could wish for is that the translator would have taken a further step on the thorny path of eliminating all the forms of the verb "to be" from haiku; e.g. from these:

the beach at Suma
New Year's preparations are
a bundle of brushwood

or

life of a priest
my name is swept away
in the River of Fallen Leaves

Still, worshipers of haiku brevity will find in this book a lot to admire:

their color
whiter than peaches
a narcissus

or

bush warbler
has dropped his hat
camelia

In the Appendices, Jane Reichhold offers a comprehensive discussion of Basho's writing techniques, thus expanding and commenting on the material previously published in her well-known manual titled "Writing and Enjoying Haiku". Other Appendices include glossary of literary terms, selected chronology of Basho's life, and bibliography. The book has beautiful illustrations: original sumi-e art by renowned Japanese artist Tsujimura. We would describe the book as a Basho encyclopaedia, as we have no doubts that haiku scholars will refer to it again and again. Moreover, it is a wonderful gift to all the lovers of haiku, let alone haiku poets.

--Anatoly Kudryavitsky

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"a wattle seedpod"

Haiku by Lorin Ford.

Post Pressed, 2008

ISBN 978-1921214-34-9, 36pp

Available via <http://www.postpressed.com.au>

The information page in this book of haiku by Lorin Ford states that "this book is proudly published and produced in Australia", and this sentence sets the tone for a work that is suffused with descriptions of the flora and fauna of that nation. This is evident from the opening haiku (incidentally, first published in *Shamrock* No 3):

first light –
eye to dreaming eye
with a kookaburra

– and continues throughout the book, with the author bringing us on a journey of the exotic: with images of mynah birds, cicadas and lorikeets. But the book does not need descriptions of the exotic to create interesting and illuminating haiku, as this author has the power to elucidate even the most banal and bring an image to life.

Lorin Ford produces work that manages to be both humorous and personal. The

simplicity with which she achieves this is evident in the haiku such as

headstone
a leaf crosses out
the I in his name

and

low tide –
bits and pieces of her
wedding china

Her “cicada” haiku exhibits the sweet sadness of *wabi-sabi*:

cicada husk...
also clinging
to a straw

This seems to be an allusion to Basho's "cricket" haiku:

loneliness
hung on a nail
a cricket

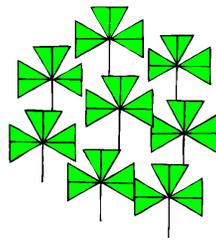
(translation: Jane Reichhold)

In this poem Lorin Ford explores the hidden depths of everyday things, which is one of the elements that contribute to its unique sound. As it happens, many

haiku poems focus on the impermanence of existence or on the pain of loss but not too many authors actually remember that existence itself can be quite painful.

The author lives in Brunswick, Victoria and has had over three hundred of her haiku published in Australia and overseas. In this book, her first collection of haiku, she has produced some beautiful, evocative images, which nod to the ebb and flow of the seasons of the natural and human worlds. We can describe it as one of the best Australian haiku offerings of recent years.

Sharon Burrell



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Shamrock Haiku Journal

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world

Issue 8, 2008

Shamrock



Haiku Journal
of the Irish Haiku Society

Announcement

Shamrock Haiku Journal Readers' Choice Awards

We invite all the readers of Shamrock Haiku Journal to vote for the best haiku/senryu poem published in 2008, i.e. in the issues FIVE to EIGHT (you cannot vote for your own poem, though). To vote, send an e-mail to [irishhaikusociety\[at\]hotmail.com](mailto:irishhaikusociety[at]hotmail.com) with "Best haiku of 2008" in the subject line. Please insert the full text of the poem you vote for (only ONE poem) plus the name of its author in the body of your e-mail. The deadline for vote is 28th February, 2009. The best poems will be named in the next issue of Shamrock Haiku Journal.

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Focus on

Romania

December midnight
an icicle dripping
with stars

first snow
children cut the icing
off a cake

how many rainbows
this sunny morning!
mother's necklace

fading moon –
out of the mist,
morning birds' song

-- Anita Beloiu (trans. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a well under the cherry-tree
the water rippled by
our whisper

horses on the loose!
evening sky hides
behind the mountain

lullaby
on a winter day –
remembering my mother

dead cherry blossoms
swallows crying
in the clouds

where the spring path
runs through flowers,
kiss of the sun

-- Marius Chelaru (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

braving the sleet,
an old man does his shopping
his bag full of wind

-- Victoria Chipoveanu (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

afternoon shade –
from all sides, the scent
of newly-mown grass

ice-covered lake
the wind moves a newspaper
back and forth

empty sky
the sound of an icicle
landing in the snow

opening soundlessly,
a chrysalis
by the mountain trail

falling snow
the apricot tree assuming
a new shape

-- Ion Codrescu (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

the last rose
covered with rime...
a raven's shadow

-- Magdalena Dale (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

waltzing with the wind
across the barren field,
a dragonfly

-- Loredana Florentina Dănilă (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

dilapidated house
the wall propped up by
a lilac branch

-- Dan Florică (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

in the pine, a crow
squawks to the chilling wind
evening draws near

snow on the open wagons
will be gone by the next stop...
spring

-- Ioan Gabudean (versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

wedding anniversary
a bunch of forget-me-nots
beside the phone

coins in the well
look like stars today –
going homeward

-- Clelia Ifrim (versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

old road
so much darkness gathers
around the lantern!

-- Nicholae Ionel (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

under the pale stars,
a blossoming lilac
sheds dewdrops

-- Gabriela Marcian (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

winter sun –
in the snowman's eyes,
first tears

rising moon
an old man puts out
the street-lamp

-- Vasile Moldovan (transl. by the author)

moon behind clouds
a puppy sniffs around
for his lost shadow

talks of approaching spring...
my daughter's doll
wearing a new dress

summer moon
a broiler hen has frightened
her own shadow

-- Vasile Moldovan (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

hoarfrost
nameless trees
watching the moon

-- Flavia Muntean (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

dandelion field
a single waft of wind
starts a snowstorm

-- Dan Norea (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

light snow
the stone princess has
a powder up her nose

icy river
willows's shadows floating
from sunrise to sunset

early spring -
in every icicle,
a melting sunbeam

reshaping the pines
in its own image,
winter wind

-- Dana-Maria Onica (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

postman at the door
first snowflake lands
on a letter from abroad

-- Eduard Tara (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a frog
leaps in the pond...
shards of a broken moon

scarecrow
wearing a wedding dress –
white butterflies

apricot trees in blossom –
in the letter-box,
rust and snow

after an earthquake,
summer stars
on the river bottom

-- *Eduard Tara (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

glimpses of sun –
in an old man's hand,
a dandelion garland

-- *Doina Bogdan Wurm (version by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

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Essay

Haiku in Romania

by Vasile Moldovan

Romanian poets expressed their interest in Japanese culture as early as at the very beginning of the 20th century. Two classics of Romanian literature, Alexandru Macedonski and Vasile Alecsandri, were fascinated by the beauty of Japanese landscape poems, and wrote several poems inspired by classical Japanese literature. First Romanian essays on haiku and tanka appeared in the Iasi-based "Literary Event" magazine in 1904. In the same year, the poet Al. Vlahuta published an essay titled "The Japanese Poetry and Painting" in the "By the Fireside" magazine; this essay contained a number of tanka and haiku poems. Poet Al. T. Stamatiad published the first haiku poems in Romanian language, 12 in total, in the anthology titled "Tender Landscape", which won the Romanian Academy Prize.

In the 1930s, the poet Ion Pillat experimented with one-line poems, many of which resembled haiku. His best miniatures appeared in his collection that he called "One-line

Poems" (1935). These poems usually had a caesura and comprised of thirteen to fourteen syllables. In the preface he claimed that even if his poems differ from mainstream haiku they should be regarded as a form of haikai poetry. Pillat's book proved to be influential, and nowadays many Romanian poets follow this trend.

At approximately the same time poet Traian Chelariu published "Nippon soul", an anthology of classical Japanese poetry in his translations (incidentally, he translated it through German). Chelariu adhered to the 5-7-5 pattern, which afterwards influenced many Romanian authors of haiku.

In 1942, Al. T. Stamatiad published "Nippon Courtesan Songs", a tanka anthology, and, a year later, "Silk scarves", an anthology of haiku and tanka. He also couldn't translate directly from Japanese, so he translated the texts through French.

In the 1970s, three anthologies of tanka and haiku appeared in Romania; all were edited by Ion Acsan and Dan Constantinescu, and translations were made by the same Traian Chelariu (again, through German). Well-known Romanian poets Nichita Stanescu and Marin Sorescu wrote a few haiku poems each in the 1980s, however they didn't commit to this genre. The Communist authorities were always suspicious of haiku, so the first Romanian haiku books and leaflets had to appear in such countries as Austria, France and Yugoslavia.

The Romanian haiku movement got a real boost in 1989, the year when the totalitarian regime in Romania came to its close. Towards the end of that year Florin Vasiliu, a Romanian diplomat who worked for a number of years in Japan, published a book entitled "Haiku constellation. Lyric interferences". This book bears a special significance for Romanian haiku. Vasiliu was a well-informed essayist, and he wrote a complex work interweaving literary history with the poetic studies. It still is regarded as a guidebook for the interpreting and writing haiku poems. Some chapters were corrected and expanded later. And this wasn't the only book on the history of haiku and the poetics of the genre published in our country, so Romanian haiku poets now have quite a number of books they can refer to if they need it.

In March 1990, Florin Vasiliu founded the "Haiku Magazine of Romanian-Japanese Relationships", one of the first publications of this kind in Europe. At first this magazine was a quarterly with the circulation of 8,000 copies, but now it appears semi-annually, and its circulation fell to under 1,000 copies. Among the members of the editorial board of the "Haiku" magazine there were a few renowned writers, such as Marin Sorescu (at that time he was the Minister of Culture). The editing board of the "Haiku" magazine has formed the core of the Romanian Haiku Society (RSH) founded one year later, in March 1991. The RSH was established on the national level, and now includes about 200 members. Shortly after that some of these haiku enthusiasts formed a few literary circles in several cities and towns of our country. Later some of them were reshaped into haiku societies. First of them, the Haiku Society of Constanta, was founded by poet and painter Ion Codrescu in 1992. Also in 1992, the Costanta-based magazine called Albatross started publishing haiku in both Romanian and English.

In 1992, the HAIKU publishing house was established. It existed for a decade and gained a good reputation for publishing small booklets of haiku and monoku, one line poems; many of these books were printed in three languages: Romanian, English and French. When this publishing house went out of business, the poetess Cornelia Atanasiu founded another, ALCOR, which specialised in haiku poetry.

In 1995, Serban Codrin, a poet especially interested in tanka and renga, founded the Tanka, Renga and Haiku School in Slobozia. This school published two magazines, "Orion"

and "*Little Orion*", the latter being dedicated exclusively to linked poems (renku). In Targu Mures, the poet Ioan Gabudean founded a haiku club, which he called "Ephemeral Joys"; it had about 80 members, mostly from Transylvania. Gabudean edited two magazines: "Orfeu/Orpheus" and "Beautiful pictures"; the latter published students' work. Gabudean also founded the Ambassador publishing house, which brought out almost one hundred haiku, senryu and tanka booklets, some of them containing one line poems, in Romanian, English and French.

Haiku magazines have also appeared in some other Romanian towns, e.g. in Piatra-Neamt and Targoviste. Of nine haiku periodicals mentioned here, three survive till this day, and publish all the main Romanian haikin.

Apart from that, many Romanian haiku poets saw their work appearing in the best international haiku publication. They also asserted themselves at an international level by winning prizes and high commendations in the most important haiku contests, both in Japan and English-speaking countries. In the course of 1994, the year of Basho tercentenary, two international conferences took place, in Bucharest and Constantza, and in both cases a celebration of Matsuo Basho was a part of the programme. In Constantza, a twin town of Yokohama, four international haiku gatherings were held in 1992, 1994, 2005 and 2007. Participants represented such countries as Japan, USA, France, Germany, Bulgaria, Great Britain, and Ireland.

Among the elements which give local colour to Romanian haiku, lime tree has to be named first. This flowering tree looks gorgeous in May and June, and is famous for its aroma. We strongly believe that lime tree may exemplify our way of haiku, which is, of course, only one of many possible ways.

(translated from the Romanian by Magdalena Dale and Anthony Kudryavitsky)

Vasile Moldovan authored four collections of haiku. He has been the President of Romanian Society of Haiku since 2001





Picture by Ion Codrescu (Romania)



Haiku and Senryu

late autumn evening
the old mountain headstones
dark as the houses

heads to the bale
three adults and a foal
autumn clouds

winter solstice
the softest pale light
of a thousand stars

Memorial Day
under one of the cars
a small water dish

a field of cairns
for how many years
Gornergrat*

** A place in the High Alps*

-- Bruce Ross (USA)

home from the city
waiting on the platform
Orion

april showers
outside the gallery
the reflections of headlights

deserted road
halfway across
the old cat quickens her step

deepening sky –
on the lamp-post
blackbird wipes his beak

campsite dawn –
in the shower
no two moths the same

-- David Serjeant (England)

white moths
lift into flight . . .
summer wind

half light
a bulrush bent back
between reeds

fresh puddles
along the night lane
the badger's gait

through the sounds
of a Paris morning
a wood pigeon's calls

swirling leaves
starlings bridge the gaps
in the ridge tiles

-- John Barlow (England)

August haze
the sky in Beijing
blue on TV

waiting for the sun
a lone bulbul fronts
an insect chorus

abandoned school
dandelions run along
the pathway

-- Robert Lucky (USA-China)

arrival
at the abbey –
the suddenness of wasps

spider's web –
my urge to travel
diminishing

-- Katherine Gallagher (Australia – England)

broken ceiling fan
face of an
uprooted saguaro

-- Rose Hunter (Canada)

hard frost –
on the maple branch
moon sits it out

-- *Eileen Sheehan (Ireland)*

steel-grey pond
ducks among
cirrus clouds

-- *Maria Ulyanova (Russia, translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

new moon
moth wings fanning away
the late summer heat

-- *Maddalena Rossi (Germany)*

"No Trespassing"
a poster lost
in the weeds

-- *Nana Fredua-Agyeman (Ghana)*

holiday home
landscape pictures
in every room

-- *Raquel D. Bailey (Jamaica)*

spring again
the lawnmower catcher
filled with feathers

-- *Leonie Bingham (Australia)*

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Prize-winning Haiku from the Irish Haiku Society Competition 2008

The Irish Haiku Society announced the results of the first ever IHS International Haiku Competition. 177 haiku by poets from twelve countries (Ireland, UK, Northern Ireland, USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Austria, Germany, Portugal, Romania and Serbia) were submitted to this year's competition. Half of the submitted poems were from the island of Ireland. This year's competition was adjudicated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky, the editor of Shamrock Haiku Journal, and it was judged blindly. It had been previously announced that an entrant may win more than one prize, which, actually, happened. The following is the list of prize-winning and highly commended haiku.

1st Prize

John Barlow (UK) received the first prize of Euro 150 for the following haiku:

mountain stillness
an empty chrysalis
fills with sunlight

2nd Prize

The 2nd Prize of Euro 50 also went to **John Barlow (UK)** for the following haiku:

summer morning
every other post
has its crow

3rd Prize

Ernest J Berry (New Zealand) received the third prize of Euro 30 for the following haiku:

early frost
the fragrance of pine
on fire



Highly Commended Haiku

In alphabetical order:

John Barlow (UK)

cold rain...
the fishermen wade deeper
into the lake

Sharon Dean (Australia)

winter chill
a bull ant climbs
the flame tree

Walter Daniel Maguire (Ireland)

autumn breeze –
spider's web
convex... concave

Roland Packer (Canada)

the open gate
to an empty field –
country graveyard

Roland Packer (Canada)

Christmas Eve
swaddled in the busker's case
a fiddle

Our congratulations go to all of the winners. We also express our sincere gratitude to the administrators of the competition, without whom... The Irish Haiku Society is planning to organise a free haiku workshop for the Irish entrants of the IHS competition, as well as for all the Irish haiku lovers who may wish to attend. Finally, plans are under way for next year's contest. We are looking forward to turning the IHS Haiku Competition into an annual event!

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Haibun

While Waiting for the Young

by Jeffrey Winke (USA)

With gray temples, the bespectacled monsignor nervously smooths his starched white collar while waiting for the young boy to hang up his altar-boy cassock before taking him to the rectory for cookies and one-on-one spiritual guidance that will always be their own special secret time together.

sunday brunch
a sparrow flies in
through the open door

Who Stops Her Dead On

by Jeffrey Winke (USA)

Even in the laundromat's florescent-green light and dressed in a pair of faded hospital scrubs and an over-sized Notre Dame Fighting Irish athletic-grey t-shirt, there is always – in this case, a mop-hair brawny woman carrying two full wicker baskets of wet laundry – a stranger who stops her dead on and asks without hesitating, "You are so tall, blonde, beautiful and have such perfect slender ankles – are you a model?"

again
his favorite stool
after A.A.*

-----* *Alcoholics Anonymous*



Book Reviews

The Narrow Road to Oku

By Matsuo Basho

Kodansha International

188 pp, ISBN-13: 978-4-7700-2028-4

Available via <http://www.kodansha.eu>

This beautifully illustrated book offers one of the nine available translations of *Oku no Hosomichi*, Basho's account of his journey to the Northern Province. This piece of haiku prose can be regarded as one of the best haibun ever written, even if some of our contemporaries would call it a travelogue. The original Japanese text is printed in this edition alongside the English translation.

Before starting on this journey in 1689, Basho sold his bamboo hut and prepared a will. Well aware of the hardships that awaited him, he clearly thought about the possibility of ending his days on this journey. Basho covered the whole distance - 2,450 kilometers - on foot, starting in late spring. He feared gangs of Ainu bandits that operated in the mountains but was lucky not to encounter any. The journey took him more than twenty-two weeks. After coming back, Basho spent five years preparing the text of *Oku no Hosomichi* for publication.

Donald Keene's earlier and slightly different partial translation of *Oku no Hosomichi* appeared in his *Anthology of Japanese Literature*, 1955. Since then, eight other translators published their versions of *Oku no Hosomichi*. Donald Keene's revised translation first appeared in 1996. New editions followed, and now the book is again available from the publisher.

As Kenneth Rexroth once remarked, Basho presents a problem for the translators because "he is peculiarly cryptic. Many of his haiku are as puzzling to Japanese as they are to Western scholars. Donald Keene's translations are close enough to the original, at the same time avoiding the perils of being literals. They are made in a very good taste, and the whole book is a good read.

Usually, haiku incorporated in the text of *Oku no Hosomichi* present the main difficulty for the translator. We sadly note that most of the translators of this book failed, for different reasons. Nobiyuki Yuasa's lengthy four-line haiku and Cid Corman's free variations on Basho's themes didn't sound very convincing even in the 1960s when they first appeared. Dorothy Britton did well translating the prosaic parts of the book, however she rhymed the first line of each haiku with the last one, which is nothing short of a haiku crime. As for Donald Keene, he tried to be true to the original. His versions of Basho's haiku always adhere to the 5-7-5 pattern. We can argue if this is the best way of rendering Basho in English; his recently published Complete Poems masterly translated by Jane Reichhold (reviewed in *Shamrock* No 7) prove the opposite. It yet remains to see if any new translator can emulate Donald Keene's achievements, which are many. What will be even more difficult to emulate are the splendid illustrations by Miyata Masayuki that make the book a work of art.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky

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Sharing Solitaire: Haiku and Related Poems

By Michael Morical

Finishing Line Press, Georgetown, Kentucky, USA, 2008

34 pp, ISBN 978-1-59924-326-9

Available via <http://www.finishinglinepress.com>

Michael Morical, an American from Indianapolis currently living in Taipei, has published haiku in Frogpond, Shamrock Haiku Journal, and in *Dust of Summers: The Red Moon Anthology of English-language haiku 2007*. This book is his first collection; it contains 78 haiku, three to a page, grouped into four sections according to geographical principles: "Chishang, Taiwan", "Manhattan", "Wandering Home", and "Brooklyn".

The preface says that reading Michael Morical's collection "is like eating peanuts. One consumes one poem after another until every one is gone." Before moving any further, I would like to halt and contemplate on the ambiguous function of "consumes" here. We consume peanuts and doughnuts, indeed, but are haiku, or any other kind of poetry, an object of this kind of mindless consumption? And if they are, what is... hmm... the final product?

Reading this book on and on, one may really begin to think that some poems were included just for the sake of such trouble-free "nutrition":

Sipping whiskey,
she doesn't mind
the weeds in her paddy

Staring on the F,
a boy asks me:
Where are your teeth?

Three old men
wait for a lady
feeding her ducks

You scrub the floor,
slopping Mr Clean,
listing my sins

An experiment in 5-7-5 also doesn't help the author to turn the piece into a haiku:

Crossing off a day,
I wait till the month is gone
and the page is turned

These are neither haiku nor "related poems"; these texts are just not up to the publishable

standard. A reader can't help thinking that a bit of self-editing would have done no harm here.

This is not to say that the whole lot of poems is not worth reading. There are fine poems, as well, scattered throughout, and they definitely outnumber the "so what?" ones. The book at its best:

Moving day
a box of naked Barbies
left behind

After the windstorm,
a dead branch falls
with the weight of rain

I turn to face
the footsteps behind me -
wind and leaves

Rice in husk
dries on the street -
an eye out for chickens

The author clearly is a keen observer, which always helps a haiku poet. Personally, I would be interested to see his next collection: I am sure he will learn by then how to remove the husk from rice.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky



Summer drizzles: Haiku and Haibun

By Bruce Ross

HMS Press, London, Ontario, Canada

84 pp.; ISBN 1-55253-63-9

Available from **HMS Press, POB 340, Station B**, London, Ontario, N6A 4W1, Canada, or from the author

Bruce Ross, "a poet, editor, and professor", as he describes himself, is well known in the haiku world as the author of three critically acclaimed haiku collections, as a past President of the Haiku Society of America, and as the editor of two important anthologies, *Haiku Moment, An Anthology of Contemporary North American Haiku* (Charles E Tuttle, 1993) and *Journey to the Interior, American Versions of Haikun* (Charles E Tuttle, 1998). This book, his fourth collection that appeared in Canada some time ago, has reached these shores only recently. The book is comprised of fifty haiku and eighteen haibun. Most of them are new work, although many of these

texts have been previously published in haiku periodicals.

As a long-time admirer of Bruce Ross's haiku and haibun I am delighted to write about his new book. Bruce Ross is probably one of the best contemporary masters of *shasei*, i.e. the art of "sketching from life". Shiki, who introduced this trend more than a hundred years ago, wrote the following: "If a *shasei* haiku has been written in good taste, it will make a remarkable effect upon the reader." These two pieces by Bruce Ross, among many others, can serve as good examples of this:

covered by snow
like the other stones
stone Buddha

and

on both sides
of the old wood fence
flooded field

Since the times of Buson, a good haiku poet is almost always a kind of pictorialist. Many of Bruce Ross's poems demonstrate his craftsmanship. The two pieces I especially liked:

early spring drizzles
so many shades of green
on the mountain

and

November river
perfect house reflections
one by one

Bruce Ross is not only a keen observer of nature but also a clever observer, and an attentive reader of his haiku won't fail to notice his subtle humour:

spring snow
one, two, three crows
walk a branch

Another one of his poems (which also has a bit of playfulness in it) is an interesting variation on Basho's famous haiku:

old pond...
a small lily pad rises up
with the frog's leap

One of the principles Bruce Ross seems to follow is Eric Amann's "nothing special". This phrase, in different variations, even finds its way onto the pages of this book:

nothing special
an empty birdhouse beneath
the overcast sky

and

not much more
red and yellow tomatoes
behind a string fence

Personally, I have nothing against highlighting everydayness as one of the haiku topics. The only thing I dread is a possible appearance of imitators. I don't look forward to the day when I'll be reviewing somebody's book of haiku, in which all the poems will have "nothing special" as the first line, even if there's only a remote possibility of this actually happening...

Another quite noticeable thing is the nearly complete absence of "first person" haiku in this book. I believe that this kind of selflessness is deliberate. This is the author's choice, which we have to respect. The author observes nature, and not himself observing nature. Eyes are the best mirrors!

Bruce Ross sometimes writes senryu but in this book not more than three poems can be classed as such. Just one example of these:

off center
the empty clay pot
beside the doorstep

Talking about Bruce Ross's haibun, I particularly liked the one titled "Ryushaku-ji". In it, Bruce Ross tells the story of his pilgrimage to the place where Basho wrote his famous cicada haiku, and describes how he experienced the stillness Basho had come there to find.

I am sure that everybody who likes haikai poetry will find in the new book by Bruce Ross something for himself. The only problem is its limited availability.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky

The Whole Body Singing

By Quendryth Young

Dragonwick Publishing, October 2007

90 pp; ISBN 978-0-9803396-6-6 (pbk)

Available from the author at: **5 Cedar Court, Alstonville, NSW 2744, Australia.**

This is Quendryth Young's first foray into publishing haiku (the book also contains haiku sequences and one haibun). The author has previously published the book of free verse and traditional poems *Naked in Sepia* in 2004 and co-authored *My Days' Circle* in 1994. Since then she has devoted herself to haiku, most notably in the co-ordination and facilitation of the group *cloudcatchers* on the Far North Coast of New South Wales.

Musing upon the title of the book, we can't help thinking that "The Whole Body Singing" would rather suit a book of tanka. Incidentally, the Quendryth Young's collection was reviewed in *Presence* as "The Whole Bird Singing" (!) As for the contents of the book, the poet has divided it into sections: Seascape, Landscape, Flora, Fauna, Insects and Other Creatures, Birds, People, Haiku Sequences and Haibun. Her deft hand and meticulous eye mean these divisions allow the reader to become fully immersed in the imagery of each section.

There are some excellent haiku here, for example, from the seascape section:

sunrise
crab holes
pop open

and

high tide
beach and sea exchange
driftwood

Reading the first piece, we share the author's observation expressed in just a few words. Minimalism and haiku - the relationship between the two, if a proper one, can be fruitful. As for the second piece, it can serve as one of the rare examples of perfect Zen poetry, and seems to be one of those timeless pieces that will, hopefully, outlive their authors.

There is a plaintive element to the artist's work, most notably in poems such as:

alone
in the forest -
all the noise

And the poems certainly evoke the Australian landscape:

forest path
walking in and out
of cool

But it is to Quendryth Young's credit that she can find haiku in the mundane elements of daily life, too. The following piece demonstrates her skills:

construction site
a mud wasp
scoops up water

Her masterful final haibun, *Mount Warning*, concerns a 60th birthday hilltop walk with her son, and in it she divulges the joy and meaning of this literal and metaphysical trip in an accessible, intimate style.

Overall, we believe this is a strong work from a woman who admits to being "addicted to haiku" and has paid close attention to her craft. We are pleased to recommend this excellent book, which makes a significant addition to our haiku book-shelves.

Sharon Burrell

