

Blithe Spirit



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Blithe Spirit

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Editorial

Your editors wish to thank those members who by postal vote or show of hands, re-elected us to office at the Society AGM. We hope to continue to justify your confidence. Nonetheless, we have decided to reorganise our functions and I am thus now responsible for the selection of (almost) all poems for Gorse Blossoms, Season Corner, Senryu Pie (our new section launched with this issue) and Time for Tanka. That is why you will now find my address on page 2. My selection is grounded in my personal interpretation of the document *Towards a Consensus on the Nature of Haiku*, recently issued by the Society to all members. I was one of the drafting committee, so you may take it that my views are in a large measure of agreement with the *Consensus*. My initial selection was scrutinised and commented upon by some of my BHS committee colleagues and I made some changes in response to their views. We intend that selection pattern to continue for future issues. We have however agreed that the editor's decision will always be final. The 'almost' qualifier above covers the fact that my colleagues alone will select my own haiku and senryu.

Our drive for "high standards and improvement in the genre" means that a few of you will find that not one of your recent offerings is included. Main reasons for rejection were: three-line haiku-like verses that were not remotely haiku, over-poeticism, philosophical statements, over-done metaphor and simile, poor enjambment, too generalised. A surprising number of submissions were not 'of the moment'. You may be disappointed, but I hope you will not be deterred. Study the poems which have been included, refer to the *Consensus*, compare with your own efforts - and hopefully you will see reasons why yours were not selected.

Our general rule is not to save any poems, so if you submitted anything in good time for the closing date and it/they are not herein and we have not written to say we are holding for a subsequent issue, then assume you are free to submit elsewhere. Assume the same for every issue from here on. Articles are more likely to be held over, for space reasons or to avoid two on the same theme in the same issue, but we will write and notify you of such intentions. We accept all submissions on the understanding that they are not offered elsewhere at the same time, but we have no objection to printing something which has already been published some time ago or in distant lands - but do please give us the details.

It is time for me to say a few words about presentation. Except for the odd typesetting error and the omission of any final full-stop, you should have found that your haiku were laid-out exactly as you laid them out. So, if you started the first line, or every line, with a capital, or used no capitals at all, that is the way it should have been published. And the extra spaces, commas, colons, etc. that you inserted, should have been replicated precisely. I chose to omit final full-stops because it appeared from your original submissions that your use of them was mostly quite random! My choice gives a consistent appearance to *Blithe Spirit* - and reflects the most common current practice amongst UK and North American haiku journals. However, we do have one member who is quite insistent that his final full-stops (when he uses them) should be published. If you feel the same, do please tell me.

We are receiving an increasing number of submissions from non-members, presumably as a result of being displayed at the Poetry Library and elsewhere. Please note that, apart from The Pathway, reviews and for illustrative purposes, it is our policy to publish only poems submitted by current BHS members.

Finally, please note that we can accept submissions on computer disk and especially welcome articles that way, as it will save a lot of copy-typing and proofreading. But we can only handle 3.5 and 5.25-inch (preferably the former and DSDD type) DOS formatted disks (so Amstrad PCW output is unsuitable). It is best if you save the file as plain text (ASCII). By all means submit a paper copy first (we will need one, anyway, with words you want emboldened or italicised clearly marked) and follow up with a disk when we notify acceptance of your article or poems.

Richard Goring

The editors welcome submissions of poetry and articles by members of the British Haiku Society (non-members may submit for The Pathway section), on the understanding that these are not simultaneously under consideration elsewhere. Copyright reverts to the author upon publication.

Submissions for the next issue must be to hand no later than 27 February, 1993 - the Season Corner theme will be Winter

The James W Hackett Award 1992

A total of 538 entries from 107 persons in 10 countries were received this second year of the James W Hackett Award for haiku displaying Tao-Zen spirit. In addition, all haiku published in *Blithe Spirit* during the year (excluding those of Committee members) were automatic entries. The Society's committee scrutinised all these poems and reduced them to a shortlist of 39, which were submitted as anonymous items to Mr Hackett, who made the final choice.

We are pleased to announce that the 1992 Winner, who receives the £60 prize, is:-

Mr Chris Mulhern, of Oviedo, Spain, for the following haiku:

forgotten water-melon
smaller than the rest
rotting on its stalk

James W Hackett commented: "The haiku moment presented here is a good example of Zen's thing-in-itself quality of Suchness. A spiritual interpenetration is also apparent. The haiku poem itself shows a careful choice of words. Moreover, the ample form is refreshing: adherence to a norm of approximately 17 syllables providing enough words to suggest a vivid and sensitive experience with nature."

Mr Hackett also 'commended' the following:

in the stubble
a ball of blue wool
unwinds in the wind

Winona Baker
Canada

a splashed frog
leaps ahead
of my watering can

Ruth Robinson
England

Cloudy sky.
Every sunflower looking
in another direction

Tomislav Maretić
Croatia

deep autumn . . .
the pool in the forest
gathering shadows

Patricia Neubauer
U S A

It is good to see such an international flavour both in the submissions and in those selected, and encouraging that the winner and one of the others are BHS members. Formal announcement of the James W Hackett Award for 1993 will be made in the Spring and published in an appropriate issue of *The Brief*, and elsewhere.

Haiku as a Homecoming

Brian Tasker

English language haiku developed in America. Maybe it was easier for them; without the rigid Victorian values and the flowery Victorian poetry that we still seem to find traces of, they do have a looser way with words. But it's not true to think that Americans have a harder eye; or an edge on reality that we lack. Rock music began in the U S; we imported it, created our own version and have been exporting it back to them ever since. These two forms of rock music merge without losing their separate identities.

We owe a debt of gratitude; firstly, of course, to the Japanese, but also to the American poets who have developed the form of haiku in English. Yet nobody owns the franchise on haiku, its province is in the vastness and the microcosm of the present moment. If we have decided that we do want to write haiku; then we should try and get our heads around the concept. We need to put aside our reluctance to speak foreign languages and write some poetry in a foreign way, but with a 'British' accent.

In haiku we are not just writing about something; in the way of telling somebody that the raindrops are like diamonds. We need to find our depth in the concrete fact that raindrops are just raindrops. In haiku we enter into something and for that moment we merge with it. To then describe it by comparing it with something else is not being honest to the experience.

It has been said that all words are metaphors. In a subjective sense they are; they can spark all kinds of associations and implied, if not stated, meanings. For example:

at the doorway
pausing for a moment;
the autumn rain

Autumn rain is a statement of fact: it also becomes a metaphor or a symbol. Autumn rain brings with it the passing of summer and the turning year, the onset of colder weather, a confrontation with our own mortality, the dying down of nature and the unrelenting cycle of change. All these things we can perceive in a moment, whether knowingly or not. In haiku we tell it like it is: as plainly as we can.

In haiku, we need to call a spade a spade; if we call it by any other name the spade will lose its meaning. To be 'in haiku' is to

be in momentary connection with things just as they are, it is to be on the edge of unfolding.

R H Blyth described haiku as a temporary enlightenment. The moment of haiku becomes the agent of enlightenment: the moment not the poem. The poem is a valid expression of nostalgia for that which we cannot grasp. The creative energy that informs haiku doesn't have quite the same desperate need for fulfilment as other forms of creative writing.

It's still a good idea to carry a notebook and jot down strands of experience. It is possible to reconstruct haiku from strands of experience; but they never feel quite as rounded out as haiku gathered from the instant. Quite often, we are unable to frame the moment in the right way to create a worthwhile poem. When, in fact, just to be a silent witness can be enough, to pay attention and observe: to let a duck skim the surface of the lake without trying to contain it within the ego's grasping, is just to let it go. To imprison the duck in a bad poem is not being kind to the duck. The action of the duck is poetry in itself and fulfils itself.

This can teach us not to cling: to both the 'deliciousness' of the moment and the urge to record it, to be freed of writing is to be free to write. The very best haiku have an organic nature that can't be contrived or made up. They manifest themselves out of emptiness or 'unpreparedness'. It's not that everything happens at the right time: but that we are available as a witness without any investment in distorting the facts.

Haiku arise out of a true spontaneity. In that sense; haiku move beyond the usual parameters of poetry to a space just beyond. To be in haiku is to be dispossessed: of the past and of the future and all that we project onto the present with our minds, yet at the same time to connect with ourselves. Before we can approach selflessness, we must approach self. A kind of circular understanding is needed. It is forgetfulness of ourselves and a momentary freedom from ourselves, it is just to come home. As Zen would have it: to abide in non-abiding.

Haiku have the sadness of truth within them - the momentary realisation that all our striving has come to nothing, and yet, despite that, we have arrived anyway.

Gorse Blossoms

*"when gorse is out of bloom, kissing's out of fashion."
all seasons, no season - haiku, experiment.....*

Twilight white ,
Each lake ;
Night white ,
The birches .

(near Winnipeg, 8/78)

Sunrise at Sanchi -
Descending the hill ,
The dog clears me a path
Through the monkeys .

(Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, 3/90)

Tito

baby's gone to bed
from the darkening mist
the cry of a swift

an old mill-pond
mirror clear and still
to the race rim

sound of dance-music
the last fishing boat throbs
gently into place

George Marsh

A strong wind
in the poplars
sound of the sea

Joan Daniels

black, desert beetles
climb small avalanches
of glittering sand

wind, stopping at nothing
for a hundred miles
touches my face

moon reflection
forming and reforming
between drops

Susan Rowley

Cold fish on white slabs
stare round-eyed at a vase
of wilted flowers

Edward D Glover

Striking poison fangs
against a cigarette's glow --
snake in bottle

Down in the meadow
a horse keeps nodding his head
under the full moon

Polishing a shoe
by brushing its leather with
the evening glow

Makoto Tamaki

An empty can
rolling in the empty car
of the day's last train

Mokuo Nagayama

snow falls -
daughter's snowman
puts on weight

sudden breeze-
a rush of confetti
decorates a gravestone

between
streetlamps
dark flowers

John Gonzalez

in the storm-wrecked forest
litter bins survive

in the road
a dead bird's feathers
mix with last night's fish & chips

Fred Schofield

in the plunge pool
waterfall tumbling
its reflection

Jackie Hardy

Summer night rain;
A monk shelters in the porch.
Goodnight Bhanaté!

Summer thunder:
Swallows skim; a raindrop falls
Into a tea-cup

Cicely Hill

understood, small gnat,
why you shy and shy away --
those snores, those snores!

David Cobb

night rain--
cars of all colours
darken with distance

Richard Goring

Plunged where he left it
amongst azaleas - a hoe
stands in timeless wait

The dandelion seed
on its way
to someone else's garden

D J Peel

aging butterfly
wing-wide in frail sunlight
falling petals

Ruth Robinson

on a south wind
the smell of the ocean floods
in bustling downtown streets

among city sounds
coming up the hill
a bamboo pole hawker's cry

Yoko Ogino

the storm-fallen scarecrow
still clad
in my old coat

opening the coffin
to add
another red rose

candlelight
for dead grandfather --
for us, his plough

Kohjin Sakamoto

The Importance of the Moment

Will Morris

Jack Kornfield in *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom* writes: "We begin to see that our whole being and all of our physical and mental universe is made up of moments... It is only by being fully in the moment that the fundamental questions of the heart can be answered; it is only in the timeless moment that we can come to that intuitive silent knowing of the truth..."

There is in fact only the present moment, but the trap is that we think of this as being part of the continuum from past to future, whereas it is a unique totality. Everything happens now, nothing happens outside it. The past has already happened, the future hasn't yet emerged - that is why Kornfield refers to it as timeless. Being a Buddhist he has no difficulty in seeing moments as discrete entities like the stills which make up a moving film, each one of which can be retained and reviewed in its dynamic entirety.

We are so dominated by clock time, Newton's measured time, that we are unaware that we experience time differently and yet everyday we grumble about the elasticity of time. How slowly it goes when we are clock-watching, how quickly when we are busy, how dramatically things happen in slow motion when we are involved in a life threatening situation. "We then see that 'existence' time is always entire time. Existing things, existing phenomena are all times; all existence and the entire world are embraced within the time of every single moment." (Dogen in *Impermanence is Buddha-nature* by Joan Stambaugh)

This is the moment that is touched with haiku; it is the sudden awareness that everyday seemingly unimportant happenings are IT in all its fullness, utterly complete.

We usually think of ourselves as an object, separate from other objects, whereas Heidegger, a Western Existentialist philosopher, pointed out that humans are not subjects, spectators, observers, separated by a glass window from the world of objects, but are part and parcel of it all, in amongst it all. He saw the world as already 'articulated' with everything already laid out and humans functioning or 'discoursing' within this context, what is referred to by modern Zen practitioners as 'going with the flow'.

This sudden realisation that in seeing one thing you see it all, that the part can contain the whole, can be demonstrated now by the hologram from which the whole can be reproduced from any fragment.

William Blake saw this clearly when he wrote:—

To see the world in a Grain of Sand
And Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity for an Hour.

The Pathway

There cannot be any of our members and readers who has not watched, with a mixture of horror and pity, the nightly newsreels of events in what most of us used to know as Yugoslavia. Yet in the midst of most despairs there may often be found seeds of hope. The last issue of *The Brief* noted the formation of a Croatian Haiku Association in May, 1992. The Association is managing to publish a twice-yearly magazine, *Sparrow*, with poems in both English and Croat - the first issue honoured us by including ten haiku selected from *Blithe Spirit* and printed in English with Croatian translations.

We are pleased to reciprocate this gesture by devoting the whole of *The Pathway* in this issue to a selection from the Association's anthology *Haiku iz Rata (Haiku in Wartime)*. In a moving coincidence, the anthology was received by David Cobb on the morning of 11 November - Armistice Day. Let us hope that the coincidence proves auspicious.

Rujana Matuka

grane bagrema
hvataju
zalutali metak

locust-tree branches
catching
a stray bullet

Luko Paljetak

Mrav pokušava
odvući oboreno
crkveno zvono

Exerting himself
to drag off the struck-down bell -
an ant

I dalje nosi
na ledima svoj teret
ubijeni konj

A horse -
dead, but still harnessed
to its load

Marinko Španović

Dječji crtež.
Iste su boje i tenk
i vojnik i sunce.

a child's drawing:
the same colour for tank,
for soldier, and sun.

Darko Plažanin

iznad pisama
današnje novine
s krvavim vijestima

today's paper
spread over the letters
with its bloody news

zračna uzbuna
bježe ljudi
od ljudi

air raid siren -
people running away
from people

Tomislav Maretić

Prolazi vojska.
Pas laje od prvog do
zadnjeg vojnika.

A platoon marches by:
from first soldier to last
a dog barking.

Na krizantemi
na grobu gardista
prerani mraz.

Out of season
on the soldier's grave -
chrysanthemums, frost.

Marijan Čekolj

U sjeni
kamenite stijene
hrpica pepela ...

In the shadow
of a rock - a small pile
of ashes ...

Pred kišu,
samo je jablan malo
zadrhtao ...

Before the rain
only the poplar
slightly shaken ...

Prošao je voz
sijena. Mirisna odsutnost
lebdi zrakom ...

Hanging on
long after the cart
the scent of hay ...

Olujna kiša:
mrav plovi na latici
divljeg kestena.

Storm rain:
an ant sails a petal
of wild chestnut.

見 聞 狩

Viewings and Listenings and Gatherings Part 1 Stephen Henry Gill

The planned enjoyment of certain natural seasonal phenomena in company with others of a poetic disposition is certainly not uniquely Japanese. Here, in the British Isles, for example, there are a few who will collect together at daybreak in an April wood to hear 'the dawn chorus' of spring birdsong, at dusk on a summer hillside to have a picnic and watch the sunset, at midday in September for an afternoon of blackberrying, chestnut-gathering or apple-picking, or at breakfast time in midwinter to feed and watch the wild birds. It is the formalization of similar activities into a positive tradition of 'viewing', 'listening' or 'gathering' parties that is so very Japanese; and, as *haijin**, we should, perhaps, at least be aware of it so that we in turn can help dream up and implement some seasonal parties of our own!

The spring night
Being dissolved
At firstlight ...
Into cherry blossom ... *Bashō*

Spring, in Japan, has been referred to as 'the Season of the Eyes' and autumn as 'the Season of the Ears'. Both the vigour and the tenderness of spring are felt most poignantly in the sudden manifestation of those wonderful luminous clouds of cherry blossom... and, likewise, later in the year, the plaintive singing of crickets shrouded by the dewy night amongst the withering grasses - this, for the Japanese *haijin*, might be felt to be the very epitome of autumn. In the same way that, when the cherry trees were at the height of their flowering, people would spread mats underneath them and hold parties, in autumn, townsfolk (and not just the poets amongst them!) might have gone to the countryside one night expressly to listen to that wonderful all-pervasive shrilling of the various crickets.

Long before the cherry buds had fattened, the *ume*, the plum (or, more accurately, the Japanese apricot), would be filling the air with its early spring perfume and people would go to view such orchards at an *umemi*. The character 'mi' means 'to view': thus, 'apricot-blossom viewing'. Weeks later, the cherry blossom (*hana* or *sakura*) would be viewed (*hanami* or *sakuragari*)... and perhaps a visit would be made to the coast for the traditional springtime pursuit of shell gathering, of wandering along the shore at low tide gathering shellfish, crabs, sea urchins, seaweed, and the like, from the rocks, the pools or the strand itself (*shiohigari*). There was admittedly a culinary aspect to this poetic pursuit - the driftwood fire and the bubbling pan were as much a part of an ebb tide shell gathering as the *sake*** was of a *hanami*. But *haijin* versified as they ate and a beautiful empty shell might

have been as highly esteemed as one still bearing its mollusc! The poet's calendar was strewn with such viewings and listenings and gatherings.

Pitch dark:
But, here and there,
The green of long grasses
Lit up by fireflies. Hōjo

Summer came and, with it, the prospect of a *hotarugari* or 'firefly hunt'. Nowadays, with water pollution widespread throughout Japan, you would have to know exactly where to go to have a chance of seeing even a single firefly - generally to some remote rice-growing valley where the streams or rivers have remained relatively clean. In the past, many rural areas would rejoice in the sight of clouds of fireflies flashing their little lights off and on as they crossed the flooded rice paddy.

The beauty of the full moon nearest to the autumn equinox of September - our harvest moon - was thought to be especially poignant. In fact, if the moon is mentioned in a haiku without any qualifying prefix ('hazy', 'crescent' or whatever), then it is understood to be the 'ideal' moon, the full and brilliant one of harvest time. At a moon viewing party (*tsukimi*) poets would gather to watch it rise and special food would be eaten. Depending on location, this evening event might also have incorporated that tuning-in to the sound of night-crickets already mentioned. This latter pursuit (*mushikiki*) was not so formalized as to have been universally popular, but those with a poet's soul most certainly sought out the opportunity to listen to them and write upon the subject.

Autumn also saw two further poetic events, both of which took place in the mountain woods inland: *takegari* (or *kinokogari*), wild mushroom hunting, and *momijigari* (or *kanpū*†), viewing the tinted autumn leaves (*momiji*), especially those of the tiny red star-leaved maple (*kaede*). As with insects and the moon, so with mushrooms and autumn foliage: they might well be enjoyed together. The most highly-prized mushroom, *matsutake*‡, was, however, found mainly in pinewoods. If successful, the mushroom hunt would naturally end with cooking up the spoils.

In the mountain village,
The full moon
Reaches into everything -
Even my bowl of soup! Issa

* haiku poets

** colourless rice wine, usually served fairly hot

† the character 'kan' is similar to that of 'mi' and also means 'viewing'. Thus we also have 'kanbai', 'kan'ō', 'kangetsu' 'kanpū' and 'kangiku' as alternative terms for, respectively, plum, cherry, moon, maple and chrysanthemum viewing

‡ *armillaria* variety

[The second part of this article will be found in *Blythe Spirit* Volume 3 Number 2]

Season Corner: Autumn

Hanging tobacco --
its leaves changing colour in
mountain sun and wind

Makoto Tamaki

spare a thought, brown snail,
for old eyes -- I took you
for a tulip bulb!

David Cobb

The pruned-back holly
retaliates with excess
of scarlet berries

Swallows and trippers
are gone - land-ladies prepare
for hibernation

Eric Speight

Bleak days--
the wilderness
of endless rain

Autumn afternoon--
a pathway of sunlight
across the lawn

Joan Daniels

suddenly
plums are deep red -
bonfire glow

Fred Schofield

A three inch oak
after weeks preparing
sheds its one leaf

Swallows on the wire
ready to migrate -
I stand at my door

Bruce Leeming

Sun-spark on white dew:
a bumble bee's weight bends down
one dying flower

Kenneth Vye Bailey

a metal tankard
its lustre gone in the September sun
I hear cream settle

Dermot O'Brien

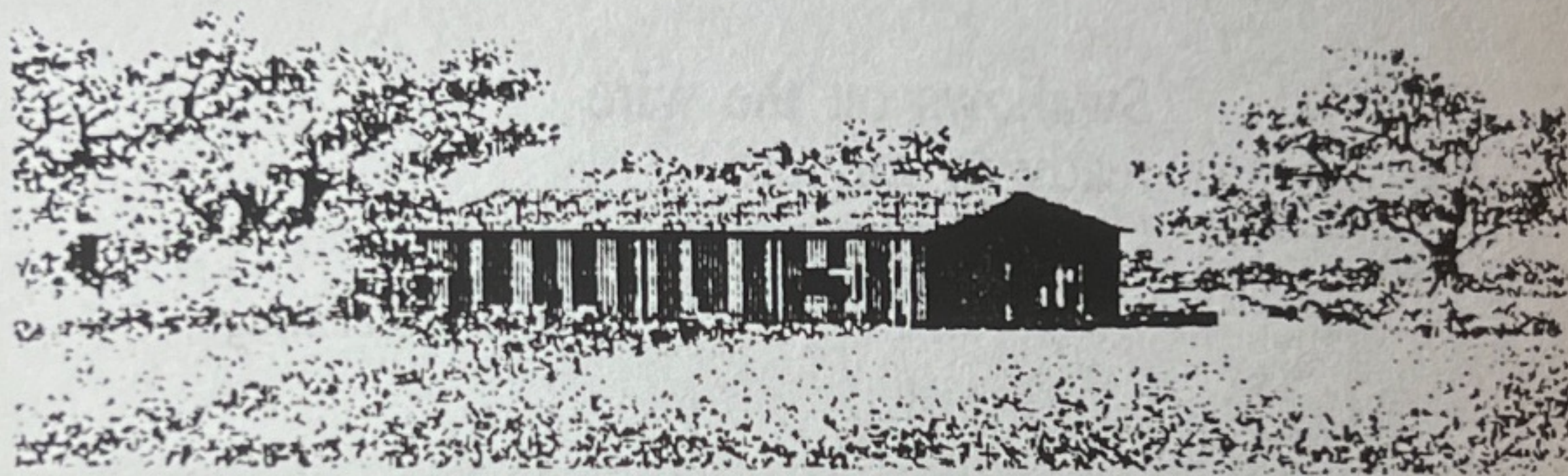
behind drawn curtains
distorted shadow
of a falling leaf

Annie Bachini

Climbing the pear
red roses nudge
the fruit

Autumn stroll -
more leaves clinging to the ground
than to the trees

Cy Patterson



Remembrance Day -
silently, the moving flags,
cherry tree's last leaf

cold wind from the east;
in a damaged spider's web
a red leaf shivers

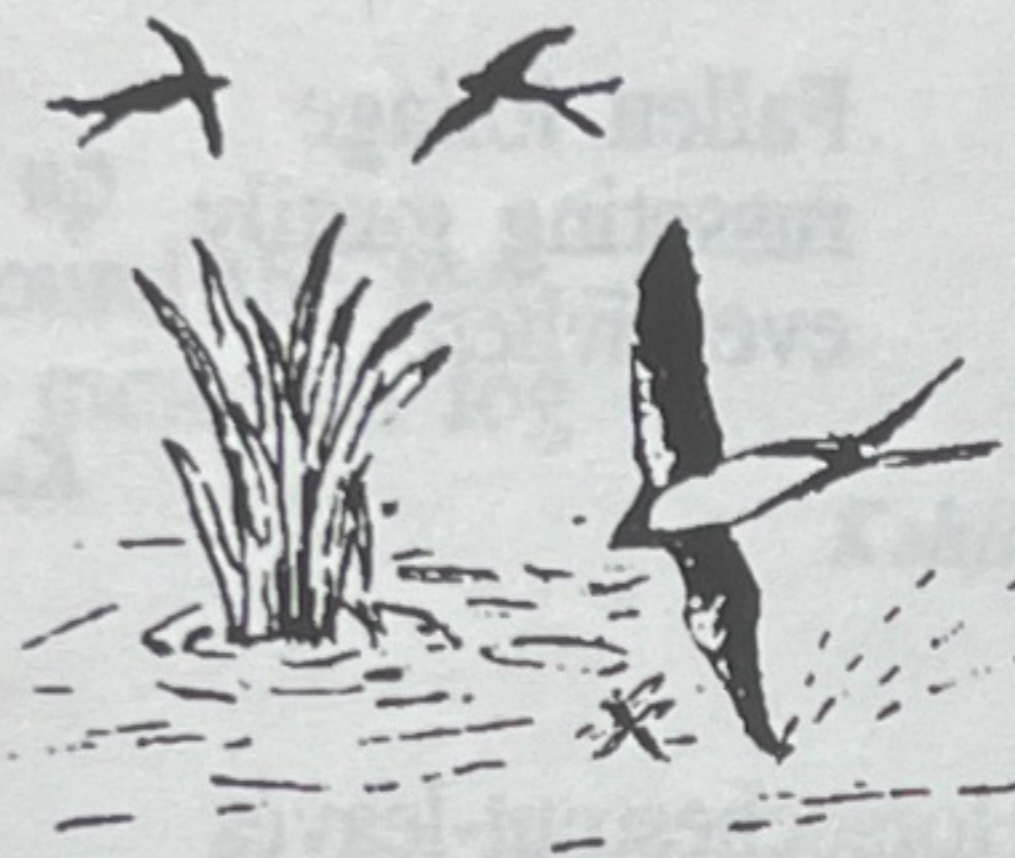
north wind -
a sudden gust
kaleidoscopes
the fallen leaves

Jackie Hardy

late autumn
everywhere in the house
dried flowers

autumn night
the party gatecrashed
by a dozy wasp

Richard Goring



Ink drawing by
Doris Husband

after the bonfire,
the smell of woodsmoke
as you pass

Susan Rowley

Michaelmas roses;
unexpected flowering,
fresher than the first

Denise Bennett

Kicking through brown leaves
in the failing light ...
an owl
watches intently

D J Peel

A golden leaf falls
upon rich purple asters -
what extravagance

Bamboo Shoot

Trees are picked clean.
Ironclad November days;
Invisible sun

Ken Morgan

Fallen foliage
russeting gustily
everywhere

Ken Ellison

Horsechestnut-leaves
skeleton the forest floor
with filigree hands

Edward D Glover

proud of fallen leaves
black botanical labels
spelling out species

Norman Barraclough

morning chapel bells...
white mists reverberate
amid dark green pines

David A Walker

a gust of wind
blows one red leaf
into my hair

absent minded --
the sound of a falling leaf
startles me

Yoko Ogino

coming up
from around the feet --
evening mountain fog

Kohjin Sakamoto

Spiderweb thread -
I walk through it unthinking
two days running

Copper-red berries
outlast the hedge leaf-fall -
sparrows flit non-stop

The blind man taps taps
through a mound of rotting leaves -
hardly lifts his feet

Katherine Gallagher

Powerful Questions?

Annie Bachini

This article was prompted by two main concerns. Firstly, my own discomfort at observing people, or at least the senryu that may evolve out of that. And, secondly, uneasy feelings about some of the senryu I have read. Using 'made-up' examples to illustrate points, and to raise questions, this exploration discusses the issues involved in terms of power, perception and language.

It seems to me that much of the observing in senryu is done by people in a more powerful social position to the subject: whether that power relationship is international, or relates to class, race, gender, sexuality, body, mind, age or education. Having said this, there is power in covert observations regardless of the social power positions of the subject and observer. For example:-

the young middle-class
man speaks
no-one is listening

This leads me to question:-

- † how this person would feel about an aspect of their life being recorded without their knowledge;
- † how they would feel about possibly hundreds of people knowing about it, if it was published;
- † how other middle-class men would feel when they read it.

In the above example the subject is positioned as victim. The next example repositions the man:-

no-one listens -
but the young middle-class man
continues to speak

Here, despite indifference to what he is saying he carries on: he has power within the situation and the senryu. Obviously this could be interpreted in a number of ways. People may not have read the original senryu as middle-class-man-as-victim, as they would if it was someone whose view is not generally so widely exposed.

But the senryu doesn't tell you everything about the man. He may also be someone who represents an oppressed group in society. Both senryu define the man in terms of age, class and gender. How we choose to describe and define says as much about the observer as the subject. But more importantly, these definitions can act to reinforce stereotypical views of people.

In this instance I don't think I'm harming middle-class men too much. Although there may be some discomfort at finding themselves the subject of a senryu, and an article about it. After all frogs are discussed all the time!

When the words 'young', 'middle-class' and 'man' are removed, the concerns expressed above disappear:-

no-one listens -
but the person
continues to speak

The reader is allowed to use their own perceptions about the person.

Having said this, there may be times when it seems constructive to mention gender, for example, to confront stereotypical perceptions. But age is a relative concept, and 'older' or 'younger' might often be more appropriate.

Looking at the same issue from another angle:-

dusting the grass
from his hair - a man
sitting in the meadow

- † Why are perceptions of men in this type of pose rare?
- † What is the motivation behind a senryu of this type?

A woman having the above perception about a man is not the same as a man having this perception about a woman; a man having this perception about a man; or a woman having this perception about a woman. There are differences in gender experience, and different power relations in the world; there are different social power relations within a gender: men and women do not have the same experience of being in the world. If this is accepted, then it follows that the same experience will have a different meaning for men and women, because they are different people, but also because they are a different gender.

The above image of a man is how women are portrayed all the time in advertisements and newspapers. It is also how I have seen them portrayed in senryu: passive recipients of the male gaze. It can be debated whether this is done consciously or unconsciously.

If, as it is widely said, haiku and senryu are about a meeting between perceiver and perceived, or an attempt to see the world from the perspective of the subject, then I think people need to be aware on many levels for this to be achieved.

One further question that springs from this:-

- † is any reward for a senryu going to be shared between the perceiver and the perceived?

I am aware that many of the issues raised here about senryu can also be applied to haiku. I am also aware that this article just scratches the surface, but this perspective has not been put forward in *Blithe Spirit* before, and I hope it stimulates further thought and discussion.

David Cobb comments: *What this article does not mention, but which has a profound effect on the case, is the fact that haiku/senryu poets habitually write about themselves in third person, i.e. the poem may be self-criticism, self-denigration. Also, it may be important to add that senryu is no different from other forms of poetry, or novels, or plays, in these respects. Is there an implication here that we should be better?*

Senryu Pie

the call to the mosque
still sounding over cities
deafened by gunfire

Susan Rowley

on the fixture list
the name of the groundsman
we buried last week

old folks' outing --
wheelchairs and walking sticks
in each other's way

birthday breakfast --
flakes of muesli settling
in the crevices

David Cobb

fearsome Hell's Angel
revving at the crossing
waiting for a child

a rare man -
hear him pissing noisily
in the centre

George Marsh

The tramp's
old boots
are smiling

Hamish Turnbull

In the cathedral
ancient whispers - envy hate
and recurrent love

Cherryblossoms
are pointless, he said,
cleaning his new car

Bruce Leeming

the woman
with a down-turned mouth
wearing a 'smiley' badge

empty carriage
every seat bearing a
'reserved' slip

Richard Goring

Over the fence
Lean the laden damson trees :
Picking the damsons . . .
Meeting the new neighbours !

(East Horsley, Surrey, 9/76)

Tito

Fumbling for her keys
arms full, and hot - a mother
sucks her child's dummy

Bedroom television ;
always the same picture -
window's reflection

D J Peel

people holding
doors open
in each others' way

street full of commerce
baby in a pushchair
with an angry face

Fred Schofield

Slowly they grew apart.
Fifty years on their gravestones
lean together

Edward D Glover

Little stone jizo --
carried in my pocket, where
my hand can stroke you

James Kirkup

into soundless sleep
taking off
the hearing-aid

Kohjin Sakamoto

Time for Tanka

Falling from dark skies
gale-driven tiny migrants
rest on the island
small birds propelled by day-shrink
to leave familiar woodlands

Kenneth Vye Bailey

The end of an old film
has been reshot. Fifty years on
into the sunset
rides a skeleton hero
on his nag of bones

Edward D Glover

Heavy with frost
no longer able to hold
the crispy fall of leaves,
chilled thoughts and dreams find their rest
worries in suspended animation!

Mohd. Ali Noor-Cashmore

The old elder tree,
In its autumn finery,
Basks in the warm sun
And leaves my lost mind to the
Winter of my lonely soul

Kenneth W Brooks

A full Hunter's moon
climbs over the apple tree,
lightening corners
where overgrown undergrowth
creates menacing shadows

Joan Daniels

Being forgotten
by you should be recorded.
That is why I write,
in my new note book,
a Tanka for the memory

Patricia V Dawson

measured words cover
silent depths between us
without denial -
loud bells ring to celebrate
oneness in separation

Annie Bachini

“Flying fish leaping
six feet above the water.”
he pauses - then smiles,
hand hovering in the air
as memory takes him back

Susan Rowley

bare mast reflected
in silver coastal water,
the creeks deserted,
I wait an empty shell;
you come with the tide and wind

Ruth Robinson

The Lapwing

She stands by the road
Guarding the trampled body
Of her crested mate.
Yesterday she waited there,
Uncertain she lingers still.....

Julia Dent

Book Review

Brian Tasker: *Notes from a Humdrum* (

£ 4.50 post free

(cheques payable to B Tasker))

Subtitled 'A Year in Haiku', this little chapbook is the work of one of our members and the editor/publisher of *Bare Bones* magazine. The book starts with a foldout page containing an eight-poem sequence titled 'Bazaar Habits', including:

shining
in the tinsel market
the merchant's gold tooth

Thereafter, most pages bear one, sometimes two haiku and follow-through the seasons. The majority of poems are three-liners and contain some delightful and sensitive images, as in:

out of the silence
between the fridge and its hum:
the cackle of ducks

upon leaving a friend
the pause before
the door clicks shut

but there are also a few written as a single line, including the remarkably short, yet wholly complete:

after rain the stars

Brian also shows himself to be something of a master of the pivoting middle line:

stirring fieldmice
bending the ears of corn -
a wind from the south

a feeling of loneliness
brought by the wind
the warmth of the sun

All the poems (there are 67) testify to Brian's belief that English-language haiku should adhere closely to the Japanese 'rules' of composition and content. Readers will find no mawkish sentimentality, no gross metaphor or personification, no deep philosophy being pushed, just simple images illustrating moments of vision. Although I like some of the haiku more than others, there are to my mind none that fail to communicate something, often with great subtlety.

A word or two must also be said of the chapbook itself. All the off-white through grey pages and card covers are hand-made in the Far East from recycled material or naturally-renewing resources and the surfaces pleasantly rough to the touch. Dark fibres and flecks of material in the paper add to the visual attraction. The whole is 'bound' with recycled string and comes in a grey envelope, also made from recycled stock. All this seems to be in keeping with the tenets of Brian's Buddhist faith.

All in all, a delight to read, to look at and to handle.

RG

Museum of Haiku Literature Award

The first award of the £50 prize, sponsored by the Museum of Haiku Literature, for the best haiku or senryu published in each issue of *Blithe Spirit* has gone to Jackie Hardy of Riding Mill, Northumberland. From the previous issue, October 1992, our president, James Kirkup, chose a poem that is rather more senryu than haiku and could hardly be more 'English':

in a passing car
just time to see
the batsman, out

Congratulations to Jackie. And staying (just) with the cricketing flavour, Colin Blundell will be the selector for this issue.

A Book of Interest - Kenneth White: *Pilgrim of the Void* (Mainstream Publishing Edinburgh Ltd) ISBN 1 85158 473 0 £ 14.99

This work will be found in the Travel section of bookshops. Readers of *Blithe Spirit* who are drawn to the Poetry shelves may miss it. That would be a pity because the book offers much of interest to haiku devotees. Kenneth White's travels in South East Asia include a 'Haiku journey' from Tokyo up through the Northern provinces to Hokkaido.

The author reveals a deep but unstuffy understanding of Zen philosophy and he has a sharp eye and ear for the haiku moment. His feeling for landscape is subtly poetic.

Some 74 pages of the section 'The Wild Swans' describe his haiku journey. Japanese thought is sensitively explored and the text is sprinkled with haiku from the author's pen and from the masters. A brief, beautifully written, chapter on Bashō includes an account, probably apocryphal, of how the 'frog' haiku was written. There is also an amusing description of 'a little haiku party' which the author enjoyed at a paper-maker's house in Shiroishi.

Many examples are given of haiku by Santoka, a modern writer (b 1882) described in a biography as "Hyohaku no Haijin" - the Haiku Man of the White Path. It was Santoka who said that he knew three joys: the first, study; the second, contemplation; the third, haiku. Kenneth White is a writer from the same mould.

The book ends with a haiku written by the author in the Rakushisha garden which Bashō visited in 1691:-

Autumn rain
earth and sky here
haiku salutations

Charles Brien



Journal - hand made in a garden shed in Bunyan Land