

# Blithe Spirit



Journal of  
The British Haiku Society

Volume 3 Number 2 April 1993

Editorial

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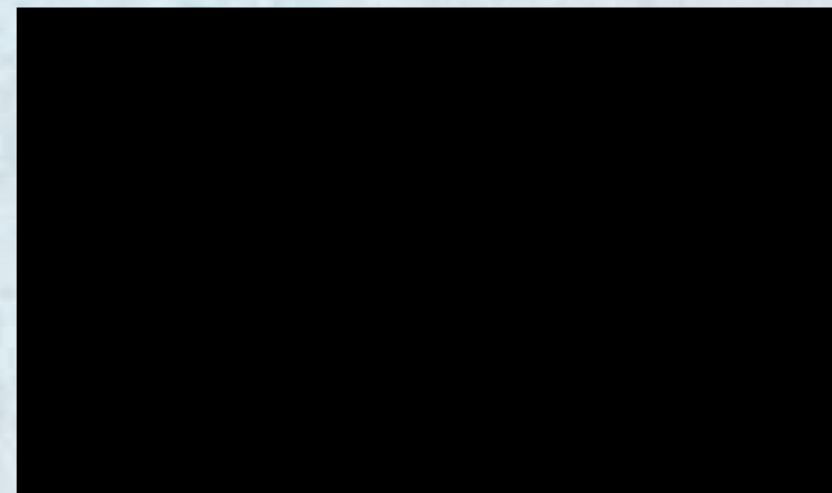
# The British Haiku Society

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Stephen Gill

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Blithe Spirit

Colin Blundell

Richard Goring



The Brief

David Cobb

The Pathway

David Cobb

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 submission or consideration elsewhere. Please provide publication details of any item submitted which has already appeared in print. Copyright reverts to the author upon publication in *Blithe Spirit*.

*Blithe Spirit* is published four times each year, cover-dated January, April, July and October. The closing (in-hand) date for submissions for each issue is the first Saturday of the month prior to the cover date.

## Editorial

It was with some trepidation that the previous issue of *Blithe Spirit* was published, with its clear statement of intent regarding selection criteria. Would there be a significant impact upon submissions for this issue? Or upon membership renewals? Would I be inundated with letters of argument and protest?

As it has turned out, I have not had one of the latter (but several applauding our efforts to 'tighten up') and the number of people submitting and the number of poems received have set new records. That is reflected in the content of this issue, where all three haiku/senryu sections each have more poems than, I believe, ever before. I also believe this has been achieved whilst maintaining the 'standards' set in January. Add to those poems the outcome of Group 4's bird-viewing in February (which ties-in nicely with the concluding part of Stephen Gill's 'Viewings and Listenings and Gatherings' item) and we have a bumper crop of good-quality haiku and senryu this issue - though rather a dearth of articles and, for lack of contributions, *The Pathway* is also absent.

In spite of the many good to excellent submissions, I must also say that there were more than a few which were quite poor. These were rejected for the same kinds of reasons outlined in last issue's Editorial. It seems that some of you have either not read or have failed to appreciate the contents of *Towards a Consensus on the Nature of Haiku*. This document, while not perfect, makes a valuable contribution to the subject of 'Haiku in English' and if you aspire to writing good haiku and to seeing them published in *Blithe Spirit*, you do need to understand its content. The *Consensus* is not, as some seem to think, an attempt to straight-jacket the form by laying down rigid rules. But those who think the document goes against the grain of Zen, with which haiku is so often associated, might do well to remember, as Brian Tasker recently reminded me, that Zen is notable for the rigid discipline its Masters impose upon those who aspire to enlightenment!

\* \* \* \* \*

Although I feel that *Blithe Spirit* is now publishing many very fine haiku and senryu, I and other Committee members are rather less happy with tanka submissions. We have persevered with the Time for Tanka section in order to encourage contributors, but it is

often a struggle to select sufficient reasonable-quality poems. This issue we have four excellent examples of modern Western-style tanka by Dee Evetts. I commend you to 'read, mark and learn'.

\* \* \* \* \*

Several people enquired about our new cover design. This is the work of our member David Walker and we are most grateful to him for the time and effort put into its creation.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have received a letter from Fred Schofield, saying that the poem 'suddenly ...' credited to him at the top of page 19 in the January issue is not his work. However, I have not received an anguished cry from anyone else claiming it is theirs. If the real author will advise us, we will make the correction next time - or is it that the prolific Fred has forgotten one of his own creations!?

\* \* \* \* \*

Finally, as some of you will know, my youngest daughter died in mid-January after battling with cancer for more than a year. I do want to thank those of you who sent letters and cards or who telephoned to express sympathy. This event, while not entirely unexpected, happened suddenly and was very traumatic. It, and subsequent illness affecting both my wife and I, are the major reasons why this issue will reach you probably in May rather than April. I am sure you will be understanding in the circumstances. It has become clear to me that I must shed some of my external activities, if only for a while, in order to devote more attention to the other members of my family. Accordingly, I am standing down from the editorial role with immediate effect. Please send your contributions for the next issue to my address and I will forward them to the new editor, whoever he or she may be. I do hope to be able to continue typesetting *Blithe Spirit* and I do intend to continue writing and submitting myself. I will also continue to run the BHS Lending Library.

**Richard Goring**

The Season Corner theme for the July issue will be Spring

## Season Corner - Winter

mild January -  
two blanketed ponies are  
preparing for spring



Haiku and lino-cut by *B D Thompson*

here and there  
on the skeletal birch  
a last leaf

*Richard Goring*

winter eve -  
my pen gone dry  
I read Issa

*Nika*

on the coal-bunker  
my son scratches his name  
nail-deep in rime

days dull and short -  
sparrows' litter  
in the swallows' porch

*David Cobb*

Traces of colour are left  
in the withered hydrangeas.  
An old poet

*Erica and Owen Facey*

cut-back tree  
holds its stubs  
to the sky

*Fred Schofield*

Frost repelled  
by the bonfire -  
waiting for nightfall

Dark afternoon  
frostbound: a blue gum  
is sprouting new leaves

Town starlings roost -  
their din drowns out  
raucous traffic

*Bruce Leeming*

colder than the frost  
lying on my doorstep  
a frozen robin

*F J Dullaghan*

snowdrops  
where the hungry flock  
tears at sunflower husks

*Abu*

buzzard atop a naked tree,  
hunched black sketch  
against the winter fog

wind flapping sheets  
blazing white against winter cold -  
good drying weather

*John McRae*

Snowmelt in the drift  
Is opening pockets -  
Sun for an early lizard  
And the odd anemone .

(Grillesse, Switzerland, 4/74)

Pursuing each other  
Out of the mountains -  
Winter storms  
On winter rainbows .

(Arashiyama, Kyoto, 1/75)

*Tito*

Only in winter:  
The open hearth brim full  
Of morning sunlight

*Ciceley Hill*



raking up the fire,  
the old woodsman keeps talking  
of the snow fairy

suddenly cracks  
under the snowbound waterwheel  
the frozen stream

first snowflakes,  
their signal  
the evening bell

caught  
in naked aspen twigs--a kite and  
the evening sun

*Kohjin Sakamoto*

Bringing in futon  
from the veranda -- how chill  
the winter sunset

Even on the first  
day of the year, how time flies --  
already twilight

His eyelids lowered --  
Buddha with the broken nose --  
deepening winter

*James Kirkup*

scattered strands of grass  
frozen stiff  
on the marshland

*Annie Bachini*

That passionate love  
has all disappeared now, in  
winter seclusion

*Makoto Tamaki*

December dates  
on incoming letters:  
so many to reply to

Spaced-out Nativity,  
with gantry lamps, footlights,  
and central heating

In the bright corner  
A white shirt  
Reflects  
Winter sunshine

*Dick Pettit*

waiting for crumbs  
the blackbird's gold ringed eye  
on my freezing fingers

lifting a frosted box  
uncovers  
a scattering of nuts and seeds

*Ruth Robinson*

Nine o'clock buses,  
Christmas shoppers advancing  
with empty bags

*Katherine Gallagher*

out of the mist  
on this winter night  
a deep silence

the kitchen door opens  
and then closes;  
home made soup

*Susan Rowley*

Winter sparkle  
on the twigs of a rose bush  
rain-drops

*Joan Daniels*

A grey morning  
ducks whistle down  
to skid on ice

*Colin Oliver*

in the snow

between paw prints  
a furrowed track

*Norman Barraclough*

fractal-rimed  
the rowan tree  
holds only the orange  
beak of the blackbird

*Petrouchka*

After heavy snow  
curled blue shadows lie across  
the moon-glazed landscape

Garden shapes have changed ;  
before I beat the branches -  
a moment's angst

*D J Peel*

Frost on the window  
melts in the fierce morning sun  
blurring the garden

*Patricia V Dawson*

# 見 聞 狩

## Viewings and Listenings and Gatherings Part 2 Stephen Henry Gill

Perhaps the 'ultimate' poetic event took place in the depths of winter - snow viewing (*yukimi*). Snow might either be falling or have just fallen. Whichever, the snow should have transformed (or at least be well on the way to transforming) the chosen view. For the Japanese, hot *sake* was an almost inseparable feature of such an event, at which poems would be composed, usually in an atmosphere of respectful silence. For some it was a meditation and, like moon-gazing, was thought to afford the practitioner a channel to enlightenment. Some would even engage in the austerity of sitting outside! If the session was to take place inside, the windows and screens of the loggia (*engawa*) would, in any case, often be slid all the way back, with only a charcoal brazier (*hibachi*) affording a minimal degree of warmth.

Across the fields ,  
Along the mountains ,  
Nothing stirs :  
This morning of snow .            *Chiyo-jo*

The Japanese poet also had at his disposal many other possible seasonal viewings and listenings and gatherings, some of which might have entailed an organised outing, but which were not perhaps quite so ritualised as those already mentioned.

There was spring herb, shoot and flower gathering (*tsumikusa*), bush warbler (*uguisu*<sup>1</sup>) or cuckoo (*hototogisu*<sup>2</sup>) listening, viewing the new green leaves (*shinryoku*), rain viewing/listening (seldom formalised), cicada<sup>3</sup> or frog<sup>4</sup> listening, firework viewing ... and many more besides.

Parties to view displays, gardens or wild tracts of particular flowering plants used also to be common: camellia, wisteria, azalea, iris, hydrangea, lotus, peonies, morning glories, bush clover<sup>5</sup>, *susuki* grass<sup>6</sup>, chrysanthemums<sup>7</sup> and narcissus were amongst the most notable species.

And then there were get-togethers to view special scenery, such as a waterfall (*takimi*), a river gorge or lake (perhaps from a boat), an ocean bay, a shapely mountain (such as Mt Fuji), or the setting of a temple or a shrine. Such places would show different aspects in different seasons/weathers/times of day, one of which might become particularly famous (e.g. snow at Kinkakuji Temple<sup>8</sup>, wild cherry-blossom time at Mt Yoshino, rain and thunder at the pine-clad isthmus of Amanohashidate, or sunrise over the island-spangled bay of Matsushima). At such times, the *hon'i*, or 'essential character', of the place would be brought out by the particular set of conditions. In other words, the Japanese poet or artist had the idea that the heart and soul of a place could be glimpsed best at certain special times.

For *haijin* to visit the place then would be to see it at its most profound, its most mercurial.

Surf-fringed  
Small islands ...

Also seen

Through the mist .

*Shōha*

Now, can we perhaps think of some British or Irish examples? (...) Snow at Harlech? Sunset at the Cliffs of Moher? Rainbow and showers at Durdle Door? Or perhaps you know a spectacular glen somewhere in Scotland that is at its very best when the heather is in bloom? Or you might prefer the spring dusk at Lavenham; or moonrise from Glastonbury Tor?

Let us compare, then, some of the natural and cultural 'potential' of the British Isles with other Japanese viewing, listening and gathering prototypes about which we have already learned. (...) Well, there are certainly waterfalls and bays and flowering gardens, cuckoos and fireworks, rock pools, wild mushrooms and rain. There may not be many night-crickets, singing frogs or cicadas; and sometimes, even in the depths of the winter, not a great deal of snow around: but we have nightingales for the *uguisu*; glowworms for the fireflies; and superbly-sited stone circles, cathedrals and castles for their various famous temples and shrines. Our spring herbs, our new green leaves and our shellfish may not exactly correspond with theirs: but we have them, nonetheless. We have beech for their maple, rose for their lotus; and apple and pear for their apricot. There may, it is true, be no troops of wild monkeys, but some do know where to look to view otters or squirrels or deer. In Britain and Ireland, one thinks of the cry of the curlew, of daffodils, of bluebells and hay meadow flowers. We watch the wandering of the summer clouds; the smoke and the flame of stubble burning; or the splendid embers of the Guy Fawkes Night bonfire. There is beachcombing and there is fishing. There is the butterfly bush and the dragonfly pond. And surely there is potential too in the maximal night of the Perseid meteor shower<sup>9</sup>; in the breeze and the waves from a cliff-top edge; and in our wetlands of waders and ducks and swans? You will, no doubt, yourself think of many more.

In houses and gardens ,  
The sound of waves :  
Through the square of Pegasus ,  
Shooting stars .

*Tito*

During this past year, the British Haiku Society has held a handful of 'viewings', at which either thematic haiku were aired or actuality linked verse composed. Locations and conditions have varied from the Kyoto Garden in freezing fog<sup>10</sup> ... to Kew Gardens in the sun at wisteria time<sup>11</sup> ... to Toad Rock (in the High Weald of Kent) in the summer twilight ... to High Force (in Teesdale) on a day of autumn wind<sup>12</sup>. In each case, we were outside for both the introduction and composition phases, only moving to café or pub for the final airing/stitching-together phase of the meet. For the Japanese, a *renga* (*renku*) session usually meant sitting inside a dull room

and using one's imagination to dream up verses set in appropriate seasons and on appropriate themes. Conversely, here in Britain, we have begun to establish a tradition whereby we are using our imagination to dream up inspiring natural locations in which to meet and compose on-the-spot, from actuality. My hope is that, in so doing, our verse-records of these particular 'events' will be blessed with a poetic objectivity, the magic of the real moment: the haiku Here & Now.

1 *cectia diphone*      2 *cuculus poliocephalus*      3 particularly the *higurashi*      4 particularly the *kajika*  
5 *lespedeza bicolor*    6 *miscanthus sinensis*    7 chrysanthemum viewing even had special names: *kikumi* or *kangiku*  
8 and its Gold Pavilion      9 in August      10 see *Blithe Spirit* 2.2      11 see *Blithe Spirit* 2.4  
12 see the Durham Conference Report

(The first part of this article is to be found in *Blithe Spirit* 3.1)

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## Group 4 Bird-Viewing Renga Meet

tsuyu chiru ya / goshō daiji ni / naku suzume  
dew disperses - / to your morning office now / chirping sparrows! (*Issa*)

The first BHS 'viewing' of this year began at 8 a.m. (!) on a cold but bright winter's morning (February 21) at Ruth Robinson's house in Danbury, Essex. Occasional snowflakes wandered on the breeze. Almost a dozen poets took up seats in the cosy conservatory, which afforded us an intimate view of the small but beautifully landscaped garden with its crescent of lawn, its shrubs and trees, and its imposing backdrop of sun-bathed rockery. Ruth had been feeding the local population of wild birds all winter; thereby, in effect, 'guaranteeing' us a good selection. We were not disappointed. Stephen acted as *sōshō* (final arbiter taking ultimate responsibility for the work), inscribing each verse, once chosen, onto an enormous scroll of blank paper, partially unfurled across a solid stand so that all could see, at any one time, at least the last verse or two (with which, of course, the next stanza would have to link). Composition took place during the first part of the morning - initially, in the conservatory; later on, with a few poets at a time in the garden itself. After some welcome refreshments, compilation of the best of our verses into a renga sequence was initiated, with much lively discussion of both matters of individual expression and of relationship with other verses. We were not attempting to follow strict Japanese rules, as we were writing 'of-the-moment', about one and the same real scene we had come all this way to view. The *sōshō* did, however, take pains to ensure a slow unfoldment, a lively and varied development, and a swift yet dignified conclusion, thus replicating to a certain extent the classical renga 'movements' of *jo*, *ha* and *kyū*. Perhaps you can discern the exact points at which the changes of movement occur? Notice too - one of the marvels of renku! - how there is a place for both artful elegance and artless severity of phrasing.

SHG

## Renga: the Circus of Birds

Dream of the night lingering  
In a bank of cloud -  
The hour of the bird

*Tito*

Snowdrops, all still closed  
In the blackbird patch

*Kobu*

Silhouettes  
Against the dawn sky,  
Birds rising

*Susan*

A weeping birch watches over:  
No one walks the stone steps

*Martin*

Suddenly, a blue tit  
Bends a branch,  
Then flies ...

*Frank*

The sun sprinkles the oak -  
A feathering of wings

*Anita*



Ink drawing  
by  
Doris Husband

As cloud moves away,  
Terracotta brightens -  
The blackbird's beak

*Susan*

Sharp calls split the air  
From privacy of thorn and thicket

*Mavis*

Smooth pebbles  
Far from the sea,  
Washed by this cold wind

*Susan*

Birds face the low sun,  
Their breasts shining

*Ruth*

The food goes out -  
The first one down,  
Bob Sparrow

*Tito*

Air alive with birds:  
The lawn darkens

*Ruth*

A boiling of bodies -  
And finding out just who has  
That competitive edge!

*Ruto*

Starlings swoop on the bread  
Dropped by a fellow in flight

*Frank*

The pearly kings  
Have brought with them  
Chopsticks to walk on

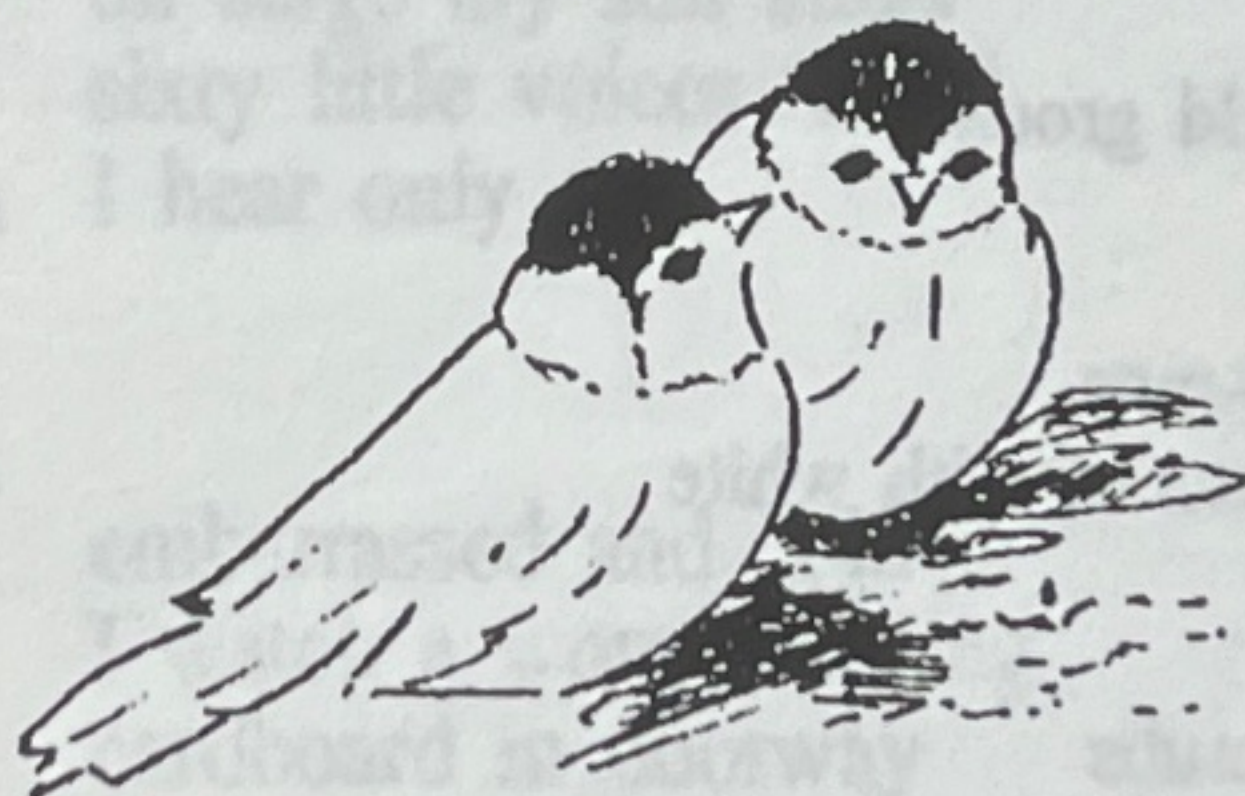
*Anobu*

Bare trees, and yet  
Silver-studded with buds

*Mavis*

In morning dress,  
Master of ceremonies -  
The celebrated wagtail

*Tito*



Ink drawing  
by  
Doris Husband

A greenfinch riding  
Bareback on the rose

*Kobu*

Bright yellow heads  
On green ruffs -  
Aconites in bloom

*Margaret*

On the fence,  
The sun

*Frank*

Spring in the blood -  
Loud on corner post,  
A bold display begins

*Mavis*



Two leaves  
Blowing down the path together

*Frank*

Gulls wait their chance  
Overhead,  
Angling on the wind

*Mavis*

At a stroke, the garden emptied -  
The neighbour's ladder

*Tito*

Landing on a twig,  
Dunnock creates tremors ...  
Settling to stillness

*Pat*

Bird bath  
Holds the clouds

*Frank*

A sleeveless red jacket -  
Severing branches  
In the cherry tree

*Kobu*

Nearest the house, no robin  
On his private bird table

*Tito*

Inevitably,  
The last to yield ground -  
A sparrow

*Kobu*

Under the bird-nuts,  
Every leaf spattered with white

*Susan*

All at once,  
Sun-touched shrubs  
Animated by the morning breeze

*Tito*

Shadows chasing  
Whispers of snow ...

*Anita*



Ink drawings  
by  
Doris Husband

## Senryu Pie

rear-view mirror  
losing her  
to a bend

the old man says  
it will outlast him  
painting the rust

*Colin Shaddick*

a fallen glove  
within its leather palm  
a glint of sky

*Kohjin Sakamoto*

on stage my son sings  
sixty little voices raised  
I hear only one

embarrassed and cold  
I watch a woman laying  
cardboard in doorway

*F J Dullaghan*

a dead TV  
the only colour  
in the garden

children feed ice-skating ducks:  
“look how far  
I’ve made that one go...”

*Fred Schofield*

In an empty park  
He practises a sweet smile  
For the bus stop girl

*Adrian Keefe*

Hanging on the wall,  
my well-worn tracksuit -  
only household stains

*Bamboo Shoot*

duty free  
on the Paris flight;  
below glass winks

*Jackie Hardy*

OUR TEAM WINS!  
not a single player  
knows my name

*Nika*

Lark singing  
sublimely : milkman  
whistles out of tune

*Bruce Leeming*

The artist's model  
hangs her clothes over the screen.  
He blows on his hands

one cotton sandal  
lies in the winter sale bin  
waiting for the sun

*Patricia Dawson*

Moist breath mists the church.  
As the coffin is passing  
our thoughts walk behind

*Muriel Jenkins*

Abandoned farmyard  
sinking in squalid decay;  
on the gate, "Fresh Eggs"

*Charles Brien*

Carved on the fireback -  
It says 'sixteen twenty nine'.  
Ashes warm from last night

*Cicely Hill*

short legs - tiny hand  
trailing a Marks and Spencer's  
carrier bag

*Ruth Robinson*

The periwinkle woman -  
More than half a day  
Of not filling the bucket  
Before her one-tooth smile is gone .

(Schull, Cork, 4/77)

*Tito*

on the wall  
of the fish 'n' chip shop  
Aubrey Beardsley prints!

(Durham City, 10/92)

*Richard Goring*

on the way  
to the funeral,  
Christmas tree lights

throwing out the old dress -  
taking it back for memories

*Susan Rowley*

'Which roses will give me scent?'  
asks the man  
with the powerful after-shave

*Petrouchka*

Dead cat with bared fangs --  
slow decay -- now snarling at  
the burning sun

*Makoto Tamaki*

After retirement  
the rustle of fallen leaves  
sounds louder

*Mokuo Nagayama*

pavement posters  
Faith Fellowship : Valentine's Dance  
so close together

*Norman Barraclough*

in the gutter  
goodbye  
on a torn card

Her withered face laughs.  
Birthday card drawn for Granny  
her real mirror

*Joan Woodcock*

new station master  
struts empty platforms  
practising his walk

*David Walker*

parents at matins  
graduating coins  
to children's ages

*David Cobb*

## Book Review

Eric Speight: *Dry Reeds Sing Small* (Hub Editions, [redacted]  
[redacted] £ 3.00 )

We welcome another of Colin Blundell's modest books of poems, which lie so easily in the hand or on the heart, and can be carried around under one's hat or in one's handbag. They fit the pocket in more senses than one, and it is amazing what production quality can be obtained for such a moderate price.

This one has a charming noodly art-nouveau design on the mandarine-lacquer cover, and the hundred or so miniature poems are two to a page, an arrangement that allows them to breathe and not to interfere with one another.

What are they? Not haiku, not senryu, not even a mixture of the two which I call *haisen*. They are more like brief anecdotes or caustic comments on the terrors and treasures of human existence:

It would be nice dear  
if you'd moderate your voice  
to a bloody shriek

I quite agree. Others put me in mind of those apparently innocuous cartoons of Glen Baxter with their professionally amateur drawing and often startling or rib-tickling captions: indeed, the art of the *haisen* is often close to the skill of the humourist one-liner:

My dear, do not pose  
before the Parthenon -- you  
are irrelevant

The humour is pleasantly tart, shrill and ego-puncturing. It puts certain types in their place, and that includes the author himself, who seems to have studied Zen repartee, koans and Taoist ejaculations to good effect:

All things are changing  
I too change but always I  
change into myself

That wider ripple of thought reminds me of something from Kamo no Chomei's *Notes from my Monk's Cabin*, "Everything streaming, streaming away ..." And Speight does have his gentler, more meditative moods, like this evocation of dawn that is almost medieval Chinese:

The sound of a flute  
at dawn, white mist on the lake  
and one bird singing

It echoes a painting on silk "attributed to Zhao Danian, Ming Dynasty" which can be found in the British Museum, where its "ink and slight colours" vibrate in the collective memory of all the millions who must have gazed upon its grace.

Such haikuesque fragments of illumination lead us naturally to a number of swiftly-brushed ink sketches of Chinese or Tibetan monastery life imbued with Zen realism:

Wretched mongrel dogs  
sleep here unmolested, a monk  
stealing scraps for them

And a touch of *satori* here and there, leaving a throbbing silence:

The great bronze bell speaks  
the still air resonating  
as silence listens

How often in the East one experiences that sensation which seems to penetrate the marrow of one's bones.

The book's cryptic title comes from this:

The dry reeds sing small  
in wind that reticulates  
the swan's reflection

That 'reticulates' in this context seems a little too nicely chosen and is out of tone with the rest of the image's simplicity, but it's a lingering picture that haunts the mind. Above the shrieks and imprecations, it is such tranquil glimpses, when Speight lowers his voice, that are most appealing in this very attractive collection. And one last quotation - this book is irresistibly quotable - could illustrate 'aware' persons' reactions, seeing it in a shop:

I know that feeling  
it's that book getting at me  
it knows I'll buy it

... "a still, small voice".

JK

\* \* \* \* \*

We have also received, and added to the BHS Lending Library, some other similar Hub Editions publications - James Kirkup: *First Fireworks* (£ 5.00), Colin Blundell: *The Desert Highway* (£ 3.00) and Fred Schofield: *Forgive Us Our Tins* (£3.50). The postage cost to borrow these (and *Dry Reeds ...*) is 34p each.

## Gorse Blossoms

child on the beach  
reels his kite in  
another wave ebbs

stooking grain  
dad's dry whistle carried  
by the summer wind

tidy farmyard  
wafting over the fence  
smell of manure

*Jean Jorgensen*

with fly-crammed beak  
the martin swooping down  
towards my gape

dog on a dog-day --  
biting a moth to death  
then his own tail

*David Cobb*

desert heat  
echoing red  
canyon walls

summer dawn ...  
waking from a dream  
morning doves

*Nika*



distant gunshots  
among sparrow songs  
the sounds of a woodpecker

*Brian Tasker*

In a tree beside  
the crematorium -  
thrushes nesting

Planing gannets  
harness the gale:  
airport closed

*Bruce Leeming*

wave-crash marvelous  
yet my wife searches for shells -  
the sound of the sea

*F J Dullaghan*

she walks the two horses  
up the long hill  
three heads bowed to the rain

*Abu*

Looking strangely naked  
shorn sheep stare at us  
when the bus goes by

*Will Morris*

a fresh snail  
leaves a wet track on  
a drying pavement

*Matt Morden*

scuffed sand above  
the seaweed line  
smooth sand below

*Richard Goring*

After the shower,  
Combing garden pebbles,  
His rake catches a snail

*Cicely Hill*

thunder crashes  
the flock of sparrows  
scatters

amber incense burns...  
the record stops. i'm listening  
to the rain gush down

*Martin Lucas*

Further down the cobble beach ,  
The face of another  
Sunset-watcher  
Loses its copper glow .

(Northam Burrows, Devon, 12/91)

The mountain lake today ,  
Quietly silver -  
Until the sky came down ...  
Bringing ravens .

(Yamanaka, Yamanashi, 10/74)

*Tito*

After the storm,  
a tide-mark  
across rocks

*Katherine Gallagher*

spotted  
on the laundry basket  
nine ladybirds

snail's signature -  
morning sun shining  
on the dotted line

startled in tall grass  
the pheasant's wings beat  
faster than my heart

*Jackie Hardy*

silent fisherman  
casts...  
a still shadow

on the hedge,  
frost-white  
- a spider's web

*Chris Mulhern*

floating hills  
above the town -  
morning mist

*Colin Shaddick*

greedier birds  
leave him  
busily gleaning

above the tree-line  
silence - only the whisper  
of the chair-lift wheel

*Ruth Robinson*

Still moonlit night  
loud with wild geese  
flying south

The moor's shallow pool's  
peat black water reflects clouds  
delicately flushed

*Eric Speight*

All in autumn dusk  
except the sun-lit summit  
of the highest hill

*Mokuo Nagayama*

dawn reveals  
the mountains,  
ridge by ridge

dead by the roadside  
the hare's eye holds the sky

*Stuart Quine*

A wet evening:  
sliding down the garden path  
slugs...

*Joan Daniels*

I stare at a death's-head  
in the counterpane - blink  
and it's flowers again

Old footwear in a heap:  
a girl's red shoe on its own  
ready to slip on

*Edward D Glover*

white-lined crests riding  
rank by rank into the bay  
vanish on its curve

*Norman Barraclough*

Walking against the wind,  
trees lean  
in the opposite direction

Buffeting night rain;  
through wild black glistening branches -  
the streetlamps

*Bamboo Shoot*

Ripples on the lake,  
reeds wind-stirred,  
ducks unruffled

*Charles Brien*

## Museum of Haiku Literature Award

The second 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 our Secretary David Cobb. From the previous issue, January 1993, Colin Blundell chose:

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

This senryu maintained the cricketing theme begun by our first prize-winner, Jackie Hardy. However, there are no cricket poems in this issue, for which the selector will be Dee Evetts.

David advises that, to avoid any suggestion of favouritism or corrupt practice, his prize will be donated to the charity **Hearing Concern**.

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### A Couple of Seasons Behind

Jackie Hardy

I have been interested in and enjoyed several article writer's views on writing haiku. There is much with which I agree. However, although I can recognise the haiku moment when I experience it, I hardly ever experience a simultaneous moment of composition. As Brian Tasker says in 'Haiku as a Homecoming' (*Blithe Spirit* 3.1), "Quite often, we are unable to frame the moment in the right way to create a worthwhile poem." How true. He goes on to suggest we let it go. In any way that can be described as active, I do let go. But passively these haiku moments accumulate in the *pot-au-feu* of my brain, are spiced and added to, then often several months later, are dished up as complete poems. All the richer for the stewing, I feel.

This morning I wrote a haiku about Guy Fawkes Night. I had peeled and diced, larded and marinated this particular poem on November 6 but it was just not ready. So I gave it up. It seems the ingredients have seethed and boiled in the creative casserole and finally on February 20 it has declared itself ready for tasting:

light from the bonfire  
reflected in a child's eyes  
miniature fireworks

Perhaps my creative process is unusually slow. Even on the occasions I am able to write directly after the haiku moment I am suspicious of the poem. Is it good enough? Will I be tempted to tamper with it? Is it something worth writing about? Perhaps I am too heavily weighed down with the Western culture to give way to that moment of enlightenment. T S Eliot said that we sometimes have the experience and miss the meaning. For me there is always the need to look for the meaning.

## Time for Tanka

it still undoes me  
the way your thin arms  
get goose-bumps  
when you grow passionate  
about ideas

at the arrivals gate  
something hapless  
in the eyes  
of those who hold aloft  
names of strangers

as I turn back  
towards the glare  
of village lamps  
first hint of a sky  
behind the sky

I dress myself  
in very discreet sulk  
until the pillow  
you hurl catches me  
behind the knees

*Dee Evetts*

behind my shadow  
watching it creep back to me  
I approach your porch -  
wonder if your light-filled eyes  
will chase me or my shadow

*F J Dullaghan*

Stooping, twisting,  
Sloshing in the icy yard,  
Schoolgirls scoop up hail,  
Into rolled paper packets  
Held out in the warming air

*Dick Pettit*

gull syncopation  
swelling, pulsing of the waves  
pebbles awash  
the beach a perfect venue  
for my winter concert

*Ruth Robinson*

I nō longer wait  
to meet you in the garden;  
green apples ripen.  
Still, in the core of my heart  
the scent of blossom lingers

*Denise Bennett*

going from her house  
the fog-enshrouded trees drip,  
drip upon my head;  
ice-chill of December dawn  
matching my own desolation

*Richard Goring*

### Dementia

In silk robe and socks  
She scrapes the soil with a spoon  
Around the spring weeds,  
And feeds the wild flowers with  
Toast from the breakfast table

*Kenneth W Brooks*



**A Book of Interest** - Christopher Neve: *Unquiet Landscape - Places and Ideas in Twentieth-Century English Painting* (Faber & Faber, 1990)

If, like me, you quite often find illumination about haiku in books which are about other forms of artistic expression, this is one to recommend. The very opening paragraph will surely grab you:

“Landscape painting has always been about what it is like to be in the world and in a particular condition. What is really important? Not the large events, or the plot that develops, but the day to day. Far better to think of life as a series of states of mind experienced in changing circumstances and in differing places than as something that always has to have direction. Landscape painting catches at those unexpected ideas and emotions that come, and so easily go, on days of no particular importance. It shows life not as a development but as a condition. How often have you sworn to yourself that this is the most beautiful day you have ever seen, on no particular day, on a day like this, and yet entirely unlike, any other? This, in the end, is worth living for.”

I like, too, the comparison between landscape painting and going to the theatre. It may be fascinating to admire the scenery, but our main attention should be directed to the play; the action that takes place within and in front of the backdrops.

If, like me, you haven't encountered the work of Eric Ravilious before, you will be charmed by watercolours which can be received as visual haiku. (Shown here is one which I fantasise was created specially for Colin Blundell!)

In Ravilious's work, Neve finds that quality of 'light-heartedness' which is sought after by the haiku poet.

With modest space available to whet your appetite further, how can I do better than mention some of the chapter headings? 'Seeing becomes Feeling', 'The Idea of the Garden', 'The Need for Roots', 'The Problem of Time', 'The Sea'.  
DC

(Those who wonder how Ravilious created the 'White Horse' watercolour, may like to know that he bought a return ticket between the stations either side, and proceeded to travel backwards and forwards on every available train, sketching frantically every time he passed the view as framed in the carriage window!)



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Journal - hand made in a garden shed in Bunyan Land