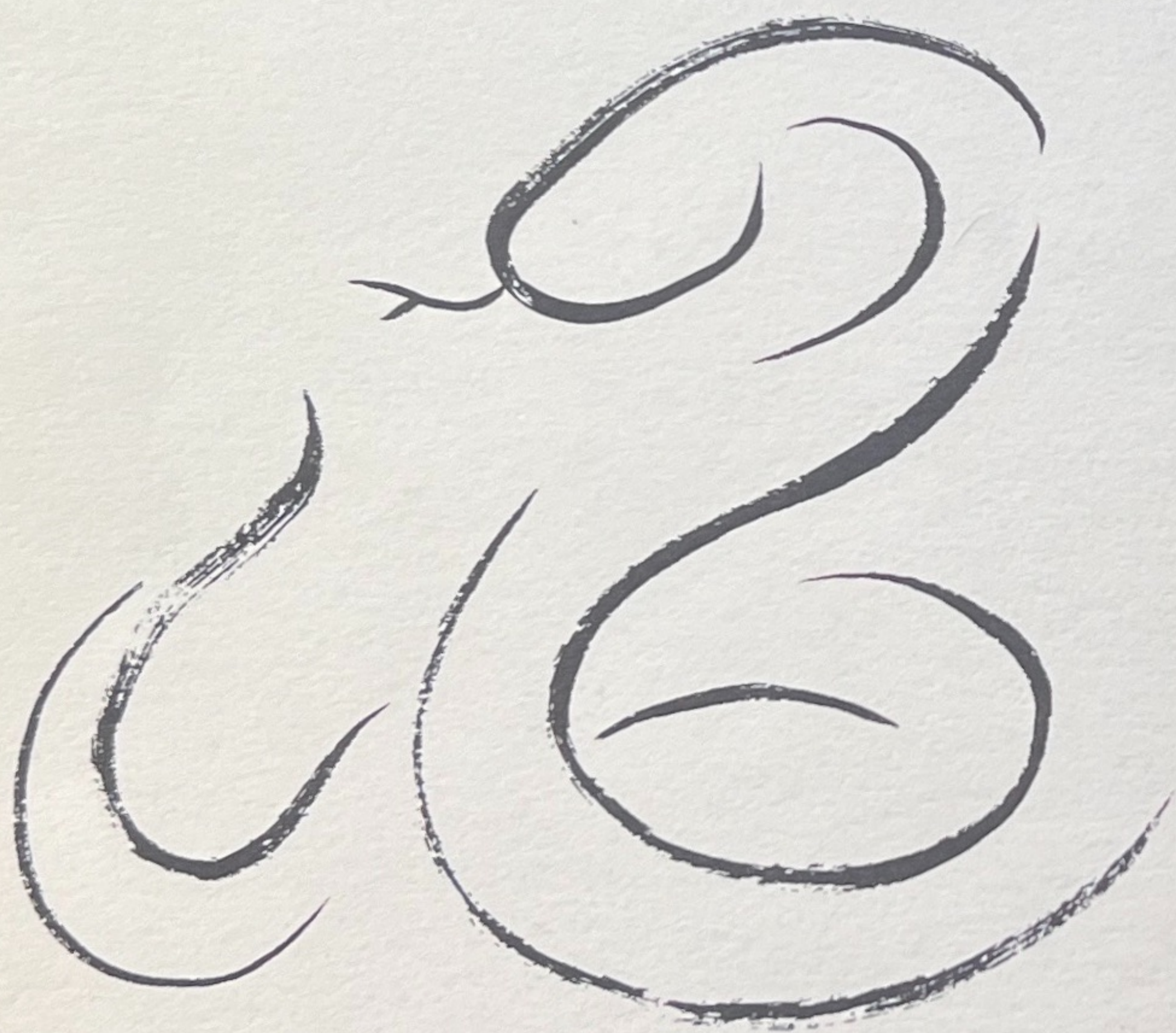


Journal of
The British Haiku
Society



Blithe Spirit

Volume 7 Number 1

February 1997

Blithe Spirit Volume 7 Number 1

February 1997

Contents

Editorial		3
Birds		4
The Raindrop Question	Annie Bachini	9
Favourite Haiku		10
Senryu		11
Museum of Haiku Literature Award		11
Haiku		12
Tanka		19
Autumn		20
The BHS James W Hackett Haiku Award 1996		23
The Pathway		24
Moon and Stars		25
Reviews		30
Favourite Haiku		32

Blithe Spirit

Journal of the British Haiku Society

Editor: Jackie Hardy

Submissions for all but **The Pathway** section to:-

Jackie Hardy,
[REDACTED]

Submissions for **The Pathway** section only to:-

David Cobb,
[REDACTED]

Annual membership of the British Haiku Society (standard subscription in the UK £12.50, £9 concessionary; £15/US\$24 overseas surface mail or £18/US\$30 airmail) includes four issues of **Blithe Spirit**. Subscriptions to magazine only - £10 a year UK, £12 overseas. Enquiries about subscriptions or membership to: The Membership Secretary, [REDACTED]

The Editor welcomes 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. Please provide publication details of any item submitted which has already appeared in print. Copyright reverts to the author upon publication in **Blithe Spirit**. Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope or IRC with each submission.

Blithe Spirit welcomes, and exists as a forum for, diverse statements about the writing and appreciation of haiku and kindred forms of verse. The Editor takes entire responsibility for the selection of items for publication.

Blithe Spirit is published four times a year, cover-dated February, May, August, November.

Officers: David Cobb (President), Susan Rowley (General Secretary & Chair), Martin Lucas (Treasurer & Events), Caroline Gourlay (Membership Secretary), Jackie Hardy (Editor, **Blithe Spirit**), Annie Bachini (Editor, **The Brief**), Richard Goring (Librarian & Hackett Award), Honour Stedman (Archivist).

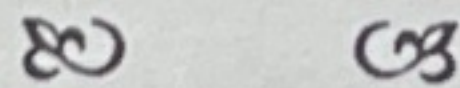
Editorial

I hope you will be as pleased with this issue as I am. I need to thank Maggie West, Penny Price, David Walker, Mel McClellan and Allan Hardy for their contributions and hard work towards making this presentation issue possible. The illustration on the cover is the work of Noriko Kajihara. To Nori also, thanks.

Speaking of the cover, you will have noticed the wording. The Journal of the British Haiku Society and *Blithe Spirit* have had a change of emphasis. This is designed to give the uninitiated a clearer idea of what the journal contains. The debate about the title *Blithe Spirit* continues in the next edition of the Society's Newsletter *The Brief*.

The theme for the next issue is the journey. Any length, from a stroll in the garden to the trans-global, will be considered. Any method of transport from Shank's pony to Concorde will be acceptable. Who knows, it may even inspire some haibun in the best Bashō tradition. The season is winter. All submissions, please, by 28 April.

Jackie Hardy



There was a typographical error in Klaus-Dieter Wirth's beetle haiku in *Blithe Spirit* 6/3 (August 1996), page 4. The correct rendition is

A ladybird
as beauty spot
on the Venus

Birds

slow river
the duckling rushes to reach
its mother's tail

Fred Schofield

watching a fisherman's float
bobbing up and down
grey wagtails

John Shimmin

Crossing the Slaney
a wild duck leads her fledglings
towards the distant shore

Dermot O'Brien

stealthy canoeist
withholding her stroke
family of coots

Matthew Paul

skimming the glare
a cormorant claps
its shadow wingtips

George Marsh



Lying on the roof
the wind in its feathers.
a dead sparrow

Patricia V Dawson

sun breaking through...
the last of winter's redwings
stabs at a worm

Martin Lucas

Perched on my roof
the twittering swallows
take a last look round

W M Tidmarsh

christmas morning heat
two fledgling mudpie larks
pecking cobwebs

Alan J Summers

the fleeing pheasant
seizing the red
from the setting sun

Tsunehiko Hoshino

cloudless skies
darken with swifts
heading home

Janice Fixter

an emu trundles up...
and looks me
straight in the eye!

Frank Williams

zebra finches
backwards and forwards
backwards and forwards
at the pet shop

Allan Jarret

low tide in winter
dunling feeding and running
running and feeding

Jack Hill

In the concrete forecourt
the sparrow, bathing,
fills the world with noise

Claire Bugler Hewitt

Daylight fading
a curlew's cry
lengthens the hill...

Caroline Gourlay

Wind off the sea
- on the rocks seagulls
about turn

Sunday trippers gone
- only an oystercatcher
skimming the bay

Deidre Roberts



autumn river bank / watching for the dipper / to surface *Fred Schofield*

dreary morning
through endless rain
the first bird's song

Sharon Lee Shafu

endtoend
endtoend
along the terraced roof
along the terraced roof
starlings chatter
starlings chatter

Anita Packwood

grey september...
as we
the ferry arrives

Frank Williams

The Raindrop Question

Annie Bachini

Most people who wrote to me, defined
r
a
i
n
d
r
o
p as a concrete poem.

Some came up with extremely interesting alternative visual representations; and ideas for performance ranged from climbing down a ladder to bungy-jumping!

Writing 'raindrop' vertically was cited by several people as disqualifying it from being a haiku. Some ruled it out because it is a concrete poem; the difficulty of performing it was given by one; the fact that the visual representation creates no tension with the 'concept' by another; and it was also seen as the jewelled finger pointing at the moon.

Using different approaches, a couple of people looked at the question from a Buddhist perspective. One put forward the view that raindrops themselves 'are unquestionably haiku'. This conclusion is based on the premise that anything our senses can experience are haiku. This person adheres to the Buddhist dictum that all experience is unified and distinctions invidious, and that the subject of a haiku and the poem itself are one. They see this as the point of contact between haiku and Buddhism.

A Zen perspective, put forward by someone else, said that Zen ideals can only be realised if the dichotomy of mind and body is activated. This person also felt that an imitative reproduction of the conceptual mode of perception excludes the possibility of two semantically disparate elements being juxtaposed, which they see as essential to the dynamic between author and reader.

There were diametrically opposed views on the attitude 'behind' the writing of 'raindrop'. Whilst one person thought it was lacking in any display of ego on the part of the writer, another found it contrived and artificial.

I was sent examples of all kinds of visual representation of poems, including one-word poems, which have been published over the past couple of years in

Modern Haiku. So, the idea of a concrete, one-word poem, if not this particular poem, is acceptable to some.

Views conflicted on whether one-word, written anyway could be designated a haiku. One person thought that if the word/concept were interesting enough it could create reverberations in the reader's mind, and also say something about the writer's mood. Another writer stated categorically that one word could not be a haiku because there is no possibility of movement.

Overall people did not find that 'raindrop' is a haiku, although some saw 'haiku-like' qualities in it. Even the person most sympathetic towards the idea of one-word poems did not see them as the best examples of the genre.

My own view is that one-word cannot be a haiku. I am not a Buddhist, so I don't equate haiku with Buddhism. What attracted me to haiku when I first saw it was its potential to bring out contradictions. I now appreciate it for that and more.

I think many short poems are interesting and valid in their own right, but I believe that haiku do have distinctive characteristics which, on the whole, *On The Nature of English Haiku* reflects. It is important to have definitions of haiku because I am a member of The British Haiku Society not the British Short Poetry, or Minimalist or Concrete Poetry Society. There seems little point to me in having the term 'haiku' if it does not have characteristics which distinguish it from other forms of short poem.

The following all contributed to this article. I have incorporated some of everyone's views and hope that no-one feels misrepresented. Paul Amphlett, David Cobb, Geoff Daniel, John Hadler, Douglas M Hendy, Cicely Hill, Arthur Jackson, James Kirkup, Martin Lucas, Honour Stedman, Alan J Summers, Rudolf Thiem, Basil Ward, Celia Warren, Klaus-Dieter Wirth.

Favourite Haiku

bleak day -
correcting the spelling
on the beggar's sign

Jade

There is a feeling of oneness, of not judging the beggar, not even being aware of not judging. The poet has simply helped someone out, as if a friend or a colleague, on a one to one basis of equality, an unaffected act of humility. We can all be beggars too, in our approach to life. After all, it will not be for ever. This haiku is very simple, yet very full, of that spark of life.

Alan J Summers

Senryu

in pale Christmas sunshine
waving across
our disputed boundary

Ken Jones

Japanesely
she takes Big Ben's photo
with a deep bow

David Cobb

customers rummage
at the car boot sale -
the eyes of dolls

Annie Bachini

the judge
thinking himself alone
throws sticks for conkers

Claire Bugler Hewitt

Museum of Haiku Literature Award

Bill Wyatt writes: In the end , I plumped for Maggie West's -

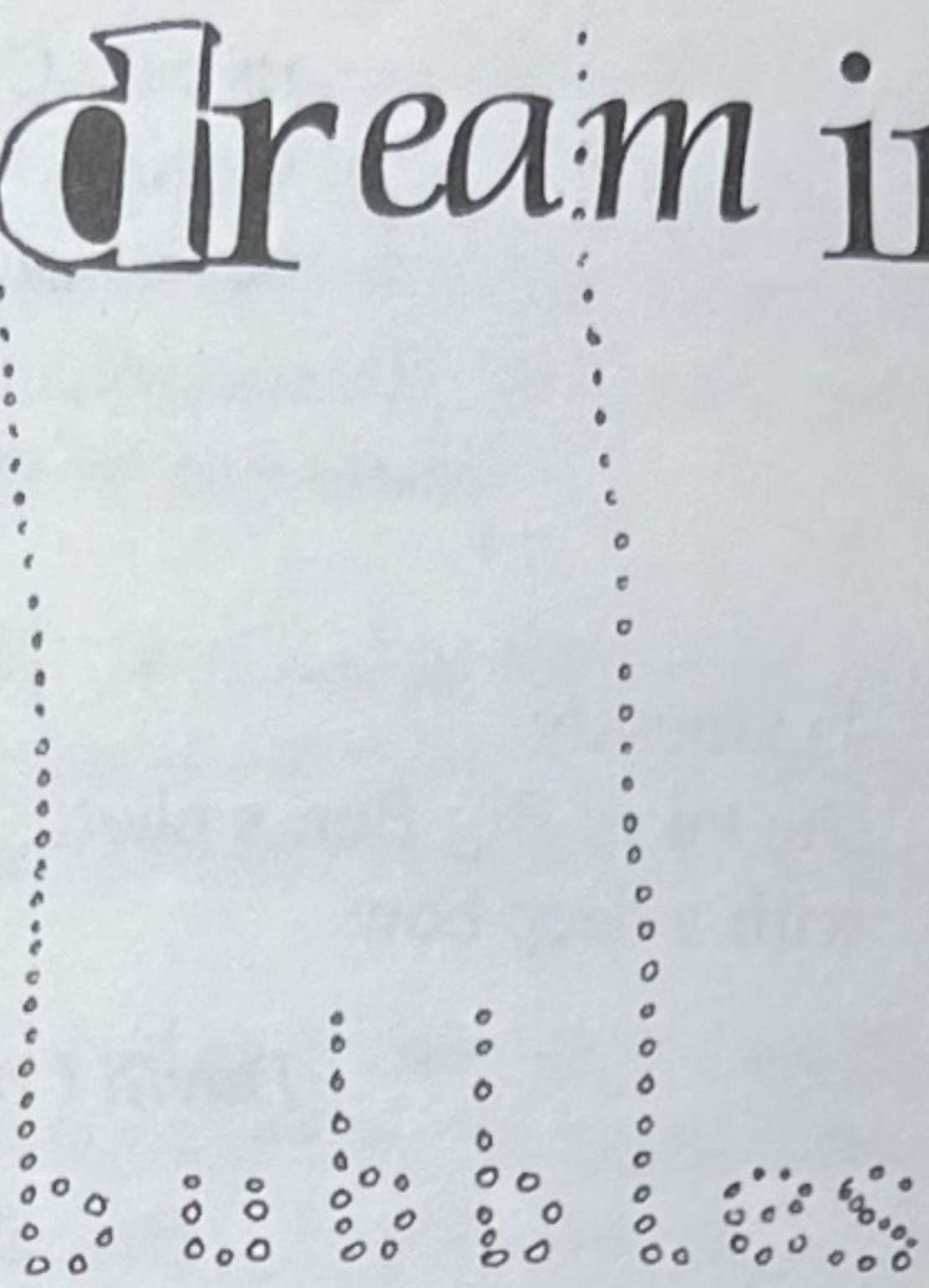
Herb Robert
growing by the tracks
rust on the rails

I bet this is the "flower in the crannied wall" of Tennyson. Maggie has used her eyes, capturing in summer that little wild geranium, named after Abbot Robert, a French Cistercian monk. Its local names conjure up images - Dog's Toe, Dragon's Blood, Jenny Wren, Poor Robin and Red Robin being just a few. It has small purplish-pink flowers with a hairy red stem. Often in dry conditions the leaves take on a deep rusty colour. The organic Herb Robert and the non-organic rusty rails come together, their colours blending in the sun, creating that haiku moment.

Richard Goring is to select from this issue.

dA~ dreaming:

lem  made



leap

from the glass

Jackie Hardy

new primrose
in the window box . . .
already a bee

another country
and yet, in the woods
the same wild flowers

Sharon Lee Shafii

five crows
in a blue sky -
sunshine

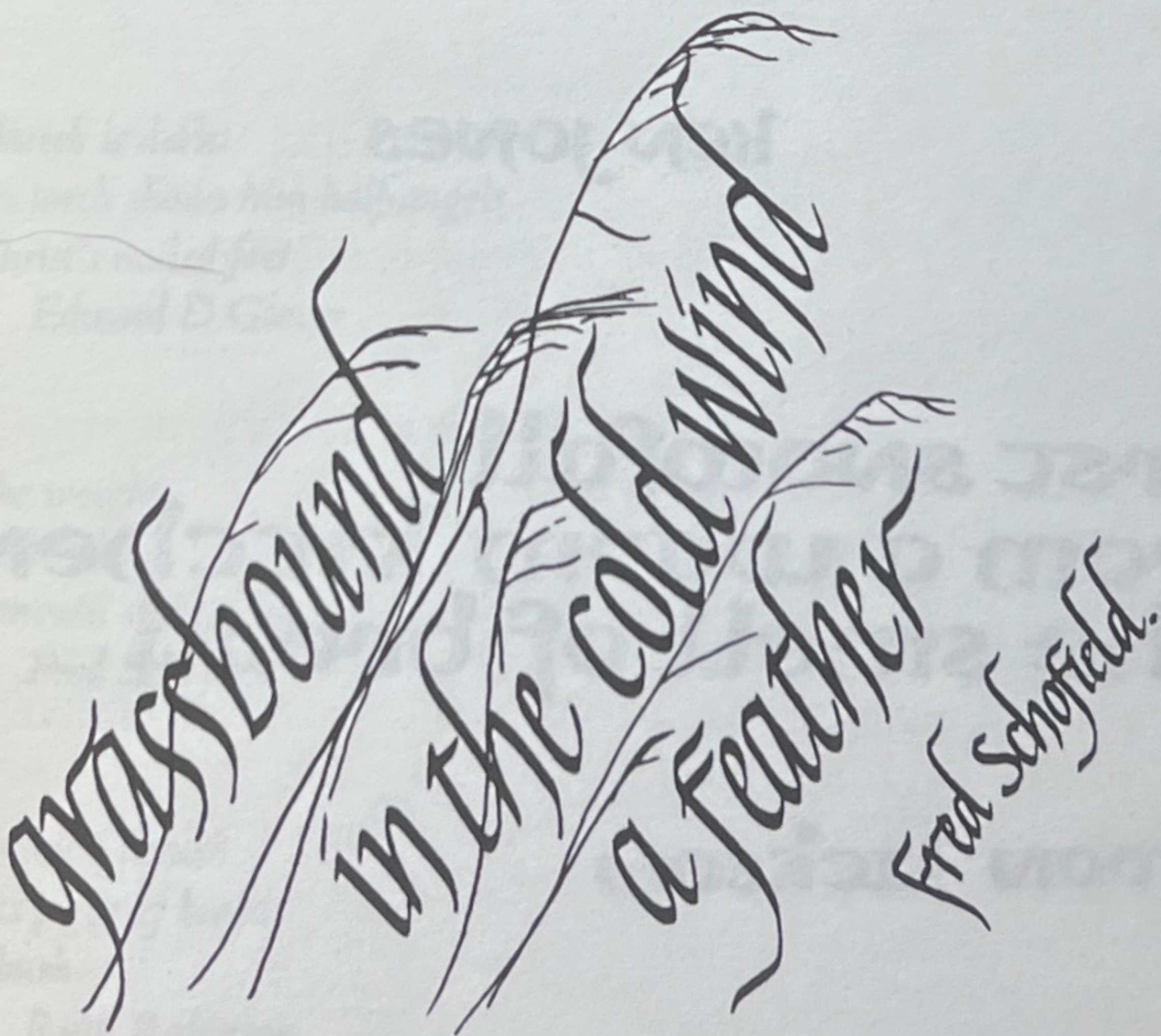
Jeanne Lupton

Across the bare fields
the hills shrouded in a mist
silent before Christmas

Dermot O'Brien

late apple blossom -
in the soil dead leaves
loose their scent

Andrew Hawthorne



Grassblownd
In the cold wind
a feather
Fred Schofield.

BY THE HEARTH
LOGS
TO ASHES

MICHAEL RUBENSTEIN

TEA AND CAKE ~
MY CHANCE
ON A WARMED SAUCEP

KEN JONES

FIRST SNOWFALL
FROM A WARM KITCHEN
THE SMELL OF BREAD

BYRON JACKSON

s
c
r
o
l
l
i
n
g

d
o
w
n

the side of the screen

a tiny spider

Martin Lucas

*The church is dark:
his dim torch shows him half-angels
and Christ's nailed feet*

Edward D Glover

*after the weight
of a hiker's boot
the tormentil springs back*

Fred Schofield

*the surviving thrush
takes its piece of bread
into a bush*

Ruth Robinson

*bull stooping
to chew thick grass
his testicles swing*

Fred Schofield

*outside toilet -
the only comfort this brisk day,
a lighted candle
Frank Williams*

*Summer solstice
- wondering if it will rain
on the longest day
Katherine Gallagher*

*steaming cows
back from the parlour
strands of saliva
Matt Morden*

Wandering light-headed
through the rain
nibbling Fairy Nipples

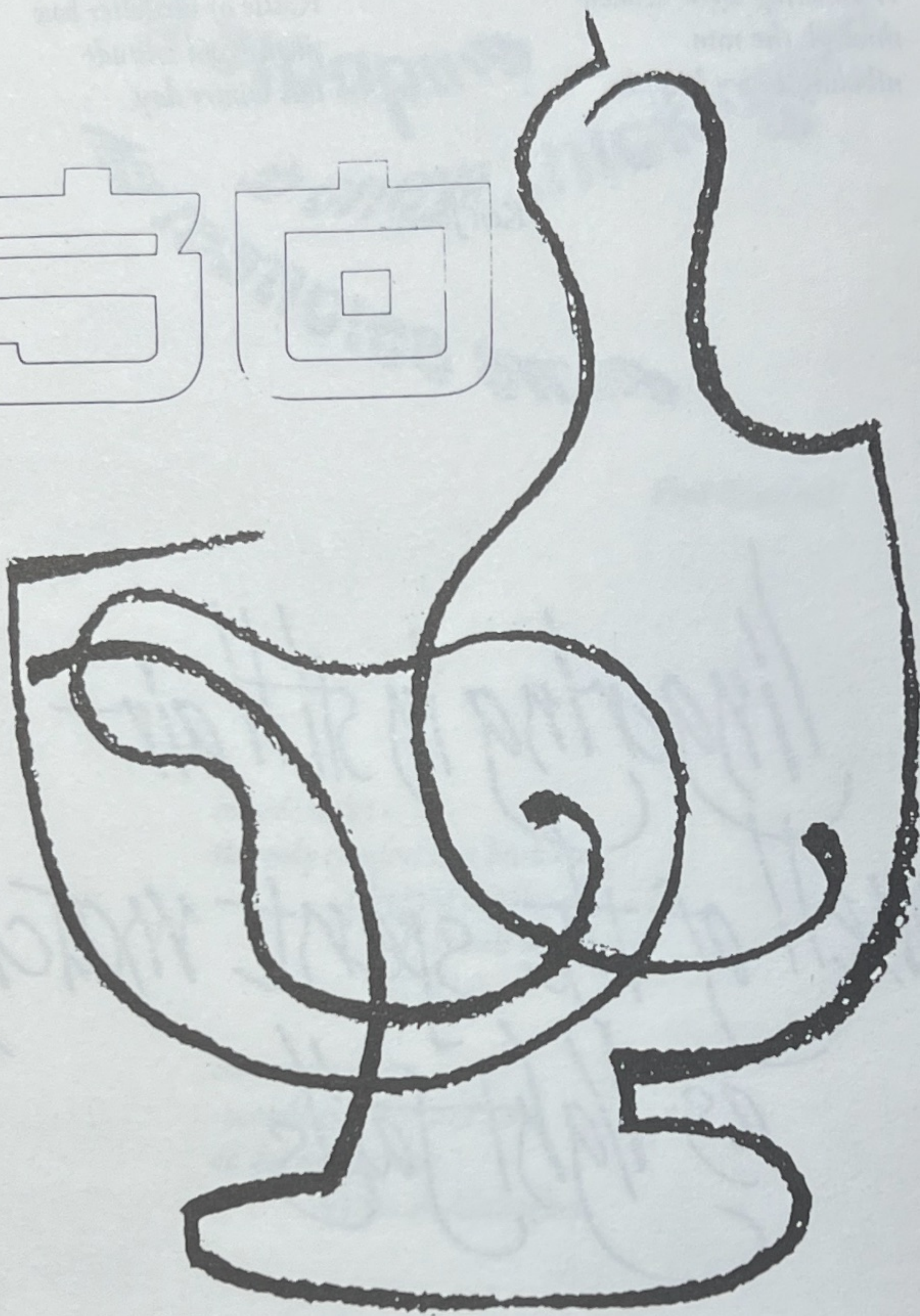
Rattle of the letter box
silence and solitude
this winter day

Ken Jones

lingering in still air
smell of the spent match
as light fails

Maggio West 97

thirtieth birthday



thirtieth birthday / yellowing pears / in a porcelain bowl *Matthew Paul*

Tanka

often we sang
the old songs,
mother,
and later when memory lapsed,
you beat your frail hand to remembered tunes

soon my seventieth year
and I'm not nostalgic:
grabbing me
not the larks I missed,
not the notes in my life

Sanford Goldstein

Fifty years on: by rows
of plain headstones a bugle
sings lamentation.
Here and there, erect or bowed
or kneeling, old men read and weep

Edward D Glover

how still
the fallen leaves
this late bright haze
deepening the mist
in your eyes

from the Job Centre
into the mist
of a fume-filled afternoon
aimless crowds mingling
with a smell of malt

David Walker

Martin Lucas

the tiny park
where lunchtime lovers met
in the town centre
now a new cinema
offers celluloid love

Richard Goring

Autumn

AUTUMN CHILL

footsteps quicken
on the endless trail

Jeanne Lupton

The autumn wind
Reminds me of something
distant scarecrow

Bill Wyatt

Remembrance Sunday

LIMP FLAGS
UNDER THE CLOUDLESS SKY

Martin Lucas

CLUMSY, the first chip
in a vase from the seaside
autumn equinox

David Cobb

*first day with a scarf
a dog in a stiff field
craps in a furrow*
David Cobb

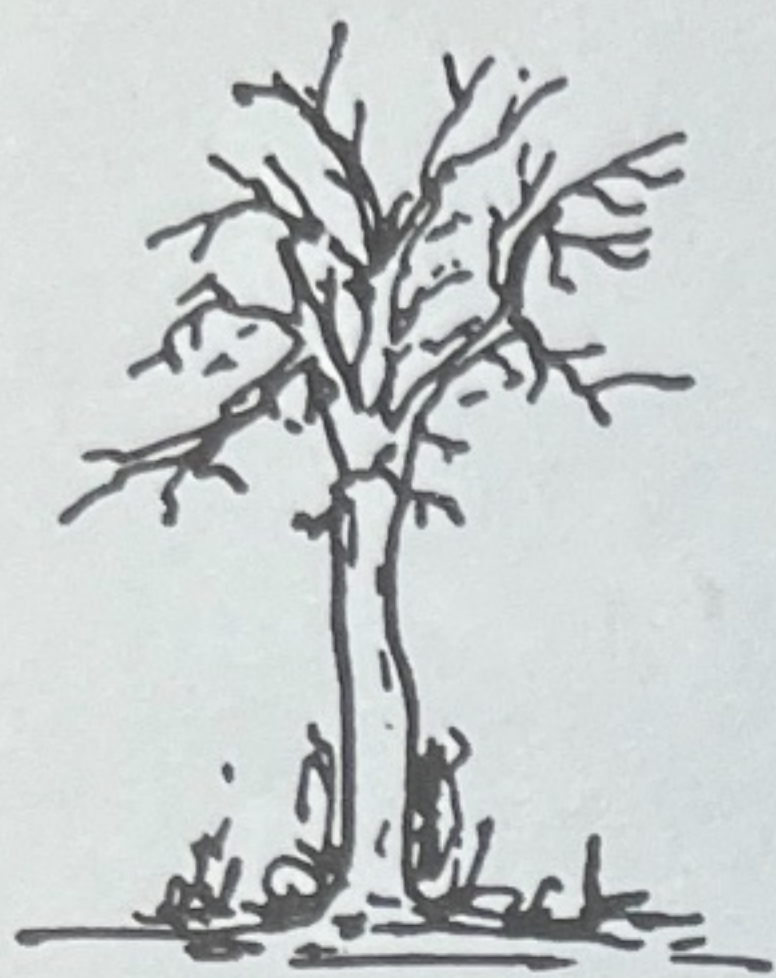
*For some minutes
Under the autumn sky
The train goes quiet:
Everyone is content.*
Tito (Osaka 20.10.95)

*October morning
- a lone sycamore blazes
over the slate roofs*
Katherine Gallagher

*sliding on and off
the river's edge
autumn leaves*
Annie Bachini

*Scent of autumn poppy -
the coitus supper
of the praying mantis*
Francis Attard

*The autumn wind
reminds me of something -
distant scarecrow*
Bill Wyatt



autumn afternoon
a few rain-pocked leaves
cling to the pear tree

Katherine Gallagher

deep fallen leaves
through the lych gate
the woodman's bier

waiting
her footsteps . . .
a leaf falls

David Walker

Sawmill roars
Smoke stretching
Into the autumn sky
Humberto Gatica

The BHS James W Hackett Award 1996

In making his selection for the sixth annual Haiku Award that bears his name, James W Hackett offers "Many thanks to those of you around the world whose interest is making this an international award. Since haiku are now being written in over 30 languages, the once improbable dream of a world haiku is coming true. Congratulations for sharing the Way of Haiku. May its transcendent spirit unite us all."

Commenting upon the entries themselves, Mr Hackett observes, "Once again this year the award produced gratifying results. And from the list sent to me [a shortlist of over 90 poems, all anonymous as to author, selected by a BHS sub-committee], the following haiku are singled out for their lifefulness and sensitivity."

The three Award prizewinners of £70 each are, in order:

my ailing father,
listening to the crickets;
last day of August *F M Black, USA*

fluttering madly--
butterfly in the slipstream
of a passing freight *Lee Gurga, USA*

in the lush garden
a wasp and I
negotiate over a drink *Elizabeth Warren, Canada*

The following poems, unranked, are nominated as Highly Commended:

In the shed
amongst the cobwebs
the old dog's bowl

Haf Davies, England

early morning frost
mingling with the grey mist
breath from the cattle

John Shimmin, Wales

Out of the forest
the blue edge of the asphalt
- a mopoke calling

Katherine Gallagher, England

Un-cut meadow
every step stirring
butterfly clouds

Brian Cater, England

on the other side
of the pane, a frozen moth;
my palm, on this side

Kohjin Sakamoto, Japan

The 1996 James W Hackett Award attracted the highest numbers of entrants and entries to date, with 188 poets submitting 866 poems. As always, the largest number (123 poets, 560 poems) were from Britain, followed by North America (32 and 145, including 6 and 28 from Canada). We were also pleased to see a return to former numbers from Eire and Australia/New Zealand. Many European countries were represented, several for the first time, and there were also first-time entries from Malta and Israel. However, it was disappointing to see only one Japanese entrant, albeit that he did well.

The Award is open again for 1997, with prizes, fees, entry conditions and closing date unchanged. We look forward to receiving your entries.

The Pathway

This Section welcomes haiku and senryu from anyone - member of BHS or not. Each poem should be in two different language versions - the ORIGINAL (any language) and the TRANSLATION (English, French or German). **The Pathway** aims to link those writing in widely spoken and less-widely-spoken languages.

James W Hackett (English) and Patrick Blanche (French)
(from Le Cri du Faucon, pub. Voix d'Encre, 1996)

Searching on the wind
the hawk's cry ...
in the shape of its beak.

With every gust of sun,
a halo of golden down
surrounds the hawk.

Deep within the stream
the huge fish lie motionless,
facing the current.

A single cricket
is warming the quiet
of this lonely night.

Sondant le vent,
le cri de faucon - n'a-t-il pas
le forme de son bec ...

À chaque percée de soleil,
un halo de duvet d'or
nimbe le faucon.

Au fond du ruisseau
sans bouger, les gros poissons
font face au courant.

Un simple criquet
réchauffe la quiétude
d'une nuit solitaire.

Moon and Stars

*a long winter's darkness, then
pink stars come out:
branch of the cherry tree*

Keith Coleman

*mist over the fields tonight
muted stars,
& fragrant manure*

*equinox:
above closed celandines
the stars come out*

David Cobb

*under a lemon balm
starhit snails
eventually touch*

Matthew Paul

*the crunch
of the dark gravel . . .
winter starlight*

Claire Bugler Hewitt

travellers' camp
above the holly for sale

the wandering moon

David Cobb

*every drop of water
on the window pane
reflecting the moon's glow
Maggie West*

*Distant bell
Reflecting in the river
Autumn moonscape
Humberto Gatica*

TILTED MOON
TILTED MOON
TILTED MOON
ALONE IN A STARLESS SKY
ALONE IN A STARLESS SKY
ALONE IN A STARLESS SKY

a party next door

Linda Marshall

such moonlight . . .
the whole field
dandelion clocks

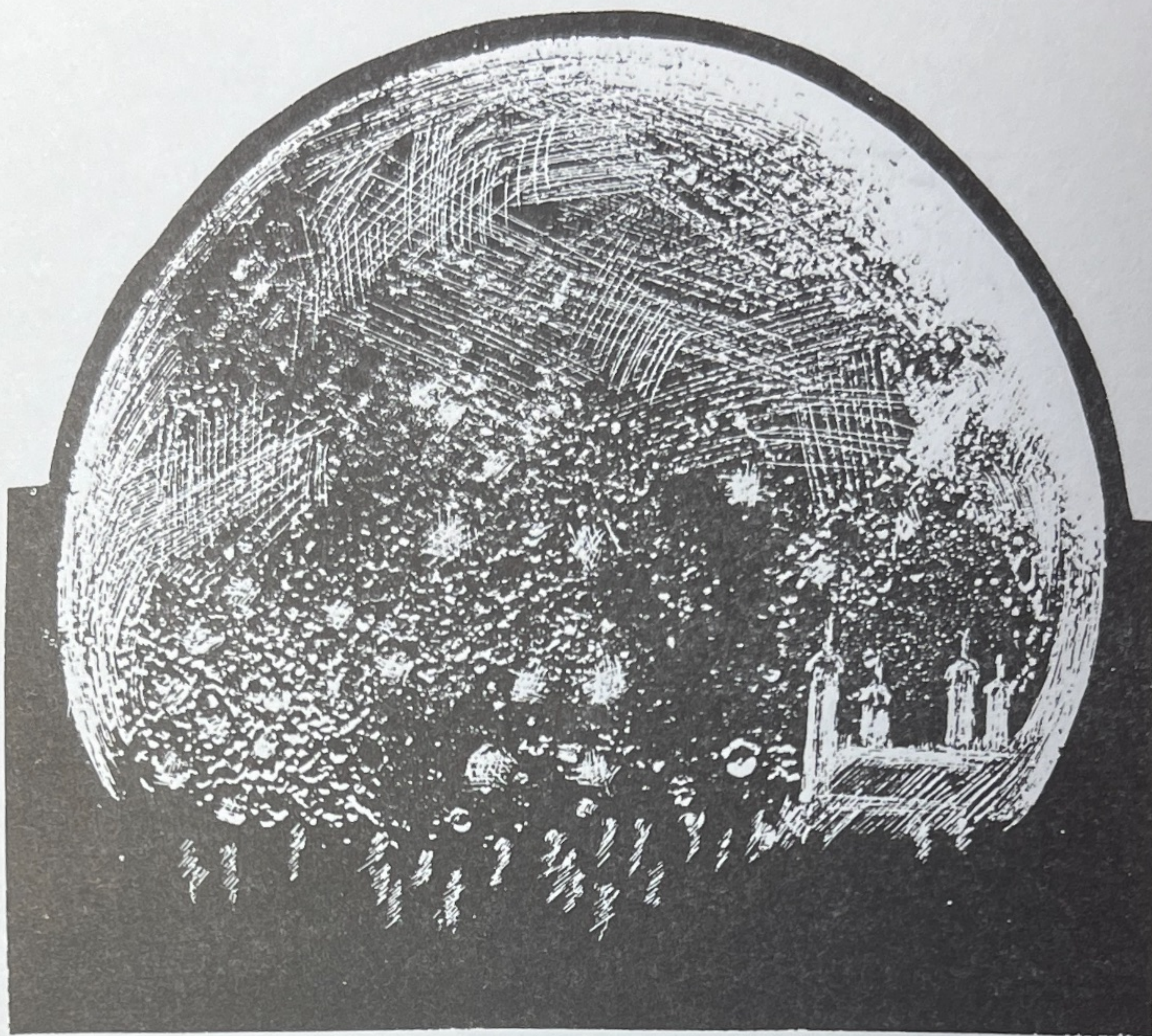
Claire Bugler Hewitt

Sickle moon
a statistician
in slumber

Francis Attard

A THIN WISP OF CLOUD
TRAILS ACROSS THE FACE
OF THE FULL JULY MOON

Frank Williams



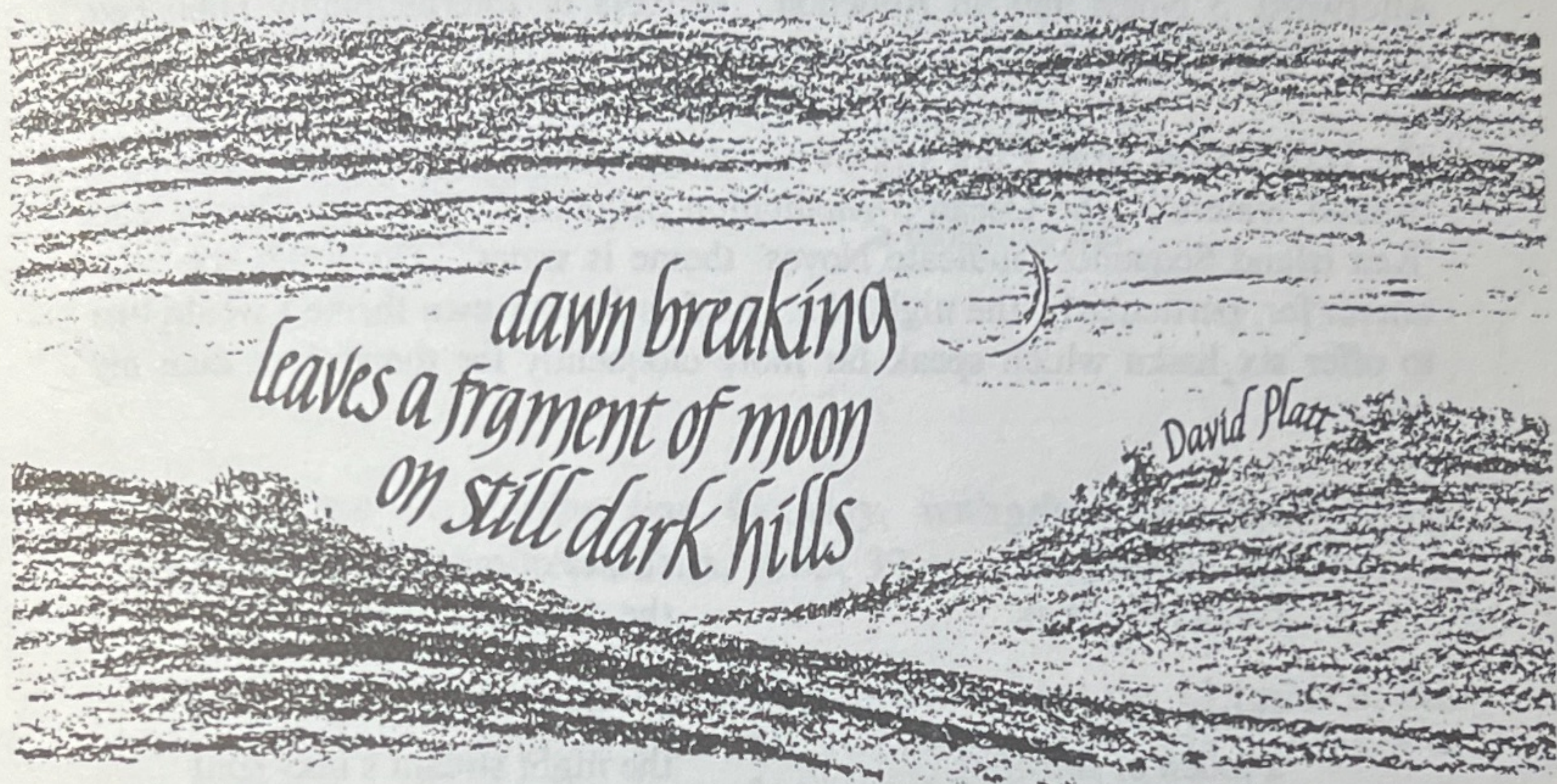
the Bon moon / shining over the tower / of London *Yasuhiko Shigemoto*

Moonlit
- a line of washing -
palely sinister
Charles Brien

afterwards
from the bedroom window
cool moonlight
John Shimmin

August sun -
the daylight moon
wedged in the blue

Katherine Gallagher



dawn breaking
leaves a fragment of moon
on still dark hills

David Platt

Full moon -
how rapid the flow
of clouds!

Yasuhiko Shigemoto

Reviews

Between Two Waves / Între două valuri, H F Noyes, trans. Mihaela and Ion Codrescu, Leda Publishing House, Constanta, Romania, 1996. ISBN 973 97176 9 1. \$10.00 plus \$4.00 postage

This 96-page paperback is number 1 in Leda's Haiku Series. Five long haiku sequences are complemented by a Foreword from Elizabeth St Jacques, an Introduction from Ebba Storey, 15 sumi-e drawings from Ion Codrescu, an Afterword, 5 Notes and an Addenda. Readers of internationally published haiku will recognise Noyes as a fine haiku poet.

The book's title, from Eliot's *Little Gidding*, and the titles of the sequences, 'Inland Waters', 'The Ocean', 'Meditation Sequence', 'Summer Shores' and 'Kea Island Sequence' indicate Noyes' theme is water. The water acts as a mirror for, particularly, the night sky. As this fits our own theme I would like to offer six haiku which speak far more eloquently for themselves than my prose.

full moon rising
the far-flung nets
catch only stars

on wet sand
slither of moonlight probes
the dead seal's cub

skinny dip -
a touch of starlight
all she wears

wild phlox in bloom -
the night stream's inky spill
over moonlit fields

a mist of stars -
mountain water flickering
through dark corn

on wet sand
the spill of the moon
sponged up by each wave

JAH

Surâsul călugărului / The Monk's Smile, Vasile Spinei, trans. Mihaela Codrescu, Leda Publishing House, Constanta, Romania, 1996. ISBN 973 97711 3 0

This is the fourth in Leda's Haiku Series. There are 116 pages of haiku, one or two to a page with translations directly underneath, which are spaced by a dozen drawings by Ion Codrescu.

Vasile Spinei's name was unknown to me, but the subjects of his haiku indicate that he has travelled widely and he may have a reputation outside his own country. He certainly deserves it. There is a vitality and honesty about the haiku that I admire very much. Here are some examples.

after the first frost
an explosion of colours
in the beech grove

on the old photo
the soft touch
of the April rain

bewildered
I look for my shadow...
noon at the equator

hoar frost;
the sparrows fly
from one bench to another

the plume of smoke
lured by the moon --
the owl's cry

in the barrel
full of rain water
a morning star

JAH

Crossing the Field, Caroline Gourlay, with drawings by Anthony Manwaring, Redlake Press, Clun, 1995, 32 pp, 25 x 19 cm. £21.00

I think Caroline would wish me to start by saying that the 15 haiku in this book predate her association with BHS and were composed in innocence of 'our consensus'. I happen to know that now (having lost this sublime state!) she feels her 'finger pointing at the moon' was sometimes too bejewelled in her first flush of fascination with the haiku form. For my part, I would be sad to see any inhibition of the spontaneous lyricism that led her to write

Spring won't bring you back.
I watch a flight of geese
both feet on the ground.

Barn door swinging shut,
the darkness left inside
until next summer.

Or even more extravagant flourishes, such as

Without a full stop
you run. Childhood, a country
without paragraphs ...

Haiku this last may not be, but whatever it is, it's a very good thing to have.

This is probably one of the most, if not the most, elegant haiku books yet to come out in Britain (mouldmade paper, treadle platen press, hardback binding quartered in cloth, sensitive drawings). A collector's piece, definitely; but also an opportunity to catch someone we now know to be one of the emerging leaders of the 'haiku movement' before the movement caught her.

DJC

Favourite Haiku

The pond's dark waters -
only stepping stones covered
with the first snowfall

James Kirkup

A haiku as perfect as the snow-covered stepping stones, fit only to be trodden by Sabrina's "printless feet"

Patricia V Dawson

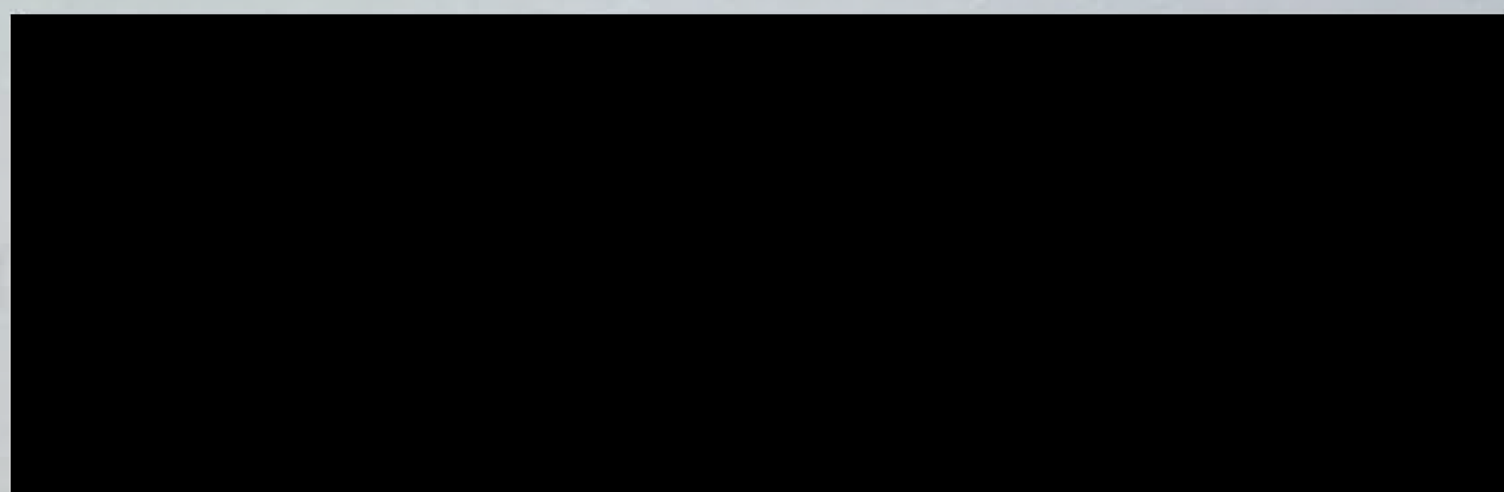


In atomic rain
Buddha goes on smiling at
the last butterfly

James Kirkup

How profound this haiku is. Any person can understand and appreciate the meaning of this haiku, whether he or she is a haiku poet or not. This is one of the most symbolic haiku that represent the present days.

Yasuhiko Shigemoto





Price £2.50

ISSN 1353-3320