# Blithe Spirit

## Journal of
## The British Haiku Society

**Volume 5 Number 2 May 1995**

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## Contents

# Blithe Spirit

## Journal of the British Haiku Society

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Submissions for all but **The Pathway** section to:-
Jackie Hardy, [redacted]

Submissions for **The Pathway** section only to:-
David Cobb, [redacted]

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**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.

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# Editorial

I commend issue 2 of Volume 5 of Blithe Spirit to you. It has been good to read the increasing volume of haiku and senryu that I have received. I look forward to Number 3 — the contents and Patricia V Dawson's striking cover design; I am shelving my editorial responsibilities for the issue so that I might take down some books. I look forward to its complete surprise. As Susan Rowley is to be the guest editor for the next issue, please send all your submissions to her at:

The seasonal theme will be **Spring** and Susan has suggested '**Warmth**' as an additonal theme for your haiku. I believe Susan is also hoping to feature renga in the next issue. The deadline for submissions is the beginning of July.

Best wishes to Susan.

Jackie Hardy

## Season Corner: Winter

Snow falling now
And still you keep opening —
Tender quince buds

*Cicely Hill*

custody battle
a bodyguard lifts the child
to see the snow

*Dee Evetts*

How softly sparrows
are hopping on the pavement
on the coldest day

*Yasuhiko Shigemoto*

back
to just two bamboo poles...
the winter scarecrow

*Kohjin Sakamoto*

Lonely winter walk
leaves behind
deep blue shadows

*E Chuther*

First dream of the year —
taking care of a dying
frog inside a shoe

*Tamaki Makoto (trans James Kirkup)*

No spider no flies
the frosted web still perfect
spans a wintry corner

*Edward D Glover*

the winter stream flows
full and muddy, its drowned
rubbish unseen

*Susan Rowley*

Slightly inclined
snowflakes gently pass
between the bars

*David Steele*

in winter silence
oystercatchers swoop down
on the cold sand

*Jack Hill*

rain drips
from the station clock —
and from my nose

*Daniel Trent*

under Orion
homeless man's begging hand
so young and supple

*Tsunehiko Hoshino*

A stone protruding
from the river — its top
is snow-covered

*Dimitar Anakiev*

drunken voices
echoing —
winter thunder

*Martin Lucas*

Paddling to keep still
the terns on the canal swept
by a winter squall

*Dermot O'Brien*

December morning —
on the window ledge
one sycamore seed

*Patricia V Dawson*

Winter
as the sun climbs higher
white lawns turning green

*Joan Daniels*

winter sun —
leaving the farm one last time
old diary finished

*Alan J Summers*

Christmas lights swaying
through the farmhouse doorway
the murmur of sheep

*John Shimmin*

winter morning stillness
chopping wood
between the echoes

*Byron Jackson*

November —
overtaking
Christmas trees

*Ken Jones*

the year's last ebb tide
pounding of mare's hooves
over the seashells

*David Cobb*

Cold stills bare branches.
The only sound in the wood
carried by this stream

*Caroline Gourlay*

## Favourite Haiku

David Peel writes: I am coming to be bored with — even to dislike — the 'overuse' of passive/absent phraseology in the writing of haiku. All those hanging participles and suchlike may get one out of syllabic holes, but in becoming stylistic cliché they seem in danger of lending a sense of fake sensibilities — at least to Western ears. So I like Colin Blundell's active perception in

railway platform tryst:
she is mouthing "I love you";
he yawns in her face

# Coming To Terms

Fred Schofield

In order that haiku does not lose its enormous potency we must constantly ask ourselves, "Is what I'm presenting as haiku really haiku?" We can do this only by examining our efforts as objectively as possible. The ego must be put aside in order for us to recognise how it meddles in our composition, manifesting itself in conceits, self-conscious imagery and a variety of other distractions. But how do we go about controlling all this? Here is an attempt to describe how I try.

My haiku starts from an impulse to explore instances of life. I'm also influenced by the work of others, though not aware of this while writing. Comments, in workshops etc., are often helpful in refining poems and in revising aspects of my approach. However, I have to wait for my own instinctive authorisation to guide me in the end. In fact, although criticism can be vital, I've never found it easy to deal with. I understand the spirit of challenging the status quo; I've always rebelled against the imposition of rules. The creative need must come first. But increasingly drawn in my reading to the perspicacity of real haiku, I have begun to discover the essence of the form and the reasons for its rules. Even so, rules can only be integrated over a period of time. They need to be assimilated and must prove themselves relevant to my realisation of the nature of the genre; a realisation which itself is continually evolving through study, experience and practice.

When I set out to write haiku, almost-poems occur. The process of mentally editing these is no different from that which applies to successful poems: the same initial effort goes in, generating the same emotional involvement. I imagine this is one reason why writers need to put first drafts away and return to them later. The fact that most of us write some poems which are very good and some which are a waste of space leads me to suspect that another force joins with our conscious effort to create poems and plays a part in determining the quality of the outcome. Perhaps my own intuition is an element of this 'other force' — it goes, at least, beyond my conscious control. I work on my haiku moments by allowing the intuition and the intellect to complement each other. Hopefully, these are tools which clear a path to the original insight. Also, the process that this involves can lead to a deepening of the perception.

I find the assertion of writing 'from the experience and not from a thought' (BS Vol 4 No 4) helpful to a certain extent but we have to define what kind of thought because when thoughts occur spontaneously, not as a result of intellectual labour or playfulness but arising from a situation, they can be part of haiku, eg

How still — is this
the last fly
I will brush from him?

*Issa*

In the above poem the author is present in an egoless way: he is observing himself. This kind of haiku is particularly difficult for the writer to assess because his actual involvement is part of the subject.

Attempting to assess our own work is much more demanding and precarious than assessing that of others because the nearer we come to devaluing our ego the more we threaten our self-confidence and ultimately our existence. Let's face it, it hurts to be told we've produced rubbish. And to tell it to yourself and truly know it, is crippling. But in my experience (both as a reader and a writer) it looks like we're stuck with it as part of the creative process. So let's admit it. Unless we admit our failures we're unable to learn. And it's vital to learn what not to include in order to allow the real possibility of haiku to arise.

## Favourite Haiku

Through frosted glass my visitor crying

*Barry Atkinson*

Dee Evetts writes: One liners tend to leave me feeling dissatisfied, but there are some wonderful exceptions, and this is one of them. The emphatic connection — vision distorted by tears, by frosted glass, in the instant before an encounter — this is glorious compression. The result, a very moving poem that resonates far beyond the deceptive briefness of a single line.

## Gorse Blossoms

'when gorse is out of bloom, kissing's out of fashion'
other seasons, all seasons, no seasons, haiku et al...

in the brief quiet
between each passing car
a robin singing

*Richard Goring*

day by day, drizzle
dissolving contractor's sand
into a delta

*David Blaber*

fresh May breeze
moonbeams in a leaky boat
toss about

*Jean Jorgensen*

each time the wind blows
clothes on the line
fan the sun

breaking through
rock-hard ground — pneumatic drills
and coltsfoot

May-Basket flowers:
I caught their breath — they took
my breath away

*Kathleen Basford*

early morning rain —
all the way to work
crushed snails

*Daniel Trent*

council cuts —
patches on the bowling green
a coarser turf

*Susan Rowley*

Knitting —
how heavy the cat sleeping
on my knees

*Yasuhiko Shigemoto*

spreading willow:
the family still calling it
grandpa's stick

*Dee Evetts*

overgrown garden pond
the old stone philosopher
staring back

*Norman Barraclough*

## Favourite Haiku

Alan Summers writes: Tom Maretic, translating his own haiku from the Croatian, intrigued me with his

the bay at night —
the clink of washing dishes
from a yacht

Who is 'observing the sound'? Is it someone walking alone along the bay? A visitor? Is this Agatha Christie haiku? Bring on Hercule Poirot to investigate the myriad possibilities that arise from this deceptively simple haiku!

# Haiku and Projection

Annie Bachini

One of the ways that I look at, and, if you like, judge, haiku is in terms of whether the poet has projected into the subject. The way that this is done, ie by the use of metaphor, simile, anthropomorphism or any other device is irrelevant. What matters to me is that the subject is not depowered by the poet.

Projection is something that every human being does: usually to other human beings. More often than not we attribute negative aspects of ourselves to others: scapegoats and moral panics, etc, but reification also involves projection. With haiku, projection seems to take four main forms. For me three of these forms are not true to the haiku spirit, as I understand it, but the fourth is.

There is also something else that people do with haiku, which is not quite projection but a human perception about an animal, plant or another person, and I am not referring to anthropomorphism.

I also want to acknowledge that some of my own haiku contain projection. I do not find them acceptable but I do keep them because they capture where I was at a particular time: not where I want to be!

§1. With all due respect to James W Hackett, I cannot accept that a human can know what an animal is thinking or feeling. In his article (Vol 4 No 3) he explains this in terms of a spiritual union between poet and subject. But how can anyone know for sure that this is what is happening?

My perception of the poems that he gives as examples is that he has projected his own thoughts and feelings onto the subject.

Now centred upon
the flavour of an old bone
the mind of my dog. JWH

I am not a Buddhist, and perhaps the discipline gives you certain insights, but I have to say I am sceptical.

§2. The second form which projection takes changes the subject into something else. Colin Blundell gives an example of this in his article (Vol 4 No 4), although he perceives the poem as containing 'imaginative truth':

harvest moon —
a rabbit crossing
Suma Lake *Buson*

I have been told that in Japan the moon is viewed as a rabbit in the same way that we refer to the man in the moon — but even taking this into consideration, all the power of the moon as a thing in and for itself is taken away in this haiku. The moon has been changed into a rabbit. What Colin perceives as 'imaginative truth', I perceive as projection.

Colin quotes from Jane Beichman's book, saying that she points out that his aim is 'to take raw materials from nature (refine) them and (make) them part of his imagination' getting closer to his own psychological reality. If this is what Buson is doing then my perception is that he is exploiting nature, and not being true to the haiku spirit.

I also believe that you go deeper into your own psychological reality by not projecting in haiku, which still leaves a place for imagination away from an already existing subject.

§3. Brian Tasker (Vol 4 No 4) gives several examples of poems which have appeared in **Blithe Spirit** and which he does not see as being true to the haiku spirit. All the poems he quotes contain projection of one form or another on to the subject. It is for this reason I am in agreement with him. This form of projection primarily uses word-play which acts to distort certain aspects of the subject. It also imposes the poet's perception onto the reader.

§4. The form of projection which I find acceptable, although I suspect that others will disagree, involves the projection of the imagination into a space rather than on to a subject. And when I say imagination, there are times when something that can only come from the imagination can seem real. This has happened twice to me in relation to haiku:

alone on this hill
ghosts of discarded kites
drift into the sky AB

I am not holding this poem up as a particularly good example of haiku, but I do see it as being true to the haiku spirit. There were no kites in the sky, and yet, I saw them. The haiku is true to the moment and it does not depower a subject.

Now to move on to the in-between thing that I mentioned earlier and which is not quite projection. I think the examples given of David Cobb's and James W Hackett's haiku in the article by Colin Blundell fall into this category.

I have several of these myself:

above the church
a procession of winter clouds
travels eastwards AB

In this example I feel that my own perception has too much weight. I have unwittingly imposed an intention onto the clouds. Of course using the word 'procession' juxtaposed with 'church' is also a bit dodgy.

The other example given by Colin of 'imaginative truth' is James Kirkup's haiku. To me this haiku is surreal and would have to be discussed in a different way to the other examples here.

(Many people have helped me form my views on perception over a long period of time, but Hegel, R D Laing and C G Jung have been most influential.)

## Favourite Haiku

it is no use mouthing
O after O at me —
I don't speak goldfish

*David Cobb*

Yasuhiko Shigemoto writes: Every time I read this haiku, I can't help smiling. Basho says that a child-like innocence is essential to haiku.

## Senryu Pie

old man out of breath
steaming the mirror up
just brushing his teeth

everyone in customs
staring at what's in her bag
— she looks away

*David Cobb*

behind his back
the small boy's hands stink
of mother's perfume

*Frank Dullaghan*

midwinter morning —
the foreshore angler's sandwich
gets the only bite

*Richard Goring*

Everywhere
keeping our gardens tidy
we old men

*Ken Jones*

in the Tate café
all conversations include
spacious hand movements

*Colin Blundell*

the shadow
the shadow overtakes
is all his in this late hour

*Alan J Summers*

inside
the shopping centre
real plants
look plastic

*Annie Bachini*

all the day the word
on the tip of my tongue —
meniscus

*Daniel Trent*

assignation
in orthopaedics, her wheelchair
stroking his crutch

*Colin Maxwell-Charters*

Loudspeaker crackle:
a girl with a cold recites
impossible stations

*Edward D Glover*

Friend of long ago
The doll you made for me —
In need of a stitch

*Cicely Hill*

after the operation
she edits her symptoms
for the family

*Patricia V Dawson*

Wrongly spelt in stone
on the war memorial —
my funny Manx name

*John Shimmin*

# Earthquake Haiku

James Kirkup

It is a pathetic paradox that such an immense natural calamity as an earthquake could be captured in seventeen syllables of haiku. Yet several Japanese haiku poets have been doing just that. The really remarkable thing is that they are all very old — some in their mid-nineties. In the Kobe earthquake, it was the young who somehow survived: many of the old were killed or died of exposure or shock. Therefore my personal maxim 'A haiku a day keeps the doctor away' finds fresh support in the survival of ancient haiku poets, some of whom are now living among the ruins of their homes and their precious archives.

The oldest of them is Igarashi Bansui (born 1899) who edits the magazine 'Kunebo'. Here is his earthquake haiku:

Daffodils blooming
with unquenchable vigour
after the earthquake

in which those brave spring flowers seem to symbolise the poet's own irrepressible haiku spirit as well as his physical endurance.

Nagata Koi was born in 1900. He is the editor of 'Kotoza'. This is what he writes:

The body dreaming,
feeling it is near to death —
ruined plum blossom

Another Kobe haiku poet, Goto Hinao, is well known for the weekly page of haiku he edits for the newspaper 'Yomiuri'. He was born in 1917. His impression of the earthquake was of a world suddenly gone mad. I have interpreted that feeling of horror at a world breaking apart with the adjective 'deranged' — meaning 'mad' but also 'shifted out of place':

Splitting frozen earth,
splitting the skies of winter —
the deranged earthquake

Wada Goro was born in 1923. His earthquake haiku has a touching reference to Issa's haiku about his last dwelling-place on earth:

Well — is this to be
my home at life's end, buried
in five feet of snow?

Wada Goro, looking regretfully at the ruins of his home and his garden buried in rubble writes:

I had thought this place
would be the last house for me —
a premature spring

Tsunehiko Hoshino is not an old poet and does not live in Kobe, but remembering the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 he writes:

This time too
we've lost the dolls —
the earthquake

(Doll Festival, 3 March 1995)

## Museum of Haiku Literature Award

Fred Schofield writes:

This is the poem I've selected from BS 5.1:-

after the goodbye kiss
the sweetness
of a russet apple *Martin Lucas*

There is a great sensitivity to exactly which part of the incident held the haiku moment. The poet, dwelling on "the sweetness" of the apple, tempts the reader to supply thoughts and feelings associated with the "kiss". The assonance coupled with the apparent simplicity of the language entices us to let images form without effort.

## The BHS James W Hackett Award 1994

The writer of the 1994 award-winning haiku is Alan Maley, currently a resident of Singapore:

When the storm has passed
We buy rain-soaked rambutans,
Full of drowning ants

The winning poem was selected by James W Hackett, who writes:

"Many thanks to all those who submitted poems for this Award. I also thank Richard Goring and other BHS committee members who winnowed the poems down to the anonymous shortlist of 74 that was mailed to me. The increasing interest in this annual haiku award is very gratifying. Some 550 haiku from 12 nations were submitted, and Mr Goring reports a world-wide geographic spread: from western and eastern Europe, northern and southeast Asia, Australasia and the Americas. What a tribute to R H Blyth (see the BHS publication 'The Genius of Haiku'), who had the prescience to foresee that haiku poetry would one day become a cultural bridge round the world. A transcending span of values that has already begun to achieve miracles of life awareness and compassion.

A clarification may be in order regarding the award winning poem. While probably unknown to most of us, the rambutan is a bright red, spiny fruit of southeast Asia. That the rambutan is not widely known does not in itself disqualify the poem from consideration. What matters in this haiku is the keen and compassionate awareness it reveals in a most mundane situation. That in the act of purchasing fruit, the poet notices the plight of ants — some actually drowning — and we can easily imagine others scurrying to safety along the spines of the fruit. There is no revulsion here, or sentimentality, either. To the contrary, interpenetration and lifefulness distinguish this 'haiku moment'. A moment that is sufficiently detailed for our re-creation. All is vividly presented in carefully chosen words and in a 'classic' haiku form; and this, along with the poem's seeming artlessness and directness, suggests much care was given to expression.

The other honoured haiku well depict haiku moments. All deserve high commendation, and I congratulate the poets on their sensitivity and understanding of what constitues the haiku experience. This year's decision was not an easy choice!"

James W Hackett gave the following as Highly Commended (in descending order):

Sleek Islay chough
carefully turning over
cowpats for maggots

*Bruce Leemimg, Surrey, England*

An armload of clothes,
line-dried in the sun and wind...
Nuzzling its fragrance

*Robert Major, Washington, USA*

coming from her house
he stops to stroke
the cherry blossom

*George Marsh, Hampshire, England*

on top of a wall
with barbed wire and broken glass —
ragwort flowers

*Martin Lucas, London, England*

autumn night —
breathing to the same pulse
the sleeping dog and I

*Kohjin Sakamoto, Kyoto, Japan*

# All the colours... haiku and senryu

in the tunnel
the black taxi roof
a stream of neon

*Colin Oliver*

Under forest trees
Gold globes of horse dung steaming
on the forest path

*Cicely Hill*

layers of coral
gleam in the glass-case
— catch the late sun

*Katharine Gallagher*

reddened knees up
above the withered hills
boy on a swing

whiter than a swan...
her laugh
from the departing boat

*Kohjin Sakamoto*

Chopping mushrooms —
blue staining boletus
shocking as blood

*David Steele*

Black silhouette
in the safari park —
a white rhino

*Patricia V Dawson*

Life class;
The shy new model poses
— colour in her cheeks

psychiatric ward:
spilling from the bedside headphones
— The Birth of the Blues

*Charles Brien*

changing colour
half-way across the street —
stranded pensioner

*John Shimmin*

in the meadow
the cows' ears numbered
black on yellow

*Byron Jackson*

A mantle of grey —
damp mist clings to my coat
woodpigeon cooing

*Brian Thompson*

the telephone rings
in the silence of the house —
sky clearing to blue

*Colin Blundell*

despite her pink hand
the change she slips to me
chill in my groin

on the wrong train
the fury of the man
with the white stick

*David Cobb*

# 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, etc). The Pathway aims to link those writing in widely-spoken and less widely-spoken languages.

*Rüdiger Fischer* (German) and *James Kirkup* (English)

Novembenrebel
noch ist kein Reif gefallen
wohin gehe ich?

The November fog
still no hoar frost has fallen
where am I going?

*Ertore José Palmero* (Spanish and English)

Cuando amanece,
inmensa peonía
an el oriente.

At dawn,
an immense peony
in the east.

*Michel Noir* (French) and *James Kirkup* (English)

Senteur de tilleul,
Il pleure doucement —
Le violoncelle

Scent of lime flowers,
It lies softly weeping — my
Violoncello.

*Rudolf Thiem* (German) and *David Cobb* (English)

Regen schlägt an das
Wahlplakat — auf Kanzlers Mund
ein Ahornblatt

election poster
rain claps a maple leaf on
the chancellor's mouth

*David Cobb* (English) and *Rudolf Thiem* (German)

election poster
outcraning cow parsley
Mrs Thatcher's head

Ein Wahlplakat:
über dem Wiesenkerbel
Mrs Thatchers Kopf

# Finding Something

Kenneth Vye Bailey

> We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression that we exist? (*Waiting for Godot*)

Colin Blundell's article 'Found Haiku' (Vol 5 No 1), in addition to providing some satisfying examples, offers ground for speculation in at least three areas of discourse: technical, literary, philosophic.

By technical I mean that we are impelled to consider the nature of haiku as a poetic form. The prose in which he has found his 'haiku' embedded exhibits the necessary sequentiality of narrative. It progresses by way of verbs and changing tenses and conjunctions. It has a view-point which moves through time. Metrically conceived narratives, poems like 'Saul' (Robert Browning) or 'The Ballad of the Mari Lwyd' (Vernon Watkins), are similarly sequential; a lyric such as Blake's 'The Sick Rose' is less so, but, like the narrative poems cited, acquires high intensity through rhythmic structure and rhyme. As distinguished from these poetic forms, from free verse and from prose, the syllabic, stress-patterned English language haiku is expressive of a uniquely realised space-time experience which, because of the instantaneity of the occasion, may seem time-transcendent, deriving from one of those zen-like moments in which subjectivity and objectivity coalesce. Note how, in encountering such a non-linear percept in the Paul Bowles story (a narrative in which a boat is moving through an estuary where we review at length a changing panorama of trees and islands), Colin Blundell, to achieve that 'heron' haiku, has to lose a definite article, an adjective, and above all a verb. The result is further to isolate and intensify the moment of vision which he has identified and which he shares, in the landscape of the author's imagination. Economy and ellipsis in the composing of haiku can lead to an unhappy semi-telegraphese, but when the balance of image/meaning and sound/stress comes right the poem is honed to a form mediating something not easily or usually admitting of expression in other forms of verse or in prose.

Colin Blundell places his 'found haiku' exercise in a larger literary context by referring to the practices of T S Eliot and S T Coleridge . It is true that Eliot 'found' in his mental store of other authors' writings apt illusions and images which resonated with or illuminated his verse. Thus in 'The Fire Sermon' where the river is used thematically to environ symbolic incidents, historical, contemporary, epic or bathetic, a line from Spenser's *Pro-*

*-thalamion*, "Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song", is several times repeated with varying degrees of irony. This is something distinct from the 'extraction' process of the 'found haiku'; yet Eliot was certainly aware of the serendipity of literary discovery. In his Notes to the same Part III of *The Waste Land*, he writes of that Mrs Porter, who, with her daughter, washed her feet in soda water, "I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia". In a lecture of 1955 ('Scylla and Charybdis') he spoke of his happy finding of the obsolete word 'antelumen', in his search for what could represent pre-dawn light, describing it as "a real trouvaille".

As for Coleridge, by some accounts he plagiarised unashamedly in his metaphysical writings, but in the 'Kubla Khan' cited by CB the appearances of "Alph, the sacred river" and the "Abyssinian maid" playing on her dulcimer, as Professor Lowes (*The Road To Xanadu*) traced them, could have come via Coleridge's reading: respectively from a fusion of Bruce's exploration of the fountains of the Nile and Seneca's geographical speculations, and (the dulcimer maid) from Aloadine's Mohammedan Paradise in *Purchas His Pilgrimmes*. These, however, emerging into the poet's reverie, are not a deliberate and conscious 'lifting', but a manifestation of what Lowes terms, in respect of Coleridge's mental imaginative processes, "sleeping images" drawn from the "deep well" of the subconscious. Coleridge's imagination, for particular reasons, worked predominantly in that way, but so in differing degrees do the imaginations of all poets — of creative scientists and thinkers, too, as has often been recorded.

Digressing for a moment from allusion and 'found haiku' to consider the introduction of literary content into haiku and kindred poems, such introductions usually occur when composition is specifically directed towards a literary theme, such as, for example, the Shelley theme proposed for Blithe Spirit (Vol 2 No 3). In response to that, Ernest Sheppard provided a senryu with a footnoted reference to its inspiration — *The Necessity of Atheism*, and James Kirkup contributed (as well as a singularly beautiful 'skylark' haiku) a tanka "on a theme by Shelley" with a quote from *Alestor* as epigraph. In the tanka the supremely Shelleyan word "azure" was used to describe the drowning waves, and Shelley's Ligurian Sea was contrasted with what is now defiled by "a lesser age's wastes". There could be a specially resonant irony in that chosen, or 'found', phrase if it were prompted by lines perhaps lying in that Coleridgean "deep well" — the Virgilian opening lines of the final chorus of *Hellas*: "The world's great age begins anew, / The golden years return".

What seems to me a striking example of an associative literary 'intrusion' is a strangely poignant haiku printed in BS (Vol 3 No 3) in the context of a review of *Wind in the Trees*, a collection of the North American poet, David Elliot:

Farm house long gone
daffodils blooming
where the door was

As Richard Goring says, in reviewing: "David Elliot is often concerned with the contrasts of life and death and the transitory nature of existence." Given that, and that Elliot is a Professor of English, it is hard to read that haiku of season and nostalgia without also hearing the opening of Whitman's 'Memories of President Lincoln', mourning "with the ever-returning spring" his death: "When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed..." Such "sleeping images" may or may not have awakened in the writer's creating imagination, attaching themselves to the immediate occasion and *aperçu*. It is a matter for speculation; though post-structuralist dogma would contend that if such is the experience of the reader, then the associative element is, in a total historical context, proper to the poem.

This brings me to the last of the three proposed areas of discourse: the philosophic. "The planet is an *objet trouvé*", writes Colin Blundell. The philosopher Gaston Bachelard in his book *La poétique de l'espace* has a telling passage about the man with a magnifying glass, an instrument which "conditions an entry into the world". A man using it "takes the world as though it were quite new to him. If he were to tell us of the discoveries he has made, he would furnish us with us with documents of pure phenomenology...". The scientist, American anthropologist, Loren Eiseley, in his significantly named book *The Unexpected Universe*, approaching the same concept from a different angle, sees Man (primitive and child being paradigmatic) as confronted with a surprising world. He writes: "No longer, as with the animal, can the world be accepted as given. It has to be perceived and consciously thought about, abstracted and considered. The moment one does so, one is outside of the natural; objects are each one surrounded with an aura radiating to man alone." And, distinctively, the poet refines and celebrates this ontological awareness, as Thomas Traherne whose "Virgin Apprehensions" were of young men as "Glittering and Sparkling Angels and Maids strange Seraphic Pieces of Life and Beauty", where "The Corn was Orient and Immortal Wheat". In his poem 'The Salutation' Traherne identifies himself:

A Stranger here
Strange Things doth meet, Strange Glories See;
Strange Treasures lodg'd in this fair World appear,
Strange all, and New to me.

In a discussion of what he calls "intimate immensity", Bachelard, in the work quoted earlier, speaks of the blending of the "world space" and "the space of intimacy". Not all haiku tell of this, but many do. Here in conclusion are two such. The first, from the BHS members' anthology, *The Sea*, is by David Cobb; the second is from Eric Speight's collection *Dry Reeds Sing Small*:

the wind shifts —
thistledown starts to blow
in from the sea

Stupendous effort,
pigeons rising vertically
from narrow passage.

Both haiku signal that state of 'shock' perception in which the poet is made intensely aware, of life's capacity for providing unlooked for happenings. They register 'found' occasions. And in each poem there is a fusion of spaces perceived. In DC's the air and sea are vast planetary mantles, the thistledown a tiny entity within its own space, yet an index for the poet of those ambient spaces' vagaries; in ES's the pigeons quite literally transcend a restricted world, the "stupendous effort" being the impression stamped on the observer's mind by the contrast, a kind of kinaesthetic effort. In both instances the experienced shock, startlement or discovery is successfully made available to, shared with, the reader.

## Favourite Haiku

Bill Wyatt writes:

Chasing my shadow
but it cannot keep up
the butterfly!

*Fukaku (trans BW)*

He died in 1753, aged 92. In Buddhism he achieved the rank of 'Master of the Dharma-eye' and before this he ran a bookstore. He started a new style of haiku, *Kechotai*, the Mysterious Bird school, and had over a thousand disciples. Many thought his work vulgar, but I love the sense of humour and playfulness that emerge from his haiku.

## Dear Editor

It was good to see your statement in the course of a review in BS (Vol 5 No 1), that you have 'a reverential regard for the continuation of haiku's spirit and tradition'. That regard has been evident in both your own haiku and in the poems you have chosen to include in the journal issues you have edited. It is, I think, a necessary, even vital, attitude and application for any BHS editor, given the stated aims of the Society and its collective view of the genre as expressed in **Towards a Consensus**.

However, looking at issue 5.1 and its predecessor 4.4, there seems to be two areas where what Susan Rowley might call 'hardlia-' or 'halfa-' or even 'neverahopeofa-' haiku can — and do — find their way into BS. This is worrying inasmuch as newcomers to the form, still trying to sort out for themselves what makes a haiku and what does not, are likely to assume that any haiku (or senryu)-like poem published in these pages must be 'okay' and will serve as a yardstick.

I presume these non-haiku slip in because they are not currently subject to editorial 'selection'. One section where they may appear is 'Favourite Haiku'. To my mind, two of those in issue 4.4 ('why did he return…' and 'I wrote a haiku…') are not haiku at all, while 'Snow on Good Friday…' is somewhat dubious. If any readers wonder why I make such claims, let them read **Consensus**.

The second area is where 'haiku' appear in articles to illustrate points being made. I suggest several occurrences in Colin Blundell's 'Found Haiku' article (5.1). Now, although I tend to the view that the best haiku come out of direct, personal experience, I've no quibble with Colin's basic concept. In fact, the article includes a couple of 'found' gems ('cold tobacco ash…' and 'tripe vendor's whistle…'). But, no way can I accept 'the swifts being late…' or 'the darkness becomes…' or 'bruised-looking twilight…' or 'vast moonlit clearing…' as haiku.

What I want to suggest is that the editor must needs apply that 'regard' for haiku's spirit and tradition to these areas. If someone submits a 'favourite' that does not match up, ask them to convince you (or seek to convince them of their misunderstanding) before you will publish. Likewise, reject unsatisfactory article illustrations. Authors should be able to come up with a better substitute — if they cannot then they probably had a poor case in the first place!

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