

Blithe Spirit



Journal of
The British Haiku Society

Volume 5 Number 3 August 1995

Don't forget to submit your haiku for the BHS Anthology to Colin Blundell as soon as possible. The theme this year is SKY. Everybody who sends a haiku gets a posh free copy of the anthology produced by Hub Editions. Samples of last year's anthology HILL are still available @ £2.50 post free from Colin Blundell [REDACTED]

Blithe Spirit

Volume 5 Number 3 August 1995

Contents

Editorial		page	3
Season Corner: Spring			4
Making Connections in Renku	Colin Blundell		6
Winter Pears	Diana Hartog/Dee Evetts		8
Museum of Haiku Literature Award			11
Warmth			12
Again They Fly Down	Robert Major		13
Gorse Blossoms			14
A 12 Verse Renga	Southern Region BHS		18
Senryu			20
Reflections on Renga Parties	George Marsh		23
Between Each Page	Portsmouth BHS		24
The Pathway			26
Scots Haiku	Stewart McGavin		28
German Haiku Conference	David Cobb		29
The Far Horizon	Janice M Bostock/Cecily Stanton		30
A Haiku Sequence	Bruce Leeming		33
Renga Extracts	Dick Pettit		34
In Memoriam Cy Patterson	David Cobb		34
Book Review			36
Recommended Reading on Renku/Renga			
	Dick Pettit		37
Dear Editor			38
Favourite Haiku		pages 11 & 22	

Blithe Spirit

Journal of the British Haiku Society

Editor: Jackie Hardy

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

Jackie Hardy, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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

David Cobb, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Annual membership of the British Haiku Society (standard subscription in the UK £12.50, £9 concessionary; £15 overseas, surface mail, or £18 airmail) includes 4 issues of **Blithe Spirit**. You may also subscribe to the magazine only (£7 a year UK, £9 overseas). Enquiries about subscriptions or membership to: The Secretary, [REDACTED]
[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: James Kirkup (President), Susan Rowley (Chair), David Cobb (Secretary-Treasurer), Colin Blundell (Journal Production), Richard Goring (Librarian), Martin Lucas (Events), Jackie Hardy (Editor, **Blithe Spirit**)

Editorial

Unaccustomed as I am.... I am delighted to be guest editor of this edition of Blithe Spirit and hope you will enjoy it as much as I have.

Renga/renku has changed over the centuries and is now being experimented with in many forms all over the haiku world. Some people prefer to stay with traditional forms, others are developing new approaches, new contexts. Increasing numbers of people, myself included, are comparatively new to the idea and playing with the form however little we know about it, learning as we go from experience, from each other and from whatever reading matter we can get our hands on. In this issue I have included two complete kasen (36 stanza) renku, extracts from others and one of 12 verses, to show something of the rich variety BHS members are producing. I hope that something in this issue will inspire others to have a go too. Few people claim to be experts; we're all enjoying the process of learning to do it better.

We have no Tanka this time; space precludes yet another section — I have passed on submissions to Jackie on returning the Editor's hat to her, with thanks for a great deal of enjoyment and a far greater appreciation of all the work involved!

We, the membership of the BHS, represent a wide range of background, age, experience, nationality and interest. One thing we do have in common is the ability to share single moments of each other's lives. Haiku is surely something to be continually celebrated, so I invite you once again to join me in discovering images, fresh and nostalgic, tentative and assured; something to love, something to hate, something to disagree with (?). For what more could we ask?!!

Susan Rowley

Submissions for the next issue of BS must reach Jackie by the beginning of October. The additional theme next time will be pigs. The season corner will be summer.

Corrigendum

Apologies to Dee Evetts whose "Favourite Haiku" BS Vol 5, No. 1, suffered a mis-print. It should have read: "The **empathetic** connection — vision distorted by tears, by frosted glass, in the instant before an encounter — this is glorious compression"

Season Corner: Spring

a white cat
climbing down a pine —
Buddha's birthday

Tsunehiko Hoshino

the swans wait
at their chosen nest site
trampled daffodils

Ruth Robinson

Spring weddings —
the wind scatters confetti
over old graves

Bamboo Shoot

coming back
on the ebb tide...
cherry petals

Kohjin Sakamoto

Sweet chestnut in flower,
One curved bough holding
The evening sun

Cicely Hill

A cat in love
comes home for rest
with a scar on his face

Yasuhiko Shigemoto

spring cleaning —
behind the sideboard
a three-penny bit

John Shimmin

Sudden breeze
falling pear blossom
decorates the cat

Byron Jackson

lush spring garden —
but only the periwinkle's
purple flower

Annie Bachini

beside the hoarding
of a red-brick house for sale
a small tree in bloom

Dermot O'Brien

Seeing two days' walk
In every direction:
Cloudshine dales
And saxifrage

Tito

Making Connections in Renku — Chapter 3 of Makoto Ueda's book on Bashō

Colin Blundell

Composing a renku is very much like a group game; ... amusement is the prime motivation of an ordinary renku-writing gathering. We can imagine... one of the participants coming up with an exquisitely beautiful verse or with an immensely humorous one and the rest of the group sighing in admiration or bursting into laughter...

MU

If renku-writing is a game, then, as in any game, there have to be rules otherwise the game is unplayable; it would be quite possible, and very interesting, to create surreal connections in renku, but it does make a game difficult to play if the ball suddenly turns into a hedgehog.

In renku-writing, the 'rules' concerning length, structure and wording are relatively easy to lay down; the 'rules' about the ways in which connections between stanzas are to be made are more akin to hedgehogs. One possible set of 'rules' is embedded in Makoto Ueda's book on Bashō, to chapter 3 of which this bald summary is intended to make you scurry.

In his analysis of 'A Winter Shower' Makoto Ueda emphasises a structural connection — 3 lines + 2, the same 2 + 3, the same 3 + 2 and so on; each group of five lines is a connected whole and the connections overlap.

Within this structure the content connections, it seems, can be in relation to imagery, character, narrative, or atmosphere and move by either contrast or similarity, by consequences, by shift of perspective in or out, sideways, up or down, by reinterpretation, by changing the context and so on.

In summary, the connecting links Makoto Ueda seems to me to be suggesting are as follows:-

- Consequence
- Introduction of character to a scene
- Developing a character's attributes
- Change of character's role
- Change of mood and/or atmosphere and/or setting

- Interior monologue
- Image development
- Word-play
- Shock
- Contrasting activities
- Making an abstract idea concrete & vice versa
- Setting up a harmony or a contrast between images
- Focussing in and out on a scene
- Change of weather
- Providing a context
- Adding to a context
- Changing between visual, auditory, kinesthetic focus
- Memories evoked
- Witty and/or narrative shifts of interpretation
- Moving from fantasy to reality and back again
- Progression of a non-explicit narrative

After the first six stanzas which should be of a calm introductory nature, any of the next twenty-four stanzas 'can surprise the reader with its novel style, striking theme or quaint image'. Whilst there should be a justifiable connection between stanzas, there is no absolute rule-book; the strength of renku is its team-effort, the synergy that develops from being familiar with the way other team members work, their characteristic style. It would be interesting to think about what you consider to be your role in renku-writing; of the above list which connections do you find it most congenial to make? What is your individual contribution to the team-effort? What does it do for the whole renku? How will you extend your repertoire?

Any two consecutive verses of a renku, when read together, should constitute an acceptable poem. Ed

*

Remember: when providing a verse for your renga, your stanza must link with the preceding one only and not to the one before that. The person following you will then only link to yours and so on; the middle one of any three will link to those either side of it but no further. Ed.

Winter Pears

A kasen (36 stanza) renga by Diana Hartog and Dee Evetts, broadly speaking in the classical tradition. "As such, one of the aspects to which we paid close attention was the overall structure of opening, development and close (6, 24 and 6 stanzas respectively)."

Composed in the Slocan Valley, British Columbia,
July-September 1994

Winter pears
ripen in a bowl
first snowfall

dh

Through leafless trees
the low midday sun

de

Talk of shifting
the rare watercolour
a little higher

de

The belled cat
jaunty through the ferns

dh

Sitting up dazed
from an overlong nap
spring moon

dh

Planting chart filed somewhere
among the packets of seeds

de

The children
rebellious this year
at vacation plans

de

PARKING FOR HANDICAPPED ONLY
the most desirable space

dh

Star-filled sky
she squeezes in to sit
between husband and ex

de

A row of hugs and kisses
closes the short letter dh

We pass down the hall
from the grandfather clock
a very faint chime de

Handmade paper box set to dry
in the lingering heat dh

Glint of moonlight:
the hammer found
among shrivelled weeds de

The heavier quilt from the closet
freshens on the line dh

Piecing together
their story of survival
in the city de

Dishes, rumpled napkins
melting ice cream dh

Smoke-burnished days
news of evacuation
from the south de

A field of russet wildflowers
gives way to daisies dh

The common feelings
of shyness and hope
so long dormant dh

At the departure gate
differences embraced de

Holding the three coins
concentrate
on your question dh

Ice still too thin
he'll wait a few days

de

Chain of thought
repeatedly broken, the new year's
first poem

dh

Locked in wrought iron, ancient
wisteria cascading

de

Mouth of the creek
under the willow thicket
sand erodes

dh

She reaches every corner
of the many-paned window

de

The week's pills
portioned to tiny compartments
labelled Monday, Tuesday ...

dh

Alone at the office
he hums a favourite aria

de

Contest winner:
the peach pie
with the homely crust

dh

Quarter moon sinking
into a bank of fog

de

Autumn rain
the long-awaited trip
to the hotsprings

de

After woodgathering
he sweeps out the borrowed truck

dh

Plastic pennants
stretched across the yard
their badminton net

de

The dock for the regatta
leans into its fourteenth year

dh

Revered teacher
by her bedside — sweetpeas
in a mayonnaise jar

dh

Walking past the street market:
a waft of anise

de

Museum of Haiku Literature award

Martin Lucas has chosen Jack Hill's:

in winter silence
oystercatchers swoop down
on the cold sand

A haiku does not need to be an attempt to 'create' meaning; the poet only needs to be aware enough to respond to the inherent meaning of the moment. Jack Hill has done this. You can breathe the fresh air in this poem.

David Cobb chooses from this issue.

Favourite Haiku

the cat's whiskers
brushing tinsel

Penny Harter

Martin Lucas writes: This poem is remarkable for its close focus and sensory delicacy; and it makes me smile. Despite its extreme brevity it still includes a season word.

Warmth... Haiku and Senryu

From life in this world
spider runs over the ashes
right into the fire

James W Hackett

After the service
outside in the sun — silence
as warm hands squeeze mine

John Shimmin

another log
on the woodstove
cat still snoring

Byron Jackson

doorbell unanswered:
in the porch, my lover's bike
— saddle still warm

Charles Brien

vacating his seat
the departing guest has left
a reminder

Ruth Robinson

October's sun dies
and the butterfly it warmed
for just one more day

Edward D Glover

the child laughs
as the snowflakes she caught
melt in her outstretched hand

Edward D Glover

that illusive sun
I rush out
too late

Byron Jackson

Again They Fly Down

Robert Major

(a haiku sequence)

In a London pub,
and the old comrades scattered...
A cup of kindness.

Again they fly down
the invisible incline...
back from a mission.

"Time, Gentlemen, time"...
Spilling forth into the dark
from the Woolpack Inn.

Lost on the way back.
Bells toll from some clock tower:
Sopley ... or Ringwood?

Does the Chaffinch sing?
Do the lapwings nest again
where we parked the planes?

Gorse Blossoms

twitching
in the morning sun
a winter bee

Kohjin Sakamoto

Mist silently
Swaddling the hill:
Purple bilberries

Cicely Hill

Nepalese village ...
from the ox with Buddha's eye,
a nudging farewell

James W Hackett

Resin and diesel oil
silence
of cut timber

Ken Jones

A ruined house —
where an oak door hung
wild cherry fruits

Edward D Glover

shadows lengthen
across the fields
a thrush's song

Martin Lucas

Running to the shops
Jumping to tap a low branch.
A second shower

Nathan Littlewood

down below, ponies
and sheep move slowly and small:
a curlew's wild cry

Eric Speight

At the waterfall
I dive into the noise
And find quiet

Nathan Littlewood

a blustery wind
passes along the bus queue —
grey faces wait on

Annie Bachini

Each morning
dead wasps on the carpet
in the same place

Adele David

Slowly moving cloud
shadowed on the mountain —
a few flakes of snow

John Shimmin

Voices cross
the stillness of the common —
rooks and men

Colin Oliver

moved and replanted
by the smart developer,
the peony dies

Patricia V Dawson

stepping down the sky
a skylark falls silent
the vacant sand-dunes

Dermot O'Brien

the oak tree felled
one shrivelled leaf has blown
against the stump

Kathleen Basford

car alarm
faintly on the wind
gull's cry

Richard Goring

smell of last year's fire
down the chimney
with each autumn gust

Janice M. Bostock

bright sunshine lost
as I kneel by his headstone

Frank Dullaghan

waking from storms -
sparrowcheeping
in a blue stillness

George Marsh

footsteps on floorboards
in the empty house
...leaving

David Steele

behind the dipped slat
of the closed venetian blind -
two appealing eyes

Richard Poynter

From inside the tent
The sound of the sea
Towards midnight
Gone distant...

Tito

A 12 Verse Renga

Southern Region BHS

Michael Gunton writes: Most of the verses are the work of one poet, others the result of discussion and collaboration. As we get into the swing of composing renga, the events are becoming more relaxed and each time we become more aware of the possibilities! It took us about three hours in all. Perhaps we could have done it in less time, but then we would have lost much of the discussion and laughter!

Father and son
silently watching the yachts
out on the Solent

Michael

a cloudbank in the West
trailing a dark fringe

George

a nightful of dreams;
the splashing raingutter
outside the window

Penny

pale light slants
on tight privet curls

Gaynor

roaring at dawn
the May Ball drunken toffs
moon from the chapel roof

George

an election poster
ripped, reveals another

Michael

in the shantytown
he accepts more garlands
of gaudy flowers

Michael

satin shoes tossed into the snow
bridesmaids and monks barefoot!

Penny

her leg bleeding
she howls for her lover
the trapped wolf

George

“GAME OVER” it flashes
— and no more points than the last time *Michael*

on the pavement
shivering children
with a threadbare Guy *George*

the pumpkin's eyes
blink in a gust *Gaynor/George*

The opening (6 stanza) section of a Kasen renga is a form of preface, nothing startling or outlandish here. The first verse (*hokku*) is usually an indirect compliment by a guest to the host and may relate to the season and the place where the renga is being made. The second verse (*wakiku*) is usually the host's indirect acknowledgement or reply to the guest. The third (*daisan*) changes the subject and begins the move to wider fields of play.

The closing 6 stanza of a renku/renga are usually clear and direct and lead quickly to the end. Some people like the last stanza (*ageku*) to link in some way to the first, to help give a feeling of completeness. Whether you do this or not, the *ageku* should be positive in feeling and is usually to do with spring.

Ed

Early renga involved *linking* by the clever use of word pairs, linked concepts, thematic parallelism and opposition, punning, buried allusions or any other of the mechanical verbal tricks practised by court poets. This was '*kotoba-zuke*' — verbal linking. Bashō's policy was '*kokoro-zuke*' — 'linking by the heart', using echo, scent, colour, rank or decorum, change or reflection, and image or allusion (though there is no agreement about what he means by these terms). GM

Many people prefer to call work produced in this way *renku* rather than renga. Ed.

Senryu

Across the street
two teenage boys fighting.
Only one shadow

Caroline Gourlay

drunken beggar
his grimy hand
so soft

Fred Schofield

Outside the house
with the new baby
the weeds grow tall

Colin Oliver

Early swallow dips,
sun on rain — wet road steaming;
Put the rubbish out!

Jem Thomasin Stedman

redundancies —
stacked mail topples
on an empty desk

Frank Dullaghan

my sleep disturbed
by a man's voice
new to my son

Frank Dullaghan

watching her
step into the lift
where I left a discreet fart

George Marsh

poet's festival:
each bookstall
sniffed by a dog

Martin Lucas

Mother, back at work,
sends her nanny to the
N.C.T. meeting

Patricia V. Dawson

As the monk approaches
She slips into her pocket
The smart gold ear-rings

Cicely Hill

choosing my weapons
I sally forth to battle
— japanese knotweed

David Steele

Baby wren
never to be seen again —
cat yawns

Bill Wyatt

between the bars
of the death row cell
the man in the moon

Michael Gunton

village cricket match
with a late snow-fall —
White out

Charles Brien

pregnant
through the shopfront window
an expectant smile

Richard Goring

April 1
outside the Registry
a photographer
blows on his fingers

Bamboo Shoot

Favourite Haiku

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

Cicely Hill

Caroline Gourlay says: Perhaps a senryu rather than a haiku, but one of the most haunting and evocative I've ever read. If haiku and senryu are about making connections, and I think they are, then this one is a winner, as Cicely has done it so effortlessly and to such effect.

Reflections on Renga Parties

George Marsh

In the Portsmouth group we have now held three renga parties and discovered what very entertaining social gatherings they are: after a hesitant start, the poem warms up, the participants start playing ideas off one another and a surprisingly inventive image-making faculty is discovered in each of us. We have found it valuable to have:-

- (a) an outline structure (which seasons come where, and two or three fixed positions for flower and moon verses and "love theme" verses)
- (b) a topic list (thirty or so items reminding the writers to cover young and old, rich and poor, old and new etc)
- (c) a decisive renga-master who is absolutely strict about the rules (no repetition of any kind, no return to topics covered, but, above all, keep moving).

A renga is a complete picture of the diversity of modern life in 36 images... It has to cover everything, so there is no slack at all, if it is to be anywhere near diverse enough. It is full of animation, change and movement.

It is a visual form. Each picture is a new scene. It is like a film, TV police drama, cartoon or shark; it must keep moving forward or die. The renga-master must ruthlessly reject any verse which dwells on a scene for too long. After a five-line unit in one place, or one mood, the next verse must leap. A renga that dwells on loveliness without bursts of liveliness quickly palls.

There is no continuity of theme, narrative or characters in a renga; there is nothing to hold it up except change. It is like the dedicated windsurfer's favourite board, called a Sinker. It will only work when a near-gale is blowing. Slow down, and you sink. This is the conclusion I have reached at this early stage of our practice, but no doubt each renga-master who gains skill will be able to show us a new aspect of the form.

'Between Each Page' was composed before an audience at The Menuhin Room, Portsmouth, 31st March 1995, this was the first *public* renga session done by members of BHS and, as far as we know, the first ever done in the UK. Participating in the composition were: Denise Bennet, Hugh Dunkerley, Stephen Gill, Michael Gunton, Alison Habens, Cicely Hill, Connaire Kensit, Martin Lucas, George Marsh, Brian Tasker, Brian Wells. Two extracts follow...

Between Each Page

Between each page
Of an overdue book —
Cherry blossom.

The sound of children playing
In the afternoon sun.

On the common
A bee; 'The Pride of Portsmouth'
Sliding by.

Past the Nab tower
The sea gets choppier.

Helped back to bed
The old man lies watching
The purple moon.

Able to take food at last
The delicious ginger soup.

Windbells chime again,
The bazaar reanimates
In afterstorm.

The price of cotton
Rising as temperatures fall.

On Christmas night
Invisible beings
Step out of snowdrifts.

Between the brake and clutch
His lucky rabbit's foot.

Under the stars
So close
The mist of our breath.

Her new woollen scarf
Wet to the touch

The sun dazzles
On their freshly painted house
And its satellite dish.

No message in this bottle
Full of moonlight.

Lying in the bracken
Since our victory party —
Nineteen forty-five farthing..

.....
Lonely night disturbed
By the rhythm of the neighbour's bed.

Radio One ...
As she sings along —
A whiff of toast.

The fog lifts;
Loud knocking at a street door.

Red dragon shakes
High at the window
Above the Chinese grocer's.

The brand new Mercedes
Scratched with a key.

Walking home
On Mothering Sunday
With daffodils.

I pause again and again,
Yet still miss the cuckoo.

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.

Colin Blundell and Julie Bird (English and Spanish)

at my open page
the small fly pauses to scrub
behind its wide eyes

la mosca para
en la hoja abierta
para lamerse

a chorus of dogs
and the sun suddenly breaks
through the long echo

coro de perros;
el sol subito rompe
por el eco largo

two children running
at the white edge of the tide —
the start of summer

dos niños corren
con la marea blanca —
ahora verano

Rudolf Thiem (German) and Ernest Sheppard (English)

Forsythienpracht —
im Schatten die Scherben
der Okarina

Forsythia's splendour —
shards of the ocarina
in the shadow

Ernest Sheppard (English and Schwyzerdütsch)

Pebbles in the brook
give fluency of speech to
water after drought

s'Gröll im Bächli
nach der Dürri macht s'Wasser
g'schwätzig

Bruce Leeming (English and Scots)

Birlin doon
the rowth o gean blume
taigles a bummer

swirling down
the profusion of cherry blossom
delays a bee

Rody Gorman (translated from Japanese into Scots Gaelic and English)

Mo ghlòr
Ga chaitheamh air ais nam chomhair
Air gaoith an fhoghair.

My voice
thrown back in front of me
on the autumn wind

(after Meisetsu)

Bheir an dìol-dèirce
Buille
Dhan dealan-dè roimhe.

The tramp hits out
at the butterfly
in front of him

Fiù's ann an gainntir a-staigh
Bidh cuileag a' gheamhraidh
A' leantainn
Air a' ghrein.

Even in his prison cell
the winter fly
follows the sun

(after Seisi)

Tha cuil
A' tuiteam air a' chich
A' dhìochuimhnich an leanabh
Fo chadal.

The fly
falls on the breast
which the child forgot
in sleep.

(after Hini Sōoyō)

Dimitar Stefanov (Bulgarian) and Angelina Christanova (English)

Эмия в тревите
и детски вик: — Настъпих
дива ягода!

A snake in the grass and
a child's cry — I stepped on
a wild strawberry.

Птиците, листата...
Есента не е ли
да губим нещо?

The birds, the leaves,
the autumn — isn't it
the time to lose things?

Martin Lucas (English) and Manami Maeda and Nori (Japanese)

morning mist
trailing along the lakeshore
a snipe's call

asagiri no
tanabiku kohan
shigi no koe

Scots Haiku

i the gloamin
twa men fae the sea
fecht on the saun

rimie mornin
fingers white, cauld
on the keyboard

white glisks
on the watter
the gants dookan

outby i the field
the geese sound wi thir lang craigs
dancan thegither

the hills aroun
in bleezin sunnoon
ma feet i the mirk

scunnert,
an hame tae
the telly

The following are translations of translations in the Penguin Book of Zen Poetry by Lucien Stryk and Takashi Ikemoto or are inspired by these translations. With thanks to Lucien Stryk for permission to print them here:-

journeys end
still alive
this autumn evening

old pond
leap-splash
a frog

Matsuo Basho (1644 - 1694)

Stewart McGavin

at dusk,
two men from the sea
fight on the sand

frosty morning
fingers white, cold
on the keyboard

white flashes
on the water
gannets diving

outside in the field
the geese cry, long necks
dancing together

the hills around
in blazing sunset
my feet in the dark

disgusted
and home to
television

hame at last an
no deid yet, forenicht
i the back end

the lochie
lowp, jaup
a puddock

The German Haiku Society Conference, 1995 David Cobb

The Deutsche Haiku Gesellschaft holds a major conference and election of officers every two years. This, the fourth in the series, was held at Gfohl in Austria, and followed a by now well established pattern. Frau Margaret Buerschaper, the president, earned the thanks of approximately 50 participants for her usual meticulous organisation. Highlights of the first day are a festive public opening and a formal lecture by a guest speaker, on this occasion about the life, poetry and working environment of the Austrian poetess, Imma von Bodmershof. This is followed by a formal presentation, with eulogy, to a member of the society whose writings (haiku, senryu, renga or tanka) are considered worthy of distinction. The recipient is declared a 'master' of his or her genre. In the evening there is a reading of haiku, senryu, renga and tanka in which all members of the society are invited to take part, an event which is open to the public.

The next day begins with a second public reading, and in the afternoon participants take an outing to congenial natural surroundings and compose verses as they go. The product is a large number of 'renga' (of a kind I think known only in the German speaking world) which are read aloud over food and drink. The peculiarity of a German 'renga' is this: one person writes a three-liner (5,7,5 is obligatory) and some other lucky person pulls this out of a hat whereupon it becomes his or her responsibility to cap it with a two-liner (7,7) and supply a single word title (usually an abstraction, such as 'modesty') which is written underneath the completed poem. One has to say this is a pleasant party game but no more.

The third day is limited to a morning session and devoted to presentations followed by an opportunity for discussion. This year Horst Ludvig broached the possibility of finding 'season words' (*kigo* and *kidai*) in the Christian almanac; and Rudolf Thiem introduced his translation of the BHS '**Towards a Consensus on the Nature of Haiku**', which the meeting decided to discuss further in the pages of the society's journal.

Organisation of haiku conferences like this one are often faced with the difficult task of striking a balance between the opportunity of creating a showcase for haiku, to bring it to the attention of a wider public and increase esteem, and on the other hand to provide a rare debating chamber in which those who are already members can develop their craftsmanship and sensitivity. The German conferences have always scored well on the first objective. One must hope that all haiku societies, whether German, Romanian, Croat, British, American or Japanese, will in future find ways of breaking out of their linguistic isolation and build together traditions of writing and appreciating haiku which are universal rather than narrowly national.

The Far Horizon

A traditional Summer Kasen (36 stanza) Renga between Janice M Bostock and Cecily Stanton. Composed in Australia between August 1994 and March 1995. Cecily writes: Janice has been involved with haiku for about twenty years and has written with americans and australian male poets before but to her knowledge, our renga is the first by two australian women.

in summer heat
mountains undulating on —
the far horizon

jb

the siamese cat wraps its tail
around my wrist as I write

cs

through the paperweight's
glass bottom your new poem
appears distorted

jb

the siphoning sounds
of parrots in love...

cs

hollow tree —
against the moonlight's silver
a black filigree

jb

autumn rain on parched earth
every saucepan — outside

cs

cooler nights
I snuggle into my
husband's warm slumber

cs

entwined...
the child between us squirms

jb

leaving for the island
the slow chug of the barge
turning aqua to white

cs

two leather clad bikies
armed with babies and nappies
CS

rain depression —
a black cockatoo snaps
bloodwood branches
JB

a sudden refreshing wind —
wet drops on the tin roof
CS

each evening
he returns — his back
a deeper shade
JB

between silk sheets
he waits smiling...
CS

across the lawn
toddler chases the cat
chasing a snake
JB

19th nervous breakdown
the kookaburras just laugh
CS

dark tide
and the moon's light
laps the shore
JB

morning chill
the wind sings in the wind chimes
CS

vase of bottle brush
red and cheerful
warms the room
CS

hand on the door knob
he turns back to look at the sky
JB

open window
the aroma of baking pies
brings the children
CS

morning mist disperses
the day warms by noon

jb

distracted
from the crimson azalea —
by his tender glance

cs

new horizon
gilded by dawn

jb

*

A Haiku Sequence

Bruce Leeming

By the track
under the fresh-sprung hazels
breakfasting tinkers

Halfway up the glen
an unexpected lochan
— eyed by a grebe

On a sun-warmed ridge
resting: far below
buzzards circling

Renku/renga are not all 36 stanzas long. There are those of 12, 20, 50.... 18 (the half-kasen) is not thought to be a number which produces a structurally balanced work. Ed.

Extracts from Two Rengas

Dick Pettit

From 'Distant Haze'

half-uttered,
an exclamation echoes
in dusty sunlight

love in the afternoon
behind the woodyard wall

matching fingers
she tries to make hers
smaller still

hands slowly lowered —
Daddy's face in the moonlight

From 'only a glance'

suspended in the lights:
for a second, a swallow

still yellow
the last of the old moon
low in the dawn

receiving friends at night
the new bride drips gold

glamorous figures
bestride an ancient star-map
tokening Fortune

shirt-sleeved deals in futures
juggle millions fast

In Memoriam Cy Patterson

David Cobb

We are sad to have to announce the death on 28 April this year of Cy Patterson, age 66, who joined BHS within days of its being set up. "I've waited 20 years for this society to be launched," he wrote at the time. He had already published a haiku chapbook, 'Thistledown' (and named his house after it, or vice versa!).

Though, following an industrial injury, Cy had been an invalid since 1970, we made a special effort to have him at our first national haiku conference in Durham in 1991, and we were very glad that he felt able to come.

In the 1950's Cy corresponded with James Kirkup and later dedicated to him a number of haiku about dandelions, knowing this to be our President's favourite flower.

One of Cy's haiku found a merited place in 'The Haiku Hundred':

Full to capacity
a pair of man's trousers
blowing in the wind.

Cy's widow, Anne, tells us that since the day of Cy's funeral she has found inspiration to overcome her loss in her own first efforts at writing haiku. Cy must surely have admired such spirit, and we wish Anne well in her writing and hope to hear more of it.

Book Review

In a Borrowed Tent by Steve Shapiro

Illustrated by Gus Furguson. The Fairfield Pamphlet Press 1994

This is an exciting collection of haiku from South Africa.

The poems are remarkable in their immediacy. The crafting is seamless. A powerful sense of place and season marks each of the four sections. The originality lies sometimes in the image:-

After a shower
a gentle running moonlight
down to the sea

Sometimes it is simply in the order of words:-

Midnight heat
the fly in the lavatory
has died of it

Steve Shapiro wears his knowledge of classical haiku lightly, though here and there, debt to a specific source is easy to discern.

One or two of the illustrations have true haiga quality. They go well with the poems. The poet's personality never comes between us and his work, yet, coming to the end of the book there is a sense of knowing the man and the place where he lives. I should have liked translations of the one or two African and Afrikaans words. Highly recommended.

C.H.

Available from: Fairfield Pamphlet Press, P O Box 375, Cape Town 8000, South Africa. Price given as £3 or \$5 including surface postage.

Recommended Reading on Renku/Renga

Dick Pettit

Hiroaki Sato: One Hundred Frogs (Weatherhill 1983) From renga to haiku in English. Traces the different styles of renga from medieval to modern. Examples of whole and part renga and single links.

Earl Miner: Japanese Linked Poetry (Princeton UP 1979) Covers the same ground as above, Full of examples.

Stephen D Carter: Traditional Japanese Poetry (Stanford UP 1993) This large anthology of over 1150 pieces has many renga links and extracts from medieval to Buson. It's worth having for the haiku and tanka, as well. All 100 verses of 'Minase'.

Makoto Ueda: Matsuo Bashō (Kodansha 1982) [See article this issue] Very clear and helpful.

Leonore Mayhew: Monkey's Raincoat (Tuttle 1985) Renga and haiku. Very useful introduction, especially on Bashō's linking. Partial commentary.

R.H. Blyth: Haiku Vol 1 (Hokuseido 1981) Has complete translation and commentary on 'The first Winter Rain' (also in Leonore Mayhew). Still a very helpful introduction to renga.

Earl Miner and Hiroko Odagiri: The Monkey's Straw Raincoat and other Poetry of the Basho School (Princeton UP 1981) Recommended by Jane Reichhold. Covers same ground as Leonore Mayhew.

Jane Reichhold: Narrow Road to Renga (AHA books 1989. POBox 767 Gualala CA 95445 USA \$12.95) A few articles on basics by JR and Hiroaki Sato, plus about 50 renga, mainly by JR and one other. Net, pyramid, solo and book renga. Apart from the first, with HS and Geraldine Little, sophisticated and way-out linking.

Lynx — a journal for linking poets (renga and tanka) eds Jane and Werner Reichhold, POBox 1250 Gualala, CA 95445, USA. Three issues a year. UK sub. \$20. Has 10-12 kasen renga and the same number of participation renga, plus experiments in renga each issue. You're sure to like some of it!

Dear Editor

why did he return
to that empty island?
bog cotton in the wind

I am happy to admit to Richard Goring (BS 5.2) that my favourite Kenneth White haiku isn't one and I do welcome his diligence in upholding our '...Consensus'. I've no time for poesy, epigrams and whatnot presented as haiku.

Nevertheless, here I am unrepentant, for this is something different. The power of White's third line cutting through the vacuous question splendidly evokes the spirit of haiku. We have in print no lack of 'real' haiku, mannered, clever, dead and exemplifying the Guidelines to the letter.

I would like to suggest that there is much 'minimal', haiku-like verse like Kenneth White's, lying outside our Guidelines, which can refresh and stimulate mainstream haiku-making and that it is important to encourage it to do so. The Guidelines, as "a few helpful signposts", have a more subtle value than simply separating sheep from goats. They help to inform and facilitate debate across the frontier which they mark. We need to bear in mind a middle way which avoids both the blurring of the form on one hand and the atrophy of formalism on the other. I believe that the Society is doing this rather well, but am glad we have robust critics like Richard Goring to keep us on our toes.

Ken Jones (Aberystwyth, Wales)



Price £1.50



ISSN 1353-3320