

Blithe Spirit



Journal of
The British Haiku Society

Volume 5 Number 4 November 1995

Blithe Spirit Volume 5 Number 4

November 1995

Index

Editorial	Page	3
Summer Haiku		4
Museum of Haiku Literature Award		8
Favourite Haiku 1		8
Haiku in the Western World	Barry Atkinson	9
Haiku		10
Favourite Haiku 2		11
Pigs		12
A Poet Discusses Haiku	George Swede	14
Senryu		15
Guest Spot		16
Tanka		17
Favourite Haiku 3		18
The Pathway		19
Favourite Haiku 4		20
Watercolour and Haiku	Colin Blundell	21
Reviews		24

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 overseas, surface mail, or £18 airmail) includes 4 issues of **Blithe Spirit**. Subscriptions to magazine only — £7 a year UK, £9 overseas. Enquiries about subscriptions or membership to: The 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: 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

I resume the editorial hat after the last exciting issue with the hope that returning to Blithe Spirit's normal format will not be 'old hat'. I feel the experiment with a guest editor was a success and I plan to repeat it next year.

There are new things about this issue: I have left out the titles to which we have become accustomed in some of the haiku sections; the chosen theme for this issue, **Pigs**, is still there, but 'season corner', 'gorse blossoms' and 'senryu pie' are no longer with us. I welcome readers' ideas, thoughts and feelings on this subject.

The theme for the first number of Volume 6 will be the **Five Senses**. This offers haikin many opportunities for inspiration and the editor a choice of whether to use one or more categories of sense. All depends on submissions, so keep up the increased number evident in this issue.

Jackie Hardy

Erratum

Volume 5 Number 3 page 20 — for 'sun' read 'Sun' in Jan Thomasin Steadman's senryu.

The BHS Committee much regrets the late arrival of Volume 5 Number 4. Normal Service is being resumed... Please submit as quickly as possible for Volume 6 Number 1

Summer Haiku

putting away
my summer clothes
thinking of next year

Rain-pocked sunflowers
standing against the fence
catch the last sun

Katherine Gallagher

On the sundial
a red admiral settles
— weeding forgotten

Charles Brien

Chewing my old gate
making wood pulp for their nest
such hard-working wasps

naked children
in and out the back door
noisy bluebottles

John Shimmin

running into
a No-play theatre
in a sudden shower

Tsunehiko Hoshino

Opening the shutters —
scent of sun-warmed herbs rising
from the mountainsides

James Kirkup

a rock's cool shadow —
a beetle finds brief respite
from the scorching sun

Erik Langhans

garden mealtime
a lull in the conversation...
— and the blackbird sings

David Steele

The first of August
the barley fields turning gold
trees loom from the haze

Dermot O'Brien

a breeze across my desk...
for a paperweight,
this young apple

fragmenting the sun,
bare legs
of a woman pearl-diver

Kohjin Sakamoto

sawn-down hawthorn
orchids flowering
through its shadow

between the barks
of a distant muntjak
words with a stranger

Norman Barraclough

among nude bathers
halfhearted spaniel
chasing the tide

evening rain
sand-puddles
on the bathroom floor

Matthew Paul

the sun sets
behind terraced houses
tiger lilies glow

conversation fades...
on a summer night breeze
rustle of sycamore

Martin Lucas

In the summer heat
shimmering chrysalis turns
into flight of blue

Bill Wyatt

hot summer day
the long walk home
lagging behind my shadow

everywhere
in the garden
three white butterflies

Byron Jackson

deck chairs
wet with sudden rain
an english summer

ai li

the shore wind
carrying it higher and higher —
a white butterfly

nodding
in and out of the shadows...
a showy lady-slipper

Jeanne Emrich

a shaft of light
on a rhododendron bloom —
summer woods

Sharon Lee Shafii

The day sags with heat
crimson clematis strident
on white stone walls

Edward Glover

evening breeze
a faded beach ball bumps
along the pool's edge

Nika

in a web outside the window
daddy-long-legs
struggles to be free

Anita Packwood

the parsimonious use
of water
this summer drought

Patricia Prime

Keats' mulberry tree —
something keeps beating its wings
on Midsummer Eve

Makoto Tamaki

in this heat
midges
fan and hum

interrupting
my daydreams — the buzz
of a fly

Ruth Robinson

Annie Bachini

this summer morning —
just a profound silence
and sparrow feathers

light wavering
over hot tarry pavements
the pulse of heavy rock

Bamboo Shoot

Museum of Haiku Literature Award

From the last issue David Cobb has chosen Janice M Bostock's

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

because 'it finds a way up the nose and into the heart, just as the smoke and flames, which once went up the chimney, now come down again as nostalgia. There is still a sort of glow in last year's fire — but really, was it ever warm enough? In this battle of the elements, it is chill air (the autumn gust), and not fire, which seems to get the upper hand.

It hardly matters whether we sense the smell as an accumulation of a whole winter of fires, or whether we guess that only the last-lit fire, probably one in spring, is still pungent. Either way we are not only reminded of all the fires we lit last year, but also forewarned of the long series we are about to embark on again as winter draws near. In this respect the human lot has a striking similarity to the toils of Sisyphus.

Oh, come now, I hear some pyrophile object: this haiku is all about joyous anticipation of a jolly heap of coals and sizzling chestnuts! Well, maybe it is. But that's why it hits the mark so successfully — it is so open-ended.

Interesting, too, how this haiku sounds perfectly balanced with a second line that is shorter than the first or third.

Favourite Haiku 1

My one hand these days,
Not clapping but clutching
A flounder at ebb tide.

Natsume Sōseki (Tr Sōiku Shigematsu)

Charles Brien writes: For years I have been baffled by the famous Zen koan, 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' This haiku provides an ingenious answer to this riddle.

The world of modern western haiku presents a conundrum difficult to solve: Japan gave us rules that we of the west would like to follow but within which we are inclined to flounder. We might have ideas that empathise with Bashō and Issa, but much of our understanding and our environment is completely different. Nothing can change that. However, we try. We battle with syllables and Zen content — fair enough; it never does any writer or philosopher harm to grapple with their chosen path. Yet, through this intellectual fight, where does the truth stand? Does it matter, for example, even in the international world of today, that many of us have a basically Christian background when the 'big four' of haiku were Buddhist? How much that is worthwhile has had to be discarded for the sake of accepted form?

It is a dilemma, especially if you accept that haiku is a matter of philosophy combined with poetical expression. After all, we have been born to a poetical process of some length. Personally, I have nearly always found this process flawed by verbosity and I was attracted by haiku's succinctness.

My thinking leads me to experiment whilst keeping the original concepts in mind. That sounds obvious and, of course, incorporates the cause of the controversy that surrounds us. It means, I believe, that we should have an open mind.

Here are three of my experimental haiku:-

The shadow
of the aeroplane
disintegrating
as we climb

(First published in RAW NerVZ HAIKU Canada)

Oranges ripen alongside my life

(Published in 'l-orizzot' Malta and RAW NerVZ)

Wildness of the sea
keeping my ferry in port

(First published in Azami, Japan)

Haiku

purple dawn
a burst of mallards
breaks the silence

this winter night
my only company
an unknown star

Nika

Heavy and light
all night long
tin roof rain

Ken Jones

news of a friend's death
a few autumn leaves
remain

mild for November
still I meet no one
on my neighbourhood walk

Jean Jorgenson

a gate hangs,
pausing in streetlight...
a city fox

Alan J Summers

lone woman singing
to the river while her man
carries on fishing

Colin Blundell

kite festival
the church tower pennant
flaps and flaps

Susan Rowley

A shroud of fog:
day a dreary intermission
between two nights

Edward D Glover

watching grey mullet
nibbling at the waterline —
the old fisherman

John Shimmin

Alone at twilight
Standing at the garden's edge
My dog smells the air

Dusk
Distant shoreline
Disappearing

F Matthew Blaine

The thirteenth mile —
Rain now reaching
The forest's black pools
Rimmed with mushrooms.

Tito (Loch Lomond 9/94)

Favourite Haiku 2

Under the willow
with a leaf stuck in its mouth
the puppy sleeps

Issa

'This haiku so simply conjures up the best of summers: for me, school holidays years ago in the country' Dermot O'Brien

Pigs

slap of my hand
rousing dust
from the pig's back

Dee Evetts

pigs' noses
poking through the orchard gate —
longer and longer

Kathleen Basford

the year's first workday —
a pig's snout rooting
into morning snow

David Cobb

sleeping piglets
beneath the farrowing rail
squashed baby fieldmice

John Shimmin

across the mud patch
where heavy pigs wallow
a frog hops lightly

snouts in the trough
making pigs of themselves
— piglets

Charles Brien

rainfall
piglets suckling
to the last drop

Matthew Paul

The old sow eating
her piglets with a crunching sound —
barnyard butterflies

James Kirkup

Silent pig
in the curio shop
slightly cracked

Byron Jackson

Scratching
the pig eats
young herbs

Dimitar Anakiev

In the field pigs sleep
in old railway carriages —
first class bacon

Denise Bennett

the only child
wide-eyed in wonder at
eleven piglets

Martin Lucas

the snorting of pigs
at the bottom of the copse;
pinkness of piglets

Colin Blundell

trampling each other
over pawpaw and mango
chooks and pigs

Alan Summers

August evening
in the half light, amongst straw
a litter of piglets

Patricia V Dawson

Knee-deep in mud
the pinkness
of piglets

Cecily Stanton

the overgrown path
wild boar piglets run squealing
a hasty retreat

Jack Hill

I began to study the haiku in 1976. Until then it was for me (and unfortunately still is for most poets) a sort of 'instant poetry' — three liners written by either those too lazy to work at the craft or by serious writers needing a break from the labours of making 'real' poems. What dramatically changed my view of haiku was a copy of Makoto Ueda's *Modern Japanese Haiku* sent to me by a book review editor. Never before had I read poems that said so much with so few words. They were completely unlike the few awkward translations of classical Japanese haiku I had seen previously.

Ueda's anthology led to extensive further reading, including books by Blyth, Henderson, Yasuda, Giroux and Rexroth as well as any haiku periodicals I could find. This reading, along with my own attempts to create what Yasuda calls the 'haiku moment', resulted in the firm conviction that the haiku is at least as valid and rich as any other poetic form.

My appreciation of haiku grew so strong that one day it spontaneously resulted in the following poem:-

After Reading the Haiku of Bashō

*At first...
nothing*

*Then when I
start to yawn*

*My mouth fills with
cherry blossoms*

*And a frog
leaps out of
an eye*

Initially, I tried to compress the poem into a haiku, but gave up after numerous attempts. There was a lesson in my failure. Whereas before I had thought too little of haiku now I had begun to expect too much. As a poet, I had once more to reaffirm that every type of poem, whether haiku, sonnet or 'free' verse has a life of its own.

Senryu

loose now
on the knuckle
the thin gold

Susan Rowley

another hot day
aroused by her touch
...time for their breakfast

John Shimmin

The postal rate rises
— finally I can add
my two cents...

E/chuther

fiftieth birthday —
light the blue candles and
retire early

my head itching —
how fortunate to walk
beneath a holly

David Cobb

pulling back the sheet...
my dead mother not smiling,
unlike her photo

Caroline Gourlay

Summer Sunday —
across the breakfast table
brown eyes

Anita Packwood

sleepless —
hoping you'll wake
so we can argue

up to his wrists
in the washing-up bowl
he watches the rain

Daniel Trent

Seventy, I mend
a duvet cover, knowing
it will outlast me

Patricia V Dawson

in a Home now...
her gold bracelet slides
down to her elbow

the old bike rattles
up and down the driveway...
grandchildren's spring break

Sharon Lee Shafii

Guest Spot

one by one
he hands over the spring winds:
the balloon seller

Kazuo Sato (Japan)

after the rain
the smell of ground rises
towards the clouds

in a tree's crown
just a few apples
and the full moon

Robert Bebek (Croatia)

Tanka

I clean
as if the rote of yesteryear
guides me
I launder like a list checked off
I dust like a musical fall of notes

once
a lamplight image
of the dead one's eyes
and head too,
alert at the Bach

Sandford Goldstein

the indentation
of your head in my pillow
and your body smell
both linger to remind me
long after your departing

Richard Goring

As a meteor
dies across the sky
and I turn for home
glowworms by the hedgeside
signal their desire

Edward D Glover

An irate queue
outside the telephone box
silenced by my tears
cannot understand
how much it costs to say goodbye

John Shimmin

There is no escape
From the burning house of thought
Save in your embrace,
If only the swift-tongued flames
Would spread from my house to yours.

Patrick Bridgewater

I watch you sitting
where a tree spreads its cool
on the grass
and my mind thinks of cream
and fire of good whisky

Frank Dullaghan

Favourite Haiku 3

At the waterfall
I dive into the noise
and find quiet

Nathan Littlewood

Alan J Summers writes: I have picked Nathan Littlewood's haiku because it strikes a chord with me and I do like the seemingly contradictory nature of the waterfall's noise above and its quiet below.

Reading the first two lines, thinking, yes, how nice to dive into a waterfall, the third line just came up and hit me with its surprise conclusion. The third line coming out as a punchline was something I learnt and appreciated from a very fine Australian poet, Ross Clark and it works so well here. There is the effect of the pebble thrown into the pool ripple effect — one of those haiku that stay with you for a long time. Saying much with little.

The Pathway

Gaby Bleijenbergh (Dutch) and James Kirkup (English)

Lopen in de mist — geen sporen van schaduw geen kijk op verder...	Running through the mist — not a trace of my shadow and no further view...
---	--

*Dimitar Stefanov (Bulgarian)
and Mitko Vasilev with George Marsh (English)*

Гола глогина стиска кичурче вълна. Далечни хлопки.	A lock of wool caught on a bare hawthorn — distant bells
--	--

Стъклено пране е разрязало двора. Зъбато слънце.	Glassy washing has cut the yard — toothed sun
--	---

Снежинка избра невежествено нежно мъжа белокас.	Not so clever, tender little snowflake, to choose my foolish white head
---	---

С черни гарвани закопчават се ниви. Рано застудя.	It got cold early — the fields button up their coats with crows
---	---

Сладко си хрускат старите ми ботуши коричките лед.	My old boots with a delicious crunch on the ice crust
--	---

Jasminka Dordević (Serbian) with David Cobb (English)

prolazi sprovod tek pas se tromo vuče za mrtvim klovnom	going to his grave just a dog trudges along behind the dead clown
---	---

Favourite Haiku 4

I have many favourite haiku, but one I feel particularly attached to, perhaps because I had to struggle for its inclusion in 'The Haiku Hundred', is Yoko Ogino's poignant

hot bath water
cold on the breastless side
another fine day

On a pleasant summery morning, in a bathroom with the window open, a woman plunges into her bath and at the same time into the depths of paradox. The cooling air on wet skin scarred by a single mastectomy is an image which immediately suggests loss but at the same time permits us to think of heightened sensitivity. Life continues after the operation and the poet has less reason, but also more reason than ever, for rejoicing in it.

Ogino-san makes wonderful use, not only of contrast, but also of the 'hinge line' technique. If you read only the first two lines, you're left with a suggestion of depleted sensation. The haiku poet could suffer no more cruel fate than that. If you read only the last two lines, the sense shifts, possibly, in the direction of joy in the day ahead. But if you read all three lines (so wisely unpunctuated) and insert a caesura after line 2, the reading seems to me immediately much more optimistic. The choice of mood remains, though, in the heart of the reader, and surely no one could read it without a recognition of both grief and delight.

This haiku is rife with insoluble enigmas. Surely the cold feeling is not just because the breeze strikes the breastless side? The other side would have felt it too? The wonder is that the mutilated side has still so much feeling, so much life in it, and yet it is a feeling of what can never be again.

Something else which makes this haiku special is its sheer originality, its firm place in our contemporary world. Although uniquely feminine, I feel it transcends femininity; it is moving to a male, though I suspect it must work even more powerfully on a woman.

This, of all the various kinds of haiku there are to write, is the kind I would most like to write.

David Cobb

In his 'Remember to Remember', writing about Abe Rattner, artist, Henry Miller quotes from a letter he received from him encouraging him to keep up his work with water-colours saying that

[Your water-colours] are the expression of your intense emotional outbursts. Your *joie de vivre* comes out in them. They become another facet of your imaginative soul and will become an integrated part of your story...

As I was reading this passage and what follows it occurred to me that haiku function in just the same way: a haiku is expressive in a neutral kind of way of a more than 'intense emotional outburst' but it *is* that — a sudden outburst with the emotional charge left as unspoken gesture:-

the sky darkens
a final few blossom petals
blow across the road

The 'emotional charge' comes after the lines end, after the words have finished — it is the more powerful for being unstated. The '*joie de vivre*' of the writer is in the habitual alertness for registering moments usually passed easily by — registering them in the super-awareness of *habitual satori*.

evening hush ...
a tabby cat
slips through the railings

As with all creativity, the 'imagination' is at work here — the bisociative mechanism, juxtaposition of person, event, hush, tabby and railings, all stated so economically that any note of dualism is simply lost; the event just-is; the writer expresses a kind of anonymity.

The habitual production of haiku makes a poignant, memorable, nostalgic, bright contribution to the story you tell yourself about your life, to the metaphor you elaborate to describe, unpretentiously, the essential you.

twilight
the colour of cornflower
deepens

The shortest of poetic forms ought not, perhaps, to be murdered with dissection; so let us talk about haiku by not talking about it: read the rest of the letter quoted by Henry Miller, substituting 'haiku' for 'water-colour' and think on...

Stick to your child-like wonder over things that happen in [your water-colours] — and please do not try to 'know something' about so-called techniques of water-colour. When children get 'knowledge' they generally lose *profondeur* of expression. The water-colour becomes just a water-colour. Rather, it evolves. Starting as nothing, the process is a continuity of temptations which lead the artist into a series of adventures. The sum-total ends an experience. It is less the record of an experience than it is the crystallisation of the empathy of the artist for the excitations, pulsations, exaltations, elations, desperations over courage and fear before the unknown. Therefore the water-colour becomes a living entity. It is an untamed spirit rearing to go off somewhere into the unexplored regions — demanding that whoever goes along must have the maximum of sensitivities, taste, judgement, decision, selflessness, analytic mind, wits, wildness, wonder, etc, all coordinated with the precision of a matador, the good humour of a philosopher and the ever-ready abandon of an ignorant but fearless lover, all these and more, right at the finger-tip in full command. One display of weakness or lack of capacity to rise to a situation, and the artist is abandoned in derision by the water-colour... Each time [a water-colour] is tried is THE FIRST TIME. There is no beginning. There is no end. That is water-colour.

That is haiku. One display of weakness, one failure to rise to a moment of experience and you are abandoned in derision by haiku. It is not that you abandon the so-called spirit of haiku — there is no such entity to be abandoned. When a haiku doesn't work, *we are abandoned by haiku* — it is not the other way round. Haiku is not something weak that needs

defending; those who leap to the 'defence' of haiku run the risk of taking on whatever weakness they identify with. Indeed, the toughness of the explorer determines the nature of the terrain. Haiku is an untamed, and untamable, spirit rearing to go off into unexplored regions. Haiku contains whatever degree of imperturbability *you* bring to it.

quiet croaking of a crow
on the bare alder
old cones; new catkins

The haiku are taken from 'bluegrey' by Martin Lucas

Reviews

The Living Now: Dermot O'Brien (Kamac Publications 72pp £4.95)

'The Living Now' is a 'collection of poems...in...haiku/senryu form' inspired by Christian faith. Since the time of Bashō, haiku can be seen as a form of religious poetry. It has roots in the Buddhist understanding that all sentient beings, and even inanimate matter, are the Buddha-nature; that is, the flavour of reality penetrates everywhere. This was expressed, in so many words, by the enlightenment poem of Su Tung P'o: 'The voice of the brook is the eloquent tongue of Buddha;/ the hue of the hills — is it not his pure form?' (tr. B. Watson)

There seems to be no reason why such perceptions cannot also be couched in Christian terms, hymning Creation while resisting pantheistic connotations. Hopkins, for instance, has done so: 'Glory be to God for dappled things...'

Haiku, however, is an art of understatement and suggestion. It gives us 'things' and relies on the reader to perceive the 'glory'. In places Dermot O'Brien achieves this:-

The swill of gravel
in an old cement mixer
suddenly silent

Fallen from its nest
a fledgling magpie rescued
in a cloth-lined cap

Here there is both feeling and sensory awareness. Much of the time, however, he gives us comments in haiku-form which it would be accurate to describe as 'observations':-

What does it matter
as long as people love God
their next door neighbour?

Only what is said
about God is forever
words heard in heaven

To appreciate the book as a whole would require a taste for such miniature homilies. Dermot O'Brien's opinion is that 'the goal of life' — heaven — is more important than 'the path one takes to get there'. Such a philosophy may impede his poetry. Haiku demands attention to means as much as ends; religion is less a matter of talking about God than of finding Him in all things.

Flori nevâdute/Unsold Flowers: Ion Codrescu (Review by James Kirkup)
(obtainable only from Hub Editions, 4 Victoria Cottages,
Terrington St John, Nr Wisbech, Cambs £3.50/\$5)

The title 'Unsold Flowers' at once aroused my interest. It is a hauntingly sad one, with a hint of Latin nostalgia, like Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*. It comes from one of Ion Codrescu's best haiku

Easter evening —
the old woman gathers
her unsold flowers

in which the main image of the flowers is intensified by the pity of 'unsold', the pathos of the old woman flower seller and the tragedy of Easter. Yet that tragedy also gives the hope of resurrection, so we imagine the old woman taking her unsold flowers home, snipping the bottom of the stems, placing them in fresh water, keeping them in a cool place overnight so that she can revive them for sale the next day, along with newer, fresher blooms. It is not just a picture or a 'haiku moment': it is a human being's whole life that comes to mind as we read the poem, which reverberates in the memory long after we have closed this exquisite little book, beautifully decorated with the author's own black and white drawings.

Several of these haiku and tanka display that deep human sympathy:-

writing with your pen
the letters seem different
and I feel you close

on the shore
a beggar counting
a few small coins

at the restaurant
a sneeze reminds me of
my brother

it's getting dark...
the old woman dons her shawl
and looks at the clouds

Such feeling for ordinary people, old and humble, is rare in today's haiku world — at least in this uniquely sensitive, honest style.

As a professional artist, Codrescu often paints landscapes and plants using the craftsman's trained, detached eye, that is not detached from the heart:-

deserted house —
ivy has surrounded
the chimney

snow falling —
I sketch a landscape
on a white canvas

cold day —
village boats in the bay
seagulls nowhere

frozen lake —
the wind moves a newspaper
here and there

What is the secret of the magic in these fleeting glances at quite ordinary objects and scenes? First of all, however swift and fleeting a glance may be, it can take in a whole world. Many haiku depend for their impact upon the experience of seeing things and people 'as if for the first time'. We feel this in Codrescu's work, but there is something else, something more profound. He seems to be telling us that what we are seeing for the first time is something that cannot be captured again, that we are seeing it 'once and for all'. That sense of fatality in human lives gives each verse an added poignancy. There is the clear vision of a child and the dark sorrow of a visionary.

Codrescu's haiku are sometimes senryu, with a mixture of the two forms that I call 'haisen'. A world-weary irony and a wry humour inform such works:

counting chickens
the child scratches his head:
always a different number

elections over —
the defeated still smile
from their posters

hot day —
a fly interrupts
the president's speech

But always we return to that heartfelt feeling for all that is human, as in the tanka about the poet's mother:-

I'm still keeping
the bus ticket
from the last visit
to my mother
before her death

in which the apparent simplicity of the plain image of the bus ticket and the memory of a personal loss interact perfectly to make a touching tribute.

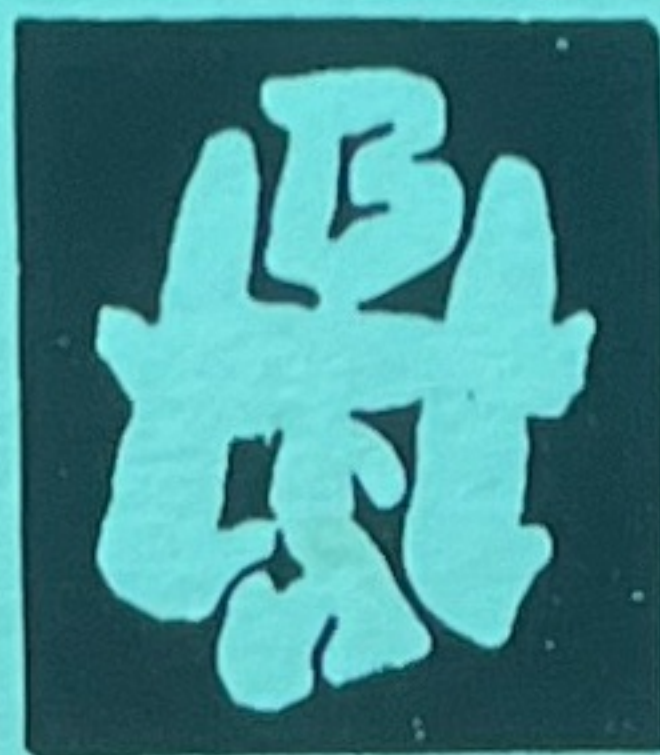
This is a book of discoveries that one returns to again and again — the ideal companion for solitude or the din of a coffee shop. The poems are printed in the original and in a precise, faithful, delicate English translation by Mihaela Codrescu. It is a work of art as neatly balanced as those three persimmons in one of Ion Codrescu's evocative brush paintings, with a falling leaf that echoes the haiku on the opposite page:-

silence —
the bird's flight turns
a dry leaf.

And though these haiku and tanka are in a 'free style', such is their intensity and economy of mood, we feel they have nothing missing. Their enchantment is complete.



Price £1.50



ISSN 1353-3320