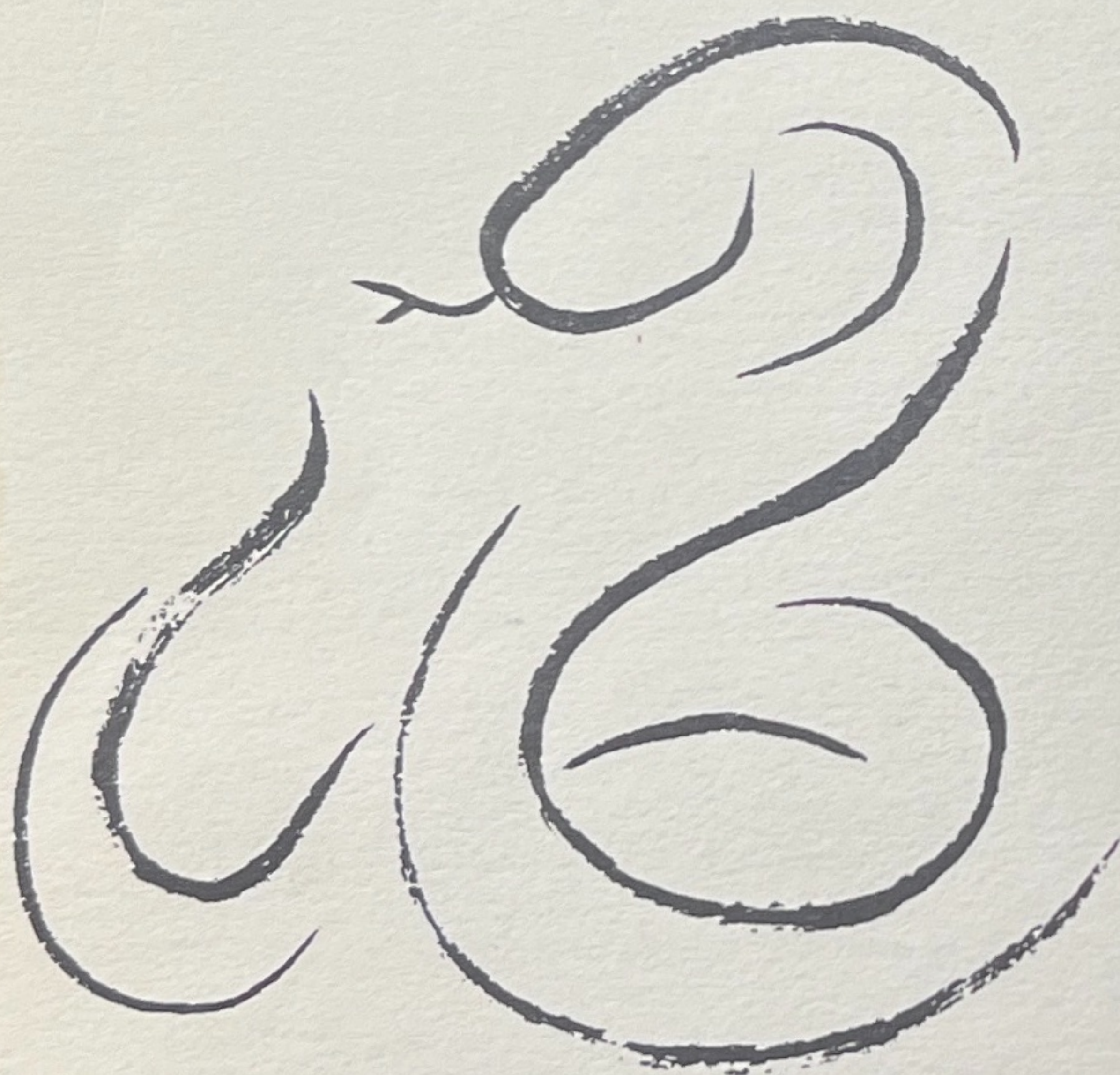


**Journal of
The British Haiku
Society**



Blithe Spirit

Volume 7 Number 3 August 1997

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]

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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.

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

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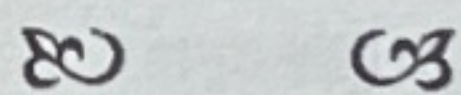
Editorial

In putting together this issue of *Blithe Spirit* I have had the able assistance of Becky Bennett, a student at Haydon Bridge High School. Becky was seeking work experience and I would like to extend my thanks for her help. For those of you who might wonder if the small town of Haydon Bridge has any significance, poetically speaking, then the answer is yes. Philip Larkin spent many a university summer vacation shacked up in a small house on the main road.

Volume 7 number 3 focuses on the haiku sequence, a form that has been previously neglected. My appreciation goes to those readers who have registered a positive response to the new section, the Featured Haiku Writer. This section will continue for at least another issue.

The theme for my and this year's last issue will be boats and ships. I hope this is sufficiently wide enough to offer inspiration. The season for haiku is Summer and all submissions should be with the editor by 4 October, please.

Jackie Hardy



Errata

Apologies are extended to David Steele for the *BS* 7/2 misattribution of his senryu -

at the cinema
too tall for his money
too short for his choice

And to Annie Bachini whose senryu should have read:

teaching practice -
the overhead projection
climbs up the wall

Haiku Sequences

Afterwards

wet grass
leaves after rain
silent cars

she holds me
her boy at our feet -
a pinewood box

I hold her
as they lower him -
her arms empty

at the roadside
a buckled bicycle
a spinning wheel

eyes wide -
but her inner eye
shut

Frank Dullaghan

Winter

a bitter north wind -
mallet gongs
on cymbals

guitar feedback...
last night's ice slides
down the window pane

dense fog after midnight...
bark from the barn,
snare-drum rattles

Keith Coleman

a positive result
from the pregnancy test...
trout-splash in the stream

seen from the window:
distant fields.. white birds
circle in the rain

tumuli skyline...
the first pains
of miscarriage

daffodils
in the window sill...
behind them the rain pours

strange bird
with a red breast
I have not seen you before

at dawn
above the snowdrops
rooks stir

first rain, then sun,
now the sound of dry leaves
blown along the road

morning sickness...
in the wet garden:
apple blossom

Claire Bugler Hewitt

Sun Moon Cloud

the evening cool -
back in the garden
cultivating simplicity

hearing a bell -
first memory
shape of the moon

days pile up
like clouds - the effort
of making my meal

grass grows tall
as the sun pokes a hole
right through the hedge!

I laugh at the clouds
for their being
so restless

sun miraculous-
living in the image
of passing seasons

there in the water
if you sweep the surface
the moon will sink

night carving
the morning dew
on a caterpillar's back

leaning on a cloud
sun and moon back
in my pocket

sun grazes my head
as clouds begin
to imagine you

Bill Wyatt - Wales 1984

Afterlife

Mother gone,
and my home
on the north side of town

her usual
Saturday morning call
in a dream

her face
in my mirror -
crickets singing

speaking low -
shadows of the stones
in the long light

cherryblossom-viewing
with Mother
and the crowd

Jeanne Lupton

The Farmer at St Benoit

we pay the rent
in advance,
to a sad landlord,

a widowed farmer,
he fills his evenings
with cognac and television

a neighbour tells us
that "he still mourns, even
after two years"

each day he brings
our mail. mysteriously, we
find it in a bush

when a cream car
arrives, his charolais appear
on the horizon

he smiles for the first time
as he fills a water trough
"Pour Les Bêtes".

Patricia V Dawson

The Hawthorn

end of winter -
faint green on the roundabout
hawthorn bushes

a garden seat
the scent of new wood
May flowers

hill-top hawthorns
petalling the road
patch after patch

hawthorn scrub -
between swelling berries
the last white flower

after the tractor
stumps of a hawthorn hedge
against a dark sky

shelter belt -
the black bark of hawthorns
burnished by sheep

leafless now
identifying hawthorns
their red berries

Jackie Hardy

Development

Blackbird spinking!
Surveyors move
into the woods

First leaves budding -
Beech trees falling
on soft moss

Long trunks lying -
Thin corpses
through sweet smoke

Arwyn Evans

Dysynni Valley Solitary for Sian Ty'r Gawen

Small grey fly
crawling up the goddess of compassion
doesn't make it

Yellow sheep walks
shaved close
to the bones of the land

Gilded
delicately fretted
and wafer thin
this sun dries cow pat

Annoyed
at becoming the noise
of the Calor gas fire

Immaculate voices
from
an immaculate conversion
[Snowdonia National Park]

More than a brown dog
with an unwieldy tail
that fox!

On top of the stove
always
the same spent match

Great sea wind
blows out the candles
lifts the scriptures
and makes the cockerel crow

Ken Jones

Letters

Dear Editor,

The May issue of *Blithe Spirit* [BS 7/2] contained 145 haiku, out of which only eight complied with the 5-7-5 format, or put another way, only 1/18th complied. To open my copy to be confronted by such a ubiquitous misuse of the 'licence' to ignore the 'norm', I immediately missed both visually and audially the expected mellifluous concord of synchrony a haiku should offer even before its sense is examined, ergo, it is somewhat diminished. The 5-7-5 format imposes a rigid constraint upon a would-be composer, a test of his/her ability. It wouldn't matter if it were a prescribed 3-5-3, still being a balanced constraint. A fresh application to the guidance given in the recently issued *The Nature of English Haiku* assures me that the 5-7-5 is not an absolute; but the near-universal denial of it here admits a laxity. That same re-reading of guidance also re-appraised me that a haiku poet does not strive to be pedantic - but I take that to only extend to that which his verse conveys.

I am aware of the 'minimalist' activity within the haiku ranks, and would be quite happy with their work, if only they went 'public' in their taste and did not at will wander without any syllabic-count restraint, neither accurate, nor by number less or more.

The instant recognition of the disregard paid to the 'norm' in this issue, not only robbed me of that balanced concord I write of, it next predisposed me to reading thereafter not in a mood of harmonious receptivity but rather, the whole reading became a critical exercise, looking for flaws. Am I so wrong in my expectations?

In the whole issue comprising 145 verses, a novice would get scant guidance of what is on offer currently in the UK-sphere of haiku, for there were four verses with a 10-syllable line, one with 11 syllables, even one with 13 syllables - and even worse, one writer had three poems published which successfully had syllable counts of 23, 29 and 30! Couplets also flourished.

For the minimalists, if a line with but one, two or three syllables cannot be expanded to hold five syllables without seeming 'padded' then I can see a need for the loss of conformity and balance, otherwise it should be binnable, ie. classified as non-haiku. As to 13-syllable lines, the writer is in the wrong genre, novel-writing would seem appropriate.

Other member's opinions would be of interest, although - judging on this issue alone - those submitting work would seem to have already spoken.

Douglas M Henly, Cardiff

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the copy of *Blithe Spirit* with review of *Dust Devils Dancing*. I have circulated these comments to contributors, most of whom are experienced writers of haiku and other verse forms which have been published.

Personally, I have been interested in haiku for about two years and have studied the relevant literature. I have thought about joining the BHS, but I am in total disagreement with your policy of including 1, 2 or 4 line 'poems' in this genre. I think it is quite legitimate to extend the subject matter to incorporate Western attitudes, but not to discard the basic structure. In my view this is no longer a haiku and should be called something else. Would anybody dream of calling a 12-line poem a 'sonnet', or a 3-line stanza a 'quatrain'? It doesn't make sense to me.

Margaret Tims, St Albans

[Margaret Tims is editor of the Ver Poets collection, *Dust Devils Dancing*, reviewed in *BS* 7/2. We managed to mis-spell Ms Tims' surname in the review and we sincerely apologise for that error]

Dear Editor,

You don't have to have read the Ver Poets' *Dust Devils Dancing* (and, not having read it, I am not offering an apology for it) to appreciate that JAH's review raises a lot of dust that the BHS has studiously avoided breathing in or even vacuuming up for seven whole years.

Firstly, to dismiss the Ver Poets as 'half-initiated' in the matter of haiku-writing presupposes that there are people who have given themselves the airs and graces of Initiates, presupposes that there exist on this planet 'The Initiated', trousers rolled up or stockings rolled down and peculiar handshakes to boot. Does a subscription to BHS get you initiated? Does scrupulously toeing the *Consensus* line mean that you are initiated? Is there an examination? Or is simply to get into *Blithe Spirit* a sign that you've made it?

Secondly, sending the Ver Poets a copy of *BS* seems to me to be a poor way of seeking to 'inspire' them. What will they find? They'll find 5-7-5, philosophy, a question, simile, metaphor, anthropomorphism and so-whatness and a lot of attractive images. I wonder what they'll make of it all... What will they think of BHS? It's instructive to look at oneself from another's vantage point occasionally.

Whilst I have tried to found a School of Installation of the Classification 'Justahaiku' (SIC-J), I am not an Initiate of the 'Hunt-the-not-a-haiku' School, nor am I a professionally initiated weeder out of 'hardlia-haiku'; so in what follows *it is emphatically not to be assumed* that I am saying that the haiku I quote should *not* have appeared in *BS* or that they are for consigning to the haiku-bin. I am just concerned that Ver Poets will not be able to draw the conclusions from *BS* 7/2 that JAH imagines they might.

Let's just take anthropomorphism as an example of one of the crimes of the BHS world; there are a number of examples of it in *BS* 7/2: birds do not engage in 'chatter' (p.2), neither do they 'sing' (p.13) - they simply make a birdish-noise, anything between tweeting or honking, nor could any member of the animal kingdom other than human beings, perhaps, be said to be 'idle' - birds have all the time in the world to do just whatever they wish to do and in my garden they always look very active, being reinforced that way by the prevalence of fodder in the neighbourhood. Cliff winds don't sing either (p.12) - they do not possess vocal chords. And trees don't have 'armpits' (p.3). And, in any human sense, dragonflies don't make 'choices' (p.8). And overhead projector projections don't 'climb' anything (p.15) - they have no feet. All the words in inverted commas in this paragraph are anthropomorphic plasterings on visible-aural manifestations of the observable universe.

Anthropomorphisms imply simile or they shift imperceptibly into metaphor: 'cat's pawprints / seem delicate carvings' (p.3) is implied simile; 'like the stretch of falling snow' (p.17) makes no effort to conceal itself; unlike the snail's trail in simile with 'Hail-Bopp's trail' (p.19), 'meadows of light' (p.21) or David Cobb's playful 'my walking shoes / fitting like new / camellias bursting' (p.21) where, in spite of the word 'like', the simile is only present in the alternative reading (which, to my mind, makes more explosively exciting reading than the tame 'first' reading with its imported pause at the end of the second line).

'So-whatness' is a very interesting category, equivalent to SIC-J, perhaps. But the category SIC-J is one the contents of which provoke a yawn - seen it all before; one might be hard put to discover the fine distinction between 'so-whatness' and 'just-so-ness' or 'thusness' (in the mystical tradition called *istigkeit*). As an example of 'just-so-ness', I find Fred Schofield's 'on a rock / two silent crows / the tide far below' (p.12) a brilliant and moving example; since, to me, the fruit of impressions is a valuable food, and always worthy of record, I find it very difficult to find dismissable examples of 'so-whatness' (by which I understand simply a verbal photo or the simple pointing out of things) in any writing at all, but let's take 'now the leaves have gone - two

nests' (p.2, incidentally can we not have decent dashes in BS?) as a contender for the 'so-what' poem of BS 7/2 and compare it with 'After the silent film / we all talk at once' (p.8) which is similar in tone and structure: the latter poem has a lovely amusing tension (or the breaking of it) which makes it far from 'so-what'; and then you see that the former poem achieves a similar tension by comparison - the nests were hidden there all summer... The restrained skill of just pointing things out is something that human beings would do well to cultivate - if that earns the condemnation of 'so-whatness', well, so what, I say.

Speaking as a de-initiate, who just happened long ago to get 'hooked on 5-7-5', I would like to ask what exactly is wrong with disciplining oneself to construct a haiku within self-imposed constraints; I would never talk about people being 'hooked on free-style haiku' let alone dismiss their efforts; indeed Hub Editions has published Fred Schofield and Martin Lucas whose poems are outstanding examples of 'other than 5-7-5 haiku' - see, I cannot even bring myself to solidify a category for them by giving it a name.

Finally, though he's not allowed a question mark, Issa asks a question on p.6 and 'peeing in Warsaw' to the uninitiated will sound remarkably like an example of 'philosophy'. Not the only example in BS 7/2.

I shall send Ver Poets a copy of this letter so they can continue to make their own choices.

Colin Blundell, Spalding

Haibun

Bill Wyatt

Late May Bank Holiday weekend - Wales, 1997

My old friend Chris's cat is getting on in years. She has grown so old and frail since the last time I saw her. Now blind and deaf, rheumatic, she sits quietly, resting in the sun's warmth. Once the terror of squirrels, woodcocks and robins, I wonder sadly if I will ever see her again. Lizards wake up and walk past her, undetected. Suddenly, touched by thoughts of impermanence, tears well up ...

Buttons faltering
on sunlit pathway - my heart
stops and skips a beat

Haiku

a stone shaken
from the heel of my shoe
apple blossom

Matthew Paul

Where the river bends
there the fish leap highest
for mayfly

Edward D Glover

Public Baths
in a patch of sunlight -
iridescent scum

Colin Maxwell-Charters

soap bubbles
great and small, each reflects
the same shining morning

Paul Amphlett

shine of the crow's beak
shine of the bluebottles

Susan Rowley

a medusa
floating
in front of my float

Hisashi Miyazaki

November wind
pasting the leaves
to the kerbside

In the summer heat
a listless kite
stays earth-bound

under a bright moon
my shadow keeping time
to my whistling

Peter Werner

Afternoon shadows,
stretching from the driveway
reach the road

Carried by the wind
just a faint smell of burning:
funeral morning

Birthday flowers:
greetings card on its side
some petals drop

Sue Schraer

heat lingers
above a flat horizon
a slight breeze

Anita Packwood

rocks
beneath the rookery
rooks

Martin Lucas

Early morning voices
and the scent of you
half a pillow away

John Barlow

rustling of leaves
around the lakeshore -
clouds darken

Padraig O Horgain

old grave...
even the plastic roses
are wilting

Frank Williams

reading in bed
between chapters
sound of the sea

byron jackson

Simile, Metaphor and Anthropomorphism in Modern Japanese Haiku

Jackie Hardy

Most English readers of Japanese haiku will be more familiar with the work of Bashō than with any of the modern Japanese haiku writers. With 800 or so haiku clubs active in Japan today, this is not because of a dearth of modern Japanese haiku but must, in some part, be the result of few available English translations.

A Hidden Pond - Anthology of Modern Haiku edited by Kōko Katō and translated by the editor and David Burleigh, is to be welcomed because it offers an opportunity to the English reader to experience 218 modern Japanese haiku. This edition contributes a new wide-open window on the haiku-writing way and at the same time reveals recurrent arguments.

The British Haiku Society in its *Towards a Consensus.....* has been unequivocal in its attitude towards simile, metaphor and anthropomorphism. Professor Arima Akito in his Foreword to *A Hidden Pond*, tells us that haiku are 'symbolic and objective'. Kōko Katō states that 'The haiku poet presents him or her [the reader] with some fresh experience or observation that is conveyed directly'.

When a simile is introduced it can be recognised by the words 'as' or 'like'. It has been said if something is like something, it is never itself. What simile does is evoke a world that exists alongside that which is being described. Can it then be considered to be 'conveyed directly'?

Here are some examples:

Like a Mozart
sonata - the sea on
a morning in spring

Hoshino Bakkyujin

The thinnest ice
retreats like cherry blossoms
deep in the mountains

Fujita Shōshi

in spring sunlight
the rows of tea bushes
ripple like waves

Morita Tōge

As sharp and piercing
as a sudden flash of light -
winter withering

Kurahashi Yoson

Metaphor can be recognised in a text by the use of the word 'is' or the implication that something is something else. In haiku, with its often incomplete syntax, the verb is frequently implied. A metaphor's function is not to express the otherwise inexpressible, rather, what a metaphor does is express the way in which, seen in a certain light, two very different things can be essentially similar. A haiku moment.

Some examples:

Spinning the light rays
from my hometown into yarn -
this pussy willow *Shimada Maki*

Daybreak in spring -
the waves drape silk gauze around
the skirts of an island *Hara Kajō*

Through fire on the sea
a single line of warriors
goes marching past *Kawano Ryōsō*

A transparent fish
is flying in the dark sky -
autumn at night *Fukuhara Keiichi*

Bashō's advice was to observe directly from the natural world with an open heart. The following poets have taken that advice. If anthropomorphism is in tune with what Bashō was saying then these must qualify as haiku:

White peonies
flushed ever so slightly
with carnal desire *Hinoki Kiyo*

Fireflies in love
where the sound of two rivers
flow together as one *Shihashi Seisui*

Right in the heart
of a waterlily plays
a dewdrop child *Asakura Kazue*

Inside my closed eyes
the white soul of each snowflake
just passes away *Akao Ei*

These haiku from *A Hidden Pond* illustrate clearly that simile, metaphor and anthropomorphism are all alive and well in modern Japanese haiku. The case against simile I find unchanged. As for metaphor and anthropomorphism - when they appear in English haiku and are placed in the pans of the editor's scale they will continue to receive a considered balance, the weight of judgement will not necessarily go against them.

Museum of Haiku Literature Award

Caroline Gourlay writes: After much deliberation between the first and the last of Mirko Vidovic's original and moving Images of War, I opted for the first:

virile young men
shooting their semen out
in the trenches

This haiku/senryu is not so simple as at first it might seem. Indeed, though its strength is in the very ordinariness of the narrative statement, behind it lie layers of subtlety that hint at different possible interpretations and levels of meaning. The word 'shooting', for instance, with its intended irony, contrasts with the almost flat delivery, sharpening the focus and heightening the tension. That these are 'virile' young men emphasises how trapped they are by their situation.

Many have emphasised the shock and horror of war, but few so graphically and succinctly the sheer pointlessness of it. In fourteen syllables Vidovic has captured its stupidity and futility - the discarded sperm an apt metaphor for wasted lives; routine masturbation is a lonely affair - how effectively in this context does it reflect the deeper loneliness of dying.

Can one not sense also an element of black humour here? Soldiers, aware of their situation, gesturing defiance - their act an expression of scorn aimed at those they feel have cynically manipulated them?

Others in this issue that I feel deserve special mention are Linda Marshall's *slow on crutches* and Claire Bugler Hewitt's *the sound of the sluice gate*.

Susumu Takiguchi is to select from this issue.

Spring

Bright morning
scraping a new blade
over my bony cheek

Ken Jones

deeper shade of pink
a drift of cherry petals
by moon and street light

Frank Williams

spring sunshine-
a small white feather
comes floating down the weir

Claire Bugler Hewitt

april soon -
buds on the trees
even downtown

Jeanne Lupton

From ice to jelly -
the garden pond this spring

Along the hillside
wells bubble in line -
Spring rain

Arwyn Evans

in the park
almost overnight,
almond-blossom

Katherine Gallagher

letting the dog out -
what shall we do today,
this first of spring?

in the garden shed
something stirring the dust -
april

Auntie's ashes
dusting my brogues -
stiff April breeze

Geoffrey Daniel

Morning sunshine
In the daffodil shadow
a dry worm

Humberto Gatica

even in my pocket -
it is everywhere
this morning's spring wind

Gilles Fabre

birthday -
wearing a chiffon dress
and a May breeze

Yoko Ogino

Curlew's call
returns to echo the moor
snow by the wall

David Leather

Sainsbury's in spring -
a young couple push the trolley
holding hands

Annie Bachini

in and out of lavatera
gang of hedge sparrows
to the birdfeeder

Alan J Summers

at dusk
out of the spring cherry
a swirling cloud of moths

the spring moon
peeping out
eye of a crayfish

Keith Coleman

Spring's sprung in Hyde Park;
an eye-catching kite caught fast -
trees coming into leaf

Bamboo Shoot

clutching daffodils
watching the old gravedigger -
curious children

John Shimmin

Bravely
intruding the herb bed:
spring's first daffodil

Paul Quayle

tilting slightly
the scarecrow's new hat
spring breeze

and again spring
back to its old slim self
garden hedgehog

Francis Attard

The sun in the west
the evening bell sounds gently
the closing of the park

Dermot O'Brien

dandelion clocks -
parachuting seeds
lost in rush hour traffic

Wind-blown clouds
slip from the moon: down here
snowdrops shiver

Janice Fixter

Bruce Leeming

spring shower
a chirrup of sparrows
in the eaves

late frost: between boughs
laden with apple-buds
the Plough's seven stars

Matthew Paul

Edward D Glover

rhododendron blossom
a white waterfall
tumbles into the lake

Paul Amphlett

Blowing a grass flute -
my young days
have gone away

On fresh-painted slats,
sticking to the picket fence:
Forsythia stars

Yasuhiko Shigemoto

Sue Schraer

glimpsed between
the young green leaves
the rising tide

May Day --
the buzz of bees
around the myrtle

David Steele

Richard Goring

Featured Haiku Writer - L A Davidson

a chirping cricket
reminds the passerby
it, too, exists

U.S. army and we
camping by the Neckarstrand
monastery bells

dressed in tatters
she rummages turned furrows
for missed potatoes

no breath of air
through yellow aspen leaves
in constant motion

sitting in the sun
people on library steps
pigeons on ledges

eating sashimi
beside a small pink fish
in the café tank

a palm tree shadow
stretches across white sand
towards blue water

the great river
still takes what it will
of the valley

waiting
in a dead tree
three vultures

a mockingbird
rocking the garden
with its songs

senryu:

"This is good!"
eating alone the soup
I made for me

Born (1917) and reared on a ranch in Montana, USA, I came to rest in Greenwich Village, New York City, in 1963, having graduated from the University of Minnesota (1940), and lived in South Dakota, Maryland, and Indiana; also in Oxford, England (1948-51) with my Rhodes Scholar husband and two small daughters, and in Kampala, Uganda (1961-62).

I was consumed with writing from youth, particularly poetry, and in 1966 started studying and writing haiku. A charter member (1968), I have been active in the Haiku Society of America and on the editorial committee that published its *A Haiku Path* (1994). Aside from one chapbook, *The Shape of the Tree* (New York, NY, 1982, reprinted '91, '96), my haiku and relevant writings have appeared in magazines, anthologies and books. My haiku are a personal journal in that they are written from observations and specific moments of my life. I regret not having known it when living in England, truly the perfect place for haiku inspiration.

L A (Laura Agnes) Davidson

Favourite Haiku

wasp nest
perfect, in the rafters
of a ruined house

Cicely Hill

old electric fire
discarded in the garden
heated by spring sun

Colin Blundell

Two splendid haiku, each proclaiming the triumph of nature over the ingenuity of man.

Patricia V Dawson

Senryu

after the meeting
noticing my teeth are
still clenched

Susan Rowley

the phone going---
sailing on
his yacht

Hisashi Miyazaki

seaside nails
never
so clean

J R Wilson

Talking fast
on his mobile
he steps in a puddle

Peter Werner

Trying to compose a haiku
while cooking breakfast.
My egg - hard-boiled

John Barlow

Everyone with their babies.
In my head
an idea for a poem

clack-clock!
from the bowling green
woodsmen

Richard Goring

adrenalin surge
and the blisters on my feet
go unnoticed

Janice Fixter

phoning to chat
the answerphone greets me
with my own voice

stage curtains open
on momentary silence

Frank Dullaghan

in the trouser press
my son's school tie
still knotted

news item-
knowing exactly what my mother's
response would have been

Annie Bachini

one night stand...
all day above the Atlantic
my book unopened

Dee Evetts

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.

Fukunaga Kōji (Japanese) and Chiyoko Mukai / George Marsh (English)

Poems written in the year of his death, 1980

ressha no hi
todoku tokoro ni
ringo uru

the locomotive headlight beam
reaches the place
where apples ripen

asa mozu no
yuu mozo mo ware
tumaru koe

shrikes in the morning
shrikes in the evening
with my choked voice

momiji furu
ki no kanashimi no
gotoku furu

the yellowed leaves
are the feelings of trees
falling away

boroboro no
mi wo karegiku no
miyuru he ni

my bag of bones
and withered chrysanthemums
all there is to be seen

Vladimir Devide (Croat and English)

U Svetoj noći
i snježne su pahulje
meke i tople.

In the Holy Night
the snowflakes too
are soft and warm

Čestitar Nove
godine: i dimnjačar
bijelog lice!

Handshakes for New Year -
even the chimney sweep
has a clean face!

Following the piece in *Blithe Spirit* 7/2, I received a letter from Dick Pettit:

"I regret to say you are performing a con-trick upon the membership, and passing off as a haiku with headnote what is in fact a type of haibun. The Bashō headnotes in Ueda are mainly places of note, circumstance or person. Where they are more, the resulting haiku will often stand without them, as for example the snowball poem for Sora. Only in very few, as for example the crane and banana plant (p.233), does the poem have an extra dimension because the reader has been informed that this is a painting - he needs the information to fully understand the verse.

The two pieces you have shown in *BS* are haibun. Some verses at the end of the haibun summarise or pick out a detail of what's gone before: the prose could stand by itself, and the verse is an elegant extra. Your two are in a way the opposite type: the verses aren't easily understandable without the prose - though they would have been clear enough to anyone who was there at the time.

Nevertheless, they are clearly part of a progression. After them come types of verse which turn away from the prose. For example, treating the prose as a renga verse which the haiku both connects up with and gives a new turn of topic to, or connects only by scent or allusion. Also there's what I call 'prowling cat' haibun prose, which keeps changing tack, so that you don't know which way it's going, and the haiku is the final twist, or attack."

Dick's arguments convince me and I ask the Editor's leave to formally recant.

At the same time, I think we probably do need some term to distinguish short, single-episode haibun from more extended haibun.

Bill Wyatt tells me there's a whole range of terms in Japanese for different types of haibun. There are two general categories to begin with: *kiko* (record of the road or journal), and *nikki* (diary), which is presumably available to the non-traveller. Within these there are even more precise terms: *michi no ki* (diary of the road), *mōde no ki* (record of a pilgrimage), *kiko no ki* (narrative of the road), and *gokō ki* (diary of an imperial journey, which in 20C Britain may be a little outside our compass).

It doesn't seem wise to me to take all these terms over into English. Rather, we should find something of our own. Haibun and haibunetta? No, thank you. One-act haibun and extended haibun? Perhaps. Can anyone come up with a better suggestion?

Trees

in amber glow
of the street light
palm tree swaying

byron jackson

defining 'yellowness'
in early spring
abundant laburnum

Matthew Paul

Wind bends the treetops
-here in the forest below
not a blade stirs

Deirdre Roberts

A laughing boy
tries to embrace the giant
Wellingtonia

Bruce Leeming

mustiness
hanging over the old churchyard
linden blossom

Richard Goring

Stopped in my tracks
by sweet blooming hawthorn;
dog waits

Paul Quayle

not a breath of wind
a leaf from the sycamore
falls away

wind chimes
from next door's silver birch
more sweepings

John Shimmin

walking a path
the sun through leafless trees
a walkman plugged in

Alan J Summers

under the trees
a sudden shower --
yesterday's rain

Dee Evetts

always
by the fire station
- boring sycamores

A Jarrett

The trunk's slow reeling,
the crash of boughs,
dead silence`...

Klaus-Dieter Wirth

autumn maples
drifting brown leaves
gypsy caravan

pine-cones in the fire
the scent of winter
fills the room

Grace Yamamoto

three years later
covering the wounded earth
pines grow on Rokko mountain

wild enough
to grow in the dark
forsythia

Yoko Ogino

Sword-like cypresses
along the Amalfi road -
sharpness of lemons

Brian H Wells

between the question
 and the reply
sunlight on a few leaves moving

dusk-
the sound of snow falling
the sound of the old pines
holding it

Geoffrey Daniel

Oxleas Wood leafing-
protesters keep
their vigil

Katherine Gallagher

Amongst the saplings,
planted to remember you:
a lean poplar

Sue Schraer

chill spring wind ...
beneath the lime tree
a severed crow's head

Frank Williams

From distant tree tops
a tawny owl starts to call-
rain soaks up silence

Bill Wyatt

the branches
of the cedar tree-
islands in the bay

Claire Bugler Hewitt

trees in the fog-
a horse stamps

Two enormous oaks
each end
of an empty clothes line

National Park
not a tree
out of place

Woods
made empty
by a raven's croak

Ken Jones

a single light
through wet birch branches
- a hundred haloes

between the tips
of willow branches
small fish move

David Steele

Tanka

Wild cherry blossoms
drifts away like confetti
and ducks swim in pairs
But you and I walk alone
in separate cities now

John Barlow

red coals
turning over slowly
my silence; your silence
the blue and the gold
flames

Martin Lucas

how something so small
can have such an impact
at this present time-
tiny yellow narcissi
in my hospital room

Anita Packwood

at the Spring show
beneath the 'NO LIVESTOCK' sign
a guilty glance
as grandpa picks a small snail
from his prize pelargonium

Richard Goring

I have spared you tales
of frost and flooding. Why
are you so jealous
now, when I tell you that
the sun shines on my garden?

Your letters are as
uncertain as falling leaves
their arrival seen
but their departure less
easy to predict

Patricia V Dawson

outside
the labour-room
fresh bank of snow
a gull's cry
resembling my son's

Matthew Paul

long night through
storm growls in the chimney -
then just for a minute,
moist and calm,
light of the haloed moon

(after the snow shower
on New Year's Eve) a plume
of pampas grass sways
in the wind, limp and bedraggled-
a moorland pony's mane

Keith Coleman

poised on the edge
of the glittering opalescent sea
trying to seize the clear air,
all in my mind
falling away

Maggie West

Rain of light and air:
Surely not for me alone
This dance of the clouds;
This old bench facing southward
Catches all the brightest skies

The magpie feather
Found on a windy hillside
Now rests on my desk
The sheen on its leading edge
Only borrowed from the sky

Anne Stephens

at the wedding
throwing rice
she substitutes
nostalgia
for fact

Peter Werner

Reviews

Haiku World: an International Poetry Almanac, William J Higginson, Kodansha International, 1996, pbk., 407 pages, ISBN 4-7700-2090-2. US\$19.00 (UK price £15.50)

The publication of this volume, together with its companion, *The Haiku Seasons* [reviewed *BS* 7/2], is likely to become a signpost along the path of haiku into the Western world. The author cogently reasserts the case for inclusion of a 'season word' in haiku, whilst allowing that some haiku will contain words having a similar effect without being tied to any particular season. The author explodes the myth that lack of a season word is one of the distinctive marks of senryu, for among the 1,000 or so poems exemplifying 680 or so seasonal topics, senryu are numerous and treated on a par with haiku.

The 680 topics actually proliferate into 3,600 words and phrases. Nevertheless, one of the pleasant pastimes the book will permit you to engage in, when you have a spare moment, is to think of some darling season words of your own that may not be included. (For example, I quickly missed *blackthorn*, *sloe*, *cowslip*, *Pancake Day* and a few more that are essential to someone writing in East Anglia.)

Haiku World is actually quite a bit smaller than the standard Japanese *saijiki*, which we are told has more than 6,000 season words in over 2,100 topic entries.

Is it fair to go in search of missing items? Can Higginson, compiling in New Mexico, be expected to know what are significant season words in places as far removed as East Anglia? Well, yes, by his own yardstick he can; the book does set out, uniquely I think, to be an international almanac. But the author is the first to admit that this is a project that will probably go on for ever; the coverage so far is, inevitably, tilted towards the northern hemisphere, towards temperate climes, and towards Japan and America. We must hope that, in preparing a second edition, Kodansha will provide the financial support that would enable the author to set up a broader network of local and regional correspondents.

Higginson has, nevertheless, gone an amazing way along the road to internationalism and generations to come will be greatly indebted to him. There are examples in a score of different languages, though poems composed in English predominate.

With the benefit of *Haiku World*, Japanese critics should be better able to appreciate the seasonal qualities of non-Japanese haiku, which in the past they might have been excused for dismissing as lacking such qualities. At the same time, one must hope the Japanese do not elevate the book to the status of an absolute canon, at least until the author has had, in a second edition, the opportunity to correct a relatively small number of inaccuracies. For some particular haiku, each misrepresentation or misapplication will be crucial. (To cite but one example, "The European robin redbreast (*E. rubecula*) has been thought of as a spring bird throughout British literature, since it comes back to the Isles in spring." If believed, this statement would be likely to make the majority of British haiku about robins incomprehensible to the Japanese reader.)

There is another question hanging over the likelihood of the author's success in convincing Japanese critics that poets in the West know how to write 'seasoned haiku', for one observes that the final 'All Year' section is actually longer than, for example, the section devoted to Winter season words, and in this section almost all the examples are from Western pens, whereas in the Winter section about a third are by Japanese poets.

Higginson draws attention to the possibility of disparities between what we read in field guides (books about birds, wild animals, wild flowers, trees, etc.) and the literary traditions of the *saijiki* (almanacs of season words). Where there is conflict, he believes the literary tradition should prevail. I shall look forward to discussing this proposition with British poets at workshops in the coming year, but for the moment I have my doubts. We have been taught, have we not (and not least by Higginson himself, in his renowned *Haiku Handbook*) to write from direct experience and immediate observation. Literary tradition, unless it evolves too, must become increasingly at variance with present experience and practice. We plough differently in the year 2000 (just try telling Essex farmers they do it in spring!), the fox has taken to the streets, the elm tree stump is bushy only with fungus; we all have our dodos. Even the domestic cow is threatened, as we know it.

The suggestive and evocative power of haiku depends, for this reviewer, rather more on authenticity to the current state of things in the natural and human world, than on links to human experience of nature as it is recorded in haiku of the past.

But this is a question every serious haiku poet has to answer for himself. Put this inestimable book at the top of your next birthday or Christmas present list and set to work!

DC

Sway, Fred Schofield, Hub Editions, 1997, ISBN 1-870653-60-2. £4.00

Fred's second collection from Hub contains 103 haiku or senryu. Hub's housestyle allows plenty of space for each poem and has 'A Note on Haiku and Senryu' as an Introduction. In just one page the notes on haiku, senryu, form and origin are necessarily short, but I found they offered an insight into Fred's particular way of writing.

This is a book to be thoroughly recommended and by way of recommendation I would like to focus this review on a Fred particularity. Namely, his use of the caesura two-thirds(ish) along the second line. Although this is not exclusive to Fred, he does it often enough (nearly 10% of the haiku/senryu in this collection conform) for it to be remarkable. Take, for example:

first warm sun
descends from the moor - a distant
curlew's cry

The way the haiku is set out is considered and has little to do with syllable count. It works so well because the chosen layout is not confining and offers numerous possibilities. It enables the reader 'to partake in the poem through the natural response of the imagination' (Introduction).

What of:

no one talking
in the house - sounds
of rain

How much would have been lost if 'sounds' had been confined to the third line?

Finally, and probably best; at least, my favourite:

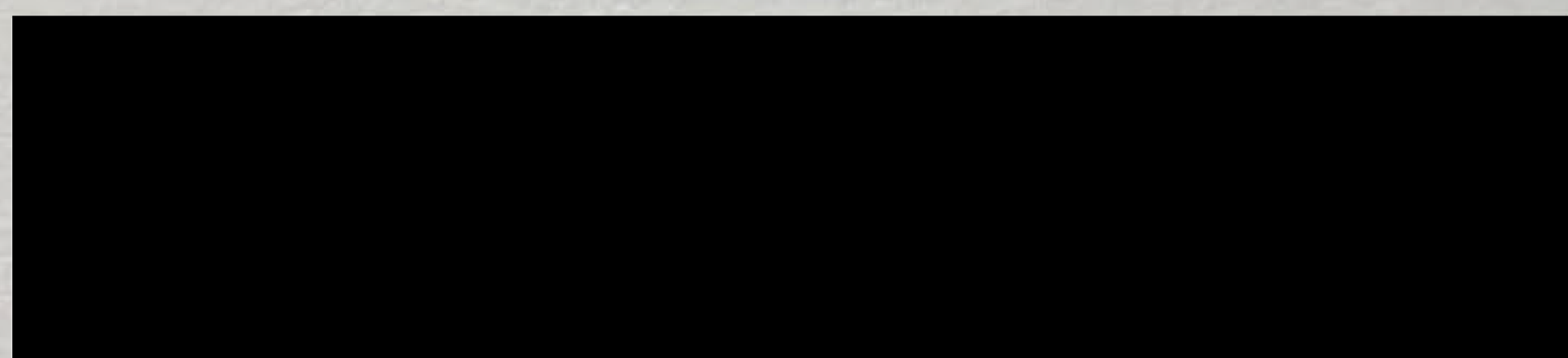
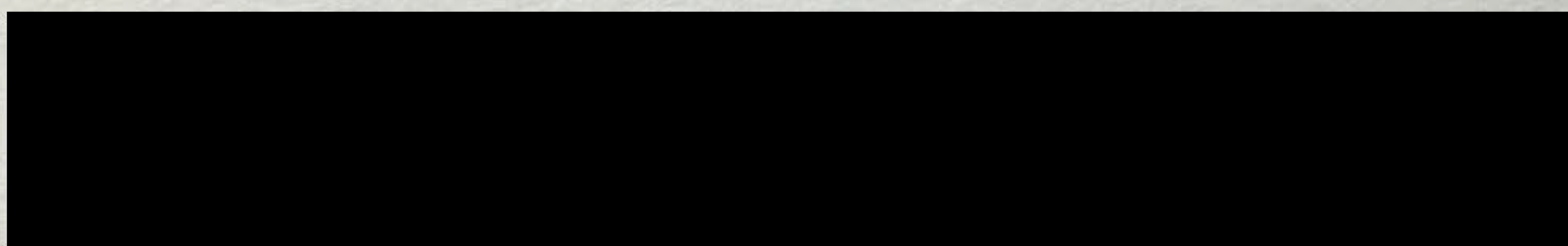
waterfall
against the rocks - spray
on the winter wind

JAH

HAIKU MOUNTAIN RETREAT

10 - 12 October 1997

GLENDALOUGH, Co WICKLOW, EIRE



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