

Shamrock Haiku Journal

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world

Issue 1, 2007

Shamrock



Haiku Journal
of the Irish Haiku Society

Focus on

RUSSIA

evening...
watching silent films
in the windows across the street

writing in the dark
unaware that my pen
has run out of ink

-- *Ivan Akhmetiev*

Drought...
the world of the pond-skater
narrowing steadily

Misted glass...
the bus takes away
the mark of my palm

Film on the end of the world –
teletext: weather forecast
for tomorrow

-- *Daria Batalina*

old photographs
father's hand on my shoulder
a maple leaf

fancying the sea
in a stuffy carriage –
easy to breathe now

-- *Elena Katsuba*

Tired of stargazing,
I look down –
puddle full of stars

Poets at the pedestal –
covering them all,
shadow of the statue

Pigeon in the room
flies into the mirror
I reflect off it

-- *Konstantin Kedrov*

end of winter –
how thin
the tube of green bice!

flying up from the pool,
the swan beats back
against his shadow

pierced by
the stubble of the mowed lawn,
night sky

white winter meadow –
steam rising
from a lost mitten

merging
to go down together –
two drops of water

-- *Natasha Levi*

wet night
hanging over the city –
chimneys hissing

both the wind
and I
back and forth

by the sea
where the rainbow ends –
my/your lips

-- *Alexander Makarov-Krotkov*

standing speechless
through an urge
to speak

-- *Ira Novitskaya*

Our dacha at sunset –
neighbours behind the fence
sawing silence

In the underpass
a fiddler pausing
listening to our footsteps

A beach in Fiumicino –
children build ruins
out of sand

-- *Sofia Russinova*

Mushroom-pickers
empty bottle gatherers...
I prepare for a journey

-- *Tatyana Shcherbina*

May morning candles
a chestnut-tree
in white flames

quivering timidly
the aspen's reflection
in chilly spring water

moonless night –
rereading your letter,
this time by heart

autumn morning
a tramp gives his place on the bench
to falling snow

-- *Valeria Simonova (Russia/Italy)*

deeper now...
shadow of the bow stabbing
the fiddler's shadow

-- *Polina Strizhova*

Belated guests
in the garden chairs
snow-drifts

-- *Julia Voronkova*

Surrounded by
Russian, Bulgarian and English words,
cat's meow

-- *Galina Yershova*

standing guard
over the Chinese restaurant
a carnivorous plant

a pedestrian
slipping on a puddle,
falling onto himself

-- *Kristina Zeytounian-Belous (Russia/France)*

Translated from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

Essay

Vera Markova's 'Ten Haiku Lessons'

by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

Vera Markova (1907 - 1995), Russian poet and academic, was renowned for her translations from classical Japanese poetry. She began translating Japanese tanka and haiku at the end of the 1960s, and less than ten years later published her translations from thirty poets, from Saigyô to Bashô to Kobayashi Issa, in the anthology *Classical Japanese Poetry*, which has since been regularly reprinted in Russia. A very interesting poet in her own right (and a life-long friend of the famous Marina Tsvetayeva), Vera Markova was a fluent Japanese speaker and travelled to Japan twice, on one occasion to receive from Emperor Hirohito an honorary medal commemorating her efforts in promoting Japanese culture abroad.

In her essay entitled 'Hokku', published in the afore-mentioned anthology, Prof. Markova analysed Bashô's work, and in the following years used some of the topics highlighted in that essay in her lectures to university students. She taught them to appreciate Japanese tanka and haiku, but also tried to stir up their creativity.

Later, Prof. Markova wrote a short text offering a few suggestions for aspiring haiku writers. She added a few of her favourite quotations from Bashô, and at a later stage even included the opinion I gave while discussing the 'Hokku' essay with her, making me the third partner in that imaginary conversation, which was most flattering. She arranged parts of the text, belonging to its three authors, in a manner resembling that of the old Japanese masters of renga, linked verse. Her students used to call the text 'Vera Markova's ten haiku lessons'.

These 'Haiku Lessons' are reprinted here. I should mention that, as some readers may already have guessed, Vera Markova was the person who once introduced me to haiku, and so started me on an exciting and unpredictable journey...

1. Allow your reader to think his way into your haiku. A revelation occurs when your and his thoughts meet at a halfway point. **(VM)**
2. Watch the River Sunagawa flow: it is not trying to be deep. **(MB)**
3. Bashô enjoyed reading and re-reading classical Chinese poetry, especially Tu Fu. There's still plenty of water left in that well. **(VM)**
4. Don't follow good dead poets but search for what they searched for. **(MB)**
5. The underlying theme of Bashô's work is compassion. He avoided grotesque and mockery, and rightly so. **(VM)**
6. Colour is important in haiku writing, however a 'monochrome' haiku can sometimes have even a stronger effect on the reader. **(AK)**
7. Don't try to be witty every time you write haiku: numerous 'comic' haikai-renga, written over the course of several centuries, are remembered merely because Shiki used the 'hai' syllable for the word 'haiku' that he invented. And bear in mind that 'hai' means 'joke' but also 'surprise, an unusual thing'. **(VM)**
8. Hokku can't be assembled from component parts. Poet's work is similar to that of a goldsmith. **(MB)**
9. Bashô became the great poet Bashô only when his hokku reached the state of *karumi* (a Japanese word meaning 'lightness, simple beauty'.) **(VM)**
10. Haiku are always set in the present moment. Nevertheless, listen out for history breathing behind our contemporaries' backs. **(VM)**

MB – Matsuo Bashô **VM** – Vera Markova **AK** – Anatoly Kudryavitsky

(First published in Poetry Ireland Newsletter, November / December 2006)



Trees

by Asya Shneiderman (St. Petersburg, Russia)



Haiku & Senryu

cold slams the air
clearing the bird-table
a sparrow-hawk

sitting with you...
burning through till dawn
the corridor light

deep in the wood
leaning against a pine tree
afternoon sun

insomnia –
through the door in my head
another door

-- *Caroline Gourlay (England)*

a new year . . .
watching hare inch
out of her warren

steadfast, the
horse, grazing in
her shadow

staring wistfully
at the moon . . .
year of the dog

-- *Robert D Wilson (USA/Philippines)*

sick in bed
my cast-off clothes
moonlit

setting sun
a tractor's sound turns into
cricket songs

dense snowfall
the black cat disappears
behind the sofa

-- *Dietmar Tauchner (Austria)*

mosquitoes and young couples in love in another language

autumn illness the white noise of crickets

waking in a strange place to a voice not my own

after a night of drinking all the way home downhill

a wet-black boulder blue december sky

-- *Jim Kacian (USA)*

poor singing voices
nevertheless
they have built a nest

a small kitchen
the toaster
warms one corner

Impressionism

ladies with parasols

walk to the next painting

-- *John Stevenson (USA)*

a tiny brown frog

leaps from the spring pool

back into camouflage

Holy City market

hawkers ignore

the call to prayer

news of a birth

now news of a death...

waning harvest moon

-- *Maeve O'Sullivan (Ireland)*

the Japanese character:

one signpost

so many different roads

waiting for the bus

someone has scattered

seeds of orange poppy

fresh sheets on the line
torn ones draping
the young gooseberries

-- *Judy Kendall (England)*

Autumn chill
a skein of geese tangles
around the moon

Boating at summer's end –
the river slips through
my fingers

Blue twilight –
falling from wet branches
the scent of lilac

--*Sylvia Forges-Ryan (USA)*

New Year cards –
good wishes
threaded on a string

winding road –
the moon gallivants
from left to right

dusk –
the moon slowly meets
the streetlights

-- *Katherine Gallagher (Australia/England)*

Old Curiosity Shop –
laquered dolls
out in the mid-day sun

art café –
the security guy hums
a James Bond theme

beachcombing...
a periwinkle rotates
deeper into itself

-- *Alan Summers (England)*

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Haibun

A Crow's Time

by Alan Summers

the sun is high skinny lizards freeze in their own tableau
just the angry buzzing grind of cicadas

coarse grass curls
round my walking shoes
an ant enters my bag

I move through parched grass and fallen ring-barked gumtree
to a plain of rocks with high bramble to face a narrow path past caves
once home to something very ancient

fading last note

the torresian crow's sound

a darkening sky

now under a black sky stars more bright than I've seen before
that shift move vibrate to suggest something more
it's my last sighting of Jupiter above Venus

susurrus of moths

round fire that flickers on

like the night

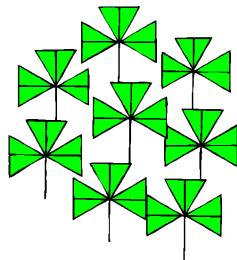
it's brittle cutting cold the moon's no longer full
this brutal simplicity of a night a crow's shade of feather

it spirals towards
the southern cross
my woodsmoke embers

quiet and dark then a rustle reminds me of the Dreamtime Dingo
white and feral imagination lends fear to a night that leers at me

it's a long time before I see a lightening but then
a quickening between two trees that's a hurt violet the morning

rekindling the fire
past pale blue trees
a red sunrise



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Shamrock Haiku Journal

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Issue 2, 2007

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Focus on

SCANDINAVIA

We showcase here a selection of haiku from four Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. As we are planning to publish a special Swedish issue of Shamrock in the foreseeable future, this selection highlights work by only one Swedish poet, notably Tomas Tranströmer.

DENMARK

May Day dawning...
the letterbox clicks
in the dark

each stone
next to its shadow –
April sun!

misty morning
she walks her aged poodle
around the cherry tree

my neighbours' wind chimes
and mine...
same sound

spring breeze
the fields slightly tinged
with green

snowstorm
all the road-signs indicate
the whiteness

-- *Allan Dystrup*

Golden-brown roadside trees...
the felled ones
still green

Climbers
yet halfway up the wall –
orange roses

My wedding bouquet:
weeds of meadows and fields
mingled with roses

Half a chestnut on the path,
a spiny shell in my pocket
for arthritis

On the wall,
the vine and sunset glow –
indoors, only art

Piling up rotting leaves
on the surface of the lake,
the current

-- *Hanne Hansen*

Special offer at Tesco:
gorgeous roses
in plastic pots

A rosebush, just purchased –
digging a deeper hole
for it

Plenty of green freckles
on rosebuds:
hungry plant-lice

Flying summer..
long threads in the air,
new-born spiders

Invisible aeroplanes..
white trails in the blue sky
form a cross

Bright moon
the last birds of summer
dissolve in the night

-- *Sys Matthiesen*

Winds go quiet –
leaves cling to the branches
averting autumn

Sun creeps into my room,
stays there
in eclipse

Quietness in the air –
they forgive each other
for a while

Man away from home –
dark girls in the moon
dance

The moon
too round to hide behind
these cypresses

The sky breathing –
we can see silver fillings,
stars

Rain falls –
no home for it
up aloft

-- *Lone Munksgaard Nielsen*

Translated from the Danish by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

FINLAND

Summer cycling –
keeping me company,
my shadow

-- *Riita Rossilahti*

snowstorm
a man waiting for a train
behind the pillar

morning bus
a procession of shadows
on book pages

in the park:
today a greener day
than yesterday

-- *Jari Sutin*

English versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

NORWAY

the noise of a train
over a gaggle of geese
this morning

snowflakes...
craters
on new asphalt

cold draught –
through the open door,
winter stars

almost home...
a buzzard soaring
on spread wings

a colder day
the gibbous moon
on new ice

smog...
the faltering patter
of high heels

dull day
my neighbour's gate
open

-- *Odd Gurre Aksnes (English versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

SWEDEN

Tomas Tranströmer

Haiku poems from

The Great Mystery
(2004)

The lamasery
with hanging gardens –
a battle-piece

Thoughts at a standstill:
mosaic-pieces
in the palace yard

Standing on the balcony
in a cage of sunbeams –
like a rainbow

Humming in the mist –
a fishing boat out there:
trophy on the waters

The wall of hopelessness –
arriving and departing,
faceless pigeons

A stag basks in the sun –
flies flit and sew the shadow
on the ground

Shaggy pines
in this tragic swamp –
for ever and ever

November sun –
my gigantic shadow drifts,
becomes blurry

Death bends over me –
I'm a chess problem, and he
has the solution

Afterglow –
looking at me, tugboats
with bulldog's faces

Rifts and troll-paths
on the ledges –
the dream, an iceberg

Climbing up a hill
in the full blaze of the sun –
goats devour fire

In the library of half-wits,
a sermon-book on the shelf
untouched

He writes on and on...
glue flowing in the canals;
the ferry across the Styx

Thick forest
the abode of the penniless god –
the walls shine

A black-and-white magpie
jumps stubbornly, zigzags
across the fields

Cringing shadows...
we're lost in this wood
among clans of morels

See me sitting calmly
like a beached skiff –
I'm happy here

The rising grass...
his face, a rune-stone
raised in memory

At a certain hour
the blind wind will rest
against the façades

Blazing sun here –
a mast with black sails
from the days of old

The roof cracks open
and a dead man sees me –
this face...

Hear the sough of rain...
I whisper a secret
so that I can get in

A scene on the platform –
such a strange calm
the inner voice

The sea is a wall –
I hear gulls scream
they wave to us

The divine tail-wind:
a soundless shot coming –
the prolonged dream

Ash-coloured silence –
the blue giant goes by,
cold breeze from the sea

Strong and slow wind
from the seaside library –
I'll rest here

Translated from the Swedish by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

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Essay

Tranströmer and his *Haikudikter*

by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

Tomas Tranströmer was born in 1931 and grew up in Stockholm. A former psychologist, he now is one of Sweden's most important poets, with many published volumes of poetry and numerous translations of his work into most European languages.

He started writing haiku quite early, in 1959, after visiting a fellow psychologist who worked in the Hällby Youth Custody Centre. Tranströmer then composed a short selection of haiku that contained these:

Extracting chanterelles
from his pockets:
caught fugitive

Night lorry rolling by,
making inmates' dreams
shake

Years later, Tranströmer's "prison haiku" were published in book-form as *Fängelse / Prison* (2001).

The poet's next collection entitled *Den stora gåtan / The Great Mystery* (2004) contained

forty-five haiku written over the course of more than forty years. Tranströmer called these poems *Haikudikter*, however the readers won't fail to notice that he writes haiku in his own way. The Swedish haiku poet Helga Härle asserts that Tranströmer's *Haikudikter* "hardly could be called haiku or senryu", as they are "rich in metaphors, sometimes also reclining on an abstraction.." On the other hand, some of the *Haikudikter* were first published (in another translation) in "Blithe Spirit", the magazine of the British Haiku Society. Indeed, many of these pieces are nothing short of the qualities we admire in haiku, and the author undoubtedly experienced what we call a "haiku moment". In the following piece Tranströmer uses the technique of the sketch, or Shiki's *shasei*:

November sun –
my gigantic shadow drifts,
becomes blurry

The imagery in *Haikudikter* is extremely rich, and these poems are highly "visual". The following haiku is hard to forget once you've read it, as it contains a striking image:

Afterglow –
looking at me, tugboats
with bulldog's faces

If we take a look at the usage of season words in *Haikudikter*, we'll see that it is quite sporadic. Of course, some of these texts have little in common with haiku. The author every so often employs a "non-haiku" technique; e.g. he sometimes writes about abstract things ("the wall of hopelessness") and uses a direct metaphor, as well as a simile without dropping the word "like" ("like a rainbow"). There are some other things quite unusual for haiku poetry here, e.g. the mentioning of 'the penniless god' and, in another poem, "the ferry across the Styx". But again, we may not deny an author who would write haiku about, say, the flying Pope the right to call himself a haijin.

In *Haikudikter*, Tranströmer mostly uses the 5-7-5 form. We have to say that Swedish is far more suitable for writing 5-7-5 haiku than English. Compare one of Tranströmer's original poems to a 5-7-5 English version of it:

Taket rämnade
och den döda kan se mig.
Detta ansikte.

(From: *Tranströmer, T. Den stora gåtan. Albert Bonniers Förlag, Sweden, 2004*)

The roof broke apart
and the dead man can see me
can see me. That face.

(transl. by Robin Fulton. From: *Tranströmer, T. Den stora gåtan / The Great Enigma. Radjhani Publications. Kolkata, India, 2006*)

This is the reason why the translations of *Haikudikter* on these pages are free-form haiku. A new translation of 28 haiku from this book was made especially for this publication.

Overall, we would describe *Haikudikter* as an experiment in haiku, all the more interesting because it was performed by one of the best-loved European writers of today. "We can hear the poet's inner voice in his haiku," the Swedish critic Torsten Rönerstrand wrote about Tranströmer's *Haikudikter*. Indeed, the initial silence in these short poems transforms itself into a very unusual language, which really is the language of the poet's soul.



The Northern Moon

by Tatyana Golovina (St. Petersburg, Russia)



Haiku & Senryu

on St Patrick's Day
shamrock confetti showers
she thinks of her home

-- *Barbara A Taylor (Australia)*

St. Patrick's Day –
not knowing any better,
lambs dance a set

the moon globe
hanging on the horizon...
an unshed tear

low autumn sun
crimsoning the mountain –
rutting stags roar

-- Paddy Bushe (Ireland – transl. from the Irish by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

winter sunrise
rust on an unused
stretch of track

sharp blue sky
the strangeness of a stile
without its fence

rising tide
all the wigeon
backsliding upriver

-- Martin Lucas (England)

more hammering –
one way and another
April wind

uncertain sky
the edge of a rose petal
curling back

noon sun
above the vineyard –
a cluster of friends

iced in –
the puppet show
slowed by a knot

"Rhapsody in Blue"
fogged windows holding
winter out

-- *Peggy Willis Lyles (USA)*

long shadows
the pochard's bill
tucked into his breast

flood debris
the flexing legs
of the spring dipper

a stonechat lands
on the highest bramble
evening sunlight

morning haze . . .
the shades of twigs added
to the magpies' nest

-- *John Barlow (England)*

returning home...
towering sunflowers
hunched into their leaves

winter solstice
steam rising
from the gutter

-- *Helen Buckingham (England)*

snowfall...
the dying dog hears something
i can't

home foreclosure...
a jehova's witness comes
peddling paradise

St. Patrick's day...
in our pot
a watery broth

-- *Ed Markowski (USA)*

sunlight shifts
with the cumulus--
flight of a curlew

shifting currents...
a coot scrambles
to stay mid-river

snow whirls
through climbing-frame bars
the squirrel's leap

-- *Matthew Paul (England)*

golden leaves
she opens a bag
of lemon drops

old headstone
cobwebs fill a cracked
flowerpot

sunlit mason jar
Grandma and Grandpa
exchange fingerprints

-- *Dustin Neal (USA)*

a few spring flakes
the old birdhouse nailed
to a dead tree

cool morning
the pond's stillness
after the duck

-- *Bruce Ross (USA)*

man with a limp...
his arthritic dog
keeps pace

museum –
a dead beetle
in the armour

-- *Quendryth Young (Australia)*

the mountaintop...
only here do I see
its many sides

snow
higher than the fence post
I know is there

-- *J.D. Heskin (USA)*

flutters with the wind
four eyes evanescent
web trapped butterfly

encircled by my fingers
the crescent moon
sails lakes of tea

-- *Jenni Meredith (England)*

one exhalation
among many in the bus
fogs up the window

in the shower's steam
a rope of hair twists and coils
as I clear the drain

-- *Ivy Alvarez (Wales/Australia)*

new town
the sound of the house
settling

old lover...
letting her fingers run through
what's left

-- *Robert Lucky (Thailand/USA)*

pearl moon
at twilight –
wet footprints glisten

-- *Sian Evans (England)*

home late
a rotting flower
blocks the doorway

-- *Matt Hetherington (Australia)*

inside
after the neighbour's wife
on a hot day

-- *Jeffrey Woodward (USA)*

wedding cake
for breakfast
hungry still

-- *Jo McInerney (Australia)*

alone this cold night
knock knock
of the radiator

-- *Philip Miller (USA)*

clouds begin to clot --
shorn lawn suddenly
a deeper green

-- *Richard Stevenson (Canada)*

gardenias –
a butterfly zigzags
through their perfume

-- *Nathalie Buckland (Australia/Wales)*

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Haibun

The Day That Elvis Died

Northern Ireland, August 16, 1977

by Barbara A Taylor (Australia)

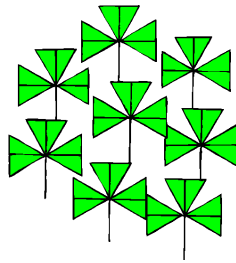
crows' calls in elms
wet earth on timber
remembering them

My mother bravely waves her king farewell. I cry tears for words not said. Pallbearers carry his open casket past us, through the great hall onto the porch between Doric pillars, down wide gray steps, as he had wished, to slowly pace the winding white-fenced avenue towards copper beeches and grand spreading chestnut trees. It was my father's favourite, to walk there with his faithful hounds. A Bunuel scene this gloomy Irish day with its drizzly rain, the bowler hats, chequered caps and bobbing black umbrellas. Aside the white-fenced driveway the snorting stallion canters close by the crawling hearse. A line behind, of mourners, shuffles steady steps on pebbles towards the old stone gate-lodge. Armoured tanks with bullet-proofed British soldiers stop, search me on my way to the cemetery. I stand stooped in soaking rain to see his coffin slowly lowered. Steely, long faces mutter blessings. At home that night, after the grievers leave our house of death, when my mother, still distressed, pulls apart the heavy velvet curtains (no longer is my family home to be so sombre as a funeral parlour subsumed with sympathies), to take my mind away from sorrow I watch the news, learn that *The King* is

dead. Death follows us all day. All week. All month. Each time the lounge-door handle turns we raise our heads, look expectantly for daddy. More silence, only acceptance that he won't be back. My grief, my fear, is strangely transposed to that "Gracelands" mansion, gripped in Memphis-fever-swallowed tears. I cry. Two idols are gone.

Today, another year is over. Another anniversary comes. The media, in Elvis frenzy, asks: *Where were you the day that Elvis Died?* It's thirty years since they both departed. *Oh, my papa, to me you are so wonderful.* We sang these words together. We are still here, we are still singing *There will be peace in the valley one day.*

sparkles in signals
on speckled tree trunks
after the rain



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Issue 3, 2007

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Focus on

EUROPE Off-Centre

Interest in haiku existed in Europe ever since the beginning of the 20th century. *Wikipedia* mentions some European non-English-speaking countries where haiku movements are best developed: "countries of Northern Europe (mainly Sweden, Germany, France and The Netherlands), Balkan countries (mainly Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania), and Russia." *Shamrock* has published or is planning to publish thematic issues focusing on each of these countries, as well as on Italy, Spain, Belgium, Poland and probably Turkey.

As for this particular issue, it presents a selection of haiku from several European countries where haiku scenes are far from satisfactory. Furthering our study of European haiku geography, we showcase authors from the states that don't have formal national haiku associations, haiku magazines and/or websites. You'll see that there are many extremely interesting poets living 'off-centre'. Some of them publish their work in such magazines as *Simply Haiku* and *The Heron's Nest*, the others win prizes at international haiku contests, and therefore can be regarded as haiku plenipotentiaries of the countries they live in, the localities where haiku movements sometimes need as much help as they can get. This publication was meant as our small contribution to it.

Among the twelve countries represented in this issue, three are republics of the Balcan region (Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro), another three, the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), further three, central European states (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia),

two republics of the former USSR (Belarus and Ukraine), and finally Portugal. We have made every attempt to find traces of haiku activities in such countries as Albania, Cyprus, Iceland, Greece, Luxembourg, Moldova, Switzerland, but to no purpose. We would be interested in hearing from haiku poets, the natives of the afore-mentioned states, should they read these lines.

Finally, we must mention that we tried hard to find Ukrainian haiku written in their native language but instead had to settle for those written in Russian. If we overlooked haiku poets writing in Ukrainian, we owe them apologies. Again, we would be interested in hearing from them and considering their work for publication.

Belarus

Greedy mud!
see how it pulls off
the beggar's overshoes

transparent air –
we can view
the last summer

prickley sow-thistle...
but look how the bee
befriends it!

-- *Ales Razanav*

(translated from the Byelorussian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

that riverbed stone –
what does it know
about summer heat?

a street lamp alight –
raindrops on the pane
suddenly awake

who can remind me
the name of this flower?
listening to the wind

what is he looking for,
this black moth?
a black flower?

-- *Miraslav Shyback*
(translated from the Byelorussian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

sparrow and a magpie
sipping water from
the same puddle

-- *Denjo Mirsad*

summer here –
poppy petals
on the cow's hoof

-- *Ljubomir Dragovic*

English versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

The Czech Republic

Evening nearing –
a stray dog runs to meet me,
a bone in his jaws

On the night train –
two sober gentlemen
playing checkers

Glasses clinking
and clinking – seeping through,
a squeaky laugh

-- *Kateřina Rudčenková*

English versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

ESTONIA

White wooly clouds
growing whiter
after the swans flew near

Withered grass whisper –
underneath the thick snow,
dreams of grasshoppers

Unexpected winter –
all night I hear leaves fall
onto the snow

In the limestone quarry,
an ice-hole, today reflecting
the cold sun

Pine branch growing fast –
I open my window,
it enters my room

Fir-trees –
so high, but sinking
into birds' songs

In the field of blooming poppies
vultures scream of
approaching autumn

Inspired by nightingales' song,
frogs start croaking
with gusto

Leaves still warm
after the first thunderstorm –
hey, snails

Inside a frozen apple,
a pale worm crawling into
his last dream

-- *Andres Ehin*
(*transl. from the Estonian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky and the author*)

Blustery wind
we're caught in the golden blizzard
of falling leaves

A tiny feather
descending –
birdless sky

The train screams
and slows down –
three silver firs on the pane

-- *Arvo Mets*
(*transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky*)

Autumn storm –
waves taking away with them
a sign "No swimming"

This plump girl
wearing her summer dress –
she has so many flowers on!

Cold stove –
between the last year's logs,
a dried grasshopper

Morning fair –
a vendor shakes off snow
from his fir-trees

Old house brought down –
trees swarm
around the pit

-- *Felix Tammi*
(*transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky*)

Hungary

birds singing,
the pear-tree flowering:
goulash soup on the simmer

-- *Judit Vihar*

an arrow in the grove
showing the direction
to butterflies

-- *János Kurszán Kántor*
English versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

Latvia

Poetess's car:
silver handles and piston rods...
a train far away

Invisible thread:
a black butterfly pulling
the yellow locomotive

Night train...
after sleep, I wake up
within my dream

-- *Valdis Jansons*

(transl. from the Latvian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Lithuania

warm breeze!
grasshoppers' chirping
invites autumn

autumn sky –
the shadows of grass blades
sink in the river

clanking cold –
a woodcutter's song
gets stuck in the trunk

-- *Artūras Gelusevičius*

(transl. from the Lithuanian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky and Nadezhda Vinogradova)

Eagle in the blue sky –
two wings outlining
a calm

White pelicans
and sacred cows...
a rainy day

I wore through my shoes
and now walk barefoot –
can't see my home

Three white mountains
above the three green hills...
a long road

-- *Paulius Normantas*

(transl. from the Lithuanian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky and Nadezhda Vinogradova)

Japanese tourists
up in the castle,
their eyes follow migrant birds

derelict house
the wind slams the door
producing no echo

-- *Artūras Šilanskas*

(transl. from the Lithuanian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky and Nadezhda Vinogradova)

full moon –
gazing upon the light
in my own window

cold night –
barman pours wine for a late guest
on credit

-- *Artūras Šilanskas*

(transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

night brighter
than the last day...
first snow

first frost...
but children's clothes
thinner than ice

-- *Mindaugas Valiukas*

(transl. from the Lithuanian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky and Nadezhda Vinogradova)

Macedonia

Mussels on the beach –
a tiny crab takes cover
in a flip-flop

Children sledding
sunbeams sliding
down the roof

Morning frost –
a sun drawn
on the car side

Early morning...
on a telephone cable,
chattering sparrows

A hospital bed –
my shadow in a hurry
to lie down

Dust-covered book –
a new title given to it
by somebody's finger

Headlights on –
a car seeking out
unexplored routes

Montenegro

a nun wielding a broom
chases autumn
around the monastery

new moon –
hanging from the bough,
a half-eaten pear

autumn sky –
the raven follows
a war-plane

a bucket under the eaves –
one waterdrop falls in,
two leap out

-- *Zoran Raonić*

English versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

Portugal

moonlit grass
the sleepless wind disturbs
flowers' dreams

a leaf falls –
the old lake's eye
blinking

old road –
sun unrolls its bright carpet
for a walker

-- *Alonso Alvarez*
(*transl. from the Portuguese by Anatoly Kudryavitsky*)

Storks
leaving these deserted fields
never looking back

Plane-tree
pollarded by the neighbours –
where have the birds gone?

Flee, butterfly!
men approach,
the whole armies

The desert wind
complaining
that trees are no more

A snow path...
dirty snow on my wellies,
the colour of men

Another storm...
the wind carries off myself
and almond blossoms

-- *Casimiro de Brito*
(*transl. from the Portuguese by Anatoly Kudryavitsky*)

Slovakia

tiny bronze sculpture:
a dead woman praying
to the sun-god

circumnavigation
in wastelands of the zodiac...
sand in gullies

-- *Mila Haugová*

English versions by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

Ukraine

Night heat –
the air-blast from the fan
tries to lift a newspaper

Evening coolness –
the feeble trees lower
their leaves

-- *Ruslan Goondakov*
(*transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky*)

Summer heat –
stretched on a stone lion,
a street cat narrows his eyes

Novemeber –
morning coffee gets stronger
with each passing day

-- *Alla Mutelika*
(*transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky*)

the smell of ozone...
get on with the poems,
my old printer!

-- *Tatiana Lugovskaya*
(*transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky*)

A box of pencils –
only the black and the white
surviving

Sweltering heat –
a girl plasters her face
with make-up

Autumn dew –
tiptoeing the garden,
a cat

A street fiddler –
in his hat, the first
yellow leaf

-- *Oleg Yourov*

(transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)



Girls with the Orchid by Oksana Popova (Ukraine/Ireland)

Haiku & Senryu

summer solstice –
daylight begins
with a crow's call

spring flowers –
one by one a bouquet
forms itself

beach picnic
the rising tide nibbles
at the sand castle

a dusting of snow –
more sugar sprinkled
on the cookies

-- *Adelaide B. Shaw (USA)*

heron
under a soft rainfall –
balsam flowers

empty now
a yellow water lily –
damselflies chase

scarlet petal
beaten against the pane –
October light

dark solstice sun sinks –
signpost to the open fields
lit up

-- Diana Webb (England)

down the valley road shadows shifting gears

on a bare twig rain beads what light there is

deck class sparrows claim my ferry seat

first light –
eye to dreaming eye
with a kookaburra

-- *Lorin Ford (Australia)*

winter twilight –
yellow apples cling
to the high branches

after her death
watching the rain
meeting the river

crowded promenade
a little boy jumps
our long shadows

-- *Lynne Rees (England)*

last off the train,
the blind man takes his time
to button up

sunburst –
a raindrop at the base
of a Worcester pearmain

a stray firework
tails off into the dark –
lunar eclipse

-- *Matthew Paul (England)*

somewhere in this swamp
the sun has drowned –
a ball of gnats

(after Ho-o)

narrow cave –
a wave rushes in,
the shape of its howl

surfacing at low tide,
a shopping trolley
dripping with sunshine

-- *Anatoly Kudryavitsky (Ireland)*

sunset –
a cat's shadow rests
by the flowerbed

abandoned harbour –
an old fishing net
still catching rubbish

lying in clover –
a tired dog letting
the world go by

-- *Martin Vaughan (Ireland)*

twilight hour –
an amber glow of
crickets' calls

fishing boat at dusk –
gulls' cries
swirling the mast

dawn a snail uncurls from sleep

-- *Aisling White (Ireland)*

pruning the roses –
a red ant attaches itself
to my arm

clear morning
the crack
of an eggshell

opening the door –
the curl of sunset
in a rose

-- *Laryalee Fraser (Canada)*

withered trees
sparrows sink deeper
into their necks

shaded avenue...
an abstract painting
of bird droppings

sun ripe fields
the jostling backs of
coloured saris

-- *Kala Ramesh (India)*

autumn wind
a cloud of crows
out of the cedar

almost summer
replanting the fields
where the river ran

-- *Susan Constable (Canada)*

overturned hat
snow covers
the coins

supermarket:
undecided
next to the pickles

-- *Rose Hunter (Canada/Australia)*

reunion:
a pause before calling out
each other's name

dream over –
I reach for you and
you're still by my side

-- *John Zheng (USA)*

patter of bamboo chimes
at dawn...
wind getting up

-- *Hugh O'Donnell (Ireland)*

dried fruits
on the bird table –
bees hum

-- *Aine MacAodha (Ireland)*

a shaft of sunlight
through the forest...
an open pine cone

-- *Terry O'Connor (Ireland)*

early evening –
only a blackbird
traffics the lane

-- *Katherine Gallagher (Australia/England)*

morning fog...
leaving home
without my purse

-- *Raquel D. Bailey (Jamaica/USA)*

brittle petals...
my dry lips
on your dry cheek

-- *Christine Vovakes (USA)*

immortelle
pressed in Grandma's
prayer book

-- *Srinjay Chakravarti (India)*

evening heat
her eyes on mine
just long enough

-- *Josh Wikoff (USA)*

retirement village
she carries his old dog
up the hill

-- *Quendryth Young (Australia)*

walking at sunrise
the scatter of pollen
from tall grass

-- *Nathalie Buckland (Australia/Wales)*

feast of the dead:
floating down the stream,
paper lanterns

-- *Anima Yamamoto (Japan/England)*

New Year's Day –
lifting the lid
on another jigsaw

-- *Helen Buckingham (England)*

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Haibun

Malden Park

by Jeffrey Woodward (USA)

Walking, we forget.

Walking, we remember.

It is merely physical exercise today while, tomorrow, it may be a cause for deep meditation.

An Indian summer morning in my favorite city park, some 500 acres of rolling hills with little groves scattered here and there amid open meadows, two ponds ringed by cottonwoods and willows, some simple wooden footbridges to negotiate a shallow creek.

I have the luxury of the entire park to myself, it seems, but an indefinable melancholy, a melancholy of unknown provenance, shadows my every step and proves itself an intimate, if unwanted, companion. Why?

watching the water
go under the bridge –
clear autumn

One can continue on, walking. One can continue on, in a state worse than that of any beast of burden, walking under the weight of regrets that one piles upon oneself repeatedly and habitually,

a labor more unforgiving than that of a taskmaster's mule.

The sky itself is relatively clear but beginning to cloud. The weather, delightfully mild.

Here is a nice spot in the grass. Here one can sit and look.

Look at the neighboring stalk of grass. What do you see?

the clarity

comes to nothing...

a drop of dew

One can stand.

One can walk, again.

One can consider, in the soon-to-be vanished yellows and reds of autumn leaves, how an inexorable uniformity and sameness will settle over these hills, if only superficially, as every bold distinction is muted in the slow decline toward winter's onset:

a mole is gray,

a mouse is brown –

fields of autumn

Nevertheless, each individual red and yellow leaf still shows itself in sharp relief, even though the sky clouds slightly. Insects, too, sing in the grass that is losing its color, insects that with each passing day are fewer and more distant. The New England aster sprays here and there, clusters of pretty purple flowers, while the rarer Lindsey's aster with its paler blue petals is plainly seen amid the white showy and heath asters that everywhere dot the slopes.

voices of insects

drift a little

with the fleecy clouds

One walks to forget.

One walks to remember.

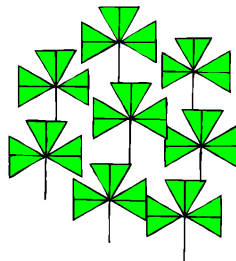
I abandon my pleasant seat in the grass.

A cloud, even though the day is still luminous. A cloud, where all was clear before.

One last hill to climb, then, in my morning walk:

through heath aster
to the crest of a far hill
and fleecy clouds

on a dusty path
that leads me up into
the sky of autumn



Shamrock Haiku Journal

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world

Issue 4, 2007

Shamrock



Haiku Journal
of the Irish Haiku Society

Focus on

Bulgaria

Cricket's song...
drops of the autumn rain
land in a cobweb

-- Ludmila Balabanova (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Windy evening –
from the opposite river bank,
the scent of grass

A hazy veil
hiding the morning river –
visible now, my breath

Dinner by candlelight –
between the two of us,
quivering air

-- Ludmila Balabanova (translated by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Tiny daisies
plaited into the braids
of ageing grass

So what's my shadow doing
on its own,
out in the cold?

-- Ginka Biliarska (translated by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

November sadness –
a waterdrop
down the pane

after rain,
slimy mushrooms among
the rotting leaves

-- *Ivelina Doicheva (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

winter solstice –
the fly's
halted flight

-- *Ana Doicheva (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

summer here –
yet another ball reposing
on the roof

summer afternoon
the hammock's shadow
sways the grass

bees gathering:
the white sleeves
embroidered with roses

muddy path –
roses, fresh after the rain,
keep their distance

-- *Iliana Ilieva (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

puddles on the road
a belated cart
spatters the grass with stars

leaning over to
an acorn cup on the path –
upturned sky

-- *Hristo ke Pella (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

Christmas morning
snowflakes falling
into my tea

funeral procession –
white all over,
the cherry tree

hot day
the peacock unfolds
his fan

lunch-time in the zoo
a line of ants aims for
the lion's meal

-- *Marica Kolcheva (transl. by Petar Tchouhov)*

Sunday afternoon –
the keyboard sticky
with plum jam

coffee break –
on the back of a chair,
two jackets

-- *Maya Lyubanova (transl. by the author)*

summer sultriness –
a railway track
hardly breathing

-- *Georgy Marinov (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

steamy horse
on the muddy road –
cool him off, snowflakes!

-- *Georgy Marinov (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky and Petar Tchouhov)*

Jimson weed by the steep –
the wind musses up
its shadow

continuous cawing –
a prodigal crow
has re-joined the flock

-- *Axinya Mikhailova (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

a single cuckoo –
and lo, the chorus of frogs
has stopped!

-- *Antoaneta Nikolova (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

cold morning –
in the packed tram, a woman
with a steaming basket

after this long
day of cleaning,
bright moon

-- *Rositza Pironska (transl. by the author)*

torrential rain –
at long last our tomcat
returns

a hornet –
just enough to bend
the petunia

-- *Rositza Pironska (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

cold moon –
shadows within shadows
along the snowy road

-- *Dimitar Stefanov (transl. by the author)*

village
bit by a blizzard
then bandaged up by it

-- *Dimitar Stefanov (transl. by Ludmila Kolechkova and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

Autumn here –
the sun nestling among
the black branches

Rusty September sun –
thin moon crescent
cuts off birds' singing

Shabby pine-tree –
through holes in its pockets
the wind wails

Look, among
a quantity of acorns,
the moon, also hanging!

Water recedes –
mussels start whispering
with thousands of lips

Glistening like silver
in the dried well,
dead moons' bones

-- *Edvin Sugarev (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

shooting gallery
the hunter wins
a teddy bear

streetlamp –
in a puddle, no room
for the moon

first snow
footprints leading
to the cobbler's house

reading a crime novel –
a dog chasing
his tail

Father's Day
the little girl wants
a male doll

old bicycle
a raindrop falls from
the shed's roof

-- *Petar Tchouhov (transl. by the author)*

fish market –
the deafening yelling
of the sellers

on the carpet
of violets,
the slim shadow of a pine

-- Rositsa Yakimova (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

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Essay

BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE BRIEF HISTORY OF BULGARIAN HAIKU

by Petar Tchouhov

At the beginning of the 1990s the renowned Bulgarian poet Ivan Metodiev founded a poetic circle called “Nava”, and soon started a magazine of the same name. This marked the beginning of his search for “Bulgarian haiku”. Trying to give a proper definition to the term “nava,” Metodiev used the word “explosion.” He gradually came to the conclusion that any short poetic form, or even part of a longer form, can be a *nava*. As for haiku, he considered them to be one of the possible forms of *nava*. Extravagant and provocative, the *nava* movement was too eclectic; in the end, its foundations turned out to be philosophical, or even mystical rather than literary.

Bearing this in mind, we can say that the “real”, or “organised”, if you like it better, haiku movement in Bulgaria started, in fact, not earlier than in 2000 when the Bulgarian Haiku Club was founded. Before that, writing of haiku and other short form poetry seemed to be a casual matter for most of the Bulgarian authors. The year of 2000 witnessed the birth of a true haiku community, whose members have since obtained a certain theoretical knowledge and acquired the necessary skills of haiku writing. Their presence is quite noticeable in modern days' Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Haiku Club has published several anthologies and individual books of poetry, and organised several haiku conferences and competitions. We now can say that it has found its niche in the literary and cultural life of Bulgaria, as well as abroad.

The first anthology published by the Bulgarian Haiku Club, *Rain Seeds*, appeared in 2001, immediately after the Club was founded. This book was the first of its kind in Bulgaria; its aim

was to promote the emerging haiku movement in our country. As it happened, the editors included some three-liners by a few established Bulgarian poets, which, even by the most generous of estimates, could not be described as haiku. Moreover, none of the authors of those poems, some of which were not among the living any more, ever called them haiku. The editors of that volume obviously wanted to raise the prestige of the edition and, so to speak, to enter the Bulgarian literary scene with a bang.

Subsequent anthologies published by the Bulgarian Haiku Club were thematically organised, as was reflected in their titles: *The Flower*, *The Rose*, *The Bird*, *The Road*. In these anthologies we can find much less of the famous Bulgarian poets alleged to be authors of haiku than it used to be in *Rain Seeds*. Instead, some foreign poets were included, some of them unquestionably authoritative figures on the haiku scene. Their inclusion brought to the forefront the contrast between their works (especially if it was translated well enough) and the tercets by some of the Bulgarian haikai. Most of the latter were still searching for their haiku paths, but often went astray writing over-poetic pieces, in which they used personification, comparison, metaphors and abstractions. Inconsistent poeticisation of the images used in haiku writing is still one of the fundamental weaknesses of the nascent Bulgarian haikai.

The Bulgarian Haiku Club now has a huge number of members, and keeps publishing different quality haiku collections by its members. This sometimes casts a shadow of discredit upon the way the genre is dealt with in our country. The lack of a well-developed haiku culture in our country can probably be blamed for a certain amount of confusion that often sets in when some of our authors try to distinguish a haiku from other sorts of short poems. No wonder that many of the Bulgarian readers - and even writers! - still hold on to the belief that all the three-liners, especially 5-7-5 verses, are haiku.

As a result of the indiscriminate acceptance of new members by the Bulgarian Haiku Club, a group of haikai broke away from the club in 2005, and subsequently founded the Sofia Haiku Club. This new organisation of poets has strict criteria for membership, and most of its members enjoy recognition in Bulgaria, as well as abroad. The most representative anthology of Bulgarian haiku published to date, *Mirrors*, was compiled and edited by Ludmila Balabanova, haiku poet and President of the Sofia Haiku club. This is a trilingual volume: all the Bulgarian haiku in this book appear alongside the English and the French versions of them. Incidentally, this anthology includes not only works by club members, but also haiku by a number of other Bulgarian authors.

Over the past few years several haiku conferences took place in Bulgaria. The most important was the Third World Haiku Association Conference held in Sofia and Plovdiv in 2005. More recently, the Sofia Haiku Club organised a conference that had "Haiku and Western Poetry" as its topic. Professor David Lanoue (USA) was a special guest at the conference, where, in addition to reading a paper, he also presented his haiku novel *Haiku Guy*, which had been translated into Bulgarian by then.

Strangely enough, there still isn't a single Bulgarian periodical or an e-zine dedicated to haiku. However one can find haiku poems on the pages of *Literaturen Vestnik / The Literary Newspaper* and also in the literary e-zine entitled *Liternet*. Both of them have special sections for haiku. This is the way things stand at this particular moment.

English translation by Angela Rodel and Anatoly Kudryavitsky

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Poppies in the Rye
by Syrma (Bulgaria)



Haiku & Senryu

dusk
a night-hawk circles
its shadow

village airport
we wait in the fog
for the hill to land

harvest moon
a dark cloud
furrows his brow

-- Ernest Berry (New Zealand)

sighing grass...
a marmot nibbling
shadows

be colorful
leaf, it's your
moment!

at dawn...
the sky delivering
shadows

harvest moon...
a mother washing
her newborn

-- Robert Wilson (USA/Philippines)

river song
a fisherman carries
his empty creel

city morning
willowherb seeds
caught on razor wire

fingerpost
a bee bumbles
through nettles

each to its own rock:
the gosanders;
the sounds of the river

-- John Barlow (England)

long day
tree shadows
from fence to fence

rise...
the moon barely clears
a backyard maple

tired of the view
I find myself weeding
my neighbor's garden

-- Marie Summers (USA)

dawn train
rosy stripes move
across my dream

badlands of Almeria –
a beggar's
dark cracked hand

wires in the wind –
a Morse code of landing
pieces of ice

-- Anatoly Kudryavitsky (Ireland)

Main Street
the bright water dances
in a wheelbarrow

concrete hardened
with the print of a cat
who prowled here once, like me

-- Sean Lysaght (Ireland)

maple leaves
sunsets
between fingers

tiny white moth
pressed to the window –
rhythm of rain

-- Diana Webb (England)

ice-out
the snowbirds return
for haircuts

house sale
the man wants his pictures
to stay together

-- Glenn G Coats (USA)

low cut t-shirt
bountiful cleavage –
man talks to it

sunshine's carpet –
gazania's
all wide eyed

-- *Bett Angel-Stawarz (Australia)*

hiking to Makapuu Point –
someone's name
carved in cactus

-- *John Zheng (USA)*

morning prayers
a temple elephant
salutes the deity

-- *Gautam Nadkarni (India)*

in a fountain
downhill to the Casino,
playful ducks

-- *Mary O'Donnell (Ireland)*

leaf-fall –
earth's begging bowl
overflows

-- Hugh O'Donnell (Ireland)

travelling at night –
nothing out the window
but myself

-- Stephen Farren (Ireland/Spain)

window rain
wetting those who went before
as I wait to go

-- J.D. Heskin (USA)

mid-morning sun
turning our chairs
bit by bit

-- Rose Hunter (Canada)

city street
the solitary oak
still green

-- Greg Schwartz (USA)

thick fog
the faint honk
of a goose

-- Robert Lucky (China/USA)

in my dream
chasing sheep
getting tired

-- Lewis Ireland (England/Wales)

silence
green apples
dewing on wood

-- Stephen Wegmann (USA)

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Haibun

The Wreck of SaySo

by Charles Hansmann (USA)

It's 9/11, 2002, the first anniversary. Gusts of 60 knots hit Hempstead Harbor. My wife relives the fear, declines to commute to the city, and from our house we watch the boats strain at their moorings. One breaks free and is headed our way - our way, and our boat: it's SaySo. We scramble down the cliff and find it on the rocks. The waves repeatedly lift and drop it, and a hole opens up in the hull. That evening when the wind dies down we salvage what we can until it gets dark: binnacle compass, GPS, ship-to-shore radio. In the morning I'm back

for anything we missed. Two hikers are aboard, snooping around, and a third comes out of the cabin. They're Swedes, young and blond, wear rucksacks and try out their English. I feel compelled to be polite - I'm the host: my country, my boat. After they leave I go below and see they have taken my barometer from its mount on the bulkhead. I go back on deck but do not call out or chase them. I let them have their adventure, their little souvenir.

bubbles
the submerged rocks
breathing

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Anniversary Getaway

by Zane Parks (USA)

Half Moon Bay. Morning coffee savored on the patio off our room. Squawk and yip of gull and tern. Foghorn in the distance. Diminishing drone of a pair of motorboats as they slip through a gap in the jetty. Waves gently lap the shore.

to-do list
she puts make love
before lunch

