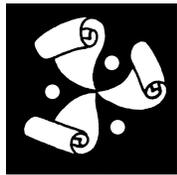


Shamrock

Haiku Journal of the Irish Haiku Society

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world



21, 2012

Shamrock Haiku Journal Readers' Choice Awards 2011

BEST HAIKU

The following piece that appeared in our No. 19 was voted the best haiku published in Shamrock Haiku Journal in 2011:

autumn wind
the sound of surf
in the flame tree

-- *Lorin Ford (Australia)*

The following haiku that also first appeared in our No. 19 was a close runner-up:

the owl's last call
before dawn
winter solstice

-- *Aubrie Cox (USA)*

BEST SENRYU

The following piece that was first published in our No 20 became the winner in this category:

ninth floor
a series of pictures
of grasses

-- *Quendryth Young (Australia)*

And the runner-up was the following piece that also initially appeared in our No. 20:

dog day's night -
just me and Milo
barking at the moon

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

We congratulate the worthy winners, and express our sincere gratitude to each and every reader who cast a vote.



bandaged in ivy,
last winter's
broken tree

dandelion suns
turned moons –
the wind halves and quarters them

cotoneaster
where an orchestra of bees
tunes up for summer

writing messages –
willows dip fingers into
the languid river

down the spider's thread
that ties my door,
a spark of shine

-- *Clare McDonnell (Ireland)*

border crossing
trail
of a horsefly

scampering chipmunks
on a sand hickory trunk
early autumn

riding the thermals
a broad winged hawk
breathless

-- *Raffael de Gruttola (USA)*

nowhere left to hide
a lone crab scuttles between
islands of stillness

the first drops of rain
striking the limestone shelter
colour again

evening approaching
curlews stilt-walk
on their reflections

-- Pat Boran (Ireland)

snow
two canaries
in a covered cage

distant conversation
a trickle
from a tap

morning
a sliver
of moon

-- Hugh O'Donnell (Ireland)

the calm before...
this old fishing boat
anchored to the moon

moonlit
the whispers of apple blossom
to the moth

in a silver frame
that summer breeze
through our hair

-- Terry O' Connor (Ireland)

New Year's Day
the glare of two suns
along a flood plain

mild winter
a ragged red rose
in limbo

splits of green in last year's reeds a bunting

-- Thomas Powell (Northern Ireland)

dawn chorus
broadcasting
seeds of light

damp morning –
the muffled thud
of the airing cupboard door

-- Helen Buckingham (England)

my brother's funeral
a fisherman's
last cast

moonlight on the snow
my shadow races ahead
down the hill

-- Joseph M. Kusmiss (USA)

a crow's cry...
the village stillness
deepens

job interview
falling leaves
with every step

-- Chen-ou Liu (USA)

winter morn...
wiping a foggy window
to watch the fog

stumps
where my tree-house
once stood

-- *Al Fogel (USA)*

old snake
on pavement
sloughing off spring

rush of blood –
seeing through
my mother's skin

-- *Noel Sloboda (USA)*

floor plan
the overlay
of white-footed ants

schoolyard gust a chorus of crinkled oak leaves

-- *Bill Cooper (USA)*

early snow
the vole burrows under
the woolly thyme

heat shimmer
a fly caught
in the honey jar

-- Alicia Hilton (USA)

spring rain
the classroom smells
of wet wool

cedar branches
sway in the wind
jazz concert

-- Joanna M. Weston (Canada)

long breath
a python flows from
its knot

regatta –
scudding to a fair wind
the summer clouds

-- Jan Dobb (Australia)

dull day –
across the wet sand
all the shells face down

crisp afternoon
driving through the shadow
of a flock of birds

-- *Natalie Buckland (Australia)*

morning market
the face on the t-shirt
sleeps

after the bushwalkers pass
birdsong

-- *Tiggy Johnson (Australia)*

a moth coming
closer and closer...
the bridge of my nose

silk cravat stored
in the bottom drawer
mothballs having dinner

-- *Noel King (Ireland)*

stirred from my slumber –
pine marten
stealing apples

spring dawn –
mistle thrush's song
muffled by diesel engine

-- *Michael Andrew (Ireland)*
job rejection letter
folding another
paper airplane

sudden cloudburst —
the separated couple go
under one umbrella

-- *Mark Lonergan (Ireland)*

through leafless trees
the crescent moon –
a blackbird shatters silence

occluded moon
in the northern sky
owl hoots

-- *Padraig O'Horgain (Ireland)*

foggy day
sheep on the hills
climb into clouds

May noon
starlings circle the blackbird
with a worm

-- *Maire Morrisey-Cummins (Ireland)*

old shadow box...
framed in the window
the gibbous moon

-- *Cathy Drinkwater-Better (USA)*

Santa bell-ringer –
the homeless guy
drops a coin

-- *Steven Carter (USA)*

random thoughts –
the on and off switching
of fireflies

-- *Adelaide B. Shaw (USA)*

snowflakes
the blind dog
sniffs the darkness

-- *Greg Hopkins (USA)*

gnat
milling through my arm hair
afternoon breeze

-- *Ben Moeller-Gaa (USA)*

fire drill
the years I ignored
silent alarms

-- *S.M. Abeles (USA)*

cut anthurium
planted in burnt-out kettle –
slow clock of decay

-- *Patrick Chapman (Ireland)*

wild iris flowers
yellow stars fill
a black ditch

-- *Ann Egan (Ireland)*

discarded newspaper
beside the canal –
origami swan

-- *Cíaran Parkes (Ireland)*

a child
tracing smoke trails
from her granddad's pipe

-- *Liam Ryan (Ireland)*

rising moon
the ocean pulls
itself in

-- *G.R. LeBlanc (Canada)*

June wedding
churchyard robins
trill an alarm

-- *Vera Constantineau (Canada)*

dawn delivery
on the doorstep
ivory pools

-- *Rachel Sutcliffe (England)*

my spare tyre
disappears...
hall of mirrors

-- *Tracy Davidson (England)*

new year's wishes
sprouts between the
concrete slabs

-- *Ramesh Anand (Malaysia)*



wheat ear
the way time ripens
within it

-- *Sergey Biryukov (Russia, transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

in the overgrown pond,
pale duckweed sobs,
then narrows the gap

white flash –
the last butterfly
among flying leaves

in the depth of shadow,
a blade of grass moves –
slanting beams of light

-- *Vladimir Gertsik (Russia, transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

girl with a red fan,
dancing –
my geranium all abloom

fried eggs wrapped in cellophane –
white chrysanthemums
with yellow hearts

-- *Nina Gorlanova (Russia, transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

after rain
all the snails
on the move

-- *Tonka Lovrić (Croatia; translated from the Croatian by Djurdja Vukelić-Rozić)*

downpour over –
on each table
pools of moonlight

-- *Tonka Lovrić (Croatia; translated from the Croatian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

prison cell
a chrysalis clinging
to the bar

-- *Alexander Martusenko (Russia, transl. from the Russian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

IHS International Haiku Competition 2011 Results

The Irish Haiku Society is proud to announce the results of the fourth IHS International Haiku Competition. This year we saw a further increase in the number of participating authors. 232 haiku by poets from fourteen countries (Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Romania, USA and Wales) were submitted to this year's competition in **Category A**. As for **Category B** open only for participants born or residing on the island of Ireland, we received 37 poems. Poets submitting their works in this category were expected to write about poverty and include reflections upon or references to "Poverty: punishment for a crime you didn't commit" (attributed to Eli Khamarov). This year's competition was adjudicated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky, and it was judged blindly. The following is the list of prize-winning and highly commended haiku in both categories.

Category A

1st Prize

Quendryth Young (Australia) receives the first prize of € 150 for the following haiku:

turning tide
the buoy bobs
sideways

2nd Prize

The 2nd Prize of € 50 goes to John Barlow (England) for the following haiku:

the windfalls
he gathered
gathering dusk

3rd Prize

Bouwe Brouwer (the Netherlands) receives the third prize of € 30 for the following haiku:

November rain -
the fence
around the ruin



Highly Commended Haiku

In alphabetical order:

Ernest J. Berry (New Zealand)

early dusk
the elderly sexton
wreathed in mist

Marion Clarke (Northern Ireland)

storm on the lough
streetlamps on Seaview
lit by sunrise

Beth McFarland (Northern Ireland - Germany)

laid at the feet
of a cat,
all the Alps

Peter Newton (USA)

first snow...
filling the emptiness
of a curled leaf

Roland Packer (Canada)

equinox
again you speak
of leaving

Cynthia Rowe (Australia)

wild persimmon
autumn sun fills
the last leaf

Priscilla Van Valkenburgh (USA)

island morning fog -
the spruce tree and wooden bench
web-connected



Category B

1st Prize

Clare McCotter (Co. Derry) receives the first prize of € 100 for the following haiku:

silver moon
climbing a scaffold of stars
unemployed builder

2nd Prize

The 2nd Prize of € 30 goes to Thomas Powell (Co. Armagh) for the following haiku:

charity shop -
we debate the need
for a book on Gauguin

3rd Prize

Mary O'Keeffe (Co. Cork) receives the third prize of € 20 for the following haiku:

coffee morning
in the hull of her handbag
she stows her daughter's lunch



Highly Commended Haiku

In alphabetical order:

Clare McCotter (Co. Derry)

gold autumn dawn
melting over the fields
she once owned

Clare McCotter (Co. Derry)

rose dawn
pulled tight around
the bagwoman's shoulders

Beth McFarland (Co. Tyrone - presently, Germany)

all the unborn children
cherry blossom
in the wind

Conor O'Neill (Co. Dublin - presently, Chile)

outside the bank
a beggar's empty hands
counting raindrops

Thomas Powell (Co. Armagh)

work prospects...
I search the sky
for yesterday's swallows

Our congratulations go to all of the winners. We also express our sincere gratitude to the Administrator of the competition, without whom...





"Case Exhibit" by Eleanor Leonne Bennett (England)

6 2 6 2 6 2



Toward Evening

by Steven Carter (USA)

Indigo rain cloaks the city but I cast a shadow – no, no, I am my shadow.

Oddly translucent, my shadow tramples a thousand eyes of rain winking and blinking on the sidewalk. Glancing at the sky, which has turned violet-lavender... And the moon – how can there be a moon? – and Neptune! Rings clearly visible in the mist, her necklace of moons sparkles against a backdrop of friendly stars which shine but don't sparkle.

Ahead walks a stranger, shoulders hunched against the cold. Descending on me, a deep feeling of compassion for him and for all the strangers, nomads, exiles of this earth; it's a warm shawl in the rain.

But where am I?

dying wind
by the roadside cross
a candy bar



Breath: Haiku
by Sandra Simpson

Published by Piwakawaka Press, Tauranga, New Zealand, 2011
64 pp, ISBN 978-0-473-19150-4

Available from the author (for details, e-mail her at [nzhaiku\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:nzhaiku[at]gmail.com) replacing [at] with @).

Priced at \$NZ17, \$A17, \$US21, £14.

Sandra Simpson grew up in Manawatu, New Zealand, and then lived abroad working as a journalist in such countries as England, Qatar and Lebanon. She is back in New Zealand now. Her first haiku was published in 1995, and her works have since appeared in *Heron's Next*, *Simply Haiku*, *Kokako*, *Stylus* and *Presense*. This book is her first collection; it contains 88 haiku, one or two to a page, grouped into four sections according to the four seasons known in the western world. Poems alternate with Sandra Simpson's own nature photographs, which to my amateur eye look like high-quality ones. Strangely enough, page numbers are missing throughout the whole book.

In the preface the author discusses the importance of breathing. We can't argue with that, can we? Another a little bit too obvious statement there is that that 'as humans, we are an integral part of the cycle of the natural world.' Towards the end of the preface the author maintains that 'haiku poets write in the hope that the barrier of their words will "disappear" so the reader may also experience the [haiku] moment.'

Let's see how it works in this book. If anybody expects not properly constructed haiku from an author on her first collection, this is clearly not the case here. Sandra Simpson has been around for more than fifteen years, and her technique of haiku writing almost never fails her. Same goes for the sound arrangement of her haiku:

rain and more rain
the welcome mat
begins to sprout

If I am not mistaken, Ralph Waldo Emerson was the first who wrote about "a surprised man of the world". In this book also, the poet likes to show that nature's beauty takes her by surprise. It can be, and is effective but the author uses it perhaps a tad too often.

reading and re-reading
the same sentence –
lotus flowers

autumn leaves –
my forgotten chore
remains forgotten

dandelion moon –
the book I ordered
unopened

Sandra Simpson clearly is a keen observer, which always helps a haiku poet.

waiting for the rains
both sides
of the pillow hot

There are also a few senryu in the book, almost all of them convincing.

family photo box
how my father smiles
in black and white

The poet likes to use the words from the local dialect, supplying each but one with a footnote. The unexplained word, however, poses a mystery.

standing naked
in moonlight –
the taste of nashi

Having looked up the enigmatic 'nashi' in the dictionary, I found out that it is "a member of the Nashi movement, or the Putin Youth, in Russia, an analogue of the Hitler Youth." This made me wonder if this organisation's international outreach extends as far abroad as New Zealand – or does the word 'nashi' mean something else in the Maori language?

Overall, there are fine poems in the book, some of them better than the others, but all perfectly adequate. The book at its best:

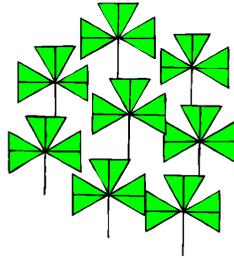
packing again –
folding the sunset
into every garment

earthquake season
the avocado
rolls this way & that

This collection comes highly recommended, and should be a good addition to anybody's haiku library.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky

____I have since been advised that *nashi* is the Japanese name for what is known in some parts as apple pear. Still, a little footnote explaining it would have been most appropriate in the book.



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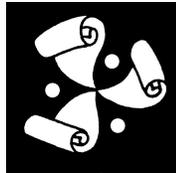
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22, 2012



high noon –
a water tower returns
a silo's glare

Basic Anatomy
worn and cracked
at the spine

to the shoe store
clearance sale with
the millipede

before me
and after,
cicadas

-- Jeffrey Woodward (USA)

child by a tree
all the bells
on one branch

frosty morning
the long shadows
slippery

adult child –
his mother small
in a hospital bed

empty house
soft brown apples
under the tree

-- Patrick Gerard Burke (Ireland)

first bee
bathing its antennae
in a condensation pool

Monday blues –
the thrush stops to sing
between pecks

descending mist . . .
the Mournes unavailable
for photos

-- Marion Clarke (Northern Ireland)

Jupiter's moons
a hawk moth orbits
the gas lamp

record heat –
palm trees on the boulevard
shedding feathers

beach tryst
a fiddler crab waving
his big yellow claw

-- *Lorin Ford (Australia)*

carrying dawnlight
into the house
ginger tabby

red leaves
after the second wine
shadows come and go

hailstorm
my mother threading pearls
by the attic window

-- *Vuong Pham (Australia)*

summer heat
fireweed filling
the empty slough

temple bells after dark the smell of burning leaves

mountain mist all the silent wind chimes

-- Patrick Pilarski (Canada)

morning rush hour –
an empty hearse
pins me to the kerb

school fete
butterfly cakes
harden in the sun

spring returns
a pale yellow poppy
leant against her window

-- Helen Buckingham (England)

March heatwave
a goose shakes its neck
to trumpet at the flock

buffeted links...
the thinnest sunbeams
drop onto fleabane

bucketing rain
the blackberry bushes
sag with fruit

-- Matthew Paul (England)

dandelion clock
midday shadows
grow longer

overgrown brambles
magpie's beak
stained purple

summer solstice birdsong late in the evening

-- Kara Craig (Ireland)

dawn departure
the roar
of a thousand pairs of wings

summer picnic
the sound of one bee
humming

-- *Tracy Davidson (England)*

beside you
the darkness releases
a birdsong

slow snowfall
the sound of
her hair blower

-- *Dietmar Tauchner (Austria)*

evening traffic
one horn
sadder than the rest

teeth marks
in the dog's leash
dry winds

-- *Glenn G. Coats (USA)*

on the roof trusses
in the old factory
owls waiting

the Battalion tailor
repairing the suits
nibbled by birds

-- Noel King (Ireland)

on the steps
of the Freedom Memorial,
a discarded snake skin

*(First published on the Haiku International Association website,
Japan)*

wax museum
fear-giggles
from behind Henry VIII

-- Anatoly Kudryavitsky (Ireland)

Bombay monsoon –
I stand knee deep
at a juice stall

monsoon –
my perfume drowned
by the smell of wet earth

-- R.J. Kalpana (India)

winding road –
pylon can't decide
which side

-- *Robert Davey (England)*

humid day
empty cicada shell
on dry leaves

-- *Raffael de Gruttola (USA)*

darkening –
words we read
into river-sounds

-- *Steven Carter (USA)*

moon viewing
the drama
of passing clouds

-- *Michael Ketchick (USA)*

zinc-white blurs —
pine branches spray-painted
with down

-- *Craig Steele (USA)*

old iron bed frame
the lover my pillows
gossip about

-- *Ayaz Daryl Nielsen (USA)*

dry creek bed
a dung beetle
swims in the dust

-- *Alicia Hilton (USA)*

inside dewdrops,
the only time I am
the size I feel

-- *S.M. Abeles (USA)*

I wait
for test results...
ice-blue sky

-- *Dawn Bruce (Australia)*

homeless man
a fog blankets
the city

-- *Gavin Austin (Australia)*

after the fireworks stars

-- *Peter Macrow (Australia)*

sunny day
a tree
on the fence

-- *Elizabeth Crocket (Canada)*

sunrise
the neighbour's gas line
a brighter yellow

-- *Vera Constantineau (Canada)*

first of May –
a fingertip of moon
on the skylight

-- *Hugh O'Donnell (Ireland)*

budgie on the roof –
a caged one listens to
his song

-- *Aisling White (Ireland)*

mountain fog –
bleached sheep skull
on snow

-- *Martin Vaughan (Ireland)*

striated stone
a footpath fossil record
walking on ocean floor

-- *Bee Smith (Ireland)*

Tower Bridge –
running water
full of shadows

-- *Tom Minitier (Ireland)*

May morning
waxy magnolia petals
ready to open

-- *Mary Gunn (Ireland)*

buds on the hawthorn tree
erupt –
aroused nipples

-- *Orla Fay (Ireland)*

canal boats
wind-danced leaves
carry autumn colours

-- *Thomas Chockley (USA)*

a boy
making his imaginary dog
cross the bridge

-- *Tzetzka Ilieva (Bulgaria/USA)*

monsoon's end
patches of emptiness
on the evening moon

-- *Ramesh Anand (Malaysia)*



over the white
wave crest,
early snow

-- Drago Štambuk (Croatia; translated from the Croatian by the author)

light breeze –
so gentle, it's unclear
from where it's blowing

in the embrasure
of a ruined castle,
the full moon's face

through the empty
snail shell,
cold shivers

equator –
half a white whale's corpse
on one side, half on the other

*-- Drago Štambuk (Croatia; translated from the Croatian by
Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

our kitty has died –
but tom-cats still come
to our door

battlefield –
dewdrops on the
wilting grass

*-- Ivan Krotov (Russia; translated from the Russian by Anatoly
Kudryavitsky)*



"Winter Birch. Clonycavan, Co. Meath, Ireland" by Sahoko Blake (Ireland)





Impression

by John Zheng (USA)

after Arnold Newman's picture

85-year-old Georges Rouault sank into a chair. The photographer, who loved the painter's somber style, shot stills from different angles. Rouault sat like a still life, his eyes thinking. After a while, he uttered: "He's photographed all around me. Does he want to photograph my derriere?"

sitting on the porch
with one leg on the other
this corn-shuck man



Catch of the Day

by Andrew Shattuck McBride (USA)

I see something in a fish ladder. I climb downslope and make my way to the waist-high concrete wall containing the pool. Trying not to get wet, I stand reaching out to grab it.

An older couple stops on the trail. They frown down at me and seem ready to scold.

Finally I can grasp it. "Yes!" I shout in triumph, and hold up my trophy so they can see.

fishing an empty
whiskey bottle from the creek
the couple left speechless



"Armadillo Basket" by Helen Buckingham

Published by Waterloo Press (Hove, UK) 2011

70pp, price £10

ISBN 978-1-9067742-37-9

Available from the publisher at www.waterloopresshove.co.uk

Helen Buckingham's new volume of poetry is *Armadillo Basket*. Why the title, one wonders? The word "armadillo" comes from the Spanish meaning "little armoured one". The haiku which contains this word is:

Dad's shed

sorting through the drill bits

in the armadillo basket

Is the poet an armadillo and the drill bits her armoury? Does she speak from a stance that is slow-moving, well-protected but also somewhat exotic? Thus we sense both the domestic and the exotic in her poetry.

Onto the haiku and tanka from the opening section of the book "Green Light".

Some haiku are instants which encapsulate change:

after school –

mastering mascara

to the rhythm of the bus

Memories of a girl awakening slowly to adulthood.

mud pack

watching her young face

harden

The haiku act as multiple mirrors with the young girl and the adult woman working reflections upon themselves.

The haiku also act as little points of anecdote on the track of a relationship.

chill wind
the wedding tent
close to flight

Tanka and haiku flash by arrestingly in the second section "Summer is a hospital" as the poet now brings summer and all its rich glories into sharp focus and a fine ecstatic language emerges.

nectar drunk
bumble bees blunder
into the parasol

This is an exhilarating section.

There are also sections of mainstream poems in this collection; some of them display wit and an optimistic momentum, while some others have a touch of something bitter, but vigorously so – an effective contrast with the plump luxuriousness of the summer section.

Armadillo Basket is a rich collection of poetry by a poet at the height of her considerable powers. I recommend it.

Charles Thompson



Clare McCotter. "Black Horse Running"

Alba Publishing, P O Box 266, Uxbridge, UB9 5NX, U.K.

2012

78 pp.; ISBN 978-0-9551254-6-1

Available from the publisher.

Clare McCotter, a poet from Co. Derry in Northern Ireland, has built a good reputation having published her haiku, tanka and haibun in the leading haiku periodicals. However she hasn't published an individual collection before, and so her first book was eagerly anticipated.

The genre is defined on the title page as "a collection of haiku, tanka and haibun" but in fact the book contains also a number of mainstream poems. According to the list of contents, the book has eight sections, although this division is not apparent when you are leafing through the book. The first section has 34 haiku, one tanka and two haibun. In the other sections haiku also alternate with tanka, haibun and mainstream poems. The title of the first section, "for judas", is really the title of the haibun on page 9, even though the section starts on page 5. There are two haibun on pages 69 and 70, between haiku sequences; the list of contents places the first haibun in the seventh section, and the second in the eighth.

The composition of the book probably reflects the writing habits of the poet. Perhaps she works like that switching from haiku to tanka to haibun and the next day starts writing mainstream poems, only to return to haiku later. Still, I can't help thinking that this book should probably have been better structured. I am all for complexity in poems but books should be easy to read. If a collection comprises several kinds of short-form poems, a reasonably good structuring is essential.

The poems in "Black Horse Running" are for the most part local to the area where the author lives, apart from a few pieces apparently referring to a trip to the Middle East. She really connects with nature in a very subtle way:

bronze chrysanthemums
father's old stories
retold in late autumn sun

Clare McCotter is not stranger to seeing “the extraordinary in the ordinary.”
E.g. in this one-line poem:

in his black hair the bones of old prayers

One would expect to find a few poems on horses in a book that has
“horse” in the title, and the poet duly obliges. In fact, there’s a few of
them grouped on pages 19 and 59.

bay horse entering
the clearing
entering the moon

hard frost
under a mare’s mane
her hands

There’s also an interesting haibun called “horse dream” in the book. “You
stood sixteen hands in a night whose amethyst soul we crossed...”
Impressive!

Of her tanka, I especially liked the following one:

old medical notes
call him imbecile
when he thinks no one
is looking he spreads
crumbs for the starlings

Clare McCotter worked as a nurse, and her medical awareness often shows
in her poetic works. E.g. one of the sequences is about a certain condition,
Alzheimer’s – and it is the least impressive part of the otherwise excellent

collection.

black dog howling
in the night
insight

Apart from the completely unnecessary end rhyme in the last two lines and the use of both "black dog" and "the night", which combine to provide an excessive amount of blackness, the simple mentioning of "insight" fails to make the poem insightful but instead creates a perhaps unwanted comical effect on the reader. Some other pieces in the same sequence are three-part haiku, or assemblages of suggestive or "promising" lines. Of course, a writer can easily shape them into an outline of a haiku but the question is if they are going to stick together. Because if they don't, "all the king's horses and all the king's men" won't put them together again.

Generally, I would advise every haikai to exercise extreme caution when attempting to write a haiku sequence. I've seen plenty of those in various haiku publications, but not too many of them convinced me that that particular bunch of poems worked best as a set. In the successful ones, there was a pervading atmosphere of a location or an event in time unifying the included pieces. Even though I have published a couple of my own rensaku, I still believe that haiku work best as standalone poems.

Luckily enough, Clare McCotter's collection has a lot of those to enjoy, and haiku lovers will surely appreciate the subtlety of her poems and attention to detail that has become the hallmark of Western haiku.

The book at its best:

evening star
a silver sapling
in the junkyard

low over rose waters a heron

crescent moon
behind cloud cover
the barmaid's bruised eye

May meadow at dusk
red fox spangled
to a frolicking shadow

I unreservedly recommend this collection to anyone who would like to sample the best of English-language short-form poems, or to anyone who has learned to appreciate their nuances.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky



Svetlana Marisova, Ted van Zutphen. "Be Still and Know"

Karakia Press

2011

ISBN 978-0-473-20664-2

186 pp.

Available from Karakia Press at <http://karakiapress.com>

This was the first book that came from Karakia Press, a print-on-demand edition powered by Createspace; a joint publication of the Russian-born New-Zealander Svetlana Marisova (1990 – 2011) and the Dutch-American poet Ted van Zutphen who compiled, edited and designed it.

Many books that come from print-on-demand publishing sites like Createspace or Lulu, despite sometimes great content, unfortunately look like amateur productions. This is the case with this publication. List of contents is missing; moreover, there are no page numbers. This makes the book extremely difficult to navigate. The cover design also looks amateurish, with one of the poets' names at the top and the other near the bottom...

I do understand that sometimes bringing out a print-on-demand edition is the last resort and some books wouldn't otherwise have come out but the bottom line is,

publish if you must but at least make sure that all the necessary design features are there.

Having finished the scrupulous analysis of the contents which, in the absence of page numbers and other landmarks, took me a considerable amount of time and pencil work, I can reveal that the book has six sections. Remembering that it comprises works by two poets, I first tried to find out who wrote what. A quote from the "Foreword" by Ted van Zutphen gave me some help with it: "In the first three chapters you'll find Svetlana's poems on the left pages and mine on the right, with un-noted exceptions in some sequences near the end of the third chapter. The fourth chapter is all Svetlana's, and the fifth chapter is all my work. In the final chapter I have deviated from all identifying distinctions made to let our story flow. (?? – A.K.) By then I expect the reader will be thoroughly familiar with our different styles that it doesn't matter anyway." We really like this kind of guessing game the editor wants us to play, don't we?

And the fact is, two of Svetlana Marisova's best haiku are buried in the last, "unidentified" section:

floating downstream –
the burden of my shadow
on a mayfly

crashing waves –
almost believing
it's forever

Again, it took me quite some time to conduct a web research and attribute these haiku.

To be honest, I always feel uneasy about reviewing the book of a recently deceased poet, as the general rule is, *de mortuis nihil nisi bonum* (of the dead, nothing unless good.) Actually, I wouldn't be able to say a bad word about Svetlana Marisova's work anyway, as the majority of her poems display a very high standard of haiku writing.

This is unusual for somebody whose creative period only lasted for about five years. Svetlana Marisova was a Russian-born Roman Catholic (I never met one in the course of the long 45 years that I spent in that country but who knows, they may still be somewhere there) who lived in New Zealand from 2004. Her English was very satisfying, even though her mother tongue was Russian. One can see that she was a quick learner: she only started writing haiku a few years prior to her untimely death, and she had good mentors/advisors. Robert D. Wilson was among them, and he also wrote a preface for this book.

Marisova's best haiku are exceptionally good, and one can only guess what heights she could have reached if she lived longer... I would describe her as a New Zealand poet,

even though she occasionally used the images stuck in her memory since her earlier life in Russia. E.g. in the following poem:

Lake Baikal –
the hidden depths
of his eyes

Many more poems, though, reflect the realities – and sometimes peculiarities – of New Zealand's nature:

reflected
in a tuatara's eye
primeval light

She often uses juxtaposition of images, perhaps more often than an average English-language haikin:

autumn mist
first grey then gold... (I would prefer to see "golden" instead of "gold" - A.K.)
morning fire

Marisova is a master of understatement. To that extent that it sometimes isn't clear what she is trying to say in her poems.

icy moon
all over the valley
unveiling...

My first thought was that I, like Sherlock Holmes, don't fancy taking a guess where I don't have enough information. But then I thought about all the haiku where the authors diligently put all the dots above "i's"...

Sometimes Marisova wrote "religious" haiku, and they are not among her best:

Jesus beads
anchoring me
to each breath

Her forte was creating visionary poems, like these:

name day...
the smoothness
of a white stone

rose petals –
the ceremony
of blood

I look forward to seeing Marisova's individual collection published some day, with all the

available poems included and arranged in the chronological order. Naturally, such a book should be rid of that "guess who wrote it" element.

Now to Ted van Zutphen's haiku. These are the ones I liked best:

this snail
taking his shell...
where?

winter dawn –
the crackling of ice
on the old pond

early spring...
feeding my hungry nose
a hyacinth

The poet commonly uses the *shasei* technique of haiku writing. Some of his pieces, however, are not much more than "so what" haiku. E.g. these:

fresh snow
yesterday's tracks
gone

or

turning over
another leaf –
paper cut

or

two clouds
in a blue sky...
merging

Another gives an interesting example of personification, much disputed now, as ever:

winter silence
a squirrel scampers,
stops... and prays

Personification here adds a comical aspect to the poem, which isn't necessarily a bad thing.

One more haiku with Christian overtones from van Zutphen:

snow drifts –
an angel spreads
her wings

Nipping in the bud any doubts about the merits of this haiku I might have had, I was still a bit surprised to see an angel referred to as a “she”. If my memory serves me right, angels in the Old Testament are called *bene elohim*, which literally means “sons of God” (and the same phrase found its way to the Greek translations of the Hebrew scriptures), whereas female angels are only mentioned in the *Book of Mormon!*

Talking about Christian haiku in general, I must confess that I am currently conducting a logic experiment testing the thesis that, if I put it with Orwellian directness and simplicity, will look like this: the more Christian a haiku is, the less convincing I find it. In Ireland, two poets, Dermot O’Brien and Sean Brophy, came up with four collections of their Christian haiku between them – and succeeded in making their books unmistakably Christian but failed miserably with the haiku aspect. Of course, I keep an open mind, and I realize that my thesis can be disproved any moment but this still hasn’t happened!

Also included in the book are tanka, haibun and haiga by both contributors.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky



“**Niotkud / From Nowhere**”. Selected haiku by **Drago Štambuk**.

Trilingual Croatian / English / Japanese

Ed. and transl. by Shokan T. Kondo.

Tokyo, Ribun Publishing, May 2011.

128 pp.

Available from Ribun Publishing, tel. 03-3352-7322.

Tomislav Maretić. "Leptir nad pučinom sitnopjesni / Butterfly over the Open Sea": haiku.

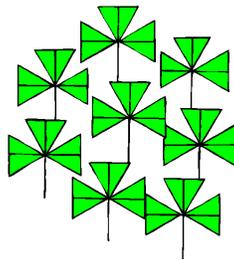
HKLD Publishing

Zagreb, 2011

ISBN 978-953-55125-2-3

144 pp.

Available from HKLD Publishing at <http://hkld.hr>

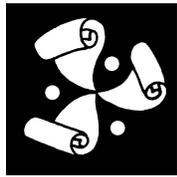


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Shamrock

Haiku Journal of the Irish Haiku Society

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world



23, 2012

News and
Announcements

IHS International Haiku Competition 2012 announced!

The Irish Haiku Society International Haiku Competition 2012 offers prizes of Euro 150, Euro 50 and Euro 30 for unpublished **haiku/senryu** in English. In addition there will be up to seven Highly Commended haiku/senryu. Entrants may win more than one prize.

Details here: <http://irishhaiku.webs.com/haikucompetition.htm>

All the entries shall be postmarked by 30th November 2012. No e-mail submissions, please!

Good luck to all!

From now on *Shamrock Haiku Journal* will publish three issues per year instead of four. This is due to the editor starting a new webzine, [Emerald Bolts](#), an Irish and international platform for flash fiction. The editor has already started reading submissions of flash fiction of no more than 500 words for the new webzine.



descending snowflakes
the battlefield
white again

the ascent
of the orange moon –
a dinghy bobs near shore

an old spade
washed to the shore
picked up again

June sunset
ochre cliffs slide
into the ocean

All Souls Day –
night sky alive with
white flares

-- Kara Craig (Ireland)

on one side
of the music school's fence –
trumpet vines

botanical garden...
the zigzag path
of spring

Neighbourhood Watch
a full moon peeks
through each window

-- Vuong Pham (Australia)

sudden storm
a red deck umbrella
lifts in the wind

evening calm
picking cockleburs
from the dog

-- *Ben Moeller-Gaa (USA)*

first dip
of the tilt-a-wheel
camellias

birthday
she asks why parsley
is biennial

-- *Bill Cooper (USA)*

Normandy beach
an armada of geese
turn toward shore

the bad part of town –
through pavement cracks,
wild flowers

-- *Jay Friedenberg (USA)*

poolside
the rescued wasp
dries its wings

my garden path
an assortment
of droppings

-- Quendryth Young (Australia)

monkey house
my daughter clambers
out of her buggy

hand in hand
we walk in the shadows . . .
split-open chestnuts

-- John McManus (England)

light frost
a flock of starlings across
the gibbous moon

all the things
I meant to do –
falling leaves

-- Juliet Wilson (Scotland)

war museum
children skip stones
across the pond

winter stars –
the mailbox
empty

-- Bouwe Brouwer (the Netherlands)

dipping sun
daylilies begin
to wrap up

-- John Zheng (USA)

lost memory found –
the smell of wood smoke
on the autumn breeze

-- Joseph M. Kusmiss (USA)

dusk... the homeless
gather on the porch
of an abandoned house

-- Scott Owens (USA)

early morning light
across the backwaters –
beavers working

-- Ayaz Daryl Nielsen (USA)

black and white photo
my father
younger than my son

-- Mel Goldberg (Mexico – USA)

first day of spring
running shoes laced
with cobwebs

-- Jim Davis (USA)

full moon night
a leaf spins
under the waterfall

-- Kath Abela Wilson (USA)

skipping stones
across Great Slave Lake
my shadow and I

-- *Chen-ou Liu (Canada)*

the day lilies blare
red and orange arias –
still, no butterflies

-- *Richard Stevenson (Canada)*

autumn gust
all the coloured pegs
grip the clothes line

-- *Jan Dobb (Australia)*

city forest
birds mimic
a car alarm

-- *Tiggy Johnson (Australia)*

visible
between the photos,
what didn't happen

-- Beth McFarland (Northern Ireland)

July deluge
lawn spinkler
joins in

-- Mark Loneragan (Ireland)

kingfisher
gathering the mid-day sun
on its wet feathers

-- Jim Burke (Ireland)

city twilight
the peregrines' nest
chimes the hour

-- Claire Everett (England)

daffodil buds
her pregnancy
now shows

-- Rachel Sutcliffe (England)

crows on a bare branch –
ink-laden
brushstrokes

-- *Marie Coveney (Ireland)*

in my teacup,
a somersault
of the full moon

-- *Keith Simmonds (Trinidad and Tobago)*

waiting for a friend –
a pigeon struts up and down
the wet pavement

-- *Sonam Chhoki (Bhutan)*

old wall
ants in and out
of the cavities

-- *Stella Pierides (Greece)*



windy morning –
my granny's red scarf
dancing

singing the sorrowful songs
of our forefathers,
the waterfall

this endless valley...
ants crossing
the track of a fox

winter night –
the gloomy sky
lit by snowflakes

at long last
there it is,
sky between the skyscrapers

*-- Amýl Engin (Turkey; transl. from the Turkish by the author
and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

clinging to the window pane,
two dried leaves,
dead butterfly's wings

-- Melisa Gürpınar (Turkey; transl. from the Turkish by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

desolate wet shore –
waves coming and going
moss remaining

-- Evin Okçuoğlu (Turkey; transl. from the Turkish by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a street beggar –
snowflakes not melting
on his palm

-- Turgay Uçeren (Turkey; transl. from the Turkish by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)





"Children of Indigo" by Armanush Markaryan (Uzbekistan)





Incarnation on a Train

by Steven Carter (USA)

The girls of Poland are unusually pretty as a rule, but this one, sitting next to me on the night express up to Warsaw, is remarkable even by Polish standards. She reminds me of a young Liz Taylor.

We try to communicate, but it's useless; I know less than a dozen words in Polish, and like most Poles she speaks no English at all. The odd thing is that we do talk a lot, even though the conversation goes nowhere.

As the train parallels the Vistula River glittering in the moonlight, I bring out a small silver flask filled with top-shelf "bison grass" vodka, the best in Poland and therefore the world. I offer her a hit and to my surprise she accepts. Then I hold the flask up to the other American sitting across from us in our compartment, but he politely declines.

The girl and I pass the flask back and forth until it's empty. Each time our eyes meet, and they do so many times, I melt, and wonder if she feels the same; of course I'll never know.

When we arrive at the Warsaw train station, I help her with her bag.

"Dziekuje, pan, dziekuje," she murmurs, touching my cheek.

"Prosze," I say softly to myself as she disappears into the crowd of Poles,

Russians, and Estonians. She looks back once at me.

"She must be in the movies," my fellow American remarks as three blue-uniformed Polish cops – Smurfs we called them then – walk past shoulder to shoulder. "I wonder who she is."

"If we were in an allegory, I'd say 'Love' with a capital 'L,'" I shrug, slinging my knapsack on my back.

"But neither of you understood a word the other was saying!"

"Exactly."

choir of stars
400 miles away
Chernobyl



James Norton. "The Fragrance of Dust"
Haiku, Stories, Poems

Alba Publishing, UK, 2012

ISBN 978-0-955-12548-5

102 pp.

Available from Alba Publishing for €15 at <http://albapublishing.com> or write to PO Box 266, Uxbridge, UB9 5NX, UK

James Norton was the founding editor of the first haiku magazine on the island of Ireland, Haiku Spirit. It was a paper-based journal of haiku and related forms that published Irish and international haiku poets. All in all, twenty issues of Haiku Spirit appeared between 1995 and 2000. James Norton was also one of the first poets in this country to write haiku

as we know them, and he set a high standard for the newer generations of Irish haikai. This is the reason why a representative collection of his haiku has been eagerly anticipated.

This collection gathers together the poet's haiku, haibun and mainstream poems written, as the author's introduction prompts, over a twenty year span. Following the Introduction, Ken Jones's Foreword offers the Welsh poet's insight into Jim Norton's work.

The body of the book is split into nine sections. Each one has a mixture of haiku, longer poems and haibun. I can't resist the temptation to quote some of James Norton's haiku gems that I have admired long since their publication in magazines. E.g. these ones:

dinner over
in the bowl
one grain

dare I tell him?
from my neighbour's dungheap
a double rainbow

august hear
faint click of pine cones
opening as we part

James Norton is a Buddhist practitioner, and the following piece gives away his leanings:

garden Buddha
hail rain or shine
same smile

If we simplify Zen to the utmost degree, we can say that a Zen Buddhist, rather than adoring and worshipping Buddha, strives to become a Buddha himself. As the Zen master Ying-An put it, "in order to achieve a Zen enlightenment, you don't have to leave your family or give up your job, nor is it necessary to become a vegetarian or a hermit; you can attain Zen right where you are." The following poem by James Norton reminds me a Zen koan that can give some kind of elusive answer to the question what Zen is:

sound of a spoon
striking an empty bowl:
that's it!

The book also offers an ample selection of James Norton's haibun (a short piece of prose

with incorporated haiku). He is arguably the most accomplished writer of haibun among the Irish haijin. Many of his haibun are travel sketches but there's no place for plain and banal prose there. "I felt free to experiment," the poet confesses in the Introduction, and his haiku prose is a must-read for anyone interested in the development of English-language haibun.

I will leave the reader of these lines with a couple of James Norton's excellent senryu:

single now
I throw away
the avocado stones

coughing
and the stranger upstairs
coughs too

In short, if you want to read Irish short-form poetry at its best, order this book!

Anatoly Kudryavitsky



William E. Cooper. "The Dance of her Napkin"

Published by Cyberwit, Allahabad, India, 2012

105 pp.; ISBN 978-8-182-53316-5

Available from Cyberwit via <http://cyberwit.net/publications/410>

Priced at USD 15

The India-based publish-as-you-pay (or, if you prefer, pay-as-you-publish) Cyberwit have come up with a collection of haiku from William E. Cooper, the American academic and poet who, according to his biographical note placed on the back cover, has started writing haiku in 2009 and whose publication credits include the best haiku periodicals.

This collection includes 100 haiku and senryu, one on a page. The title refers to one of the poet's better known pieces, which can't be described as anything but excellent, due to its subtle humour:

old ballerina
the dance
of her napkin

Strangely enough, the cover photograph (not a very high quality one) depicts nothing connected with the title, or with the title haiku, but a lake (a river?) with a kayak in the distance.

Like many American haikai, William E. Copper is primarily a minimalist, and one can only admire the economy of haiku like these:

hammock
the sway
of Orion

or

zoo bend
suddenly
flamingos

or

cauliflower
fractals
everywhere I look

Of course, if you strip a haiku to the bare bones, there still have to be bones, and the minimalist approach doesn't always help, especially if you haven't got sufficient imagery:

sea oats...
leaning over
the long pier

In the majority of cases William E. Cooper uses a shasei technique, and his thorough sketching of nature results in such excellent haiku as these:

bulging acorn
the grey squirrel
adjusts his grip

daily walk
the welcome jig
of an emerald beetle

Equally convincing are the poet's senryu:

baby's hand
the long tunnel through
a pajama sleeve

working overlong
the slack mouth
of a trout on ice

The poet doesn't always maintain the desired level of perfection, and a few so-what pieces found their way onto the pages of this collection:

Mayan ruins
slowly down
uneven steps

Grand Canal
a soccer ball
floats to my daughter

while daughter's (should have been "daughters", really) negotiate,
the banana split
melting

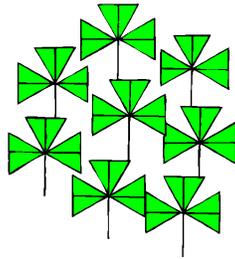
Unfortunately, notes from a poet's diary, even if they have a sentimental value to the poet, don't always make good haiku/senryu.

Still, there's a lot to admire in this collection, and the readers will surely bear in their memory some of the best pieces, like this:

green tea
tasting a mountain
I will never climb

This book is a worthy addition to anyone's haiku library, and comes highly recommended.

--Anatoly Kudryavitsky



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