

Shamrock Haiku Journal

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world

Issue 9, 2009

Shamrock



Haiku Journal
of the Irish Haiku Society

Shamrock Haiku Journal enters the third year of its existence. In the previous two years we have published eight issues, in which we showcased works by two hundred and seventy-two poets who represented thirty-eight countries. We are grateful to all our contributors, and declare our intention to further broaden the geographical scope of our publications.

Announcement

Shamrock Haiku Journal Readers' Choice Award 2008

The following piece by **Graham Nunn (Australia)** published in our No 5 was voted the best haiku poem that appeared in Shamrock Haiku Journal in 2008:

lookout point
the stones
share our silence

One of our authors who voted for this haiku supplied the following comment about it:

As well as providing fresh insight, this haiku evokes for me a tremendous sense of awe. The writer in present tense, and the ancient stones are together silent. Looking out and beyond. Awesome.

The close runners-up were a haiku by [Vasile Moldovan \(Romania\)](#) published in our No 8:

winter sun
in the snowman's eyes
first tears

and the following piece by [Martin Vaughan \(Ireland\)](#) that appeared in Shamrock No 7:

sunburst -
scent of wild garlic
fills the garden

A piece by [Sergey Biryukov \(Russia\)](#) was voted the best one-line haiku published in Shamrock Haiku Journal in 2008:

out of the empty sleeve steam

(First published in Shamrock Haiku Journal No 5. Incidentally, translated by the editor)

Many congratulations to the winners!



Focus on

Poland

calm sea -
above me and below me,
a row of clouds

clear sky
the garden hose
paints a rainbow

-- Agnieszka Adamska (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a night at the motel -
light from passing
furniture vans

from my neighbour's house,
only the voice
of a crying doll

forest brook
an autumn leaf drifts
toward shore

-- Magdalena Banaszekiewicz (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

new moon -
out of the fragrance of damsons,
nightingale's warble

cloudless sky
the wind swaying the ears
of flowering flax

weeping willow -
instead of leaves,
raindrops

distant mountains -
through the blue haze,
ruins of a castle

All Souls' Day -
over the old grave,
a wingless angel

-- Grażyna Kaźmierczak (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

away from home -
even the birds sing
in a foreign tongue

empty street
the wind brings
the sound of flute

birds' twittering
morning mist
clears away

rainy evening -
over the stove, mushrooms
drying on a thread

river mist -
from the other shore,
woodpecker's knock

-- Maria Kowal (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

abandoned fort
a rusty cannon sinks
into jasmine

-- Rafał Leniar (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

Saturday
the wedding procession
passes a funeral train

autumn park
on the stone chessboard,
a few chestnuts

village graveyard
black soil and fresh flowers
scattered on the snow

-- Artur Lewandowski (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky and the author)

Sunday lunch -
sitting in my father's place
for the first time

golden autumn
more and more butterflies
with pale wings

-- Artur Lewandowski (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

autumn
the smell of mushrooms
in a suburban bus

fog over the meadows
yet again, my father forgets
his macintosh

pond
a couple of swans
sail from cloud to cloud

autumn fog
a narrow ravine
full to the brim

cold evening -
over the dimming campfire,
a thousand stars

-- Damian Margolak (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

how deep the silence!
in the spider's web,
a grasshoper

abandoned house
a mossy pool
dotted with tadpoles

old bridge
a falling fragment
breaks the moon

spring rain -
in the cherry orchard
white speckles on mud

old door -
over the worn threshold,
New Year's frost

-- Jacek Margolak (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

river breeze -
sticking out from the reeds,
long fishing rods

misty meadows
jingle bells
from both ends

Russian acrobats
cold rain tapping
on the circus tent

spring thunderstorm
old gentleman opens
his umbrella for me

calm breeze
enough to scent
a flowering orchard

-- Aneta Michelucci (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

rainy day -
on the office steps,
an unemployed sparrow

-- Robert Naczas (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

dawn over the lake -
so cold
the blue sky!

empty nest
bare branches next to
my mother's house

pheasants in the meadow
another bus leaving
without me

late evening -
on the sheet of paper,
a shadow pen

nightingale in the evening -
closing my eyes
to hear

-- Mariusz Ogryzko (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

end of summer
the wind erasing
footprints

spring cleaning
rustling leaves
in the attic

last turn in the road -
from my house, the smell
of apple pie

end of winter
only the birch
still in white

wet night -
wherever I set my foot,
the moon

-- Katarzyna Prędotą (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

autumn sun
a leaf falls
onto its shadow

cold morning -
in the trash, a tramp
and a few birds

All Souls' Day
fresh leaves
between the graves

listening to silence -
fallen leaves
at Chopin's monument

winter garden
the fence's shadow separates
white from white

-- Dorota Pyra (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

procession of clouds
flowers on her hat
darker

thunderclap
the sparrowless branch
up and down

empty road -
in the old ruts,
fresh snow

morning calm -
between the light and the dark,
a spider's web

first date
nightingale's song
louder

-- Bronisława Sibiga (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

awakening -
the rain from my dream
still falling

wild mustard field
warm wind brings along
the scent of honey

summer breeze
shadows of clouds crawling
along the beach

frosty morning -
between two branches,
the skeleton of a kite

broken mirror
in each splinter
the same pair of eyes

-- Grzegorz Sionkowski (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

awakening
view from my window
still the same

-- Mateusz Sionkowski (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

loneliness
nothing but advertisements
in my letterbox

-- Marek Szyryk (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

no stars
only snowflakes
in the lantern light

four empty walls
even my own voice
unrecognisable

last walk on the beach
her shadow has
longer legs

spring wind
again the same quiet whistle
under her daughter's window

autumn drizzle -
on the washing line,
only raindrops

-- Juliusz Wnorowski (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

catching my breath -
from a deep vale,
the roaring of a tractor

a churchyard oak -
at my granny's grave,
a squirrel and I

lightning in the sky
the sound of drumming
from an upturned bucket

sea of poppies
each blast of wind
followed by a wave

path in the forest
out of the mist,
woodpecker's knock

-- Rafał Zabratyński (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

large shrine on the meadow:
a feral animal
open to the skies

-- Adam Zagajewski (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

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Essay

A Brief History of Polish Haiku

by Rafał Zabratyński

Shortly after Poland regained its independence after the First World War Polish literature became more receptive to new literary trends, including those coming from oriental countries. However, the first Polish study of Japanese literature was published in the book entitled *Historja literatury chińskiej i japońskiej* (A History of Chinese and Japanese Literature, Warsaw, 1901) by Julian Adolf Świącicki. As far as translations of Japanese poems are concerned, the first compilation titled *Sintaisi-sho, poeci nowo-japońscy* (Sintaisi-sho, Modern Japanese Poets) by Antoni Lange was published in Warsaw in 1908. In this book we also find a concise history of Japanese literature in the 19th century.

In 1927, first Polish translations of haiku appeared in the essay by Stefan Łubieński entitled "Sztuka słowa i pieśniarstwa" (The Art of Word and Song); it was included in the book called *Między Wschodem a Zachodem. Japonia na straży Azji*. (Between the East and the West. Japan Guarding Asia).

After the Second World War the Communists came to power in Poland. This fact accounts for considerably limited interactions between Polish authors and the outside literary world. Socialist realism dominated the Polish literary scene pushing all the other literary trends to the sidelines. That was the reason why no

haiku translations could be published in our country in those times. This accounts for the fact that the first Polish anthology of classical haiku *Godzina dzikiej kaczki* (The Hour of a Wild Duck) appeared in 1966 in Great Britain; it was compiled and edited by Aleksander Janta-Półczyński.

Haiku resurfaced in Polish periodicals only in 1975, notably in the "Poezja" (Poetry) monthly, one of the co-editors of which was Stanisław Grochowiak. For the first time the whole issue of a Polish magazine was completely dedicated to haiku, comprising several translations of Bashō's haiku and a detailed essay by Prof. Wiesław Kotański, which he called "Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec haiku" (Japanese Seventeen-Syllable Haiku). The first Polish poet to include haiku in his collection was Leszek Engelking. His book published in 1979 was called *Autobus do hotelu Cytera* (A Bus to the Cytera Hotel).

The decade commencing in 1980 saw a considerable proliferation of Polish literary works inspired by oriental philosophy; haiku in particular. However, a turning point in the changing attitude towards haiku was in 1983, the year when an anthology of classical Japanese haiku appeared in Poland. The editor Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda simply called it *Haiku*. The book was fitted with an introductory essay, the translator's commentary, several reproductions of Japanese paintings, samples of calligraphy, as well as a closing essay on the history of haiku in Japan written by Mikołaj Melanowicz.

The 1990s witnessed a plentiful crop of haiku and related poems in Poland. Czesław Miłosz, one of the Polish Nobel Prize winners for Literature, translated a collection of classical Japanese and contemporary American and Canadian haiku from English, and in 1992 published his translations in the book entitled *Haiku*. This book provoked an enormous interest in haiku among Polish readers.

The next quality publication followed shortly. In 1993, *Antologia kanadyjskiego haiku* (An Anthology of Canadian Haiku) edited by Ewa Tomaszewska hit the shelves of Polish bookshops. From November 1994 to November 1995, five issues of the magazine *Haiku* edited by the poet Robert Szybiak appeared in Warsaw.

At the very beginning of the twenty-first century the first national anthology

of Polish haiku finally appeared in our country; it was called *Antologia polskiego haiku* (Anthology of Polish Haiku) and edited by Ewa Tomaszewska. This study, that also included an introduction about Japanese influences on the European culture and art, was an invaluable source of information on the history of haiku in Poland, as well as on the status quo in contemporary Polish haiku. It showcased more than six hundred haiku and haiku-like poems by nearly eighty Polish authors, and spanned ninety-six years (1905 to 2001).

In recent years the number of haiku poets in Poland has been growing constantly. There are now several groups of haiku poets, all rather informal.

The one that came to being earlier than the other has poets born in Silesia, a region in south-west Poland. The leader of the group, Felix Szuta, is an important writer and promoter of haiku in our country. He is the editor of "Pileus", a literary supplement to "Gazeta Chojnowska" (a local magazine from Chojnow) that published quite a number of haiku by local authors. In 2001, members of the group founded the Association of Polish Haiku Authors in Legnica. This is probably the only formal haiku association in our country. There is another, a smaller group of Silesian haiku poets who gathered around their leader, Krzysztof Karwowski. They mostly publish their works in the periodical booklet called "Pagina".

There is a prolific group of haikai located in Gdańsk, the city regarded as an important cultural centre in Northern Poland. The members of the group won a few awards and commendations in prestigious national and international haiku contests. In 2001, Piotr Szczepański won the Third Prize in the 6th International Kusamakura Haiku Competition. In 2009, Dorota Pyra won the Grand Prize in the 2009 Shiki Special Kukai in memory of William J. Higginson. There is also a large number of creatively active authors who are not associated with any particular haiku group. The Polish haiku scene also includes a few authors living and writing abroad, e.g. Krzysztof Jeżewski (Paris) and Lidia Rozmus (USA).

One of the most original Polish haiku writers is Dariusz Brzóska Brzóskiewicz. He is also a performer, and is known to promote the younger generation poets. Brzóskiewicz wrote haiku for TV programs and collaborated with a few well-known Polish musicians on the artistic project called "Haiku Fristajl"

(Freestyle Haiku). It resulted in a CD released in 2006, which has haiku in Polish and Japanese as lyrics. Brzóskiewicz also published a volume of his haiku entitled *Haiku Brzóska* (Haiku of Brzóška, 2007).

Poland has many good haiku poets whose works are available mostly on the Internet. They take part in various haiku forums, where they can workshop and showcase their poems. Talking of Polish literary online forums, arguably the biggest of them is "Serwis poetycki - Interkl@sa" (Poetic Website - Interkl@sa), the address of which is <http://www.poezja.org>). It has a big number of portals dedicated to various literary genres. One of them is fully dedicated to haiku, and attracts a number of prolific poets, some of which have texts on these pages, e.g. Maria Kowal, Jacek Margolak and Aneta Michelucci. A few of them won awards and commendations in prestigious national and international haiku contests, e.g. Marek Kozubek (the Annual Suruga Baika Literary Prize, Lyrical Passion Poetry E-Zine contests) and Katarzyna Bielińska (the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Haiku Invitational).

In 2005, Grzegorz Sionkowski launched a new Internet forum, which he called "forum.haiku.pl" (<http://forum.haiku.pl>). It seems to be the biggest Polish haiku site on the Internet. Some of the participants also have their texts here, e.g. Magdalena Banaszkiwicz, Artur Lewandowski, Robert Naczas, Mariusz Ogryzko, Katarzyna Prędoła, Dorota Pyra, Bronisława Sibiga, Grzegorz Sionkowski, Juliusz Wnorowski, Rafał Zabratyński. Most of them have their own personal websites or run haiku blogs.

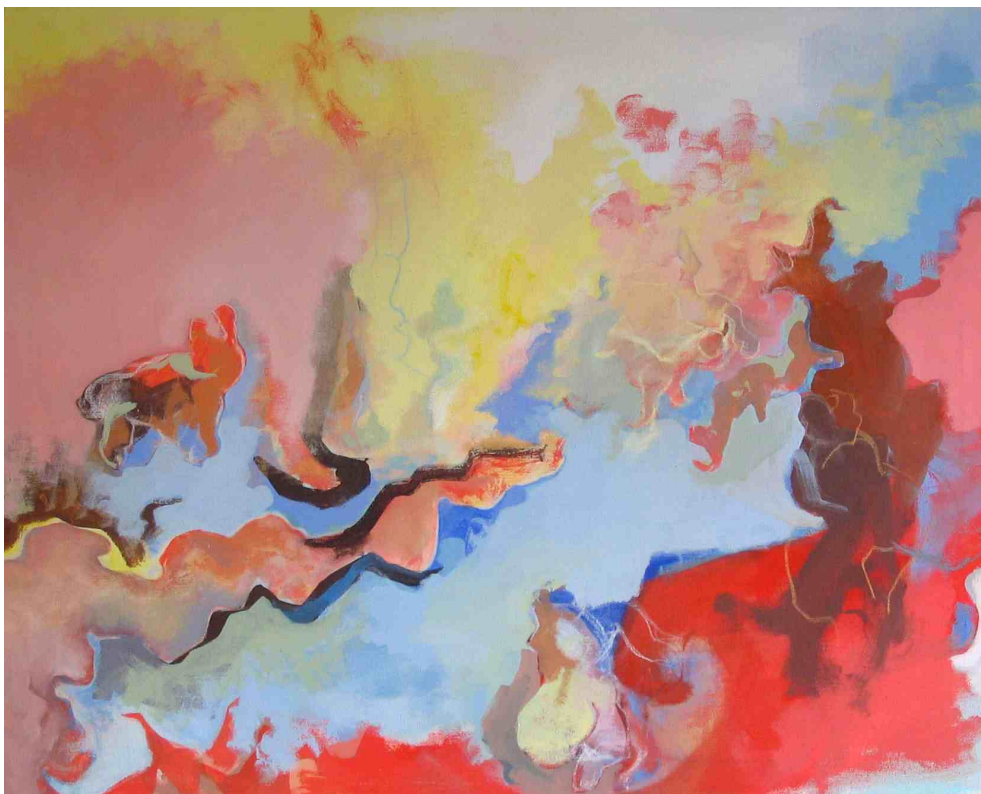
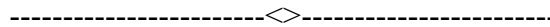
Another valuable haiku resource appeared on the Internet in 2007 when Grzegorz Sionkowski started "mała antologia haiku po polsku" (a small anthology of haiku in Polish) (<http://antologia.haiku.pl>). It currently presents almost three hundred quality haiku written by more than fifty authors.

Summing up, I would like to mention that in 2003 we had an important haiku gathering in our country. It was International Haiku Conference held in the Cracow Center of Art and Japanese Technology, "Manggha". The motto of that conference was "With haiku into the 21st Century".

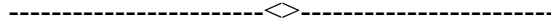
As it happens, we still don't have a nationwide haiku association, which

hinders Polish haiku groups from steady contacts between them. Another obstacle is a lack of translations of classical Japanese haiku, as well as of contemporary haiku written in the main European languages. Also, we don't have Polish translations of some important works on the theory of haiku (e.g. the oeuvre of R. H. Blyth), nor have we Polish-language versions of the main haiku handbooks (e.g. of those by William J. Higginson and Jane Reichhold). As a result, we are facing the spreading of short-form haiku-like poems that don't have the essence of haiku, whereas real haiku are rare. Nevertheless, it is heartening that more and more Polish haijin not only publish their works in international anthologies, magazines and e-zines but also win awards and commendations in prestigious national and international haiku contests. This means that Poland appears to be clearly noticeable on the modern haiku map.

Rafał Zabratyński is a haiku poet and the moderator of <http://forum.haiku.pl>



In the Beginning by Marek Bogacki Staszkiwicz (Poland/Ireland)



Haiku and Senryu

St. Patrick's Day -
expats form
a snake

start of the season
the myna bird rehearses
its builder's whistle

old road
the sky as full
of potholes

Boxing Day
a fork-lift truck
laden with mist

-- Helen Buckingham (England)

ants trail across the trail the morning breeze

lifted by salt wind the stonechat's tail

slowly through the corn stubble long legs of thoroughbreds

godwits twist into twilight cold of the marsh

gathering the piebalds what's left of the sun

-- John Barlow (England)

elms in bud
a clutch of old leaves
whispering

summer rain
the street jacaranda's
deepest bow

snake country the length of the shortcut

slack tide
a sea eagle's shadow
skimming

-- Lorin Ford (Australia)

resting on the riverside railings a jackdaw and me

across the old rifle range spent burdock

slow tributary
a water vole's egress
between the rushes

-- Matthew Paul (England)

chalk hills
against blue winter sky -
ghosts of butterflies

first sticky buds
the cling
of morning light

against the mist's grain
wake of six ducks
quacking through

-- *Diana Webb (England)*

island holiday...
a cockatoo wolf-whistles
passers-by

heatwave
first light moving a chive pot
into the shade

workman's tea break
morning sunlight splits
the steam

-- *Cynthia Rowe (Australia)*

floating upriver
the garbage barge
with seagulls

paw prints
disappear in the snow
wind under the hemlocks

leaf shadows
clinging to the mountainside...
solar winds

-- Raffael de Gruttola (USA)

train whistle
across the midnight moon -
an owl hoots

red fox sprints
across the road in front...
chores waiting at home

twilight turn of tide -
the rising moon pulls sand
between my toes

-- Rodney Williams (Australia)

the busy tongues
of barnacles -
tide-pool sunrise

creak
of the old dock
frozen in ice

spring melt -
elk graze
on the ninth green

-- *Patrick M. Pilarski (Canada)*

Christmas holidays
the night journey sparkles
with stars

morning
after the night before
whirr of wasps

loud cry
of the new born
morning light

-- *Dawn Bruce (Australia)*

hunter's moon
a searchlight
scans the sky

icy bus stop
two strangers share
a streetlamp's glow

day moon
the snow prints
of bare feet

-- *William Cullen Jr. (USA)*

rain at dawn
a glittering spider-web
bars my path

five fields away
the rookery creche
calls for breakfast

-- Pat Metcalfe (England)

thistle down
fluffs in tufts of wind -
distant taps

a broken vee
of geese reunite -
pipe smoke

-- DM Holmes (USA)

at the top
of the stop sign,
trumpet vine

looking at himself
in the glass
he polishes

-- Philip Miller (USA)

steaming
after a bath
snow in the back yard

Kamakura Bay
same smell and sound of surf
on Bull Island

-- *Sean O'Connor (Ireland)*

patchwork sunrise
through the leafless trees
red cardinals

after the snowstorm
sun lights tulip fruit on tree
to bronze

-- *Breid Sibley (Ireland)*

tropical storm
sunflower petals fall
on dead leaves

rising sun...
a roadside beggar
in Buddha's pose

-- *Nana Fredua-Agyeman (Ghana)*

policemen
saying "Go home"
to a homeless man

-- *Cheryl Daytec-Yangot (Philippines)*

autumn breeze
a thrush sings away
into the blue

-- *Terry O'Connor (Ireland)*

chaffinch sings
the first song of spring
traffic noise

-- *Juliet Wilson (Scotland)*

falling snow
the postman's footprints
into the white

-- *Lex Joy (USA)*

fir tree dark
against winter sky
pen and paper

-- *Joanna M. Weston (Canada)*

city lights stars clad in mist

-- *Sabih Uddin Omar (Bangladesh)*

midnight silence -
in a brass gong,
full moon

-- *Judith Johnson (Australia)*

early spring
the same crocus
under the maple tree

-- *Bernard Gieske (USA)*

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Haibun

Intrusions

by Richard Krawiec (USA)

Another glorious autumn day with my lover, tainted by phone calls and notes from her middle-aged son. Before we leave for church he calls to say he has to pick up his mail, forwarded to her when he moved back from a disastrous 3 months out West to 'find' his life. On the way to church he calls again to tell her what time he'll be there. After church, as we drive to a festival, he calls once more; he's lost the house key and can't find a way in.

Late afternoon, a warm, orange sun slides below the horizon of low roofs. Before we stroll down the leaf-patterned streets, she first calls to make sure he got inside all right. We return to her place to find a note of thanks and apology atop her laptop computer; he used to visit porn sites at her house. I stare at the photos on the refrigerator; her grown son, beaming; a stumbling toddler.

It takes a few minutes to check the bedroom. The previous week, he'd left his shirt draped atop my saxophone case. Nothing this time. We slip into our robes, open a bottle of wine, sit by the fire, dwindled now to embers.

dead leaves fall
unable to prime the cold
lawnmower

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Book Review

Walden by Haiku

By Ian Marshall

The University of Georgia Press

240 pp, ISBN-13: 978-0-8203-3288-8

Available via <http://www.ugapress.org>

This ample book contains haiku reworking of a number of fragments from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. Ian Marshall extracted haiku ideas from the book and went on to write nearly three hundred haiku poems based upon the Thoreau's book.

Walden (first published in 1854 as *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*) gives an account of Thoreau's stay in a cabin in a woodland area near Walden Pond, not far from Concord, Massachusetts. As Thoreau mentioned in his book, his cabin was not in wilderness but rather at the edge of the town, in which his family home was. Apparently, Thoreau didn't intend to live as a recluse. He visited other people, and had visitors himself. His main idea was to isolate himself from society, so that, seeing it from the outside, he could understand it better. Thoreau's experiment in simple living and attempted self-sufficiency ensured that the book became one of the best-known American non-fiction books.

Interestingly enough, *Walden* was written by the author who never heard of haiku. In his turn, Ian Marshall is a Professor of English and a haiku specialist. His main task in this book was to find similarities between Thoreau's prose and the art of haiku. Marshall's literary experiment begins with the first part of *Walden*, *Economy*, where Thoreau describes his idea of staying in a small cabin in the woods for twenty-six months. He also calculates his earnings and spendings while he constructs his house and buys and grows his food. In this chapter, as in the following ones, Marshall examines Thoreau's aesthetic principles. While Thoreau was talking about economy, Ian Marshall ponders upon "economy" as the essence of haiku. He mentions one of the main principles of haiku - *hosomi*, which he translates as "spareness", or "slenderness", or, if I may add my own version, "thrift". This, of course, applies to haiku poets' work with words.

One of the examples of *hosomi*, i.e. haiku economy, given in the book is the following piece, which could even have been written as a one-liner:

a borrowed axe
returned
sharper

Another piece that I liked here is this:

trying to hear
what is in the wind
I lose my own breath

In the next chapter, *Where I Lived, and What I Lived For*, Thoreau describes the way he survived in the cabin: he "lived desperately, to front only the essential facts of life." Marshall here talks of another haiku principle, *wabi*, i.e. the fact that haiku often reflect on desolation and poverty as necessary

preconditions for spiritual richness.

The chapter titled *Reading* conveys the author's idea that classical (here, mostly Greek and Latin) literature is and will always be superior to popular fiction, widespread in that part of Massachusetts (even in those days!)

Here's one of the pieces (re)created as a haiku (or rather as a senryu) by Ian Marshall:

books
the oldest and best
stand on the shelves

The next chapter, *Sounds*, has, according to Ian Marshall, more haiku moments than any other. Thoreau here states that one should experience life itself not relying too much on literature as a way to reach transcendence. He meticulously describes all the sounds he hears from his cabin: frogs croaking, owls hooting, cows mooing, church bells ringing; train whistle is criticised for being an alien sound!

frog tr-r-r-oonk
round again and again
that there be no mistake

The following chapters are called *Visitors* (Thoreau describes here some visitors to his cabin), and *The Bean-Field*, in which Thoreau describes his efforts to cultivate two and a half acres of beans. A possible pun: "bean field" - "being field" makes Marshall talk about the usage of puns in haiku. Actually, I can contribute another pun - "being filled" - to this - in case somebody collects them.

In *The Village* Thoreau describes his regular visits to Concord, in those days a small town in Massachusetts, to learn the news, which he finds "as refreshing in its way as the rustle of the leaves." Marshall here suggests that haiku have a social dimension, and talks about linked verse, haikai-no-renga.

The following chapter is called *The Ponds*. Ponds are "lovelier than diamonds," says Thoreau. This is where the reader has a right to expect good haiku, and Marshall duly provides some:

huckleberries
to know the flavor
ask the partridge

the old pond
not one wrinkle
after all its ripples

In *Baker Farm* Thoreau describes how he got caught in a rainstorm and had to take shelter in the hut of John Field, a poor Irish immigrant trying hard to make some extra money for his family.

sitting out a storm
under that part of the roof
which leaks the least

Higher Laws is Thoreau's apologia of vegetarianism, chastity, teetotalism and diligence.

an impulse to eat woodchuck
not for my hunger
but for his wildness

Brute Neighbors is a chapter about wild animals, his neighbors at Walden. Marshall finds in Thoreau's work two of the Zen qualities described by R.H. Blyth: grateful acceptance and love. Thoreau is prepared to love all the creatures, even if he disapproves of their behaviour.

red ants and black ants
their Battle of Concord
fighting for principle

House-Warming. Having picked berries in the forest, Thoreau also gathers firewood and tries to make his cabin more or less cold-proof before the arrival of winter. Here Marshall talks about using alliteration and assonance in haiku writing.

a lamp
to lengthen out the day
a sharper blast from the north

Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors. Thoreau narrates the stories of those who used to live near Walden Pond, and then mentions a few people who visited him throughout the winter.

a slave's epitaph
the date he died
telling me he had lived

Winter Animals. Again, a very haiku-like background, upon which Marshall draws:

light-footed hare
putting the forest
between us

Here Marshall talks about *karumi*, or the lightness of haiku, and also about using the juxtaposition of contrasting images. He concludes that a haiku poet has to find the right "degree of separation" between such images.

The Pond in Winter. Here Marshall talks about using metaphors in haiku, and why haiku poets tend to avoid them.

Spring. In this chapter Thoreau describes the thaw and the melting of the ponds. As nature is reborn, so is he, says the writer - and leaves Walden.

a grass-blade
streams from the sod
into summer

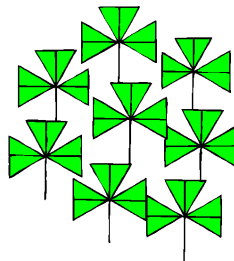
Thoreau - and Marshall after him - talk here about living in the present. Marshall quotes Basho who once said that "haiku is simply what is happening in this place at this moment."

In the final chapter entitled *Conclusion* Thoreau criticises conformity: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." Marshall transforms Thoreau's phrase "There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star" into a poem:

more day to dawn
the sun
but a morning star

In the second part of the book, Marshall takes to explain how he actually found the haiku in Thoreau's text, and quotes the fragments of *Walden*, in which he attempted to highlight the imagery. Talking about haiku reworking of classical texts, the main question is, do the resulting texts stand up as original poems? In this case the answer is yes. I wouldn't go as far as to say that all of them are destined to stand the test of time but there's a great number of quality poems in the book, which will surely appease the appetite of haiku lovers. Marshall-essayist is also convincing, so this book shall be useful not only for Thoreau scholars but for all interested in nature writing.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky



Shamrock Haiku Journal

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world

Issue 10, 2009

Shamrock



Haiku Journal
of the Irish Haiku Society

Focus on

Italy

winter day -
in my aunt's drawer,
a collection of butterflies

red stain
on the carpet -
a snail retreats

lamp burning hot -
a spider escapes
into darkness

turtle pausing my father's foot

cherry blossoms in her hair -
the girl buying
a wedding dress

-- Sara Aguzzoni (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

wave by wave
the sea syllables
its secret

beneath the waves,
an underwater lamp -
shining sun

lightning
among the algae
fish with silvery sides

-- Enrico Bagnato (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

in the pine wood,
a dancing white ghost...
the fog

-- Silvia Berti (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

icy dawn
in the 'Laugh Often' mug,
first coffee

twilight
a lonely bee
at the roses

-- Carlo Bramanti (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

in the puddle,
a snowman's
carrot

-- Alessandro Calamia (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

thin fog -
a tile dripping
with moonbeams

Hiroshima sun -
a toddler in the playground
screws his eyes tight

old magazines -
in the doctor's waiting room
only O.A.P.s

war museum -
a skylark's song
breaks the silence

frosty night -
the echo of a tolling bell
opens up the sky

-- *Andrea Cecon (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

purely by chance,
a cricket on my hand
while I'm reading

-- *Livia Cesarin (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

snowflakes
a white carpet
for my journey

-- *Giacomo Cucinotta (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

rain over the night sea
I dream of
distant countries

-- *Alessandro Domian (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

squeezed into the nest,
three baby blackbirds dream up
their first flight

beautiful as always,
last blossoms of the dying
apple tree

three pine-trees -
bowing to observe the city
that surrounds them

each day at sunset
crowning itself with a new sky -
the city

a wren in flight -
almost invisible
among these falling leaves

-- Riccardo Duranti (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

ruined tower -
on duty as a sentry,
the owl

-- Moussia Fantoli (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

autumn day -
an island in the brown pool,
coffee-machine

-- Laura Forgnone (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

jumping into the sky
from city roofs
swallows of spring

autumn sand
the world has disappeared
into the spiral shell

reading an old letter -
smell of the last
winter

a rain song,
without haste
filling the room

-- Gabbiano (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

dense fog
the clang of a tram bell
departs

-- Franko Galato (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

in this old temple,
it could be me praying
not knowing it

the setting sun
grazing an antique mirror -
rainbows everywhere

thinning hair...
growing old together,
this brush and I

-- Giorgio Gazzolo (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a sailboat
jumping over the waves
caressing the sea

-- Stefani Grotti (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

hurried tramping of feet
on the road -
fallen leaves dry slowly

wind swaying
poppies on the hillside
a red cloak

-- Oscar Luparia (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

out of the shade,
a heron flaps her wings -
first sunbeams

spring has arrived
each leaf chooses
a wind

no safety net
acrobats hopping
over the rainbow

Saturn
the flight of gulls
around their nest

candles in the wind Ursa Minor

-- Toni Piccini (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

magpie
carrying a crystal -
second sun in the water

the wind in cherry-trees
the pool wearing
a white veil

-- Claudia Sandroni (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

at midnight,
the tolling of a bell
and an unexpected guest

-- Dino Sessa (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

down in the valley,
the rustling of flowers -
almond trees in bloom

heroic siesta -
I bend a stem and save
a buzzing bee

I hear
somebody's whimper -
silent snowdrop buds

-- Maria Serena Siena (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

August rain
pomegranates shed
red tears

a mouse scratches himself
behind shadow walls
sleepless night

timid faces
of lemons
the light of dawn

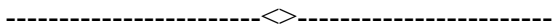
-- Emilio Paolo Taormina (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

falling leaves -
black butterflies
against the setting sun

-- Elisabetta Tonazzi (transl. by the author and Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

the sun's smile
stretched from ear to ear
one hundred golden teeth

-- Fabrizio Virgili (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)



Essay

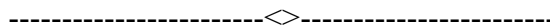
Haiku in Italy

Italy has a long tradition of poetry writing that employs a wide range of topics and uses various metrical forms. Haiku is not an easy genre for those who try to write in this style, as acquiring the necessary skills usually takes a considerable amount of time. Italian poets certainly haven't got used to the simplicity and the brevity of haiku, however they seem to like the challenge. This accounts for the flourishing of haiku groups in our country. Their participants are committed not only to composing, but also to discussing haiku poems. Another thing, they try to popularise this trend of poetry in our country, and seem to be quite successful here, as many of the members of the afore-mentioned groups have their poems awarded in the competitions that periodically run inside the country. Not many of the poets actually adhere to the Japanese rules of writing 5-7-5 haiku, or, wider, haiku that have seventeen syllables. This isn't a bad thing, however even less of our haikai use kigo and rhythmical equivalents of kireji composing their poems. Instead of using a proper kigo, some of them with dull regularity use the name of a season, and sometimes would even make words like "Autumn" or "Spring" the titles of their haiku forgetting that there shouldn't be any. This is an unavoidable blemish that follows the widespread haiku expansion in our country but I don't see any huge problem here, as with the passing of time more of our poets will learn to write sublime haiku.

Talking about haiku associations in our country, I must mention the national haiku association founded in 1987 in Rome by Sono Uchida, the well-known Japanese haikai and the ambassador of Japan in Vatican. Also involved in the establishing of the first Italian haiku association were Michiko Nojiri, the European representative of the Urasenke House that organises Japanese tea ceremonies all around the world, and Marisa di Iorio of the Empiria Publishing House. I joined them on return from a prolonged stay in Japan. Subsequently the national association called Italian Friends of the haiku (Associazione Italiana Amici dell'Haiku) was founded. The further development of it was facilitated by the interest from Araki Tadao, the Ambassador of Japan and a fine poet. The association publishes an information bulletin titled *Yasude*; it is edited by Michiko Nojiri and myself. The activity of the Empiria Publishing House (<http://www.empiria.com>) has lately increased, which resulted in the publication of translations of some works by ancient and modern Japanese poets, as well as by the leading Italian authors of haiku.

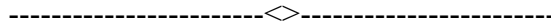
In the end of June 2009 the annual prize-giving ceremony will take place in Rome: the Institute of Japanese Culture (Istituto di cultura giapponese di Roma) will award the best haiku written in the Italian language according to the Japanese metrics (Premio letterario nazionale de haiku). This prize was first introduced twenty-three years ago, and is still being awarded. A special prize is always given to the best haiku written by students of Italian primary and secondary schools. This is one of the successful initiatives of the Association of Italian Friends of Haiku, and I must mention that over the course of the last two decades we had many interesting discoveries in this category, and some exciting new poets have joined the ranks of our haikai.

Carla Vasio (translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)





"Cliffs and Waves" by Gabbiano (Italy)



Haiku and Senryu

over mudflats
the winter light pinpoints
a boat's blue hull

through the rat-run a fox's sideways trot

behind an ait
the river levels
an ancient slipway

hail and sleet
the barber nips next door
to lay a bet

-- *Matthew Paul (England)*

moonshine
tonight no one talks
about the drought

heat lightning
in a meadow
charging bulls

lunch bell
migrants eat with one hand
pick with the other

long drought
a large raven stays put
on the scarecrow

-- *William Cullen Jr. (USA)*

bonfire night
the village shopkeeper
donating apple crates

desolate crag -
bracing the wind,
two mating gulls

sea storm -
in the whispering cove,
a blush of sea pinks

so many cherry trees!
the pastel hues
of April rain

-- Aisling White (Ireland)

aspen in the rain
each leaf dripping with
the sound of autumn

Waterloo Day -
through the dusty haze,
a row of cypresses

March has arrived
camellia's red eyes
watching a hare

war museum
two gas masks
staring at each other

-- Anatoly Kudryavitsky (Ireland)

seaside park
cherry blossom petals
billow along the path

acacia leaves
the golden touch
of evening light

deserted harbour
gulls tussle for crabs
at low tide

scent of jasmine
a bullfrog croaks
the advent of the night

-- Sharon Burrell (Ireland)

leaf strewn square
a pigeon walks
a corridor of sunlight

creaks in the wood
from an ancient bench
autumn hills

poppies in winter
round the war-memorial
snow-white silence

-- Diana Webb (England)

morning thaw
the old shack's
creaking bones

home at last
carefully dried birch wood
spits its welcome

snowmelt
the scent of pine needles
with each step

-- Mark Miller (Australia)

taste of clover
a bumblebee's first journey
from home

harvest moon
a scarecrow shivers
alone

blood moon
many flaming hands
paint the sky

-- Albert Schlaht (USA)

late evening blue
how alone
this star

warm spring sun
a pile of dikon*
wrinkled

amongst all these blossoms
just one bud
closed

-- Sean O'Connor (Ireland - Japan)

* Dikon (daikon) - white East-Asian raddish

full moon falling on the herb rack

Easter morning daffodils reduced

leaf fall
the gardener's
pursed lips

-- Helen Buckingham (England)

shed snakeskin
holes
that were its eyes

wind stirs
the pine trees...
empty mailbox

dewy morning
a frog nestled
in the rain gauge

-- Nathalie Buckland (Australia)

dawn light
the blackness of fishermen
on the point

glass-bottom boat
the reef fish swims
in its own circle

-- *Quendryth Young (Australia)*

snow covers
the makeshift shrine
a long winter

the bartender
bends to her story
winter night

-- *Glenn G. Coats (USA)*

mist in the creek
the blue blur
of a kingfisher

her silence -
wrapping the scarf tighter
around my neck

-- *Bob Lucky (USA)*

slack tide
a heron ankle deep
in ripples

things to do...
the all-day drip
of an icicle

-- *Susan Constable (Canada)*

grandson on his knee,
the pig farmer counts shoats
from the porch

morning ground fog -
beyond the fence line, the same
squawking rooster

-- *Al Ortolani (USA)*

spring rain
the grey sky blushes with
cherry blossom petals

monks' path
on a drizzling day -
a bug under the cold rock

-- *Anima Yamamoto (Japan - England)*

walled up windows
the gaping mouth
of a derelict postbox

the steep slope
of a derelict graveyard -
that heart shaped stone

-- *Irene Brown (Scotland)*

scattered sheep
in an early morning field -
boulders in the mist

talking it out
again
with my absent wife

-- *Michael Massey (Ireland)*

eyeing the moon
from the pipal tree,
a magpie

empty gin bottle
reflecting the flight
of geese

-- *Andrew Caldicott (Ireland)*

cherry blossom fire
kissing the garden
to sleep

-- *Patrick Chapman (Ireland)*

tightrope walker off duty
his rope serves
as a clothes-line

-- *Gautam Nadkarni (India)*

first of May
a beggar leans against
the hospital wall

-- *Hugh O'Donnell (Ireland)*

frosty tips of grass
crows' tails
lifted to the sky

-- *Natalie Arkins (Ireland)*

rain on the window
an unfurling snail plucked
from its thrush-cracked shell

-- *Tony Bailie (Ireland)*

mowing the lawn
I pretend not to hear
the grass screaming

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

beads of hail
peppering bonnets
gather round

-- Evan Costigan (Ireland)

gravel after rain
patches of pink and yellow
fading

-- Sinéad McDevitt (Ireland)

cut branches on pine tree
cat steps up
to shade

-- Elisabeth Crocket (Canada)

wet
bearberry trunk
the color of rain

-- Sergio Ortiz (Puerto Rico)



Haibun

Deep North

by Cynthia Rowe (Australia)

Jamming on my old straw hat, I clamber aboard. The engines throb, tossing diesel fumes into the air, filling the Gulf with wisps of smoke to create a crazed

Wedgwood bowl. Tourists push past, heading for the railings. The boat creaks. Shards of water spurt from the stern until the foam curls a Territorian farewell. On the port side a man clad in army disposal shorts drops to his haunches, stares at his hands in reverie. His sunburnt paws resemble salted fish.

estuary
a crocodile cruising
on the waterway

The vessel ploughs through an ore blue sea. The island blob, dark in Carpentaria distance, finally takes shape. The air is thick. I can almost taste the humidity as the boat slows, then edges into the jetty. Stepping ashore, I am confronted by the same boy with the ebony skin. I refuse his long bum shellfish, opt for the mud crab. After handing him a fistful of coins, I examine my purchase only to discover yellow eggs on the underside. I untie the pincers, watch the crustacean scuttle to safety beneath a prop root.

tropical sun
mangroves delving
into sand mud

-----<->-----

Pennsylvania Turnpike

by Sheila M. Ross (Canada)

Driving through a perfect summer night, car windows open, we take the 160 mile Pennsylvania Turnpike heading west through the Allegheny Mountains. This road quickly pulls us up 4000 feet into the cool crisp night. Bright stars, vehicle lights pierce the dark.

The heavy traffic - cars and transport trucks - push us to high speeds as we white-knuckle tight right and left ess bends that hug the sides of the old mountains, and drive the seven tunnels that drill through the mountain tops. In the dark the endless road repair sites and perilous drop-offs are almost invisible.

Suddenly fireworks rise into the sky from valley towns and villages. They explode beside us, beneath us - fill the valley skies with glittering comets, giant fountains, fireballs, shooting stars, waterfalls ... silver, scarlet, gold, green, blue.

unknown and uninvited
turnpike travelers share
July Fourth celebrations

From sundown into the late night, the cool mountain air holds shimmering after-images. A light wind brings the rich odour of cordite through our open windows... the only clouds that slowly drift across the mountains.

cordite memories
holiday fireworks
compete with the stars

-----<->-----

Book Review

Încă un pas / One More Step

Haiku Vol. 5

By Stefan G. Theodoru

Editura Amurg Sentimental

Bucharest, 2008

160 pp, ISBN: 978-973-678-246-6

Available from the publisher

The new bilingual collection by one of the oldest Romanian haikai is marked as his Vol. 5. It is reassuring to see how Romanians preserve their cultural heritage.

Stefan G. Theodoru (b. 1921) has been living in the USA, specifically on Long Island, since 1964. He is one of the group of poets who were behind the founding of the Romanian Haiku Society. Theodoru is a scientist and a writer, a quite prolific one. The list of his publications includes novels, books of short poems, plays, memoirs and poetry, and occupies three pages in the reviewed book.

This particular volume - the only one we have seen so far - comprises one hundred and thirty-one poems. It is supposed to be a collection of haiku, however quite a number of aphorisms find their way onto its pages, especially towards the end of the book. Some of them can fairly be classed as commonplaces:

there are questions
without answers - maybe
better this way

or

sometimes
too many advices
led to confusion

Anyway, there are more haiku than non-haiku poems in the book, so the readers have their 'food for thought' both ways. First thing an English-speaking reader won't fail to notice is that the translations are often not up to the standard. "News at television", "alone for a months", etc... Sometimes it is even difficult to understand what the author/translator is trying to say. E.g.

dripping icicles
on dry leaves -
drum beating sounds

Is it about icicles growing on leaves? And about sounds beating the drum? Or vice versa? Or should it have been written in this way:

icicles
dripping onto dry leaves -
quiet drumming

Once again, our advice to haiku poets, non-native speakers of English, would be to refrain from translating their own poems - or at least from publishing their efforts. This is not the case where one can use his DIY skills...

To be fair to the author, there is a great deal of interesting poems in the book. A few that we particularly liked:

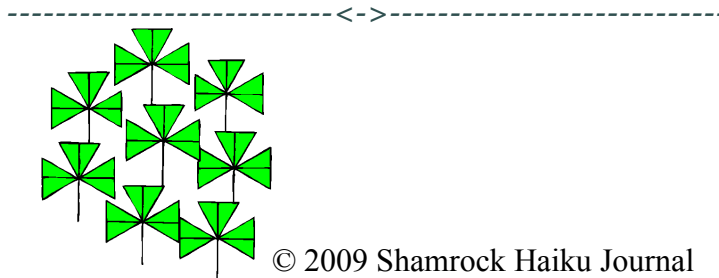
a dark statue -
on its stretched out hand
a white pigeon

home-made cookies
bought
at [the] supermarket

a plastic tulip
forgotten in the garden -
narcissus[es] around

Mr. Theodoru clearly is a keen observer, and he often finds unusual combinations of images that work very well together in his poems. This is why his work is so highly regarded in his country. We are quite sure that many of Mr. Theodoru's poems that look faded in English shine in all the colours of the spectrum in the original Romanian. We look forward to English versions of his best haiku provided by a professional translator of poetry.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky



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Information

IHS International Haiku Competition 2009 announced!

The Irish Haiku Society International Haiku Competition 2009 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.

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

All the entries shall be postmarked by 31th October 2009. No e-mail submissions, please!

Good luck to all!

Focus on

BENELUX

BELGIUM

from the lotus leaf
into a big cloud –
a frog's merry leap

a crab at low tide
trying to catch
moonbeams

car headlights –
white rabbit nibbles
a blood-coloured carrot

evening
in Scotland –
a sheep traffic jam

-- *Bill Bilquin (transl. from French by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

back from work –
clouds form the arch
of welcomes

-- *Elie Duvivier (transl. from French by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

with the back of her hand
she caresses the book
once finished

-- *Elie Duvivier (transl. from French by Aisling White)*

nothing but arid land –
and all of a sudden,
a flower

caught
by the fragrance of a flower,
the moonlight's silver

-- Germain Droogenbroodt (transl. from Flemish by the author and Martin Culverwell)

merciless,
rapping on ear-drums,
a cicada choir

hidden
in the white thorn-apple flower,
this evening's silence

roots in the dirt,
blooms whiter than whiteness –
a lotus flower

-- Germain Droogenbroodt (transl. from Flemish by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a waterdrop
trying to merge with another
where the river dries up

-- Maurice Gilliams (transl. from Flemish by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

morning sun
the dark fields
breathing

falling blossoms -
the wind gathers them
in the gutter

evening on the beach -
in the distance, a boat
overtaking the sun

falling down together,
flower petals
and snowflakes

full moon
the faint rustle
of ripe corn

-- Marc Hendrickx (transl. from Flemish by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

birds' skeletons
lightly resting
among fallen leaves

under the blades of the plough
cloud shadows
and meadow grass

-- Werner Lambersy (transl. from French by Aisling White)

shrunken leaf
on the kitchen floor –
awaited since summer

he smokes in the doorway
only the smoke
leaves the house

on the tablecloth,
forks, spoons and somebody's
scarred wrists

-- Werner Lambersy (transl. from French by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

May evening -
more distant than bird songs,
a cuckoo's call

dead calm -
suddenly, the rustle of snow
dropping off a pine branch

my elderly neighbour
clearing snow not farther
than his mailbox

driving 90mph...
floating slowly inside my car,
willow fluff

-- Bart Mesotten (transl. from Flemish by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

birds
high in the sky –
not definable

-- *Marcel Peltier (transl. from French by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

chilly wind
silence walks the streets
this December morning

-- *Marcel Smets (transl. from Flemish by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

cool sea breeze -
at twilight, the shadow
of a cormorant

a couple behind a haystack
thinking they're safe -
summer afterglow

seaside holiday -
after an argument,
salty kisses

-- *Frans Terryn (transl. from Flemish by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

morning bomb alert –
blossoming apple-trees
smell of kerosene

-- *Serge Tomé (transl. from French by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

LUXEMBOURG

in the garden, the wind
makes my late father's washed pants
move

portraits
nursing their faded past -
weary autumn gardens

-- *Anise Koltz (transl. from French by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

THE NETHERLANDS

end of a long walk
every stone underfoot
hurts

waiting room -
sunbeams resting
in the shabby seats

pristine snow -
everything is still possible
this New Year morning

-- *Adri van den Berg (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

at an auction:
dead butterfly in a box
next to three slugs

braced up,
a cat shoots up the tree –
a hunt underway

a twig
gliding down to a quiet park,
straining my dreams

huge figs –
a metallic-green fly
seats itself on them

red currant –
this dying summer's memories
of spring

-- Jan Bontje (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

freshly cut grass
on the sloping hills -
I cycle past its fragrance

the busker
picks up his earnings,
gives small change to a beggar

-- Jeroen de Bruin (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a dove couple
in the misty spring rain –
shoulder to shoulder

-- Anton Gerits (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

white cloud
creating a grey shadow pool
between the two villages

virgin snow
under the parked cars -
and nowhere else

night train
the only thing in view
is myself

last dune...
the sea receives me
with open arms

the street where I was born -
all looks so small
except the trees

-- Ria Giskes-Pieters (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

the gate
of a walled cemetery -
predictably, it beeps

in a calm swamp,
two mallard ducks chop the moon
into pieces

worn jacket -
on the inside,
a spare button

riverside cemetery -
the family's gone home
but the sound lingers

-- Ida Gorter (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

behold, an elephant
turning into two dogs!
clouds in the wind

-- Marianne Kiauta (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

deeper darkness
above the churchyard...
the stars shine brighter

the train has passed -
following it, silence moves
in the same direction

southward bound,
a silver stripe
in the blue holiday sky

-- Els Kooyman (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

war childhood –
not even grass left to play on
this summer

-- *Paul Kreetz (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

yet again
dreams of soldiers
treading upon spring grass

pattering on the tiles
in the deepest darkness,
winter rain

a scarecrow
falls face down
embraces the earth

-- *Wim Lofvers (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

looking back –
staring at me,
thousands of sunflowers

-- *Hans Reddingius (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

mirror room
each time a different image
of the same thing

-- *Leon Scevenels (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

a white swan flying
low above the dark water
disturbing the still

-- *Henk van Setten (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

between the bunkers,
frolicking bunnies
in the dying light

-- *Abel Staring (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

greeting a blind man...
his dog looks straight
into my eyes

quiet square -
only the equestrian statue's shadow
moving

calm Sunday
an elm's shadow
goes round

tin soldiers -
the quick and the dead
in the same box

old people's home -
in each window,
sunset

-- *Max Verhart (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

as I walk by,
they look out the windows...
memories

raked into a pile
between the graves,
last summer's leaves

cold waves splash -
a seaside crow's head
sunk into shoulders

-- *Gerrit Wassing (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

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Essay

Haiku in the Netherlands and in Flanders

The Dutch-speaking area comprises the Netherlands and the northern part of Belgium known as Flanders, where the version of the language spoken there is called Flemish. There are two languages spoken in the Netherlands: Dutch and

Frisian. Most of the Frisians who live in the northern province of Friesland are bilingual and speak both Frisian and Dutch. Haiku are known in the Netherlands since about 1980, and they are being written in both Dutch and Frisian.

History

The first Dutchman, and, as far as we know, the first Westerner, who has written haiku, was Hendrik Doeff (1777-1835). From 1798 till 1817 he stayed on Deshima, a small artificial island in the harbour of Nagasaki in Japan, which housed a Dutch trading post. At that time this settlement was the only connection point between the thoroughly closed Japanese society and the outside world. Apart from the fact that the chief of that colony visited the shogun in the capital city of Edo yearly or once in two years, the Dutch people were seldom allowed to set foot on Japanese soil; hence the artificial island. But this fact did not prevent Dutch and Japanese people from communicating. In the resulting cultural exchange, haiku were mentioned and discussed. Doeff, for several years chief of the settlement, was interested in the Japanese language, and published his Dutch-Japanese dictionary. Moreover, two haiku composed by him can be found in Japanese publications that appeared in the course of his stay in Japan. But there is no proof that Doeff was still interested in haiku after his return to the Netherlands. And he played no role in spreading haiku outside of its country of origin. This actually never happened before the 20th century.

Although haiku were only accepted as a form of Dutch-language poetry around 1980, they incidentally attracted some attention of Dutch poets before that. The good example of that is the work of the Dutch poet J.C. van Schagen (1891 - 1985). Having made a name for himself by writing mainstream poetry, he later got used to writing 5-7-5 poems. He preferred not to call these texts haiku, though; probably because he wrote his miniatures in a very personal way and so wanted to avoid discussions if they were haiku or not. He sometimes called those small poems "reflexes", but he acknowledged the Japanese influence on himself when he commented on them.

In Flanders, Bart Mesotten started writing and promoting haiku in the early 1970s. In 1976 he joined forces with a few other writers interested in this type of poetry and founded the Haikoe-centrum Vlaanderen (Haiku Centre Flanders). In 2000 he was awarded for his efforts in promoting haiku with the Shiki Masaoka International Haiku Grand Prize in Matsuyama, Japan.

A highly important anthology titled *Een nieuwe maan* ("A new moon"), was edited by J. van Tooren (1900 - 1991) and published in 1973. The editor was already in her fifties when she got acquainted with haiku after reading the works of R.H. Blythe. She started to learn Japanese when she was sixty, and after some time was able to read classical haiku in the language they were written in. She went on to translate many Japanese haiku into Dutch. The anthology she compiled had an

introduction dedicated to the origin and the history of haiku, as well as to haiku rules. The book sparked a rather broad interest among the readers, and inspired many people to try their hand at writing haiku. In 1980 eight of such haiku admirers established the Haiku Kring Nederland (Haiku Circle Netherlands).

The way haiku developed in the Netherlands and Flanders can probably characterise the path the other European countries followed, or maybe not just European but all the non-Japanese nations. Initially most efforts in haiku writing imitated classical Japanese haiku, especially those presented in the books by R.H. Blythe and Van Toorn. Later, poets started looking for their own way and trying to write poems being 'in the culture' and 'in the language', by which I mean the Dutch language and culture. Probably the most prominent haiku poet among them was W.J. van der Molen (1923-2002), who made himself a name as a poet in the 1950s, and then, in the 1980s, took a special interest in haiku. Like Van Schagen before him, he wrote haiku in an unusual way, preferring this to imitating classical Japanese poetry.

Generally, there were two stages in the development of Dutch-language haiku: the first stage was about haiku being adopted, and the second, about finding the original way of writing them in our language. We can say that since the late 1990s all the parts of the Dutch-speaking area reached the second stage of haiku development. As a result, we now see more and more free-form haiku appearing in the Dutch-language publications, in addition to plenty of classical haiku. Of course, poets like Van Schagen and Van der Molen seem to have skipped the imitative stage completely.

Organisations

Both the Haiku Centre of Flanders (HCF), which has about 80 members, and the Haiku Circle of Netherlands (HCN), having about 200 members, are associations catering for all of Flanders and all of the Netherlands respectively. Their goals are to promote haiku and stimulate haiku writing in Dutch. They organise haiku meetings, discussions and workshops.

A few years ago the HCN started organising ginko, i.e. haiku excursions with the discussions of haiku written in the course of the ginko.

There are also small regional groups, members of which are not necessarily also members of the HCF or the HCN. However, all such groups are headed or otherwise co-ordinated by a member of the national haiku association. The Frisian group of haiku poets preferred to name itself *Froaskedobbe*, which is Frisian for frog-pond, thus acknowledging one of the Basho's haiku. The Haiku Society of America, as we all know, chose the same name for its magazine.

Publications

The HCF and the HCN co-publish the quarterly titled *Vuursteen* ("Flint"). This magazine founded in 1981 is dedicated to haiku, senryu, tanka and related forms of poetry. It publishes newly-written Dutch-language and occasionally Frisian-language haiku and provides relevant information about haiku activities in the low countries. The articles published in *Vuursteen* over the last quarter of the century dealt with the origins and the development of haiku, specifically in Japan, and analysed various techniques used in haiku writing. Essays on haiku movements in other parts of the world also appeared in *Vuursteen*, as well as book reviews. It is the oldest still existing haiku magazine in Europe. It also publishes, quite regularly, haiku in the South African language, which originates in the 17th century Dutch, and is one of the official languages of South Africa, formerly a Dutch colony.

In 1991 W.J. van der Molen started a magazine that he called *Kortheidshalve* ("for brevity's sake"). It appeared three times a year, and was dedicated to short poetry in general, with an emphasis on haiku. Van der Molen was one of the editors of *Vuursteen*, but became dissatisfied with the other editors' rather traditional approach to the genre. So the haiku poets who preferred to write free-form haiku and to experiment found a tribune in another magazine called *Kortheidshalve*. The last issue of it was brought out in 2002 by Van der Molen's friends after his death.

Another magazine published in the Netherlands (even in Friesland!) was *Woodpecker*, an international journal dedicated to haiku from all over the world. They appeared in the original languages; non-English-language haiku were supplied with English translations. Between 1995 and 2002 issues of *Woodpecker* appeared twice a year.

In 2000 the HCN was celebrating its 20th anniversary, and on that occasion it published a volume of haiku and tanka written by its members; it was entitled *aan het woord* ("speaking"). This book was critically acclaimed, and led the HCN and the HCF to jointly produce such a collection every two years. In 2008 the fifth anthology of this kind hit the shelves of book-shops.

We have to mention that bigger publishing houses have always shown little or no interest in Dutch haiku whatsoever. Works by Dutch haiku writers have traditionally been published by small presses, sometimes subsidised by the author. There were many self-published haiku collections, as well. The lack of quality never seemed to be an obstacle for such publications. This was the way a lot of substandard haiku found their way onto book pages, which harmed the reputation of the Dutch haiku movement. Anyway, in the Dutch literary world haiku hardly have any standing. With a few exceptions neither publishing houses nor reviewers of poetry show much interest in haiku. My opinion is, we should strive not for the acceptance of haiku in the literary world, but mostly for

perfection in haiku writing. This may help us to gain such acceptance, after all.

Max Verhart

(Max Verhart is the editor of Vuursteen and a former President of the Haiku Circle of Netherlands)

The author's self-translation of this essay was edited by Anatoly Kudryavitsky



"Glass Trees" by Jan Warnaar (The Netherlands)

Haiku and Senryu

Kakadu lilies
a yellow glint
in the crocodile's eye

butterfly...
the way she raises
her eyelashes

on this longest night
she begins to knit a scarf
for the wind

belly dance school
the moon
at the window

-- Lorin Ford (Australia)

a bumblebee
in summer dusk
humming along

last stop
an elderly man
the only one

long shadows
over the cornfield stubble
crows descending

leaves
living up to their name
autumn wind

-- *Terry O'Connor (Ireland)*

passing train
two cirrus clouds
couple together

morning sun
a poplar sheds
the night's rain

-- *an'ya (USA)*

full moon -
the wind stirs the darkness
in the fox field

still talking
after I've gone -
the widow next door

-- *David Serjeant (England)*

autumn tramp
the landscape woven
into my socks

playground
a picket fence holds back
the garden

-- *Quendryth Young (Australia)*

pasture cairn
the old farmer's
bent spine

white catkins
haze the willow –
dawn fog

-- *Catherine J.S. Lee (USA)*

shooting star
through the sycamore
two falling leaves

traffic by the creek
the fisherman's eyes
meet mine

-- *Dave Moore (USA)*

through the classroom window
a netball's net
hangs loose

autumn sun -
copper beech colours
changing in the wind

-- Irene Brown (Scotland)

the outcast fuchsia
seeds wall cavity...
growing solitary life

thin sky lines
spinning suns
on hospital blankets

-- Noel King (Ireland)

hyssop
footprints
in the yard

deep in the flood my father's voice

-- Jacob Kobina Ayiah Mensah (Ghana)

gulmohar tree
a girl with lilac
awaits a rickshaw

-- R.K. Singh (India)

broken bridge
a kayak slips silently
between two clouds

-- Patrick Druart (France)

train to Westport -
three cows
enjoying sunshine

-- Sinéad Mac Devitt (Ireland)

first butterfly
how lonely
among the flowers

-- Philip Cruden (Northern Ireland - England)

inside the cocoon winter time

-- Mark Lonergan (Ireland)

autumn sun
glistening on
discarded fireworks

-- Rena Rowe (Ireland)

snow flickering
through darkness...
a holy candle

-- *Jerm Curtin (Ireland)*

a bubble
blinks to existence
blinks out again

-- *Patrick Hopkins (Ireland)*

midnight river -
flamingos drink
the stars

-- *Ryan Fitzpatrick (Ireland)*

a shivering
blade of grass...
the breath of moonlight

-- *Catherine O'Sullivan (Ireland)*

gentle June breeze
maple leaves
clatter

-- *Michael Gallagher (Ireland)*

night shift
a baker looks at the crescent
among the clouds

-- Artur Lewandowski (Poland, translated by Rafal Zabratynski)

red fruits
causing the branches to bend...
can't raise my weary hands

-- Elena Galinovskaya (Russia, translated by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

driving home -
in all directions, wind burst
of dandelion seeds

-- Donna K. Everhart (USA)

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Haibun

The Unexpected

by Barbara A. Taylor (Australia)

to Geraldine

day dreaming
drunk on daytura
in a hammock

Golden shafts paint these sacred rocks. A koel calls. I read the news of her death. No-one had told me, but what could I do? I was waiting, as usual, for her next email. Her epistles came from time to time. She would tell me her news and talk of what she's writing. Two years ago she'd asked me to scatter her mother's ashes back in the auld country. I carried out that request on my last trip back to Ireland. From the Giant's Causeway's winding track I sent her mother out to the angry sea. Sadly now, her daughter too, is gone. I am left speechless.

breaking the silence
silver cockatoos' shrieks
in the mists

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Book Review

Haiku Enlightenment

By Gabriel Rosenstock

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009

122 pp, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-0521-6

Available via <http://c-s-p.org>

Haiku: The Gentle Art of Disappearing

By Gabriel Rosenstock

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009

138 pp, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1133-0

Available via <http://c-s-p.org>

The two collections of essays by the renowned Irish haikin Gabriel Rosenstock are reviewed here together, mostly because they could have appeared under one cover. Still, there is a significant difference between the two.

An early draft of "Haiku Enlightenment" was serialised in World Haiku Review, so some of our readers may already be acquainted with it. In the book, as well as in the WHR, the material is given in refreshingly small portions... or is it only the author of this review who hates reading long chapters, sometimes not even divided into paragraphs? Gabriel Rosenstock himself says that "the book is best savoured in sips!"

"Haiku Enlightenment" is primarily aimed at experienced haiku writers who want to examine their writing process comparing it to that of others. At the same time it can be of great help to a newcomer to the land of haiku, because it comments on the very essence of this genre. After all, scores of people attempt writing Japanese short-form poetry not knowing much about the subject; some of them naively believe that following the 5-7-5 pattern is everything in haiku writing. They can't be farther from the truth...

In the first part of "Haiku Enlightenment" the author examines haiku moment as a dynamic pause. Haiku enlightenment happens when time stops – that is, for the enlightened person. Enlightenment is a sudden breath of freedom. Death is the longest pause. Haiku can be soul-awakeing... These are only a few of the author's theses.

Enlightenment undoubtedly is the core of haiku writing. A haiku poet, even if he/she is far from Buddhism, must strive for the enlightenment of a Buddha. After all, writing is the experience of telling the complete truth (as the writer sees it) to the others; the truth is always personal, but complete honesty is essential: poetry is known to mirror its author.

A reader of this book follows haiku-no-michi, the path of haiku, learning how to stop and listen, and how important it is to pay attention to what happens right here and right now. As Ruskin famously taught his students to see, Rosenstock appeals to his readers to "see with the heart". He writes about the feeling of oneness with Nature, human beings and all creatures, despite modern days' "estrangement, alienation... the pathologies of the 21st century." He quotes one of the haiku by Issa in his own English-language version, just to show "the fullness of emptiness":

up he comes
my favourite
cormorant -
empty beak!

The reader won't fail to notice that the author quotes quite a number of haiku throughout the book, and comments on them, which helps him to draw conclusions. His choice of quoted poems is always interesting.

The "Haiku Enlightenment" volume has an appendix where useful tips for writing haiku are given. We especially liked the following two: "Increase your nature vocabulary in as many realms as possible." And: "Enjoy yourself!"

"The Gentle Art of Disappearing" can be regarded as a sequel to "Haiku Enlightenment". This is a philosophical essay on the brevity of haiku and non-existence as the essence of an author's selflessness. The whole idea seems to be derived from the following phrase by R.H. Blyth: "Reality is not the question not the answer, but in the pause between the two."

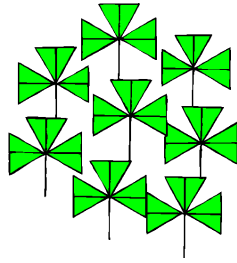
"Would you like to disappear?" the author asks, and then describes various kinds of such disappearance: disappearing in the haiku moment, disappearing in the flame, disappearing in the ordinary, disappearing in light, disappearing in the garden, disappearing in sound, disappearing in silence, disappearing in the game, disappearing with the birds...

Then a question arises, this one: 'Is it safe to disappear?' So far as we understood, the answer is, we constantly change, so the person who comes out of the state of disappearance is not exactly the same as the person who has entered it. Gabriel Rosenstock sees haiku as "a great, eventful homecoming." He quotes Jean Houston who once remarked: "The veils of the soul are lifted". This is not a bad metaphor for haiku enlightenment!

There's a lot more to both books of essays on haiku by Gabriel Rosenstock, so we hope they'll find attentive readers. Both are a good read and a worthy addition to anybody's collection of books on haiku. After all, we haven't had many of the kind lately...

These books can equally appeal to those who never tried composing short-form poetry but this category of readers should exercise some caution here: the books may cause a reader to get into haiku writing, which is quite addictive!

Anatoly Kudryavitsky



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Shamrock Haiku Journal

Haiku from Ireland and the rest of the world

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Shamrock



Haiku Journal
of the Irish Haiku Society

Announcement

Shamrock Haiku Journal Readers' Choice Awards

We invite all the readers of Shamrock Haiku Journal to vote for the best haiku/senryu poem published in 2009, i.e. in the issues NINE to TWELVE (you cannot vote for your own poem, though). To vote, send an e-mail to [irishhaikusociety\[at\]hotmail.com](mailto:irishhaikusociety[at]hotmail.com) with "Best haiku of 2009" or "Best senryu of 2009" in the subject line. Please insert the full text of the poem you vote for (only ONE poem in each category) plus the name of its author in the body of your e-mail. The deadline for vote is 28th February, 2010. The best poems will be named in the next issue of Shamrock Haiku Journal.

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Focus on
Slovenia

I take a step on ice
the whole valley
crackles

funeral –
spring wind
wrapped in a flag

-- Dimitar Anakiev (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

whispering silence
in the mountain vale –
falcon screech

birth of a rainbow –
a snail crawls along the path
towards wet leaves

-- Anica Bedič (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

blazing sun
a forgotten umbrella
so lonely on the stairs

-- Zvonka Bizjak (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

working together
in my garden,
myself and an ant

sleepless night
a bare branch
silhouetted against the moon

a dry branch breaks
under my foot
the grove silent no more

-- Jana Fišinger-Jelen (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

solitary pine tree
already touching
the edge of a city

-- Bojan Foršček (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

half asleep,
I look at dew on the roses...
birds sing

-- Sonja Golec (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

in the glass face
of my watch,
the Universe

hillside tree –
among the dead leaves,
a blue tit

this scared bird's
angry chirp,
who is it addressed to?

empty boat
swaying by the shore...
high tide lingers

a raindrop on each thorn
of this sprig...
end of the day

-- Marko Hudnik (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

after a snowfall,
morning silence and the shadows
of crows' wings

pine shadow
an old man and his walking stick
take a rest

-- Tatjana Jamnik (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

overgrown path
after I pass, the spider
mends the hole

speedy ride –
a fly inside the car
adjusts her wings

-- *Darja Kocjančič (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

rustling pinewood –
a sunbeam shows the way
to a procession of ants

small cicadas ...
the pinewood echoes with
the trembling of their wings

-- *Zlatka Levstek (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

on the other side, too...
birds drying their wings
atop the rainbow arch

-- *Špela Lovišček (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

apricot blossoms
and snowflakes...
bees refrain from visiting

sunflower field...
how many yellow pages
on the wall?

-- *Marijan Mauko (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

falling leaves...
with each day, the sky looks wider
from under these trees

still pond
a passing bird
sees herself

discarded pot
full of rainwater...
a reflected rainbow

a lame girl
in the swing
her happy squeal

tower in the evening glow
the cheerful nodding
of a bell

-- Silva Mizerit (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

shower has stopped
the road provides small mirrors
for the clouds

river stillness
a swan slumbers
on top of a white cloud

river fisherman
slowly pulling a fish
out of the cloud

-- Janez Mrdavšič (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

torrents of willow seeds
the swan
sheds a feather

permeating through
the dimming sunlight,
a blackbird's song

dull day ends
last sunbeams linger
on forsythia blossoms

snow forecast –
the sun in a pond
hides behind clouds

winter day –
the rising fog devours
the landscape

-- Polona Oblak (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

setting sun...
the smooth snake's shadow hides
in a mole's burrow

-- Marko Pak (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

pigeons' shadows in the square...
passers-by
trample them

-- Stane Pevec (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

a parting hug
the mirror in my pocket
cracks

-- Vladka Rejc (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

between branches
into the morning,
the creeping sun

-- Primož Repar (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

on a shabby roof
covered with damp moss,
a quiet crow

see how he flits
out of the dried-up well,
a scared sparrow

songbird
making a warm nest
in the old helmet

-- Rudi Robič (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

mountain trail –
bird song interrupted by
a beeping mobile phone

evening toll
filling the space
between snowflakes

misty morning
stoplight highlights the driver's
face in the next car

-- Edin Saračević (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

mountain's dark slope –
a deer gorges on blackberries
until dusk

-- Slavica Šavli (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

evening river –
behind the passing teal,
shards of the crescent

a piece of the crescent moon
between the curtains –
night moth

blinding moon –
the shadow of an old bridge
on bright stones

-- Rudi Stopar (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

above me, the sky,
next to me, a tree –
I'm one too many here

-- Smiljan Trobiš (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)

cutting the grass –
robin on a bough
waiting for me to stop

village by night
a telegraph pole all alone
in the street

room for two in my bedroom...
a spider and I
each in his corner

-- *Jože Volarič (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

in a wild frenzy,
the chained dog sells out
a trapped man

-- *Klavdija Zbičajnik (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

icy morning
the bus plastered with
Marilyn Monroe posters

looking for glow-worms,
a curious kid
wielding a torch

misty morning –
as I buy a sunflower, the sun
comes out

goats in the pen
the wind directs the clouds
towards the skyline

licking ice cream...
the wind adds
a salty taste

-- *Alenka Zorman (transl. by Anatoly Kudryavitsky)*

Essay

The Slovenian Haiku Scene

by Alenka Zorman

Haiku were first introduced to Slovenian readers in the second half of the last century. It was done by Vladimir Gajšek, Mart Ogen and Iztok Geister, Slovenian poets and haiku enthusiasts. Classical Japanese haiku were first translated to our language by Mart Ogen and subsequently published in two anthologies titled *Haiku and Mala antologija japonske lirike / A Little Anthology of Japanese Poetry* (both 1975). It is an interesting fact to note that the Slovenian haijin of that period were influenced not only by the classical examples but also by the works of Vladimir Devidé, the well-known Croatian haijin.

One of the major events in the development of haiku in our country was the founding of the first Slovenian haiku magazine, *Prijatelj* (1996). It was edited by the poet Dimitar Anakiev, who was also a co-founder of the World Haiku Association. A few Slovenian authors of haiku were published in *Knots*, an anthology of South-Eastern European haiku poetry (1999).

In September 1997 a group of Slovenian poets founded the Haiku Club of Slovenia (HCS). The number of HCS members was on the increase, and at some stage the HCS had thirty to forty members on average. That year the HCS started publishing its magazine titled *Letni časi / Seasons*. A few years ago it became a bilingual Slovenian/English publication. Haiku by several other Slovenian and foreign-based poets who weren't formally members of the Club appeared in it, too. The magazine was delivered to the members of the HCS, to haiku clubs and to some foreign haiku poets. The last number of the magazine (No 30/31) appeared in January 2007, and the publication was discontinued. Many of the issues of *Letni časi* are still available online. In 2001 the HCS published an anthology of Slovenian haiku titled *Teh nekaj besed / These Few Words*. Almost six hundred of the included haiku had previously been published in *Letni časi / Seasons*.

The following years in the history of the HCS can be described as a period of stagnation. The interest in haiku has fallen, the HCS is currently facing financial problems, and there are no more enthusiastic volunteers who would work for the Club. One of the reasons may have been the increase in the number of haiku blogs. The possibility to publish haiku in a blog seemed to be tempting for many. Since then a few of the most active Slovenian haiku poets have published their works on their blogs, sometimes beside photographs or as haiga. Several Slovenian literary magazines still publish haiku, and there have been quite a

number of self-published haiku collections out there.

Another Slovenian literary association, Apokalipsa, is quite active at promoting haiku. They organise an annual international haiku contest; in 2010 they will hold their eleventh. They also publishes haiku in their literary magazine titled Apokalipsa, which is well-read in our country. In 1998 and 2001, two special editions of Apokalipsa were devoted to haiku exclusively. Since 2000 Apokalipsa also publishes bilingual Slovenian/English haiku collections by Slovenian and foreign haiku poets. So far they have brought out six of such books, each containing works by four authors, and they are planning to publish more. In 2005, the Apokalipsa Association published *Ribnik Tišine / Pond of Silence* (2005), an important anthology comprising fifty haiku by fifty Slovenian poets, with translations into twelve languages. In March of the same year the Apokalipsa Association together with the HCS organised a haiku festival in the Slovenian House of Culture in Ljubljana, as a part of the Festival of Japanese Art and Culture. There were two Croatian poets among the guests. (On the copyright infringement committed by the Apokalipsa Publishing and the poet Marko Hudnik in 2010 see the editorial in Shamrock No16 - ed.)

Marko Hudnik, the former editor-in-chief of *Letni časi / Seasons* magazine, presented the history of Slovenian haiku and wrote about haiku as a genre of poetry in the Encyclopaedia of Slovenian Literature that hit the shelves of our book-shops in 2002.

In primary and high school Slovenian children have haiku lessons. There are two annual junior haiku contests being held in our country; the results of both are presented publicly at special events, and the prize-winning haiku appear in haiku publications.

A few articles on haiku and reviews of haiku books sometimes can be found in the main Slovenian newspapers. Some of our poets recite their haiku on the Radio Ljubljana programme called Literary Nocturne. In 2005, there was also a TV show about haiku poetry.

Most of the contemporary Slovenian haiku poets write free-form haiku, as opposed to 5-7-5 ones. Some of them publish their work not only nationally but also internationally, sometimes winning prizes or receiving accolades in international haiku contests. Slovenian language is arguably less suitable for haiku writing than some other European languages. Sometimes our poets have problems with the length of haiku, i.e. with the number of syllables, finding it difficult to keep their poems short.

Summing up, we should mention that in Slovenia haiku are regarded as a special genre of poetry. Some mainstream Slovenian authors write haiku as well or at least used to write them at some stages of their lives. Many people in our country still don't take haiku seriously, but the situation is gradually changing for better.

Alenka Zorman is the President of the Haiku Club of Slovenia. She lives in Ljubljana. In 2010 she was involved in the so-called 'Hudnik controversy', which amounted to copyright infringement committed by the poet Marko Hudnik and Apokalipsa Publishing (more info in Shamrock No 16)



"Mountains" by Evgenija Jarc (Slovenia)



Haiku and Senryu

a slipping sky...
fieldfares gather
in the shadows of the hill

into catkins too the arriving warbler's song

under redpolls alder rain

lapwings following starlings into the merse* wind

turning leaves the blackbirds of the lane

-- John Barlow (England)

**Merse (pronounced murs) is a common Scottish term for "salt marsh"; from the Old English "mersc".*

summer solstice
late in the afternoon
a crow's complaint

fogged-in mountain
from the unseen meadow
cow bells

a rainy day
the little bird interested in
the one dead branch

-- Bruce Ross (USA)

molten sun
the black meshes
of lime branches

hospital maze
I become number seven
on a pink plastic chair

city gusts
the last flaps
of a jilted umbrella

-- Ian Turner (England)

winter fog
my blind poodle
finds our way

a dry leaf settles
in the pavement crack
stormy sky

billabong* –
crocodiles circling
the tourist boat

-- Cynthia Rowe (Australia)

** billabong (Austral.) = small lake*

after rain
the sound of birds
tuning in

blackbird
holding the winter sun
in its beak

searching for loose change
my hands
smelling of money

-- Ciarán Parkes (Ireland)

still water -
ruins lost
in their reflection

at every turn Mount Errigal

rainbow -
seven flavours
of rain

-- Hugh O'Donnell (Ireland)

birthday party
fireflies mingle
above the guests

smell of baking bread
the moth's
powdery wings

-- Nathalie Buckland (Australia)

golden sunset...
the morning glories
still bright blue

city subway
alone with tap tap
of high heels

-- Dawn Bruce (Australia)

panhandler
whistles through his teeth
winter moon

tea steeping
grey-green
windows of rain

-- Philip Miller (USA)

cold night
beneath the covers
all of the cat

midnight wind
the whisper
of Victorian lace

-- Cathy Drinkwater Better (USA)

old dog lifts his leg
on the phone pole
not as high these days

finally
spring in the air
the dog barks at it

-- Helen Ruggieri (USA)

after the storm,
skeleton of umbrella
atop a road sign

frosty morning
the tunnel of my breath
on a station platform

-- Sharon Burrell (Ireland)

willow canopy
a stream
thundering seaward

moonbeams ocean dancing

-- *Jean Tubridy (Ireland)*

two washing baskets
reeds loosening
by a bridge

-- *Noel King (Ireland)*

summer pond -
ripples
within ripples

-- *Gautam Nadkarni (India)*

raindrop
the sky's last star
flickers

-- *Leonie Bingham (Australia)*

passing train...
a dandelion unfettered
from its roots

-- *Asim Khan (England)*

splatter of rain
the shimmer of coins
in the carp pond

-- *Robert Lucky (USA)*

in the shadow
of a hedgerow, cicadas
swell with storm

-- *Al Ortolani (USA)*

father's
old service bayonet -
is that blood?

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

street beggar...
as I fumble for coins
he requests my credit card

-- *Seshu Chamarti (India)*

Barbados heat
the police station windows
wide open

-- *Elizabeth Crocket (Canada)*

it tries in vain
to get off the escalator -
a plastic cup

-- *Luc Vanderhaeghen (Belgium)*

mountain range
the hum
of a distant city

-- *Joanna M. Weston (Canada)*

lifeless rain
from the branches -
tiny leaves

-- *Aju Mukhopadhyay (India)*

umbrella
gentle rain tapping
love songs

-- *Marisa Fazio (Australia)*

scent of dawn...
blossoms swooning
upon blossoms

-- *Keith A. Simmonds (Trinidad and Tobago)*

a snail...
morning begins
at my doorstep

-- *Jacob Kobina Ayiah Mensah (Ghana)*



Prize-winning Haiku from the Irish Haiku Society Competition 2008

The Irish Haiku Society is proud to announce the results of the second IHS International Haiku Competition. This year we saw a significant increase in the number of participating authors. 218 haiku by poets from thirteen countries (Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, England, USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, France, Poland, Portugal and Romania) were submitted to this year's competition. Many of the submitted poems were from the island of Ireland. 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.

1st Prize

Mary O'Keeffe (Ireland) receives the first prize of € 150 for the following haiku:

November sunset
a galaxy of crows
quench the twilight

2nd Prize

The 2nd Prize of € 50 goes to **Scott Mason (USA)** for the following haiku:

receding surf...
for every clamshell
a sandy wake

3rd Prize

John Barlow (UK) receives the third prize of € 30 for the following haiku:

some in, some out
of the ebbing tide...
the morning oystercatchers

Highly Commended Haiku

In alphabetical order:

Ernest J. Berry (New Zealand)

September wind
a better view
of compost bins

Clare McCotter (Northern Ireland)

stooping on the edge
of autumn
purple river grass

Roland Packer (Canada)

country fair
cornsilk at the feet
of the hucksters

Cynthia Rowe (Australia)

spring equinox
two pines leaning
into each other

Andre SurrIDGE (New Zealand)

end of a stalk
the caterpillar climbs
a ladder of air

Ian Turner (UK)

sun fringed clouds
a carrion crow struts
from sleeper to sleeper

Andrena Yeats (UK)

horses stand in morning frost
one apart stares
at the space between

Our congratulations go to all of the winners. We also express our sincere gratitude to the administrators of the competition, without whom... The Irish Haiku Society is planning to organise a free haiku workshop for the Irish entrants of the IHS competition, as well as for all the Irish haiku lovers who may wish to attend. Finally, plans are under way for next year's contest. The IHS Haiku Competition now is an annual event, and next year we may also introduce a special prize, in addition to what we had to offer this year.

Haibun

Sometimes

by Cathy Drinkwater Better (USA)

Sometimes it's almost too much: the mood swings, ever since early childhood. I never know quite what to expect. One day she's up, the next she's down. When she's in that dark place there is no consoling her; when she's not, all is right with the world. She doesn't believe in pills or therapies, so 'round and 'round and 'round we go, this grown child and I... a sort of "ring around the rosie" till we all fall down. But to change her would destroy the wellspring of inexhaustible creativity that is her. She is my flesh and my blood, and I will cherish her, just as she is, until the day I die. It's just that sometimes...

phone call
the warmth of the sun
in my daughter's voice

Ufa City

by Anatoly Kudryavitsky (Ireland)

The squeaky train plunges into a fishbowl station. No way forward: the rail is buried in sand. Next to the station, another fishbowl, a market, but there is an outdoor bazaar as well, where smells compete with colours and sounds for your attention. Grilling shashlik sizzles over a live charcoal fire sending droplets of burning oil in all directions. The honey man sucks his golden fingers. These tradesmen sitting on empty polystyrene boxes, what new kind of Silk Road brought them here?

rice dealers...
white Styrofoam grains
tumble in the wind

Book Reviews

PASSION AND HONESTY

A Thousand Reasons

Tanka by Pamela A. Babusci

ArtBookbindery.com Empowering Writers to Self-Publish™

Printed and Bound in Canada

April 2009

66 pp.

Available from the author

Pamela A. Babusci's tanka selection has a strong title, *A Thousand Reasons* (ArtBookbindery.com. 2009). There are a thousand reasons you should read these, 120 of Pamela's tankas written over the past 14 years.

In his Introduction, Tom Clausen writes: 'Tanka comprises a long history of poets who have written highly charged poems focused on love, yearning, loss and isolation. Pamela A. Babusci writes in the tradition of Yosano Akiko, Ono No Komachi, Izumi Shikibu and Takuboku ...' He goes on to say that she takes risks in her work, 'she does so fearlessly, and that aspect gives this collection a strength and poignancy that is uncommon.'

It's important to take risks. Otherwise tanka, especially in non-Japanese languages, can run the risk of being pastiche, hollow echoes of the true thing. Even noted Japanese writers of tanka, such as the above-mentioned Takuboku (1886-1912) took risks, moving from a one-line tanka to a three-liner, as in the following:

my wife today
behaves like a woman unleashed.
I gaze at a dahlia

I love that! Now let's plunge into Pamela's tanka. Great poetry opens up great spaces and this I like:

wiping off my lipstick
i tasted your mouth...
will you long for me tonight

when you are as distant
as the Milky Way?

This is the real thing, is it not? It has the mood, the atmosphere, the brevity, the aftertaste, the sadness. The simplicity of the diction is admirable and euphony is not sacrificed. The feminine touch throughout this book is exquisite, as in the beautiful title tanka:

a thousand reasons
to leave him
a thousand reasons
to stay ...
withering bamboo

How could that be improved upon? Are they all as good as this? No. I would have dropped twenty or so tanka from this selection. Tanka must be flawless in conception and execution, otherwise one finds oneself skipping over statements that amount to nothing more than self-indulgence and navel-gazing. Happily, the best tanka here make one forget the less accomplished ones. One thing is sure, her searing honesty will bring many more readers into her fold:

the knife slips so easily
into the fresh mango
trying to remember
why I hate him
so much

Gabriel Rosenstock

Endless Small Waves: Haibun

By Bruce Ross

HMS Press, London, Ontario, Canada

Proof bound. 7" X 8 1/2.

102 pp.; ISBN 978-1-55253-070-2

Available from HMS Press, POB 340, Station B, London, Ontario, N6A
4W1, Canada,

or from the author at:

Bruce Ross, PMB 127, 499 Broadway, Bangor, ME 04401, USA.

Bruce Ross, who authored four collections of his haiku, has had a number of poems published in Shamrock, and his work was reviewed in our No 8. This time he has had a collection of his haibun out; it contains 68 texts, the majority of which have not been published before. The glossy pale blue cover has an ink drawing by the author on it.

Haibun is a Japanese form of haiku poetry in combination with prosaic fragments. 'Hai' comes from the word 'haikai' and 'bun' means 'writing'. This term can best describe the style and the tradition of Basho's famous travel journals, *Oku no Hosomichi*, known to English-language readers as "The Narrow Road to the Deep North". Traditionally haibun often relates to a journey, whether the travel is a physical exploration of a particular part of the world or work of imagination.

Some of Bruce Ross's pieces have been written in travels inside and outside the United States, in such countries as Canada, Mexico, Peru and Japan. Apparently, a journey of a haibun writer means much more than just reaching the destination, but rather is a self-exploratory thing. In his travels, Bruce Ross seeks answers to the questions he asks himself, even if he has never thought about the actual wording of these questions. 'I had found my answer,' he concludes his opening haibun, and the same avid quest for answers can be found in some other pieces, notably in the haibun about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Bruce Ross uses a variety of story-telling techniques, which his potential reader will surely appreciate. He mainly narrates about the real people he met and the real places he visited. His narrative method can be described as traditional and recognisable, and it works well for him. The reader of Bruce Ross's haiku prose will, of course, notice the strong imagery in these texts. 'Black girder giant legs', 'a spider monkey staring down at us with anger'... But this is predictable. Less predictable is that such images don't just serve for the decoration of the text: each of them becomes a part of a many-component mosaic, which is what Bruce Ross's haibun really are.

Each of these pieces captures a moment in nature and a moment in time. If we look for an example of the author's clear vision of the world as reflected in a Zen poet's eyes, it is best revealed in the following haibun:

Clarity

My first glimpse is down a narrow alley in the distance, towering black girder giant legs firmly on earth gleaming. Up close there are groups of simple stars

incised on each of its four supports. But before that at a moderate distance on this cold clear day all that elevates and illuminates me in this city of imagination and possibility.

*windy morning
clouds through the base
of the Eiffel Tower*

Pieces like this clearly show the moment of enlightenment, or, if you prefer, a revelation of epiphany.

There is also an interesting piece on Edward Hopper, the painter. Bruce Ross quotes a fellow haijin who said the following about Hopper: "Anyone who likes haiku like Hopper". Writing haiku prose about the world of artificial images is risky, however this particular piece has an unmistakable 'wabi-sabi' atmosphere about it, and therefore is convincing.

Both in the quality of the texts and their topics, Bruce Ross's haibun are powerful. With his perfect sense of timing, the economy of his narrative, as well as the ease and clarity of his haibun, he is deservedly regarded as one of the best masters of the genre, and this book will undoubtedly strengthen his reputation.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky

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