THIRD EDITION

EDITED BY COR VAN DEN HEUVEL

THE
HAIKU
ANTHOLOGY

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#### THE HAIKU ANTHOLOGY



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Haiku and Senryu in English

Edited by Cor van den Heuvel



W. W. Norton & Company New York London

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Printed in the United States of America
First published as a Norton paperback 2000

The text of this book is composed in Stempel Garamond
with the display set in Weiss.
Composition by Chelsea Dippel
Manufacturing by the Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group
Book design by Chris Welch

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The haiku anthology: haiku and senryu in English / edited by Cor van den Heuvel. — [3rd ed.]

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p. ).
ISBN 0-393-04743-1

1. Haiku, American. 2. Haiku, Canadian. 3. Senryu, American. 4. Senryu, Canadian. 5. Nature—Poetry. I. Van den Heuvel, Cor, 1931– .

PS593.H3H34 1999 811'.04108—dc21 98-50927

CIP

#### ISBN 0-393-32118-5 pbk.

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110 www.wwnorton.com

W. W. Norton & Company Ltd.

Castle House, 75/76 Wells Street, London W1T 3QT

567890

To Harold G. Henderson and R. H. Blyth

I would like to thank the poets for their help in putting together this book, particularly Carl Patrick for his critical advice and L. A. Davidson for the use of her library of haiku books and magazines. I'd also like to express my appreciation to Gerald Howard, who was my first editor at Norton, for suggesting I do a third edition, and to Norton editor Patricia Chui for guiding it through the publishing process.

A special thanks to my wife, Leonia Leigh Larrecq van den Heuvel, for her love and support through three editions of *The Haiku Anthology*.

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A NOTE ON THE SELECTION AND LAYOUT

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## A NOTEGON THE SELECTION AND LAYOUT OF THE POEMS

sen certain poems in this book which are, on the surface, similar to others. If a haiku is a good one, it doesn't matter if the subject has been used before. The writing of variations on certain subjects in haiku, sometimes using the same or similar phrases (or even changing a few words of a previous haiku), is one of the most interesting challenges the genre offers a poet and can result in refreshingly different ways of "seeing anew" for the reader. This is an aspect of traditional Japanese haiku which is hard for many Westerners, with their ideas of uniqueness and Romantic individualism, to accept. But some of the most original voices in haiku do not hesitate to dare seeming derivative if

they see a way of reworking an "old" image.

Layout: Due to the fact that the words of a haiku provide only the bare essentials of the image, with which the reader's awareness works to create the haiku moment, it is important that the reader is not distracted from those essentials. The layout of the page, the amount of white space within which the words may work, and the choice of the other haiku on the spread all play a role in determining how the reader will direct his or her attention. Such considerations have been second only to the selection of the haiku themselves in the editing of this book.

### FOREWORD TO THE

aiku. What is it about these small poems that makes people all over the world want to read and write them? Nick Virgilio, one of America's first major haiku poets, once said in an interview that he wrote haiku "to get in touch with the real." And the Haiku Society of America has called haiku a "poem in which Nature is linked to human nature." We all want to know what is real and to feel at one with the natural world. Haiku help us to experience the everyday things around us vividly and directly, so we see them as they really are, as bright and fresh as they were when we first saw them as children. Haiku is basically about living with intense awareness, about having an openness to the existence around us—a kind of open-

ness that involves seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching.

Not so long ago, in 1991, when the first Haiku North America conference was being held at Las Positas College outside of San Francisco, another major figure of American haiku, J. W. Hackett, and his wife, Pat, invited four of the attending poets including myself to their garden home on a hill in the Santa Cruz mountains. Christopher Herold, one of those poets, wrote a haiku, included in this anthology, about that experience:

returning quail
call to us from the moment
of which he speaks

The poets had all moved out to the garden, continuing their talk about nature, Zen, and haiku. Toasts were raised to Bashō, Japan's most famous haiku poet, and to R. H. Blyth, his most faithful translator. Shadows were lengthening and James Hackett was trying to make clear his feelings about haiku when the birds suddenly came to his assistance. Christopher Herold's haiku captures that "moment" of the afternoon, when Hackett, and the quail, summed up everything he had been saying, eloquently and passionately, about haiku and the way of life it represents: living in the present moment—now.

That conference the poets were attending is just one indication of the new popularity of haiku. The Haiku North America conferences bring together poets from many different haiku groups and societies throughout the United States and Canada. They are held every other year. The first two were at Las Positas, the third was in Toronto, and in 1997 the conference was held at Portland State University, in Portland, Oregon. The next one is scheduled for Chicago. There have recently been a number of international conferences as well. There was one in Matsuyama in 1990, with delegates from the United States, China, and several European countries meeting with some of the top haiku poets and critics of Japan. In Chicago in 1995 about twenty Japanese haiku poets came to join American and Canadian haiku poets in a series of events called Haiku Chicago, which included a haiku-writing walk through Chicago streets and parks.

There have been others: in Europe, California, and one just last year in Tokyo, which was hosted by the Haiku International Association and attended by a large delegation from the Haiku Society of America and Haiku Canada. These larger activities are the result of smaller groups of haiku poets getting together in their own individual countries to write haiku, to publish magazines and books on the subject, and to discuss haiku theory and practice. This phenomenon is nowhere more prevalent than in the

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United States, which probably has more poets writing haiku than any other country except Japan. Groups of poets have joined together in Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Portland, Oregon, San Francisco, and many other cities and towns across America to write and discuss haiku. The Haiku Society of America has helped to coordinate and organize special events, such as the conferences mentioned above, to bring these groups together for an interchange of ideas and mutual encouragement. Many of the groups were started within the society's regional division program, which allows each region to elect its own regional director, have regional meetings, and have its own newsletter or magazine. Many of the poets in this anthology have been active in such groups.

Despite such serious attempts to develop a haiku literature, and to educate the public about it, there is still a lot of misunderstanding about this kind of poetry. The idea that haiku is anything in three lines of 5-7-5 syllables dies hard. People write little epigrams in this form, or jokes about Spam, or cute descriptions of birds and flowers, and think they are writing haiku.

In 1987, I wrote in *The New York Times Book Review*:

A haiku is *not* just a pretty picture in three lines of 5-7-5 syllables each. In fact, most haiku in English are not written in 5-7-5 syllables at all—many are

not even written in three lines. What distinguishes a haiku is concision, perception and awareness—not a set number of syllables. A haiku is a short poem recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived in which Nature is linked to human nature. As Roland Barthes has pointed out, this record neither describes nor defines, but "diminishes to the point of pure and sole designation." The poem is refined into a touchstone of suggestiveness. In the mind of an aware reader it opens again into an image that is immediate and palpable, and pulsing with that delight of the senses that carries a conviction of one's unity with all of existence. A haiku can be anywhere from a few to 17 syllables, rarely more. It is now known that about 12—not 17—syllables in English are equivalent in length to the 17 onji (sound-symbols) of the Japanese haiku. A number of poets are writing them shorter than that. The results almost literally fit Alan Watts's description of haiku as "wordless" poems. Such poems may seem flat and empty to the uninitiated. But despite their simplicity, haiku can be very demanding of both writer and reader, being at the same time one of the most accessible and inaccessible kinds of poetry. R. H: Blyth, the great translator of Japanese haiku, wrote that a haiku is "an open door which looks shut." To see what is suggested by a haiku, the reader must share in the creative process, being willing to associate and pick up on the echoes

implicit in the words. A wrong focus, or lack of awareness, and he will see only a closed door.

At the time I wrote that article the activities of the Haiku Society of America were pretty much confined to New York City, though it had members throughout the country, and most of the small groups mentioned above were yet to be formed. Soon after this the HSA began to hold its annual meeting in a different city each year, and the regional system was created. All the special conferences mentioned above have taken place in the decade of the nineties. The world of Englishlanguage haiku has radically changed since the last edition of this book in 1986.

At the same time as these developments were taking place, haiku's sister genre, senryu, was also increasing in popularity and in quality. Senryu is the same as haiku except, instead of dealing with Nature, it is specifically about human nature and human relationships and is often humorous. Many poets writing haiku in English also write senryu. For many Americans writing them, senryu is haiku—though a very special kind. But as many others consider them totally different genres, without disputing that they have the same roots and retain many similarities. They both embody an awareness of the world around us.

Besides the wider developments discussed above, yet partly due to them, the more important goals of

creating excellent haiku and producing individual writers of talent continue to be realized. New, young poets have come to the fore. Established poets have broadened and deepened their work. New haiku magazines and presses have appeared. And new books of haiku and about haiku have significantly altered the way we think about the genre. (See the Book List following this foreword, where magazines and organizations are also listed.)

In this book there are about 850 haiku and senryu by eighty-nine poets. Around half of the poems are new to this edition. Forty-four of the poets appear in the anthology for the first time. I will get to a brief discussion of some of these new writers shortly. But poets have been writing haiku in North America since at least the 1950s, and I would like to first say something about the early figures of English-language haiku, for their work is included here as well.

Two major poets from this group have died since the last edition of this book appeared. The loss to haiku by the deaths of Nicholas Virgilio and John Wills is immeasurable. Both were respected in the American haiku world from their earliest appearances in the little magazines. By the time of their deaths they were considered among the top writers of the genre. Since their passing their stature has become even more assured. Their works stand as monuments on the landscape of American haiku's first half century. That period, beginning in the fifties and early sixties with the first experiments of Jack Kerouac, J. W. Hackett, Nick Virgilio, and others, and which is now being crowned with the mature works of a number of outstanding haiku poets, may someday be looked upon as the Golden Age of North American Haiku.

Nick Virgilio died at age sixty in January of 1989. He was stricken by a heart attack while taping an interview for *The Charlie Rose Show*, a nationally televised program then airing on CBS. Nick had been a popular figure as a guest on television and radio in the Philadelphia area, interesting thousands of people in haiku. During the year or so before his death, he appeared a number of times on National Public Radio. When he died, he was on the verge of becoming American haiku's first celebrity. Virgilio's work is farranging, from simple nature poems to gritty urban haiku. His haiku about his brother, who died in Vietnam, comprise one of the finest elegies ever written. They demonstrate the power of love to preserve the memory of those close to us.

Through the Nick Virgilio Haiku Association, headquartered in his hometown of Camden, New Jersey, Nick still spreads the word about haiku. He is buried there only a few steps from Walt Whitman's tomb. Whitman was one of his favorite poets, and Nick often quoted him. A large granite stone in the shape of a lectern has been erected over Nick's grave

with his famous "lily" haiku engraved on its top. Visitors can read the poem while facing a small lily pond:

lily: out of the water . . . out of itself

John Wills died in 1993 at the age of seventy-two. His haiku go deep into the heart of American nature. Many of his greatest haiku were written between 1971 and 1978 when he lived on a farm in the mountains of Tennessee. They are about the surrounding fields and woods and the streams and rivers. He loved fishing and wrote often about it in his haiku. With just the barest of brushstrokes, Wills can make us one with a waterthrush at dusk or let us see the miracle that lies in a simple swirl of water on a trout stream:

rain in gusts below the deadhead troutswirl

Happily, one of American haiku's most important pioneering writers, J. W. Hackett, is still with us, and we can, as I noted earlier, drink a toast to Bashō with him. Hackett's haiku first appeared in the early sixties. R. H. Blyth included a selection as an appendix to his *History of Haiku* in 1964. He cited Hackett's works as

examples of how haiku could be written in English. In 1986, I wrote in the preface to the Second Edition of this book that Hackett had turned to writing longer works. But in the nineties he has begun writing haiku again and has become active in the haiku community. He recently lectured about haiku in Japan, Ireland, and the United States and has judged several haiku contests, including the annual contest of the British Haiku Society. In 1993 he was the keynote speaker at the second Haiku North America. He is finishing a new book about haiku to be called *That Art Thou: My Way of Haiku*. Hackett's haiku included here are from his popular *The Zen Haiku and Other Zen Poems of J. W. Hackett*, which is still in print (see the Book List for this and for a Web site devoted to his work).

Among the other important trailblazers of English-language haiku included in this edition are Clement Hoyt, who started studying haiku and Zen with Nyogen Senzaki in 1936 and became one of our first senryu writers; O. Mabson Southard, who has described his poetic voice as owing "the burden of its intimate heraldry to aboriginal America"; Robert Spiess, many of whose haiku reflect his love of canoeing the lakes and streams of Wisconsin; Elizabeth Searle Lamb, who has traveled widely, but writes some of her best haiku about the American Southwest, where she now lives; L. A. Davidson, a sharp observer of nature as it exists in New York City, where she has long resided,

and whose love of sailing probably played a part in the creation of her well-known "beyond / stars" haiku; Foster Jewell, who captured the silences of the woods and desert places of America; and Eric Amann, a Canadian poet, critic, and editor, who is able to find haiku in parking lots and on billboards, and even in a folded tent:

The circus tent all folded up:
October mist . . .

The haiku of all of these poets began appearing in the early haiku magazines of the sixties. Some of those poets edited these magazines. Hoyt and Spiess were both early editors of the first haiku magazine in this country, American Haiku. The first issue, published in 1963, contained work by Hackett, Virgilio, and Southard. Spiess has for many years now been the editor of Modern Haiku, and Lamb was for a long time the editor of Frogpond, the magazine of the Haiku Society of America. Eric Amann started the first Canadian haiku magazine, Haiku, in 1967. Hoyt and Jewell passed away some time ago. Of the rest, only Spiess, Lamb, and Davidson have been notably active in recent years, writing and publishing new haiku.

As English-language haiku approaches the end of its first fifty years, a number of poets, other than those

discussed already, have, by the quality and quantity of their haiku, emerged as major figures: Anita Virgil, Gary Hotham, Marlene Mountain, Alexis Rotella, George Swede, Alan Pizzarelli, Michael McClintock, Raymond Roseliep, and Rod Willmot.

Roseliep, who died in 1983, was one of our most unorthodox poets. He used haiku in an intellectual, yet paradoxical, and spiritual, way. At the same time he saw the world as vividly sensuous and richly comical. The play of the mind is usually avoided in American haiku, yet Roseliep was successful in using it because he did so so innovatively, and because he infused it with the haiku spirit. Michael McClintock, another major revolutionary in haiku, has not been noticeably active for some time now—though he quietly published a book in 1997 that may contain haiku (see Biographical Notes). His early defense of a "liberated haiku" and his critical rejection of syllable counting were crucial in the development of English-language haiku. His senryu magazine seer ox was instrumental in gaining respect for senryu at a time, the mid-seventies, when not a few haiku poets looked down on it. His work here is taken from that included in the Second Edition. Rod Willmot, another original, helped change haiku's direction by his critical articles and by his broken-narrative style of haiku. He has also not been heard much in haiku circles recently. However, he did publish quite a bit in the years immediately following the last edition, and I've included a number of these newer pieces. His Burnt Lake Press was important in the late eighties and published, with Black Moss, Virgilio's and Wills's most important books. He is now at work on a novel.

Gary Hotham is a haiku poet whose work is continually exciting. He keeps turning out wonderfully subtle and simple poems, honing them to a pitch of perfection until they quietly consecrate the quotidian. Some of his newer works create a noir-like atmosphere. In just a few words, he can convey a feeling of small-town loneliness, the bleakness at the edges of a big city, or the mystery and wonder at the heart of the most ordinary happenings of a life in the suburbs.

Though I've included several new pieces by Marlene Mountain, most of her section contains earlier haiku. For about a decade now she has concentrated on what she herself has characterized as "pissed off poems." These are works that express her outrage at what we have done and are doing to harm the environment and to limit the freedom of women. To me, most of these seem, however admirable, something other than haiku or senryu. Her "belly up" frog and a few others may be exceptions.

Since the Second Edition, Anita Virgil has added significantly to her already impressive body of work, writing haiku that give us the essence of our American seasons and senryu that zero in on the human condition. She is also one of our best haibun (a mixed form of prose and haiku) writers, combining a lucid, supple prose with haiku that grow out of it as easily as flowers, or cucumbers, from a vine. She notices with keen awareness things around her that many of us take for granted or fail to observe at all. There is a lot of her new work included here.

George Swede and Alexis Rotella are beyond superlatives. They are both masters of haiku and senryu, and you will find an abundance of new as well as time-tested work by them in this edition. Alexis Rotella's poetry reflects the wide spectrum of existence itself, aglow with the special light of art. Her senryu contain vivid exposures of her personal life. Rod Willmot said of her work: "Although [Rotella] has a wide range, her special gift is for the revelation of moments in her emotional relationships with others . . . She catches the most troublesome of such material and puts it down *perfectly*, without a trace of pretence or self-indulgence, capturing it so simply and accurately that henceforth that moment of human experience, in anyone's life, is expressed for all time."

George Swede is the funniest haiku poet who ever lived. I'm sure his senryu would be the envy of great comedy writers like Woody Allen or Mel Brooks if they were aware of them. The opening and closing lines of his section in this book are priceless. He teaches the Psychology of Art and Creativity at Ryer-

son Polytechnic University in Toronto and has been a featured speaker at many of the HNA and international conferences mentioned above.

Alan Pizzarelli is one of this book's biggest attractions. It's too bad I can't hang a circus banner from the cover saying, "Don't Miss the Greatest Haiku Act on Earth!" Since the Second Edition, his work has reached a level of quality that fills me with joy and envy. Pizzarelli finds his subject matter everywhere: in a piece of burlap, on a car bumper, or in the actions of a shoeshine boy. With a special kind of insight, he is able to spot the moment that shows their significance and is able to reveal it through an extraordinary facility with words.

Of the other poets here that have been in earlier editions, Arizona Zipper is one of several who have made notable strides in their work, and he has a much larger selection this time. His haiku on county fairs brings a special flavor to the genre, and I can almost smell the smoke from that sulky driver's cigar floating in the damp evening air.

Among the many new poets in this anthology, all with exceptional talents, there are a large number who show not just a promise of greatness to come but have already established a record of accomplishment that makes them substantial figures in the haiku world. Most prominent are Lee Gurga, Dee Evetts, Wally Swist, and Michael Dylan Welch.

Lee Gurga gives us the mystery and wonder of the Midwest: the vast spaces, the rolling prairie, the immense sky, and the majestic rivers. As I recently wrote for the jacket of his latest book, *Fresh Scent*, he "seems destined to forge a fresh poetic heritage for the Midwest." Not only do his haiku let us see the beauty of the land, they allow us to feel the character of its people, which reaches "out of the poems like a warm handshake." In Gurga's sensitive and often humorous poems we discover the heart of America. You'll find a generous selection of them in this anthology.

The following is a part of what I wrote for the back cover of Dee Evetts' endgrain: "From the unforget-table comic moment when his waitress flourishes her washrag to that moment of insight into existence as his woodshavings roll along the veranda, the poet presents the reader with a panorama of haiku happenings that both delight and spark awareness." You can sample that panorama here, including the two poems referred to in the quotation.

Wally Swist and Michael Dylan Welch are very dissimilar. Swist is in the tradition of Robert Spiess and John Wills. Though he does not write about Spiess's canoe country or Wills's Tennessee, his haiku are about the same kinds of subject matter. He writes almost solely about the woods and farms of western Massachusetts where he has lived since the early eighties. His style is more like Spiess's, using the juxtaposi-

tion of two images to create a single moment. He assisted Spiess as an editor for *Modern Haiku* for a number of years.

Welch intertwines memories of childhood with the present, giving his work an immediacy blended with nostalgia. His images are more urban and domestic than Swist's, and he varies the form more so that his haiku create fresh shapes on the page. Welch is also very important to the haiku community as an editor. His Press Here has published many of the best haiku chapbooks to come out in recent years, and he edited the haiku magazine *Woodnotes* until deciding to discontinue it in order to start a new one, *Tundra*, due this year.

Though not represented by as many haiku as some of those poets I've already mentioned, Vincent Tripi and Carl Patrick write a kind of haiku that seems to involve a whole new way of seeing. Not since Roseliep's has there been a haiku so completely different from what everyone else is writing. Tripi's best work has a mystical quality that reminds me of some passages in Thoreau, whom Tripi regards as a mentor. Many of his haiku moments are unforgettable, like his tracks around the carousel. Carl Patrick can go from the very simplest presentation of the everyday, like his cookie tin, to a wild, seemingly surrealistic view of reality that we see in his hailstone. Washed in the colors of his imagination, things glow in his haiku—but only to disclose their own ineffable essence.

There are so many poets—all the others in this edition—that I would like to praise individually, but you will have the delight of discovering them all as you go through the following pages. However, I would like to take some space here to say a few more words about English-language haiku in general.

The form of haiku that has continued most in favor in English is the otherwise free-form three liner, often written with the second line slightly longer than the first and third. These haiku are usually written in less than seventeen syllables. Though a few poets still write in the 5-7-5 syllable form, this form is now mostly written by schoolchildren as an exercise to learn how to count syllables, by beginners who know little about the true essence of haiku, or by those who just like to have a strict form with which to practice.

The one-line and the two-line haiku, popular in the early and mid-eighties, are now a more occasional phenomenon. The one-line is very hard to write successfully, though some of the most outstanding haiku in English have been in one line. In this anthology, you'll find some of the classic ones, written by poets like John Wills, Marlene Mountain, George Swede, and Matsuo Allard, as well as some great new ones from Alexis Rotella.

There are fewer concrete haiku in this edition than in the last. To work as a haiku a concrete poem has to be simple and direct. It must reveal the essence of whatever image it is trying to evoke immediately, without its graphic configuration calling such attention to itself, or to the writer's ingenuity, as to distract us from that image.

As I learn more and more about haiku, mostly by reading thousands of them, I have come to the conclusion that the greatest haiku are those that take me directly to the haiku moment without calling attention to themselves. When I first read Alan Watts's characterization of haiku as "the wordless poem," I thought it was because a haiku had so few words, but now I believe it goes deeper than that (whether Watts intended it to do so or not). Haiku, for the reader, is wordless because those few words are invisible. We as readers look right through them. There is nothing between us and the moment.

To achieve this goal, certain literary practices common to traditional western poetry are usually avoided by American haiku poets. Such devices as figures of speech or rhyme are rarely employed, for these tend to take away from the thing as it is. The haiku should take us right to the haiku moment and present us with the tree or a leaf, the spring rain or the autumn wind, a rose in a garden or a rusty pick-up under the pines, just as they are—no more, no less. The phrasing and choice of words provide the music of a haiku, which must be as short as a birdsong. Meter is rarely employed. When it is, it is used to create a musical

flow that is unobtrusive. For example, if one takes the trouble to listen closely one can detect a subtle current of iambic meter in some of John Wills's haiku. It does not call attention to itself. It is like the faint sound of a breeze helping reveal the haiku moment.

As in previous editions, I have not separated the senryu from the haiku. I like the variety you get by presenting them together, and I think the reader gets more pleasure encountering them unexpectedly—with no warning flags or labels. It is more fun to figure out yourself whether a certain poem is a haiku or senryu. In some the mixture is so even it is hard to decide whether the Nature or human aspect is the more dominant. It could be one or the other.

I hope you'll find that the haiku and senryu in the following pages demonstrate a special magic of language, that they create for you moments of sharp and significant perceptions, coupled with an unspoken awareness of the oneness of the human with nature, and that they spark an intense emotional response. And finally, I hope you'll agree that living in the haiku moment is a poetic experience of the highest order.

Cor van den Heuvel New York City Summer 1998

## BOOK LIST, WITH HAIKU PRESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

(See Biographical Notes for more books by the poets)

those I consider the most important to English-language haiku. There exist similar sources for all the major languages of the world. Haiku is today an international poetry. To learn about this globe-circling aspect of haiku, the best sources in English are the books listed below by William J. Higginson. His book Haiku World is the first international saijiki (haiku almanac). It has over a thousand haiku and senryu arranged according to the seasons, with explanations of why certain words and phrases point to particular times of the year. The poems are by more than six hundred poets living in fifty countries and writing in twenty-five languages. All those not written in English

appear both in the original language and in English translation. This and a companion volume, *The Haiku Seasons*, which gives a history of the haikai tradition and the Japanese saijiki, are among the most important books published since the last edition of this book.

Others include Hiroaki Sato's superb translations of Matsuo Bashō's *Oku no Hosomichi* and Ozaki Hōsai's haiku and prose. The former is a fully annotated translation of Bashō's major work, and easily the most accessible version in English. The latter makes available the finest work of one of Japan's most important modern haiku poets, Ozaki Hōsai. Hōsai, and another twentieth-century poet, Santōka Taneda (translated by John Stevens), are perhaps closer to us in their freeform style of writing and freedom of spirit than the more famous "pillars" of Japanese haiku.

To better understand the most important pillar of all, Bashō, we now have a book that gives us a wide view of the haikai world that existed during his lifetime. Haruo Shirane's *Traces of Dreams* shows how Bashō and his circle of poets were only a part of a much wider literary phenomenon: they were just one of many competing schools of haikai poetry. Shirane examines the ways in which the master's literary theories changed and developed amidst this mix of tastes and styles and goes on to demonstrate how similar changes are going on in the haiku world today, both in Japan and beyond.

Two of the most important new magazines to appear since the last edition of this book are *Woodnotes* and *South by Southeast*. The first was started in 1989 by the Haiku Poets of Northern California, with Vincent Tripi and Paul O. Williams as the first editors. After a few years, Michael Dylan Welch took over as editor. It became independent of the HPNC in 1996 with Welch still as editor, and he decided in 1997 to let it fold so that he could start a new magazine with a less local focus. The first issue is due sometime in the latter half of 1998. During its existence *Woodnotes* set a new standard for high-quality haiku and related genres like tanka, linked verse, and haibun. The articles were groundbreaking and the quality of the layouts and art work unmatched.

South by Southeast was started about five years ago as an organ of the Southeast Regional Group of the Haiku Society of America, but only came into prominence about a year later under the editorship of Jim Kacian. This too has been an outstanding magazine, being even more comprehensive in its coverage of the world of English-language haiku than Woodnotes had been. Kacian is now the new editor of the HSA's Frogpond, and Stephen Addis will take over South by Southeast. It will continue to be published by Kacian's Red Moon Press, however. The stalwart war-horses of the haiku magazines continue to be the HSA's Frogpond and Bob Spiess's Modern Haiku. The first has

been publishing for twenty years and the second for about thirty.

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- AHA Books, Jane Reichhold, editor and publisher, P.O. Box 1250, Gualala, CA 95445.
- Brooks Books (High/Coo Press), Randy M. Brooks, editor and publisher, 4634 Hale Drive, Decatur, IL 62526.
- Burnt Lake Press, Rod Willmot, editor and publisher, 535 Irène-Couture, Sherbrooke, Quebec, J1L 1Y8.
- Frogpond (magazine of the Haiku Society of America), Jim Kacian, editor, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604-1661.
- From Here Press, William J. Higginson, editor and publisher, P.O. Box 2740, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2740.
- High/Coo Press (see Brooks Books).
- Iron Press, 5 Marden Terrace, Cullercoats, North Shields, Northumberland, NE30 4Pd, England, UK.
- King's Road Press, Marco Fraticelli, editor and publisher, 148 King's Road, Pointe Claire, Quebec, H9R 4H4.
- Modern Haiku, Robert Spiess, editor and publisher, P.O. Box 1752, Madison, WI 53701-1752.
- Press Here, Michael Dylan Welch, editor and publisher, 248

Beach Park Blvd., Foster City, CA 94404.

proof press, Dorothy Howard, editor and publisher, 67 Court, Aylmer, Quebec J9H 4M1, Canada.

RAW NerVZ (see proof press).

Red Moon Press, Jim Kacian, editor and publisher, P.O. Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604-1661.

Smythe-Waithe Press, 9632 Berkshire Way, Windsor, CA 95492.

Tiny Poems Press, John Sheirer, editor and publisher, Asnuntuck Community-Technical College, 170 Elm Street, Enfield, CT 06082.

Tundra (see Press Here).

### ORGANIZATIONS

The British Haiku Society, Sinodun, Shalford, Braintree, Essex, CM7 5HN, England, UK.

Haiku Canada, 67 Court, Aylmer, Quebec J9H 4M1.

The Haiku Society of America, c/o Japan Society, 333 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017.

The Nick Virgilio Haiku Association, 1092 Niagara Road, Camden, NJ 08104.

Note: When writing to magazines, presses, or organizations enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope; if writing one in another country, enclose an international reply coupon, available at the post office.

# PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

omeone, probably thinking of Bashō's famous haiku about the-sound-of-a-frog-jumping-into-an-old-pond, once likened the English-language haiku movement to a small puddle far from the mainstream of poetry. If so, the puddle is doing very well on its own. While the mainstream moves, for the most part, sluggishly through gray fogs of obscurity and intellectualization, the puddle is ablaze with color and light—as a glance through this book will show.

There are no signs of its ever drying up—on the contrary, it seems to be springfed—and the "frogs" who inhabit it are singing songs filled with original imagery, stark beauty, sparkling wit, intense emotion, peaceful calm, and acute awareness.

This edition of The Haiku Anthology contains around seven hundred haiku, senryu, and related works-about five hundred more than there were in the First Edition, which was published in the spring of 1974. Extraordinary things have happened to haiku since then—due, primarily, to the innovative, fresh approaches brought to the genre by the poets represented in this book. Haiku will become what the poets make it, to paraphrase the late Harold G. Henderson,<sup>1</sup> and our haiku literature is as rich and varied as it is because such poets as Anita Virgil, Alan Pizzarelli, Michael McClintock, Marlene Mountain, George Swede, Raymond Roseliep, John Wills, Gary Hotham, Alexis Rotella, and others have led the way into directions of accomplishment undreamed of in the early years of the movement.

These accomplishments are also, indirectly, the result of work of scholars and translators of Japanese literature, such as Henderson himself. In recent years new books by Makoto Ueda, Earl Miner, Hiroaki Sato, Burton Watson, and Donald Keene have deepened our understanding of Japanese haiku and its related genres, significantly affecting how we write their counterparts in English.

In the years between editions there have been three major developments: the emergence of the one-liner as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> One of the pioneer scholar/translators of haiku, Harold Henderson died in 1974, shortly after the First Edition of the *Anthology* was published.

a common form for haiku and senryu; the growing practice of writing longer works, such as sequences and renga; and the increasing importance of human relationships, especially sex and love, as subject matter.

Though many poets had been moving toward more freedom for the haiku form in the early seventies, especially away from the restrictions of the 5-7-5 syllable count, it was only in the latter half of the decade that the one-line form became more than an occasional exception to the three-line "rule." The three-line form, with no set syllable count, remains the standard, but some of the best haiku in English have been written in one line, and the form is now widely used.<sup>2</sup>

Three people were initially responsible for gaining its general acceptance: Marlene Mountain (formerly known as Marlene Wills) was the first to write good one-line haiku with some regularity; Hiroaki Sato translated Japanese haiku into one-liners and lent "legitimacy" to the writing of original one-liners in English;<sup>3</sup> and Matsuo Allard furthered the cause of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The First Edition had only a single one-liner, Michael Segers' "in the eggshell after the chick has hatched."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Sato's one-line haiku translations started appearing in magazines in 1976, and over six hundred are in the anthology *From the Country of Eight Islands* (1981). Sato also lent confirmation to an earlier conclusion by William J. Higginson, which appeared in a small book called *Itadakimasu* in 1971, that ten to fourteen syllables in English, rather than seventeen, most closely match the sound length of the seventeen *onji* in a traditional Japanese haiku.

one-liner by writing polemical essays in its favor, editing and publishing several short-lived but important magazines devoted to it, publishing chapbooks of them, and by writing them himself.<sup>4</sup>

The most common argument for one-liners is that the Japanese write haiku in one vertical line or column and therefore we should write in one line also, but of course horizontally in the Western style. Strict "three-liner" advocates argue that since the Japanese haiku breaks into three parts because of the 5-7-5 syllable (onji) form—a pattern that occurs naturally in the Japanese language—the only way to parallel it in English is to write in three lines. Of course many poets write in one form or the other simply because they think the particular poem they are writing works better in that form.

There has also been some experimentation with two-line haiku—Bob Boldman has probably had the most success with them—but they are still quite rare. A few poets have tried writing English-language tanka. These five-line poems have usually been most successful when done in the introspective style of Takuboku Ishikawa (1885–1912) rather than in the traditional lyric manner.

<sup>4</sup> Matsuo Allard's press was first called Sun-Lotus and later became The First Haiku Press. As far as can be determined, the press is no longer in existence. Matsuo Allard also used the name R. Clarence Matsuo-Allard. Longer forms in the shape of sequences have been a part of the haiku scene since at least the sixties, and a few short ones were included in the First Edition, but they have increased in popularity in recent years. While most sequences have been made up of haiku or senryu which can stand alone as poems themselves—at least their authors intended them to have that ability—Marlene Mountain and Alexis Rotella have written a kind in which the individual elements, though firmly rooted in haiku and senryu, depend largely on their context for their effectiveness, and only one or two out of several may be able to stand alone. Similar sequences of haiku or tanka that depend on context for meaning have been written in Japanese. They are called rensaku.

An attempt at English-language renga was published as early as 1968 in *Haiku Magazine*, but it wasn't till the mid-seventies that the form became of any importance. Also called "linked-verse poem" or "renku," renga were originally written at a live session, like a jazz improvisation, but in English have most often been done through the mails, with two, three, or more poets writing links in turn.

William J. Higginson and Tadashi Kondo played seminal roles in awakening interest in renga early in 1976 with discussions at the Haiku Society of America. These were recorded in the society's newsletter, and later that year *Haiku Magazine* put out an issue

devoted to renga and haibun (prose pieces written in the spirit of haiku). In the late seventies and early eighties, Marlene Mountain and Hiroaki Sato participated in a number of renga that appeared in Cicada and in the Haiku Society's Frogpond. Sato has been one of the most influential figures in American haiku in recent years (he was president of the Haiku Society of America for three terms, 1979-81). His book One Hundred Frogs: From Renga to Haiku to English (1983) gives an informative and entertaining history of Japanese renga, along with a brief account of Englishlanguage renga and a small anthology of the latter. In Japan haiku originated when the hokku of haikai no renga began to be written as an independent poem. The process has been reversed in the West. Renga developed here when haiku poets started looking for ways to extend the haiku into longer forms. Its importance for this anthology is that the practice of writing renga has helped stimulate innovation in the writing of haiku and senryu and has encouraged the exchange of ideas and a sense of community among poets by bringing them in closer contact with one another.

Another longer form is the haibun. These prose pieces—which usually contain one or more haiku—have been tried occasionally in English, but except for some parts of two novels by Jack Kerouac little of significance has appeared yet. In several passages in *Desolation Angels* and *The Dharma Bums*, Kerouac has

come closer than any other writer in English to the terse, elliptical, nature-inspired prose that characterizes the genre. His descriptions of his experiences alone on Desolation Mountain have the whirling brevity and vivid immediacy of some of Bashō's great haibun. Unfortunately, the few haiku he includes are not of comparable merit.

The last major development involves subject matter. Though there were in the First Edition a few haiku or senryu dealing with sex-some of Michael McClintock's come immediately to mind—they were rare exceptions. Sex, love, and the whole range of human emotions and relationships have now become fairly common themes. Rod Willmot, one of the movement's most important critics and one of Canada's leading haiku poets, calls most of these poems "psychological haiku"; those specifically about sex he has called "erotic haiku." "Serious senryu" would be more accurate, I think, for most of them. Instead of recreating a moment of awareness in which human nature is related to nature, they give one a moment of awareness about one's own inner feelings or one's relationships with other human beings.

Senryu began as comic verse, but that does not mean it has to be called haiku when it becomes serious. It seems useful to me to keep the two genres distinct in somewhat the same way the Japanese do—haiku relates to Nature and the seasons, senryu relates to human nature. Traditionally, the Japanese have ensured this by insisting that to be a haiku the poem must have a season word (kigo), while a senryu does not. They have always had the same form. It is the subject matter that determines the genre—not the form, and not whether the subject matter is looked at humorously or not. Haiku itself began as a kind of humorous verse, and one can still write a funny haiku.

In recent years, more and more writers have been creating comic and serious senryu that rival the best haiku in the depth of insight they reveal and the emotional richness they convey. Michael McClintock, who edited a magazine (seer ox) in the mid-seventies devoted to senryu, and Alan Pizzarelli, who wrote many comic senryu about the same time, were probably the first to spark significant interest in the genre though Clement Hoyt and a few others had written fine senryu earlier. Recently George Swede, a Canadian, has become one of the best senryu writers in English—of both the humorous and the serious kinds. He is a highly original writer of haiku as well, and his work in both genres has influenced a number of other poets. In the United States, Marlene Mountain (particularly in her sequences), Alexis Rotella, and Bob Boldman-among others-have led the way in bringing psychology, or more subjectivity, into both haiku and senryu. Rotella has polished this facet of the art with such brilliance that she has become in only a few years

one of the stars in the growing constellation of outstanding haiku/senryu poets.

As in the First Edition, I have not tried to separate the senryu from the haiku in this book—not because of the slight difficulty in deciding which is which, for a few do overlap, but because an interesting variety, contrast, and resonance can result from their juxtaposition.

Though one-liners, longer works, and serious senryu are the most obvious, widespread developments, there have been many other successful explorations of the possibilities of haiku and its related genres. Usually these have been accomplished by the individual genius, or style, of a particular poet, from the minimalist and "unaloud" pieces of Marlene Mountain to the extended haiku and "sound" poems of Pizzarelli. Mountain had published little in the haiku magazines before exploding on the scene in 1976 with her book, the old tin roof. Since then she has figured prominently in the movement, and her inventive and powerful writing has helped to shape many of the changes that have taken place. Though Pizzarelli had a few poems in the First Edition of the anthology, he has since become the clown/magician of the haiku world, materializing an amazing array of word-wonders that brings the wise craziness of the poet/monks of the past into the modern world of chrome and neon.

Raymond Roseliep, another sui-generis poet, had

tried his hand at haiku in the early seventies, but his main work and reputation then was in traditionally Western genres. When he later devoted his craft to haiku, he kept a Western flavor in it which makes it hard to say exactly what his marvelously witty and off-the-wall creations are—William J. Higginson has resorted to the word "liepku." One of the most prolific poets in the movement, Roseliep left us a large body of these sparkling and delightful poems which undeniably belong to haiku/senryu before he died in 1983.

In fact, all the voices in this book have unique qualities: Gary Hotham is a master of what might be called the "plain," or "subtle," haiku, so ordinary that unless you are especially alert you may miss the resonance stirring beneath the simple image of, say, an overdue book or a paper cup; Martin Shea has a dramatist's skill in setting a scene that tells a story—his images lead us into a narrative that continues on in our minds after the poem is read; Penny Harter zooms in for close-ups of a cat's whisker or the toe of a boot with such startling clarity and effective cropping they loom into a sudden indefinable significance; Scott Montgomery's work often has a surreal, dreamlike aura about it; Arizona Zipper has a wry, earthy, downhome humor; and so on.

Canadian poets have long played an important role in the English-language haiku movement, especially Eric Amann, who edited *Haiku* and *Cicada*, perhaps English-language haiku's most influential magazines.<sup>5</sup> They are still unsurpassed for excellence in both content and design, though both have ceased publication—the last, *Cicada*, in 1981. Amann and Rod Willmot, both of whom were in the First Edition, and George Swede are Canada's leading haiku poets. Among the other new voices from the Canadian part of the "puddle," LeRoy Gorman's and Chuck Brickley's are perhaps the brightest.

All the major American figures in the First Edition appear again in this one—including Foster Jewell, J. W. Hackett, Nicholas Virgilio, Robert Spiess, John Wills, Michael McClintock, William J. Higginson, Anita Virgil, and O. Mabson Southard (then writing under the name Mabelsson Norway). Several of these poets have been very active in the haiku movement in the years between editions. Michael McClintock was especially busy in the mid-seventies with his Seer Ox Press—putting out the magazine and several chapbooks by various poets, while also writing and publishing work of his own. Robert Spiess took over the editorship of *Modern Haiku* magazine in 1978 (from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Two important anthologies of Canadian haiku have appeared: George Swede's *Canadian Haiku Anthology* (1979) and *Haiku: Anthologie Canadianne/Canadian Anthology* (1985), edited by Dorothy Howard and André Duhaime, a bilingual collection of French-language and English-language haiku.

Kay Mormino, who started it in 1969), keeping it the stable, smooth-sailing, general arbiter of the haiku scene it had always been—where the conservatives and radicals of the movement can both be heard but moderation predominates. His poetry has taken on a darker tone in recent years, yet it still glows with keenly perceived moments from the world of forest and stream.

William J. Higginson was a sort of guru to the haiku movement in the early and mid-seventies. He left the puddle for a time, but became active there again in the eighties. He and Willmot are probably our most astute critics. As well as being a critic/poet Higginson is a scholar/translator of Japanese literature. In his recent The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku (1985), he gives one of the clearest delineations of what a haiku does and how it does it that exists in English. He also presents a comprehensive picture of the development of both Japanese and world haiku from its beginnings to the present, succinctly condensing and incorporating with his own translations, research, and analyses the most important new information about haiku and its related genres from the large body of scholarly works on Japanese literature of the past twenty-five years. It is an indispensable companion volume to the great works of Blyth and Henderson.

Nicholas Virgilio's work continues to illuminate the

shadows of death. Adding to the elegiac series of haiku about his brother, who died in Vietnam, he has created a moving testament to the power of art and love to rescue the memory of a loved one from the blankness of death. The autumn wind, which somehow evokes trust and fear at the same time, blows through his haiku with a strange consolatory power that is unforgettable.

"A reclusive and fiercely independent spirit," J. W. Hackett has not been directly involved with the haiku movement since the sixties, when his work appeared in the haiku magazines, but his haiku continue to attract new readers and writers to the genre. They are probably better known than those of any other non-Japanese poet and have been praised by R. H. Blyth, Alan Watts, and Jack Kerouac. However, for more than a decade now he has been mainly interested in writing longer poems, a number of which are in *The Zen Haiku and Other Zen Poems of J. W. Hackett* (1983), a book that, happily, also contains all the haiku from his long-popular *The Way of Haiku*.

Between 1974 and 1980, Foster Jewell produced nine more of his enchanting chapbooks of haiku, two of them in collaboration with his wife, Rhoda de Long Jewell. While evoking vivid images of the woodlands, mountains, and deserts he loved, Jewell also had a way of summoning the spirit of nature into his haiku so that you felt its presence—in the sound of thunder along a

beach or in the silence of a moonrise. In 1984 he passed away into the silences he wrote so intimately about.

O. Mabson Southard remains a mysterious figure, like his changing name, and much to the regret of the many admirers of his haiku there has been no new work by him in the haiku magazines for several years now. He has, it is said, recently turned his mind to other concerns, including the study of mathematics. The sharp clarity and depth of his images—the rocks and tree coming out of the mist in his well-known "old rooster" haiku, the loon's cry crossing the still lake, the sparrow knocking snow from a fence-rail, the dogwood petal carrying its moonlight into the darkness—these and many more will ensure that his name (or names) will endure as long as there are readers of haiku.

Anita Virgil's stature, like Southard's, becomes more ensured as we see how her haiku continue to shine as brightly as ever though the years go by: the flickering light on the pine bark, that feeling of sinking through the snow-crust, the spring peepers, the shadows on the dinner plates. Virgil, too, was silent for a few years but in the early eighties started writing again. One of the first of these new haiku was "holding you." It won first prize in a special erotic-haiku contest conducted by *Cicada* that resulted in the book *Erotic Haiku* (1983), edited by Rod Willmot.

John Wills has been one of the most productive

poets in the movement—especially in the years since the last edition—and he has found a way of haiku that is closer to nature, more resonant with its mystery and wonder, than the work of perhaps anyone else writing today in whatever genre. With only a few syllables, he creates haiku of such clarity and purity they seem to have come from the hand of nature itself.

There are some poets in this book that should have been in the earlier edition but were not. Jack Kerouac, for example. He was one of the first to write haiku in English, and to do so in a distinctively modern, American style, using a colloquial idiom and everyday, local images rather than turning out imitation Japanese poems about cherry blossoms.

The medium for the writers of haiku in English has continued to be the haiku magazines and the small presses that publish haiku chapbooks. They are the movement. Leanfrog, a haiku newsletter published on the West Coast, listed nineteen magazines in 1982 that were accepting haiku, with many of them specializing exclusively in haiku literature. In addition, it listed seven haiku societies. The haiku magazines come and go like most small-press ventures, but a few have managed to publish for several years. The most important magazines and presses still publishing are included in the Book List.

After about twenty-five years of English-language haiku, do we know what a haiku is? There seems to be

no general consensus—which may be a sign of its health and vitality. There is still much talk about awareness and perception—less about Zen and the Infinite. Hiroaki Sato, especially, has tried to get the Zen out of haiku, saying that Western critics have been responsible for the association and that Japanese haiku poets have much simpler intentions than to try to give their readers "enlightenment." "Haiku have been written," he writes, "to congratulate, to praise, to describe, to express gratitude, wit, cleverness, disappointment, resentment, or what have you, but rarely to convey enlightenment" (One Hundred Frogs, p. 131).

It is said that Bashō toward the end of his life felt his love for haiku might be a worldly attachment standing in the way of self-realization—but, try as he would, he could not give it up. What did haiku give him that made it so hard to abandon—even for the promise of spiritual peace? It must have been more than just the opportunity to express gratitude or resentment, or the chance to congratulate or describe. His disciple Dohō's explanation of what the Master meant by his famous saying "Learn about a pine tree from a pine tree, and about a bamboo plant from a bamboo plant" suggests an answer:

What he meant was that a poet should detach the mind from his own personal self. Nevertheless some poets interpret the word "learn" in their own ways and never really "learn." For "learn" means to enter into the object, perceive its delicate life and feel its feelings, whereupon a poem forms itself. A lucid description of the object is not enough; unless the poem contains feelings which have spontaneously emerged from the object, it will show the object and the poet's self as two separate entities, making it impossible to attain a true poetic sentiment. The poem will be artificial, for it is composed by the poet's personal self.<sup>6</sup>

Now Dohō is not explaining enlightenment, but neither is he explaining how to "praise" or "describe"—in fact, he states that description is not enough. The process he does set forth, however, sounds very similar to the way Zen Buddhists describe the path to enlightenment: achieving detachment from the self, becoming one with existence. If you become one with something other than yourself, leaving self behind, isn't that a way to know, or to at least catch a glimpse of, the truth that all existence is one? If that's not enlightenment, it certainly seems like a step in the right direction. Of course, true enlightenment is said to require giving up all attachments—so the monk must also give up those things that have helped him along the way, including his koans, his sitting, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> From Makoto Ueda's Matsuo Bashō, pp. 167–168.

even his desire for enlightenment itself. So because a Buddhist poet feels he must give up poetry doesn't necessarily mean that the poetry wasn't useful along the way. R. H. Blyth has written:

A haiku is the expression of a temporary enlightenment, in which we see into the life of things.... It is a way in which the cold winter rain, the swallows of evening, even the very day in its hotness, and the length of the night become truly alive, share in our humanity, speak their own silent and expressive language.<sup>7</sup>

Since writing the passage quoted earlier, Sato seems to have taken a new look at this question. In a talk called "Bashō and the Concept of 'The Way' in Japanese Poetry," given to the Haiku Society of America in December 1983, he quoted Bashō as saying that "poetry writing is another vehicle for entering the True Way (makoto no michi)" and pointed out that the "True Way" means Buddhism. Bashō, who "trained in Zen," apparently felt, at least part of the time, that he was on a spiritual path when he wrote haiku.<sup>8</sup>

Ultimately haiku eludes definition. It is "always evolving, burgeoning, growing," Rod Willmot writes in a recent letter—and it may be a good thing, he adds,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Haiku, Vol. I, pp. 270, 272.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Frogpond, VI, 4 (1983).

if, rather than working toward a restrictive definition, we continue in our present direction, where haiku poets are creating "a whole variety of poetics and criticisms, coexisting rather than competing."

That variety can be experienced in the following pages.

Cor van den Heuvel New York City Spring 1986

# INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

ntil now, the poets represented in this anthology have been largely "invisible." Though some of them have been writing haiku for nearly two decades or longer, their work has flowered practically unnoticed—their only recognition coming from the small world of the haiku magazines. The movement of which they are a part, however, has now reached a point where its accomplishments can no longer be ignored.

Haiku in English got its real start in the fifties, when an avid interest in Japanese culture and religion swept the postwar United States.<sup>1</sup> Growing out of the increased

<sup>1</sup> The Imagists, and those who followed them, had no real understanding of haiku. Because they had no adequate transla-

contacts with Japan through the Occupation and a spiritual thirst for religious and artistic fulfillment, this interest centered on art, literature, and Zen Buddhism. Alan Watts, Donald Keene, D. T. Suzuki, the Beats, and others all contributed to both arousing and feeding this interest, but it was R. H. Blyth's extraordinary four-volume work *Haiku* (published between 1949 and 1952), Kenneth Yasuda's *The Japanese Haiku* (1957), and Harold G. Henderson's *An Introduction to Haiku* (1958) that provided for the first time the solid foundation necessary for the creation of haiku in English.<sup>2</sup>

In the late fifties and early sixties, the seed began to germinate, and a few poets across the country began to write haiku with an awareness and understanding of its possibilities.

Within five years after the publication of Hender-

tions or critical analyses available, they failed to see the spiritual depth haiku embodies, or the unity of man and nature it reveals. English-language haiku owes practically nothing to their experiments except in the sense that all modern poetry owes them a debt for their call for concision and clarity in language.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Henderson published a small book on Japanese haiku, *The Bamboo Broom*, in 1934, in which he recognized the possibility of English haiku. But the time was not ripe. (There were exceptions: Clement Hoyt began studying Zen in 1936 with Nyogen Senzaki, the man who "taught me the haiku," and Yasuda was writing haiku in English in the thirties, publishing some as "Experiments in English" in *A Pepper Pod*, 1947.)

son's book, a magazine was started by James Bull in Platteville, Wisconsin, devoted solely to English-language haiku: American Haiku (1963). The first issue was dedicated to Henderson and included a letter from him to the editors, which said in part: "If there is to be a real 'American Haiku' we must-by trial and error-work out our own standards. . . . One of the great functions American Haiku could perform is that of being a forum for the expression of divergent opinions." J. W. Hackett, Nicholas Virgilio, Mabelsson Norway (O Southard), and Larry Gates were among the contributors to that first issue.<sup>3</sup> The magazine was published twelve times in the next five years, ceasing publication in May 1968. Later that year, under the auspices of the Japan Society, the Haiku Society of America was founded to promote the writing and appreciation of haiku.

In the meantime, three new haiku magazines had emerged, all of which are still publishing. Jean Calkins started *Haiku Highlights and Other Small Poems* (now called *Dragonfly: A Quarterly of Haiku Highlights*) in Kanona, New York, in 1965. Though the work it published was undistinguished for a long time, in recent years it has printed significant articles on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Among those appearing in the second issue were Robert Spiess, Virginia Brady Young, Clement Hoyt, and Elizabeth Searle Lamb.

haiku by William J. Higginson, Michael McClintock, and others. In 1967 two haiku magazines appeared that were to carry on the work begun by *American Haiku: Haiku West*, edited by Leroy Kanterman in New York City, and *Haiku*, edited by Eric Amann in Toronto, Canada. (*Haiku* is now edited by William J. Higginson in Paterson, New Jersey.) Both have printed high-quality haiku, and *Haiku* has especially demonstrated a willingness to experiment with haiku form and presentation.

There are now at least five English-language haiku magazines being published in the United States, with others in England and Australia. In fact, haiku are being written all over the world—in German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and other languages, as well as English and, of course, Japanese.<sup>4</sup>

In the midst of this proliferating interest and activity with haiku throughout the world, the "literary world"—critics and poets alike—continues to see English-language haiku either as worthless fragments, blank and incomprehensible, or as little more than examples of a form of light verse whose only use is as an educational aid to interest children in poetry.<sup>5</sup> Such

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Gary Brower's annotated bibliography, *Haiku in Western Languages* (1972).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> There are exceptions. A few well-known poets have tried to write haiku, but none has seen it as a principal "way" or direction for their work. Gary Snyder, though he was one of the first to try

attitudes may have been excused in the early years—thousands of bad poems were published under the name of haiku—but in the last few years the proportion of good haiku to bad has been at least the same as in any other kind of poetry.

One can only conclude that such critics have not looked deeply enough into the literature available on the Japanese haiku and its esthetic traditions—or simply do not know haiku in English. Haiku is a poetry of simplicity and suggestion new to Western literature. It has been called the "wordless poem," and is often so bare as to seem meaningless to the uninitiated. Yet its few words have such an ontological immediacy that the sensitive reader can almost reach out and touch the things they describe. However commonplace the image, it is *now* in one of those timeless moments when it flashes forth an unspoken message of the one-

writing haiku in English with an understanding of Japanese haiku (as early as 1952), has never concentrated his poetic energies in that direction. Jack Kerouac, the Beat novelist, was also an early practitioner of haiku and probably came closer than any of the Beat poets to its essence. But it remained a footnote to his other work. More recently, Hayden Carruth, Robert Kelly, John Hollander, and some other recognized poets have experimented with short poems which derive from the form of haiku, but show little or no conception of the haiku's true nature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> By Alan Watts. Eric Amann wrote an exceptionally fine book on haiku using this phrase for the title. It appeared as a special issue of *Haiku* in 1969.

ness of existence. It does so in the silence that surrounds the words. Blyth has called haiku "an open door which looks shut," because it takes an intuitive awareness to see that moment of perception which lies just over the threshold. The reader must be an equal partner in the creative process—the slightest shift of focus or mood can close the door again. Aware readers are increasing, however, and the "visibility" of haiku in English will depend on their perception.

Haiku in English is still in the process of finding its "way." Beyond a general agreement that haiku should be short, concise, and immediate (or brief, simple, and direct, etc.), individual poets may often diverge widely in their conceptions of what a haiku is and how one is created. One of the most fundamental questions raised about haiku has been: is it basically a religious or an esthetic experience?

A number of those who favor the religious, or as some prefer to say, spiritual side of this question relate haiku to the philosophy of Zen. J. W. Hackett and Eric Amann have been spokesmen for this view, which follows the "teachings" of R. H. Blyth. Citing Bashō—"Haiku is simply what is happening in this place, at this moment"—Hackett emphasizes haiku as a "way" of life, rather than as literature. In his book *The Way of Haiku* (1969),<sup>7</sup> the poet states:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> One of the very few haiku poets with a book readily obtainable at bookstores, Hackett alone has had a large body of

I have written in the conviction that the best haiku are created from direct and immediate experience with nature, and that this intuitive experience can be expressed in any language. In essence I regard haiku as fundamentally existential and experiential, rather than literary. There are, of course, important structural and artistic considerations involved in the expression of the haiku experience . . .

In Haiku in English (1965), Henderson contrasts Hackett's approach ("what may loosely be called the Bashō school") with that of Nicholas Virgilio and others who stress imaginative creation—that is, the artistic role of the poet as a maker of imagined scenes as well as experienced ones, exemplified in Japanese haiku by Buson. Some of the poets who lean toward this view may believe their work is ultimately based on actual experience too, in the sense that even their imagined scenes are put together from things they have known. And since it is possible for readers to experience a "haiku moment" through words, even though they may never have encountered it in reality,

work available for several years. A number of the poets in this anthology have, however, been published by small presses (see Biographical Notes). [In 1983 Hackett published *The Zen Haiku and Other Zen Poems of J. W. Hackett*, which is a revised and enlarged edition of *The Way of Haiku*. It too contains the passage quoted above.]

there are *poets* who claim they can discover such moments in words during the creative process.

There is also the question of "natural speech" (artless) as opposed to language which uses poetic techniques. An argument against a too "literary" approach is R. H. Blyth's admonition that a bejewelled finger distracts from what it is pointing at. But it is well to keep in mind that a deformed finger can be distracting too, and may even point the wrong way.

The distinction between haiku and senryu, which are structurally similar, has also been a subject of controversy. Haiku is said to relate human nature to nature in general, while senryu is concerned primarily with human nature and is often humorous; but it is hard to draw the line.<sup>8</sup>

There are other differences among the haiku poets: there are the 5-7-5ers who believe haiku should be written in three lines of 5-7-5 syllables; then there are those who think the norm for English should be less than seventeen syllables to more closely approximate the actual length of seventeen Japanese *onji* (sound-symbols), which are generally shorter than English syllables. Still others, like Michael McClintock, are for a "liberated haiku"—rejecting syllable-counting com-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> I have not tried to separate the senryu from the haiku in this book.

pletely. There is the problem of subjectivity in haiku: is it allowable at all, and if so to what degree? And, on the other hand, is complete objectivity really possible?—and so on.

These "disputes" among the poets don't prevent them from appreciating each other's work and are actually a way of answering Henderson's call to "work out our own standards." "Haiku" may be on its way to becoming a much broader term than it has been in the past. This may or may not be a good thing; but while some are working to broaden the concept, there are others who are moving toward a simpler, purer, deeper kind of haiku—and even a few who are finding ways to create poems which do both at once. Japanese haiku has survived countless controversies in its centuries old history, and haiku in English will too. As Henderson says, what haiku in English will become "will depend primarily on the poets who write them."

A great diversity lies in the pages ahead. But though these poets are all moving along individual paths, they are all following the haiku "way." The variety of their voices should delight us as much as the oneness they reveal enlightens us. For the joy of life is to be able to see it anew each moment. These haiku moments await only your contribution of awareness.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Haiku in English.

Here you'll find the strange landscapes of Nicholas Virgilio, which, while remaining part of the real world, take us on a surrealistic trip to the source of the life force in a lily or to the mystery of death in the headlights of a funeral procession; or the simple wonders of J. W. Hackett, where a caterpillar or a small cloud of gnats can take us to the core of existence simply by being what they are now; the daring experimentation of William J. Higginson or Anita Virgil, who both find new visceral possibilities in words; the muse-guided nature sensitivity of Mabelsson Norway, whose wordspells can call trees and rocks out of a timeless mist; the pure simplicity of Robert Spiess, the subtle clarity of whose images resonates again and again through the natural juxtaposition of the barest aspects of nature; the rich, fertile earth and living waters of John Wills; the haunting silences of Foster Jewell; the fresh virtuosity, sensual vigor, and delicacy of perception of Michael McClintock; and many more, all with their own individual voices, their own way of looking at the world through haiku.

There are undoubtedly poets and haiku missing from the following pages that belong here, but here at least is a representative selection—here is haiku in English becoming visible.

New York City June 1973



Billboards
wet
in spring
rain...

The circus tent all folded up:
October mist . . .

Snow falling on the empty parking-lot: Christmas Eve . . .

A night train passes: pictures of the dead are trembling on the mantelpiece

The names of the dead sinking deeper and deeper into the red leaves

Winter burial: a stone angel points his hand at the empty sky

# KAY M. AVILA

Sunset: one last parachute floats slowly down spring is here the cat's muddy paw prints on the windowsill

sun behind the hills the fisherman ships his oars and drifts into shore

longing to be near her i remember my shirt hanging in her closet

the telephone rings only once autumn rain freshly fallen snow opening a new package of typing paper

the evening star just above the snow the tip of an alder bush

northern lights shimmer a saw-whet piping on the distant shore moss-hung trees a deer moves into the hunter's silence

snowflakes fill the eye of the eagle fallen totem pole

snow silenced town then the stillness broken whistle of the train skinny young men grouped around the car's raised hood spring's here a dozen red roses the box lightly stained by spring rain through binoculars a woman looking at me through binoculars

next to the wanted poster the man with the goatee

tugging and begging at the end of his leash the dog's owner mirror my face where I left it

leaves blowing into a sentence

mist, panties on the line

in the doll's head news clippings

in the heat admiring the shade in the blouse

face wrapping a champagne glass

a moment in the box of jade

in the temple a heartbeat

touching the ashes of my father

day darkens in the shell

a fin grazing on restless stars

the priest
his shadow caught
on a nail.

JANUARY FIRST the fingers of the prostitute cold

i end in shadow

long meeting
I study the pattern
embossed on the napkin

morning surf a dog fills the sky with seagulls sheet lightning: the face near the top of the ferris wheel

the puppet leaning from his booth blinks at the rain

outside the pub the sailor faces the wind deserted wharf the mime bows to the moon

# DAVID BURLEIGH

After washing up putting a warm plate back in the cold cupboard someone's newspaper drifts with the snow at 4 a.m.

waiting: dry snowflakes fall against the headlights

an empty elevator opens closes

end of the hour—
twilight shadows obscure
the therapist's face

finding their line
in the deepening fog
a dozen pelicans

### MARGARET CHULA

sudden shower in the empty park a swing still swinging

saying good-bye snow melting from the roof tiles

Through the slats of the outhouse door Everest!

Farm country back road: just like them i lift one finger from the steering wheel

Waiting to see the odometer's big change . . . missed it!

going the same way . . . exchanging looks with the driver of the hearse

daybreak—
from the bread truck's roof
frost swirls

the plumber
kneeling in our tub
—talking to himself

sidewalk sale— `wind twists a lifetime guarantee tag

light snow . . . the students study in silence

## ELLEN COMPTON

red geraniums
rips in the awning
leak sunlight

kaleidoscope the little sound of a star shattering On the mountain slope the stillness of white pines in the falling snow

A crow caws: in the silence of the woods the flap of its wings

# L. A. DAVIDSON

beyond stars beyond star in the dark lobby of the residential hotel a feeling of autumn

on my return she brings blue plums on a white plate

the silent crowd waiting for the fountain to rise again

it is growing dark, no one has come to the door, and still the dog barks

# RAFFAEL DE GRUTTOLA

subway woman asleep picked daisies in her hand between the twirlers and the marching band the missing child Spring afternoon: the barber spins me around towards the mirror

The last kid picked running his fastest to right field

August night: the lamplit quiet as our children draw autumn night: following the flashlight beam through the rain

Deep snow:
peeling potatoes—
dark earth on my hands

Snow at dusk: our pot of tea steeps slowly darker a drift of snow in the picnic table's shadow first day of spring the white of her neck as she lifts her hair for me to undo her dress

the thousand colors in her plain brown hair—morning sunshine

frog pond—
a leaf falls in
without a sound

Thick window frost through a melted finger hole blue sky

Shielding his eyes with his baseball glove . . . first geese

A steady wind blows cloud shadows up the mountain and off the cliff

Between two mountains the wings of a gliding hawk balancing sunlight long July afternoon at the railroad crossing the train goes on and on

back from vacation I let traces of sand remain in the car trunk November rain long ropes of the window washers float in the wind thunder my woodshavings roll along the veranda vegetable stand the owner sprinkling water with a bunch of kale

heat of the day still in the brick wall of the liquor store

summer's end the quickening of hammers towards dusk

a dusting of snow tire tracks grow visible in the road's soft edge

after Christmas a flock of sparrows in the unsold trees 20,000 feet traces of masking tape on the jet engine

overnight bus the young mother sucks her thumb

how come whatshisname never speaks to me

his fury pulled up short by the payphone cord

I set the alarm get out of bed to unpack her photograph with a flourish the waitress leaves behind rearranged smears custody battle a bodyguard lifts the child to see the snow

how desirable in the thrift store window my old Mah-Jongg set

coming home weary `
the broken tread announces
my floor is next

unexpected news she stands staring into the cutlery drawer

freshening breeze the skillet softly chimes against another chill night after you the toilet seat slightly warm The crow flies off . . . mountains fall away beneath him Rowing
out of the mist
into the bright colors

At the river-bend wriggling towards the setting sun a lone watersnake

The lights are going out in the museum, a fetus suddenly darkens

The reflected door opens the mirror deepens

Winter dawn; from the deepest part of the forest crows are calling Weight lifter slowly lifting `the tea cup

Downpour the palm reader does her nails

Old retriever; he opens one eye at the tossed stick

After falling down she asks for a bandaid for her doll too

No matter where I stand . . . barbecue smoke

Snowflake's fall into the darkness of the tuba

I shut down the lawnmower a call for supper over the still grass

stripping wallpaper into the nite my wife uncovers someone else's bedroom

I hear her sew
I hear the rain
I turn back a page

first snow lites our bedroom she puts on the flowered sheets for the smell
I plane another shaving
snow buries my tracks from the house

farm dog calling calling to its echo deep in the forest

bales of hay
dot the bluestem meadow—
morning breeze

a bike in the grass one wheel slowly turning summer afternoon rows of corn stretch to the horizon sun on the thunderhead pine shade the wooden bench worn smooth

mountain cherry from branch to branch the photographer

two little boys paddling like mad the beached canoe

wedding picture:`
each face finds
a different camera

professional conference in the restroom all the dentists washing their hands candlelight dinner—his finger slowly circles the rim of his glass

rural interstate—all the other cars exit together

scenic overlook the whole Mississippi valley hidden in mist

fishermen's cars parked along the road . . . cold rain

exploring the cave . . . my son's flashlight beam disappears ahead graduation day my son & I side by side knotting our ties

summer sunset—
the baby finds his shadow
on the kitchen wall

silent prayer the quiet humming of the ceiling fan

last bale of hay we sit down on it and watch the moon fresh scent . . . the labrador's muzzle` deeper into snow after chickadee stillness

the smell of the iron as I come down the stairs winter evening

from house to barn: the milky way

winter prairie—
a diesel locomotive
throttles down in the night

Deep within the stream the huge fish lie motionless facing the current.

A bitter morning: sparrows sitting together without any necks.

Searching on the wind, the hawk's cry . . . is the shape of its beak.

Half of the minnows within this sunlit shallow are not really there.

The fleeing sandpipers turn about suddenly and chase back the sea! The stillness of dawn: crashing between the branches, a solitary leaf.

Wind gives way to calm and the stream smoothes, revealing its treasure of leaves.

Time after time caterpillar climbs this broken stem, then probes beyond.

An old spider web low above the forest floor, sagging full of seeds.

Wind sounds through the trees . . . while here, gnats play in the calm of wooded sunlight.

Indian summer: the scarecrow's jacket fades to a paler blue.

A pale dawn moon—
furrows of the new-ploughed fields
white with frost.

The time it takes—
for snowflakes to whiten
the distant pines.

After the snowfall . . .
deep in the pine forest
the sound of an axe.

Late snowfall; more and more yellow the forsythia.

Until it alights
on a white daisy—just another
blue dragonfly.

A hot summer wind shadows of the windmill blades flow over the grass.

The sparkler goes out and with it—the face of the child.

On the old scarecrow a crow sits for a while suddenly flies off. winter rain in our garage the same stray cat chained to the fence the dog's collar

under the old car oil puddles ripple in the winter wind

on the padlock snow melting

in the mirror the open door blows shut behind me

clouds blowing off the stars

broken bowl the pieces still rocking

wrinkles in the white icing of the birthday cake

grandmother's mirror—age spots
the glass

in the empty cup the folded lemon snowflakes—
dust on the toes
of my boots

pine needles in the broken curve of the ornament

closed bedroom door her shadow darkens the crack of light

only letting in the cat until the morning star

## DORIS HEITMEYER

first snow brought in from the suburbs on the neighbors' car

between lace curtains the white cat's eyes follow a snowflake Sierra sunrise . . . pine needles sinking deeper in a patch of snow

cloud shadow long enough to close the poppies

returning quail call to us from the moment of which he speaks

soon after the child the puppy goes to sleep

while I'm gone my dog takes the driver's seat

## FRANK HIGGINS

children in single file through the puddle again

## WILLIAM J. HIGGINSON

wet snow—
another color or two
on the sycamore boughs

a robin listens then flies off snow eddies

this spring rain the thief too curses his job

Holding the water, held by it the dark mud.

writing again the tea water boiled dry I look up from writing to daylight.

summer moon the only white in the afternoon sky

going over a bump the car ahead going over a bump

the fence post hangs upright in the washout mid-summer heat

commercial break—the cat and I head for the kitchen

the red ribbon award for my first sunflower has faded to orange rain splashing—
the waiting room door
closes

yesterday's paper in the next seat the train picks up speed

rest stop—
in the darkness
the grass stiff with frost

one mirror for everyone the rest stop rest room

coffee in a paper cup— a long way from home

on the ceiling a large leak stain autumn coolness the library book overdue slow falling snow snow now rain—your picture by mine

no one moves the winter evening darkens the room

trash day the garbage truck backs over the new snow

home early your empty coat hanger in the closet

stalled car. foot tracks being filled with snow. sun & moon in the same sky the small hand of my wife

time to go—
the stones we threw
at the bottom of the ocean

the wind going away—
the tape measure pulled past
the numbers

late evening heat the newspaper rattles in the fan's breeze morning fog not seeing far the fern's underside

waiting room quiet an apple core in the ashtray

unsnapping the holster strap summer heat

quietly the fireworks far away distant thunder the dog's toenails click against the linoleum night comes picking up your shoes still warm

up late—
the furnace comes on
by itself

my wife still asleep—snow piles up on the steps

letting
the dog out—
the stars out

morning quiet snow sticking to this side of the telephone poles While the guests order, the table cloth hides his hands counting his money.

Down from the bridge rail; floating from under the bridge, strangers exchange stares.

In that empty house, with broken windows rattling, a door slams and slams. Leaves moil in the yard, reveal an eyeless doll's head . . . slowly conceal it.

In that lightning flash—
through the night rain—I saw it!
... whatever it was.

A Hallowe'en mask, floating face up in the ditch, slowly shakes its head.

Hair, in my comb's teeth, the color of autumn wind this whole day is gray. Last screech owl cry— How quietly the dawnlight comes creeping through the woods.

Thunder storm passing—
echoing along the shore
that last hollow sound . . .

This evening stillness . . . just the rusted cowbell found by the pasture gate.

Cliff dweller ruins and the silence of swallows encircling silence.

Somewhere behind me, seeming in dark silence to feel a slow coiling.

Where the coyote called, rising in full cry, the moon . . . the sound of silence.

That breeze brought it a moment of moonlight to the hidden fern. Fall wind in pinyons . . . Faster and louder patters yesterday's shower.

Mountain shadow crossing the evening river at the old fording place.

Under ledges and looking for the coolness that keeps touching my face. Finding this cavern—
following the lantern light . . .
followed by silence.

the boat sails close-hauled to the breeze windward pines bright sun the sheen of tall grass when it bends

clouds seen through clouds seen through

calm evening the ballgame play-by-play across the water

ground fog up to my ankles in moonlight In my medicine cabinet, the winter fly has died of old age.

Birds singing in the dark
—Rainy dawn

Straining at the padlock, the garage doors
At noon.

Evening coming the office girl Unloosing her scarf.

Arms folded to the moon, Among the cows.

Missing a kick at the icebox door It closed anyway. raining . . . a can of paint holds open the door

rainy afternoon car wash deserted

November snow garage door left gaping

fog . . .
just the tree and I
at the bus stop

home from a journey, my reflection in the glass of the front door

small box from japan the smile of the clay buddha through the packing straw

mounted butterflies snowflakes through the window from winter storage the prow of the canoe entering sunlight pausing halfway up the stair white chrysanthemums a plastic rose rides the old car's antenna spring morning

leaving all the morning glories closed

the old album: not recognizing at first my own young face the far shore drifting out of the mist to meet us

a lizard inching with the shadow of the stone nearer the cave's mouth

far back under a ledge the ancient petroglyph faint water sound

still . . . some echo the pale jade cricket box in the museum perfect summer sky one blue crayon missing from the box

cleaning brushes . . . the last ray of sun drying the ink stone

first heat wave—
coolness
of the bike store's basement

a shower darkens—
in the summer bookstore
the smell of new novels

a screendoor's quiet rain and the sound of spoons placed carefully away

## GERALDINE CLINTON LITTLE

summer afternoon a beach umbrella no one comes to Moonlit sleet In the holes of my Harmonica

At the bottom

Of the rocky mountain slope
A pile of pebbles

The longest night:
Only the snowman stares
At the stars

Quietly shaping
The hollow of the blossom
The morning sunrise

Wild rose bending— And bending even more With the bee's weight

Over dried grass, Two butterflies— And a chill wind . . .

Duck feathers
On the lake's shore
Silent skies

Summer stillness the play of light and shadow on the windchimes

A doe's leap darkens the oyster shell road: twilight

I shake the vase a bouquet of red roses finds its shape

Moon and melon cooling with us in the stream

first frost . . . on a silver card tray wild persimmons an icicle the moon drifting through it

snow by the window paper flowers gathering dust

thawing ice the garbage blooming out of it

the silence a droplet of water trickles down a stone
passing clouds only a stand of aspens is in light
alone tonight one fish ripples the lake
deep in my notebook a lily pad floats away

overtaken

by a single cloud

and letting it pass...

at once on the bright wet twig

long summer day . . . my neighbor's bull at it again

letting my tongue deeper into the cool ripe tomato

peering out
the scarecrow's ear—
two glittering eyes

while we wait to do it again, the rains of spring

she leaves—
warm pillow scent
remaining

twisting inland, the sea fog takes awhile in the apple trees a single tulip! hopelessly, i passed on a poppy . . . a field of poppies! the hills blowing with poppies!

glimmering morning silence unfolds all the yucca

across the sands the rippling quiet cloud shadow

a side-canyon:
pausing a moment, listening
into its reach . . .

rowing downstream red leaves swirling behind me a small girl... the shadows stroke and stroke her

the merry-go-round as it turns shines into the trees

look it's clear to Saturn

hearing cockroach feet; the midnight snowfall dead cat . . . open-mouthed to the pouring rain

the aging beauty having her knee x-rayed points her toe

every Sunday
the marlin leaping
from father's necktie

small child afraid to throw away his Church Bulletin second husband painting the fence the same green

hearing us argue, our old dog tiptoes past her empty water bowl

the lights on the tree before the plug goes in

old woman, wrapping her cat's gifts —centering the bows

summer night newly-weds cutting shelfpaper —their bright light evening lecture a shadow hangs from the pointing finger

her silence at dinner sediment hanging in the wine

crying she moves deeper into the mirror

with the last lamp stripping her shadow off moonrise white cat eating the cardinal

Summer noon; the blueberry field divided by a muddy road

silent deer the sound of a waterfall

farther and farther into the mountain trail autumn dusk deepens surrounding the quiet bungalow yellow crime scene tape end of the cold spell i'd forgotten the color of my under socks

winter night writing letters to get letters

wood pile on the sagging porch unstacking itself pig and i spring rain

empty mailbox i pick wildflowers on my way back

he leans on the gate going staying

a quiet day an old man on his tractor passes at dusk

```
on this cold
spring 1
2 night 3 4
kittens
wet
5
```

stick

my neighbor's rooster hops the i throw

beneath leaf mold stone cool stone

early morning wind in the umbrella of the pumpkin stand

old towel folding it again autumn evening

## at dusk hot water from the hose

pick-up truck guns on the window rack the heat

one fly everywhere the heat

summer night clothes whirling in a dryer

above the mountain mountains of the moon

faded flowers of the bed sheets autumn night

seed catalog in the mailbox cold drizzle

acid rain less and less i am at one with nature\*

\*less and less nature is nature

old pond a frog rises belly up

first time out sled runners leaving rust tracks in the snow

toy shop window a tiny sleigh waits at the doll house door

winter sunset long shadows follow us home from the sledding hill neighbor's children leave . . . casually the cat slips out of the hall closet

evening séance the medium's parlor smells of cabbage

moonless winter night beyond the last street lamp breakers pound the beach after tires on the wet country road pine-dripping silence wheelruts of the old logging road flowing with rain

November evening—raindrops blow from the pine into the mist

empty verandah of the old resort hotel rain drips from the eaves inside the hailstone ripples on a pond

on the sandal I take off a dew-covered slug continues its journey

not a cloud in sight I put the red flag up on the mailbox heaped in the buttercup blue sky from the pinecone one furry spider leg then another

one by one eyes close in the henhouse stars appear

first cold night the fat tomcat hangs from the window'screen

at the fruitstand taking off my mitten to feel the coconut long winter night
I open the red cookie tin
for needle and thread

## ALAN PIZZARELLI

light rain
on the young tree
a strip of burlap flaps

on the peddler's truck an emptied scale swings in the morning sunlight

a bright awning is cranked over the corner fruitstand

the gas station man points the way with a gas nozzle

on the bright marquee a man's shadow changes the letters

reaching for the wind-up toy it rides off the table driving out of the car wash

clouds move across the hood

bending back along the railroad track tiger lilies

tiny fish
swaying
into the current
shadows rippling
over a hubcap

carried from the car the ventriloquist's dummy looks around

squinting to read the sign "optician"

on the windswept corner traces of a puddle fade

done the shoeshine boy snaps his rag a spark falls to the ground darkens

that's it

tonite nothing to write

but this

## Porno Movie

the girl
loosens her bra
starts peeling off panties
darkens

25¢

just before dawn
a beachball floats
across the stillness of the pool

lightens

the dog runs after the stick i pretend to throw

buzzZ slaP buzzZ

under the boardwalk sunlight brightens and fades

flinging the frisbee skips off the ground curving up hits a tree

petals

drop of ocean in my navel reflects the amusement park

hottest day of the year a breeze in the distant treetops

it's here!

on the boardwalk high above the crowd a man on stilts

the tattoo'd man walks onto the crowded beach

the bearded lady hangs her wash against the wind

late in the evening a midget hoses the sunflowers

the setting sun lights the top of the high striker the fat lady bends over the tomatoes a full moon

the ferris wheel turning into the fog

the taffy pullers
the taffy pullers
the taffy pullers

on the merry-go-round that empty blue bench

in the shadows of the trees by the amusement park a firefly at shortstop between innings sparrows dust-bathing

october rain the tarpaulin ripples across the infield

game over all the empty seats turn to blue twilight staples rust in the telephone pole snow falls from trees rumble of passing boxcars with no money
i go
snow viewing

sun brightens snow slides off the car bumper

wiping the chrome blue vapors fade

a few snowflakes fall on the candy store window the lights go out

starry night the jeweler closes the folding gate putting away the sled the frayed rope drags in the mud coming home flower by

flower

waiting for guests a corner of the rug keeps turning up

unpainted porch fog comes to a closed door unable to get hibiscus red the artist eats the flower

piano practice through an open window the lilac

buttoning his fly the boy with honeysuckle clenched in his mouth

in white tulips the rooster's red head flowering brushing my sins the muscatel breath of the priest

the cat lowers his ears to the master's fart

after Beethoven he gets the furnace roaring

white orchid on her coffin the pickle lady tape recording mountain silence

in the stream stones making half the music

ordering my tombstone the cutter has me feel his Gothic "R"

the sailor peeling potatoes around himself

pacing the shore the ship's cat flea . . that you Issa?

light lights light

downpour: my "I-Thou" T-shirt

swish of cow tail peach petals fall

leaving a bookmark by Issa's wild goose to pick wild strawberries by the autumn hill my watercolor box, unopened birthcry! the stars are all in place

seance a white moth

campfire extinguished, the woman washing dishes in a pan of stars

he removes his glove to point out Orion

snow all's new icy dawn...
the sparkling window frost
in the unused room

morning train—
its shadow moves across
a bank of snow

silence the snow-covered rock under winter stars Thoreau's gravesite: the smell of woodsmoke on the cold spring air

Sunday morning: pale violet lilacs behind the old library

sunny afternoon all the fire engines gone from the open bays

## ALEXIS ROTELLA

Smelling faintly of roses the morning mist.

Cabbage moth—the whole golf course to itself.

Yachts all docked—the tinkle of ice.

At the top of the ferris wheel, lilac scent. Lying—
I tell him I'm not looking for a prince.

Among morning-glories the drip drip of lingerie.

Sunset: riding the merry-go-round alone.

Deep in the inkwell a star.

Undressed today's role dangles from a metal hanger.

Just friends: he watches my gauze dress blowing on the line.

starrynightIenteryourmirror

With wine glasses we stand and talk into the rhododendrons.

His footsteps in the room above me: slowly I brush my hair. Late August
I bring him the garden in my skirt.

Waterlilies . . . in a moment he'll ask me what I'm thinking.

In his wedding band watching the clouds pass.

Leading him in . . . my bracelet jangling.

Lying in the wet grass, him still beating inside me. Against his coat
I brush my lips—
the silence of snowflakes.

Only I laugh at his joke . . . the silence.

After an affair sweeping all the rooms.

Trying to forget him stabbing the potatoes.

In the garbage bin mound of snow and a valentine.

Opening his dresser drawer—darkness slips out.

Clutching a fist of hair from my brush I watch him sleep.

Discussing divorce he strokes the lace tablecloth.

During our argument a pink rose tightens its petals.

In the guest room where my mother slept I look for comfort.

Sitting together on the stoop, the dog's hip presses mine.

Summer afternoon: the smell of inner tubes.

Surrendering to a rain-washed stone.

Moving with the clock-tower's shadow the flower lady.

Vase of peonies: on a white bud lipstick print. A butterfly lands on Park Place.

Chin on the broom floating petals.

She's running for office—for the first time my neighbor waves.

300 miles away my father makes sure I hear him sigh.

My last day at work— already someone has taken the stapler from my desk.

After the atheist's sneeze I bite my tongue.

Quickly I powder my nose my mother staring back. Snow on the graves the sound of a distant plane.

Asleep among Christmas ribbons the cats.

Winter morning the sound of eggs boiling in an enamel pot.

Christmas cookies—nibbling stars.

From her neon window the crystal gazer stares into winter rain. In the passing caboose Christmas lights.

warehouse-theatre's muffled cries the soft night rain

red-flashing lights on the leaves by the window they draw down the shade

winter drizzle . . . the street-preacher's heels rise from the box

walk's end . . . the cold of his hand shook mine bolted

space

the lights on the corners click and change

held it, a peony —black Rolls

Moving through the criteria— a breeze.

sparrows sunning on the slaughterhouse

terminal.
one far off and
perfect moon

the long night of the mannequins—snow falling

warm spring day in the empty classroom a forgotten book driving to work
past the woods
and the wild roses

between cities on the interstate so many stars

ever since I was a child the moon following me home

no moon tonight our eyes are drawn to the white chrysanthemum the men on both sides have taken

my armrests

the haiku completely gone by the time I've dried my hands

stocking feet the width of each board down the long hallway

androgynous stranger winks at me

horror movie commercial break my son follows me into the kitchen

after lights out the cat finding things to do

## O. MABSON SOUTHARD

Across the still lake through upcurls of morning mist the cry of a loon Mirrored by the spring under the pines, a cluster of Indian-pipes

A patter of rain...
The lily-pad undulates
on widening rings

Perching bolt upright—
the crow lets the rain-water
trickle from her tail

Down to dark leaf-mold the falling dogwood-petal carries its moonlight

Now the leaves are still— and only the mockingbird lets the moonlight through!

In the garden pool, dark and still, a stepping-stone releases the moon The old rooster crows...
Out of the mist come the rocks
and the twisted pine

The waves now fall short of the stranded jellyfish... In it shines the sky

This morning's rainbow shares its deep violet edge with the misty moon

One breaker crashes...
As the next draws up, a lull—
and sandpiper-cries

In the sea, sunset...
On the dark dune, a bright fringe of waving grasses

Hushed, the lake-shore's pines...
Once more a steady mountain rests on steady clouds

Still sunlit, one tree...
Into the mountain-shadow
it lets fall a leaf

Snow-laden bushes—
one bent to the ground, and one swaying in the wind

On the top fence-rail she lights, knocking off some snow—a common sparrow

At the window, sleet...

Here in the darkening hut—
sudden squeaks of mice

Blue jays in the pines; the northern river's ledges cased with melting ice Tar paper cabin
behind the river's white birch
—a muskellunge leaps

Patches of snow mirrored in the flowing stream; a long wedge of geese

Marsh marigold on a low island of grass; the warmth of the sun Muttering thunder . . . the bottom of the river scattered with clams

A light river wind; on the crannied cliff hang harebell and fern

Shooting the rapids!

—a glimpse of a meadow gold with buttercups

Lean-to of tin; a pintail on the river in the pelting rain A dirt road . . . acres of potato plants white-flowered under the moon

Asparagus bed silent in the morning mist the wild turkeys

Dry, summer day; chalk-white plover mute on a mid-stream rock

Ostrich fern on shore; a short-eared owl in an oak watching the canoe Becoming dusk,—
the catfish on the stringer
swims up and down

Wispy autumn clouds; in the river shallows the droppings of a deer

A long wedge of geese; straw-gold needles of the larch on the flowing stream

Winter wind—
bit by bit the swallow's nest
crumbles in the barn

The chain saw stops; deeper in the winter woods a chickadee calls Winter moon;
a beaver lodge in the marsh,
mounded with snow

cold saturday drawn back into bed by my own warmth

too quick to reply cutting my tongue on the envelope

under the blackest doodle something unerasable

bouncing along on the guardrails car shadow checking the driver as I pass a car just like mine

tourist town postcards of the waterfall racked upside down

deliberations on a charge of murder turning spring outside

the river always out there in the dark late train home

moon breaks over the hill a dreaming driver dims his brights winter solstice sheen of the cherry's bark streaked with rain

tarp slapping—
the fragrance of lumber
in the winter mist

yellow iris buds... on the back of his sketch pad, the pond's reflection

wind dying down: from a mossy rockface the faintest trickle

lighting the path to Walden Pond my bedside lamp

## GEORGE SWEDE

alone at last i wonder where everyone is Fresh snow at dawn already the footsteps of the neighbor's cat

becoming a photograph winter afternoon

A sigh from her then one from me two pages turn Swinging on the hanger her white summer dress: wind chimes

Night begins to gather between her breasts

Sunrise: I forget my side of the argument Unhappy wife I pedal my bike through puddles On the bus the teenager pulls out a mirror and adjusts her pout

Spring morning | gravedigger whistling

stars crickets

In the town dump I find a still-beating heart

Street violinist fallen leaves in the open case One button undone in the clerk's blouse—I let her steal my change

One by one to the floor all of her shadows

Leaving my loneliness p inside her

At dawn remembering her bad grammar

On the face that last night called me names morning sunbeam Windless summer day: the gentle tug of the current on the fishing pole Summer night: in my eyes starlight hundreds of years old

Long train horizon sun flickers through the empty cattle cars

Evening shadows fill the autumn market—the unsold duck quacks

Deep snow following in my footsteps winter twilight

The frozen breaths of the carolers disappearing among the stars

Mental hospital my shadow stays outside

At the end of myself pencil tip

Passport check: my shadow waits across the border

After the search for meaning bills in the mail

At the edge of the precipice I become logical

Thick fog lifts unfortunately, I am where I thought I was dewy morning: the logging truck's load sweating sap

trembling in the steady rain caterpillar tents in the crabapple

leaning into the coolness the flat tops of Queen Anne's lace gleam with rain

thunder rumbles in the distance drenched kitchen screens dry mesh by mesh mist lifts from the hills wet barn wood steams tugging the snarl out of its chain neighbor's watchdog

walking into and out of the sound of the brook

a white mare grazes in a grove of birch thunderheads

row after row of radishes each top shivering in the cool rain the flatbed of baled hay rocks with the tractor's pull Indian summer

windy mountain summit the warmth of the sun on my rippling jacket

an old road through the hills fallen leaves fill the potholes

far into twilight milkweed crosses the meadow the evening star As day breaks . . . the lightness of her breath on my back

A wisp of spring cloud drifting apart from the rest . . . slowly evaporates

Sitting in the sun in the middle of the plants that I just watered

In an autumn wind, looking through a box of books left on the corner After gazing at stars . . . now, I adjust to the rocks under my sleeping bag

Without a trail . . .
the silence of snow falling
around the mountain

End of a windy day . . . the last light lingers among the pampas plumes

In the snow around the carousel tracks of a horse White lilac scent—
the dollhouse at the window
with its window open

Left open wide at the centre the butterfly book

Motionless
a thousand feet above the hummingbird
the condor's wings

Staring at me from the roar of the river a wild horse Autumn colors

breaking through the haze
the wood duck settles

With me the same cloud @ out of the covered bridge

october loneliness two walking sticks

Colouring itself across the pond the autumn wind

Owl feather
in my palm
—the feel of moonlight

lingering snow the game of catch continues into evening changing pitchers the runner on first looks up at a passing cloud

the batter checks the placement of his feet "Strike One!"

summer afternoon the long fly ball to center field takes its time

slow inning the right fielder is playing with a dog

after the game a full moon rises over the left field fence from behind me the shadow of the ticket-taker comes down the aisle

lonely night the faces painted on the windows of a toy bus

the blues singer tells how bad it is then the sax tells you too

in the mirrors on her dress little pieces of my self through the small holes in the mailbox sunlight on a blue stamp

the evening paper on the darkening lawn first star

a letter stuck in the 11th floor mail chute summer night

end of the line the conductor starts turning the seats around the shadow in the folded napkin

a branch waves in the window and is gone

autumn twilight in the closed barbershop the mirrors darken

raining at every window

November evening the wind from a passing truck ripples a roadside puddle

snow drifts above the bear's den starry night spring breeze the woods road is still wet under the pines

hot day a rock caught on a ledge in the waterfall

stillness sand sifts through the roots of a fallen tree

late autumn the great rock reappears in the woods a stick goes over the falls at sunset

as the sun comes out a sail appears from behind the island

reading a mystery a cool breeze comes through the beach roses

starting to rise to the top of the wave the duck dives into it

summer afternoon the coolness of the newspaper from the grocery bag a tidepool in a clam shell the evening sunlight shading his eyes the wooden Indian looks out at the spring rain

the sun goes down my shovel strikes a spark from the dark earth

the geese have gone in the chilly twilight empty milkweed pods

late autumn sunlight fades from a sandbank deep in the woods snowstorm a baseball glove under the Christmas tree the slow day . . . in the empty motel corridor a stack of dirty dishes

The first hot night: chilling the tea slicing the lemons.

hot afternoon . . . only the slap slap of a jump rope

behind sunglasses
I doze and wake . . .
the friendly man talks on

the swan's head turns away from sunset to his dark side Quiet afternoon: water shadows on the pine bark.

mullein with nothing around it but the air

low tide: all the people stoop

on the hot lawn only the mushroom's shade

rustling beneath the leaf cover, I pluck the bean cool

trickling over the dam summer's end red flipped out chicken lung in a cold white sink

Emerging hot and rosy from their skins—beets!

my spade turns the dark earth lets in some sun

all morning the vegetable garden shaded autumn

quiet evening:
the long sound
of the freight train fades

snowflakes begin . . . at the cellar window the red geranium blooms Awakening . . . the cold fresh scent: new snow.

following me deeper into my quilt the wren's song

I sigh and the cat on my lap begins to purr

at the end of the coal train's sound winter dawn

walking the snow-crust not sinking sinking Darkening the cat's eyes: a small chirp.

## morning bath clouds & birds float between still wet limbs

spring breeze...
her breasts sway
over the porcelain tub

she turns the child to brush her hair with the wind

holding you in me still . . . sparrow songs

twilight taking the trees

the dark throbbing with spring peepers no sound to this spring rain but the rocks darken

Claiming the outhouse roof: peacock!

not seeing the room is white until that red apple

spring twilight . . . the hanging fern turns

a phoebe's cry . . . the blue shadows on the dinner plates

## NICHOLAS VIRGILIO

lily:
out of the water ...
out of itself

over spatterdocks, turning at corners of air: dragonfly

heat before the storm: a fly disturbs the quiet of the empty store

bass picking bugs off the moon approaching autumn: the warehouse watchdog's bark weakens in the wind

Thanksgiving alone: ordering eggs and toast in an undertone

town barberpole stops turning: autumn nightfall

the first snowfall: down the cellar staircase my father calls New Year's Eve: pay phone receiver dangling

the blind musician extending an old tin cup collects a snowflake

Easter morning . . . the sermon is taking the shape of her neighbor's hat

my spring love affair: the old upright Remington wears a new ribbon lone red-winged blackbird riding a reed in high tide—billowing clouds

the junkyard dog in the shadow of the shack: the heat

taking a hard look at myself from all angles the men's store mirrors

removing the bullet-proof vest: the heat the cathedral bell is shaking a few snowflakes from the morning air

barking its breath into the rat-hole: bitter cold

a crow in the snowy pine . . . inching up a branch, letting the evening sun through

winter evening leaving father's footprints: I sink into deep snow the sack of kittens sinking in the icy creek, increases the cold deep in rank grass, through a bullet-riddled helmet: an unknown flower

—In memory of Lawrence J. Virgilio

the autumn wind has torn the telegram and more from mother's hand

flag-covered coffin: the shadow of the bugler slips into the grave

my gold star mother and father hold each other and the folded flag

Viet Nam monument darkened by the autumn rain: my dead brother's name my dead brother . . . hearing his laugh in my laughter

another autumn still silent in his closet: father's violin

on the darkened wall of my brother's bedroom: the dates and how tall

the hinge of the year: holding up candles in church lighting up our breaths my palsied mother, pressing my forehead on hers this Ash Wednesday

my dead brother . . . wearing his gloves and boots: I step into deep snow

sixteenth autumn since: barely visible grease marks where he parked his car

after father's wake the long walk in the moonlight to the darkened house into the blinding sun . . . the funeral procession's glaring headlights

at the open grave mingling with the priest's prayer: honking of wild geese

adding father's name to the family tombstone with room for my own

on my last journey alone on the road at dawn: first sight of the sea autumn twilight: the wreath on the door lifts in the wind landing swallow the ship's chain dips slightly

spring breeze through the window . . . stains on an apron left at the counter

morning bird song my paddle slips into its reflection

mountain spring in my cupped hand pine needles beach parking lot where the car door opened a small pile of sand

low summer sun the shadow of an earring on your cheek

after the quake adding I love you to a letter fresh snow on the mat the shape of welcome still visible

after-dinner mints passed around the table ... slow-falling snow

toll booth lit for Christmas from my hand to hers warm change spring breeze the pull of her hand as we near the pet store

my face dripping . .. the floppy-foot clown's plastic flower

after the quake the weathervane pointing to earth first day of summer a postman delivers mail in a safari hat

grocery shopping—
pushing my cart faster
through feminine protection

reading in bed my pulse flickering the lightly held bookmark first snow . . . the children's hangers clatter in the closet

taking invisible tickets at the foot of the basement stairs—child's magic show

paper route knocking a row of icicles from the eave home for Christmas: my childhood desk drawer empty scouring pans—snow deepening in the yard

dreaming . . . dust on the window

wind: the long hairs on my neck

fly on the flank of the bronze horse crickets . . . then thunder

first morning . . . over the snow, a washing steams on the line

the mirror fogs, a name written long ago faintly reappears

axe in the sun wood-chips falling cool on my skin a road all puddles last light on the woodcock's beak Breathing . . .

the teacup 
fills with shadow

May rain . . . On the sill, a feather shifts in the draught

A small noise . . . papers uncrumpling. stillness again

trilliums rippling . . . under her scarf her pulse

I find her huddled on the bed the paperback closing by itself

away from eyes the stairwell holds us in its arms

bathing, I think of you and lift the straw blind to the rain

A page of Shelley brightens and dims with passing clouds weak sun silverware dries cold under the open window

cheeses, pâté my mouth suddenly dry when she looks at him

just her look escapes from between her children beach in fog

humiliated again bar-smoke in the sweater I pull from my head can this be all?
just light
appears through the envelope

a game of solitaire sun off the cards slashes at the walls

parked near her house. a match flares on the empty porch

what was I thinking? toes suddenly cool in river clay mail on the counter sits unopened afternoon sun through birches

novel's end on the cluttered desk a pool of clear wood

musty shed winter light on the overturned canoe Listening . . . After a while, I take up my axe again the dawn wind fluffs the feathers on the owl's neck

cold morning a flock of crows settles in distant trees far out a lone duck bobs and bobs . . . the lake in winter

spring rain the rocks in the garden have settled

abandoned barn . . . the faintest neighing of horses

supper done . . . the old folks sit on the porch

autumn wind . . . the rise and fall of sparrows

sugar maple the drawing class seated before it goats on the roof of the chicken shack spring morning

laurel in bloom she lingers awhile at the mirror

spring thaw white horse in the pasture nosing clouds

my hand moves out touches the sun on a log the old cow lags to loll and splash spring evening boulders just beneath the boat it's dawn a marsh hawk tips the solitary pine

water pools among the rocks at then pools and pools again

a bluegill rises to the match | wavers and falls away the moon at dawn lily pads blow white in a sudden breeze

a bluejay sails to the bough of a pine the coolness

a bittern booms in the silence that follows smell of the marsh rain in gusts below the deadhead troutswirl the hills release the summer clouds one by one by one

a stagnant pond red dragonflies the heat

water lilies slithering through them a leech beyond the porch the summer night | leaning out a moment the sun lights up a distant ridge another

a mourning cloak comes sailing down the deerpath

along the gravel
speckled trout their shadows
out before them

looking deeper and deeper into it the great beech coolness hemlock shadows flicker across the boulder

i catch the maple leaf then let it go

the day wears on the logcock keeps on drumming dusk from rock to rock a waterthrush

a pebble falls bushes at the water's edge just faintly glimmer

den of the bear beyond the great rocks storm clouds

the evening sun slips over the log follows me downriver another bend now at last the moon and all the stars november evening the faintest tick of snow upon the cornstalks

in an upstairs room of the abandoned house a doll moongazing

deep winter . . . all day long the mountainside in shadow

a box of nails on the shelf of the shed the cold mist for miles through it runs the light of a night train

morning meadow a wren follows the sunshine in clouds roll in the flow of silt down the dry creek bed snowmelt a space opens around the rock

light spring rain the sound of an airplane circling above the clouds gathering light . . . one swell of the sea becomes another

light
up under the gull's wing:
sunrise

flash on the rim—side canyon prolonging thunder

after the garden party the garden

first cool evening between the cricket chirps the longer silence sunrise path: at each step the baby's shadow releases her foot

the baby's pee pulls roadside dust into rolling beads

hot rock by the stream each of the baby's toeprints evaporating

warm rain before dawn: my milk flows into her unseen picking the last pears yellow windows hang in the dusk

reunion:
a pause
before each hug

before the sled moves the little girls already squealing windblown Christmas lights still place between stars On the first day of spring snow falling from one bough to another

In a circle of thaw the cat walks round and round

violets
in a broken sac of dew—
the hoof of a deer

persimmons
lightly swaying—
heavy with
themselves

fallen birch leaf vein-side to the sky The silence in moonlight of stones

The calliope!
Walking to the fair
a little faster.

Unable to decide which balloon to pick she begins to cry.

Still trembling
after the Cyclone rumbles past:
a row of Kewpie dolls.

Sprinkling again!
A sulky driver lights up another cigar.

In the puddle another raindrop jiggles the fun house.

A frost at the fair.

Steam rising in the moonlight from a mound of hay.

Falling from a horse in the carousel the morning dew.

Under a withered iris in the noon heat a crisp, blue ribbon.

In the French fry stand the World Series is turned down to hear her order.

Sulky drivers cracking their whips!

A moth flutters up
higher and higher.

The high diver takes off her cape in the stars.

Right in the middle of the cat's yawn—a pink tongue.

Opening its eyes closing its eyes a cat in the sun.

After a hard rain, a cat stops to shake a paw before moving on.

Following the smoke ring out the window the cat's eye.

Hopping over the mound and into the dugout—the first robin.

In the shade under a leaf a forked tongue.

Hard climb turning to look back more frequently now. I stop to listen; the cricket has done the same. ्रात्संत्रस्थ १०००मा विकास १८८० - १००० व्याप्ति

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# THE HAIKU SOCIETY OF AMERICA DEFINITIONS

The following definitions were completed in 1973 by the HSA Committee on Definitions: Harold G. Henderson, William J. Higginson, and Anita Virgil. They were slightly revised in 1990 by Higginson and Virgil.

#### PRELIMINARY NOTES

- 1. Though it was our original intention to confine ourselves to the discussion of haiku, we found it impossible to do this adequately without also covering the terms haikai, hokku, and senryu. By use of cross-referencing, we hope that we have been able to present a clear picture of the meaning of haiku in the briefest manner possible.
- 2. The Japanese words *jion* (symbol-sound) and *onji* (sound-symbol) have been mistranslated into English as

"syllable" for many years. However, in most Japanese poetry the *jion* or *onji* does not correspond to the Western notion of the syllable. For example, while each of the entry words is reckoned as two syllables in English, "hokku" and "haiku" are each counted as three *onji*, while "haikai" and "senryu" each have four *onji*. On the other hand, where each Japanese *onji* is equal and brief as "do, re, mi, etc.," English syllables can vary greatly in time duration. (For a further discussion of the Japanese sound system, see Roy Andrew Miller *The Japanese Language*.)

3. Each of the four entry words is its own plural.

#### HAIKU

- (1) An unrhymed Japanese poem recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived, in which Nature is linked to human nature. It usually consists of seventeen *onji* (Japanese sound-symbols).
- (2) A foreign adaptation of (1). It is usually written in three lines of fewer than seventeen syllables. (See also HAIKAI, HOKKU.)

NOTE to (2):

That part of the definition that begins "It is usually written" places a heavy weight on the word "usually." We depend on that word to provide latitude for variations to the syllable count and to the number of lines or other external aspects of "form" *providing* they meet the primary stringent requirements expressed in the first part of the definition. Rarely is a haiku longer than seventeen syllables.

While all Japanese classical haiku, as well as most modern

ones, contain a *kigo* (season-word: a word or phrase indicating one of the four seasons of their year), extreme variations of climate in the United States make it impossible to put a codified "season-word" into every American haiku. Instead, American adaptations include some reference to Nature within them.

#### HOKKU

- (1) The first stanza of a Japanese linked-verse poem (see HAIKAI).
  - (2) (Obsolete) A haiku.

# NOTE to (2):

Hokku was used as a synonym for haiku by the Imagist poets, but is obsolete in modern American usage. It is definitely obsolete today in Japan.

#### SENRYU

- (1) A Japanese poem structurally similar to the Japanese haiku (which see), but primarily concerned with human nature. It is usually humorous or satiric.
  - (2) A foreign adaptation of (1).

#### HAIKAI

(1) A type of Japanese linked-verse poem, popular from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Such a poem normally consists of thirty-six, fifty, or one hundred stanzas, alternating seventeen and fourteen *onji* (Japanese sound-symbols). Usually a small group of poets took turns composing the poem's stanzas, whose content and grammar were governed by fairly complex rules.

# **NOTES:**

In Japanese, the word *haikai* is commonly used as an abbreviation for the phrase *haikai* no renga, usually translated as "comic linked-verse." Under the influence of Bashō (1644–1694), the tone of *haikai* no renga became more serious, but the name was retained. The word *haikai* is also used in Japanese as a general term for all haiku-related literature (haiku, *haikai* no renga, the diaries of haiku poets, etc.).

In Spanish and French the word *haikai* is often used to refer to either the Japanese haiku or Western adaptations of the Japanese haiku. However, in modern Japanese usage, reference to a single *haikai* is to a *haikai no renga*.

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The following brief biographical entries include the state, province, or country where the poet currently resides, date and place of birth, and most recent book. For addresses of the haiku presses—AHA Books, Brooks Books, Burnt Lake, From Here, High/Coo, King's Road, Red Moon, and some others—see the Book List that follows the Foreword.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editor thanks the following poets, magazines, and publishers for permission to print these poems:

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