

Prune Juice



*A Journal of Senryu, Kyoka,
Haibun and Haiga*

Issue 22 • July 2017

PRUNE JUICE

Journal of Senryu, Kyoka, Haibun & Haiga

Issue 22, July, 2017

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Cover Art: *May Flowers* by Daniela Giles

Prune Juice : Journal of Senryu, Kyoka, Haibun & Haiga

Issue 22: July, 2017

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Prune Juice Journal of Senryu, Kyoka, Haibun & Haiga is a digital journal occurring tri-annually, dedicated to publishing and promoting modern English senryu, kyoka, haibun & haiga. It is edited by Steve Hodge. Please send all submissions and correspondence to:

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ISSN1945-8894

www.prunejuice.wordpress.com

Editor's Note

Welcome to the twenty-second issue of Prune Juice. There are a lot of exciting features in this issue, not the least of which is the results of the second annual H. Gene Murtha Memorial Senryu Contest. More about that beginning on the page following this note.

We also have a special feature entitled "Clerihews for Haiku Editors" by Michael Dylan Welch, consisting of twenty-two poems placed throughout the issue. For those not familiar with the form, clerihews are humorous four-line poems about real-life people and follow an AABB rhyming scheme. All of Michael's clerihews in this issue are about specific people who were editors of haiku journals or anthologies in the past. He's also written more clerihews about people who are *currently* editing haiku journals, so we may get to see more of these poems in the future. To make this feature immediately identifiable, we've enclosed each set of clerihews within a box.

Additionally, we have a fascinating scholarly essay by Richard Gilbert entitled *Kigo Versus Seasonal Reference: Cross-cultural Issues in Anglo-American Haiku* in which he explores a variety of interesting issues, including the possibility that English language haiku might actually be a version of senryu when viewed from a Japanese perspective. This is a must read for any serious student of haiku and senryu.

We're also featuring a number of poems we received in tribute to Carlos Colón (a.k.a. Haiku Elvis) who passed away last October. We're grateful to those who shared their work with us and we're confident that this feature will be meaningful to all of our readers, whether or not they knew this talented, gentle and hilarious man. Carlos was one of a kind and is missed by everyone whose lives he touched both in person and through his poetry.

Lastly, I want to thank everyone who helped make the special scifaiku feature in our March issue a smashing success. I received a number of comments about the feature from readers - all of which were positive! Thank you, again, to Alan Pizzarelli for suggesting the feature and for your excellent poems, wonderful essay and photograph. And thank you, again,

to Deborah P Kolodji for helping spread the word throughout the scifaiku community and for your excellent poems and wonderful essay. Editing a journal such as *Prune Juice* seemed to me to be a solitary endeavor before I started doing it, but I soon learned that it's a collaborative effort which depends on the generous and eager support of contributors and readers from around the world. I'm grateful to each and every one of you.

Now, here we go...

Steve Hodge
White Lake, Michigan

Announcing the Winners of the Second Annual H. Gene Murtha Memorial Senryu Contest

Michael Rehling, editor of *Failed Haiku* senryu journal, and I received nearly five hundred submissions to the 2017 H. Gene Murtha Senryu Contest this spring. We were both gobsmacked by the sheer number of exceptional senryu we received from talented poets the world over. Both Michael and I thank all those who submitted and wish we could include more of your poems in our journals.

Following are the top three winners of this year's contest, all of whom will receive cash prizes and haiku books signed by their authors; Aubrie Cox Warner, Richard Gilbert and Lee Gurga. Since we received so many excellent poems this year, Michael thought it would be a good idea to publish a large number of honorable mentions. He was right, of course (he's always right!) so we hope you enjoy those honorable mentions on the pages following our top three winners.

First place winner:

moving day
taking apart the bed
our parents dreamed on

Gregory Longenecker, USA

As I read through the hundreds of poems that were submitted to the contest this year, I was struck by this one in particular. With so many wonderful poems to choose from, I expected that my choice for first place would be difficult. That turned out not to be the case. The moment I read this one, I suspected that it might end up being the winner.

Since I was judging this contest blind – not knowing who had written any of the poems submitted – I was curious as to who had written it. When Michael revealed that it was by Gregory Longenecker, I wasn't surprised. Gregory's poems frequently appear in the pages of *Failed Haiku*, *Prune*

Juice and many other fine haiku journals and I've admired his work for many years.

I love this poem for a variety of reasons. It begins with "moving day" in line one, leading me to suspect that the poem would be a humorous take on a task which no one enjoys. "we take apart the bed," line two, takes a turn toward a more sensual subject; perhaps even bawdy. But the last line, "our parents dreamed on," brings the poem to an emotional level I didn't expect – a level of pensive, gentle reverence and love which took me by surprise.

Those of us who are old enough to have lived the experience of emptying the house of our last surviving parent know that it is a bittersweet day. Each item we touch brings a rush of memories. In Gregory's poem, this fact is augmented by the fact that he's sharing this experience with a sibling – "our parents dreamed on," not *my* parents dreamed on. The memories are being experienced twofold and the task becomes twice as meaningful.

Going deeper into the poem, the bed takes on even more emotional depth. It isn't only about two siblings sharing an introspective moment. They aren't just remembering their parents and reluctantly disassembling their bed. The bed is also about the parents' dreams. There are four people in the room now; the two siblings and the parents who slept and dreamed on the bed – dreams that certainly included the siblings. Now the poem becomes heartbreaking in its emotional depth.

This is a beautiful poem which deserves to be preserved for future generations – generations of people who will, sadly, someday experience the heartbreaking task of helping their siblings take apart the beds their parents dreamed on.

Steve Hodge

Second Place Winner:

job interview –
dodging puddles
in my best shoes

Marilyn Humbert

In this senryu you have an image most, if not all of us, can relate to. You are literally trying to 'put your best foot forward' in a job interview but the weather is fighting all your best efforts. Marilyn does not tell us if she succeeded in keeping those shoes shiny, but then each of us can fill in the 'end game' with our personal experience in dodging puddles. It is that simple and relatable a moment, shared in twelve syllables that made this one resonate.

Third Place Winner:

family dinner
adding salt
to my own wounds

Lori A Minor

Ah, the 'family dinner'. We have had thousands of them in our lifetime, but making it through, one dinner at a time, provides no convenient map for our own behavior. Even a deep Google search can only give you vague hints as to how to navigate the sometimes outright treachery of family and friends at the dinner table. Lori has committed the perfectly normal sin of adding to the fuel of her own fire. I know this situation myself, and any reader can easily relate to her self administered pain. The one thing that makes this senryu work so well is that we all 'live through' these moments, and the proof of this is Lori's own poem. Bravo!

Honorable Mentions:

A brief word on 'short list poems'!

When you make the top ten percent of a contest such as this one, you have written something very special. What it means is that both judges, in this case Steve Hodge and Mike Rehling, think your work has risen to the top. This contest is judged 'blind', so we are always surprised at some names, and others we just nod our heads in appreciation for the umptenth time, having seen their work many times before as editors.

We thought that limiting the selections in this category would be a disservice to senryu poets everywhere. Several of these poets have TWO poems on the short list. I would call that a WIN in my book!

Please take the time to read the work here, and to congratulate, with the same vigor you would to the preceding three winning poems, the poets represented below.

Thanks to EVERYONE who submitted. You made the judging very hard.

Mike Rehling

peace rally -
my kids fight
over a balloon
Rob Scott

All Saints' Day --
a small superman costume
on the barrio balcony
Maeve O'Sullivan

windowshopper -
the glassy gaze
of the dummy
Helga Härle

discovery
the shadow
on the x-ray
Kim Mannix

silence ~
our minds still
talking
Rajandeep Garg

winter graves
missing people
I never met
Rajandeep Garg

flip flops
Grandma's laugh
turns into a cough
Mark Gilbert

in the cathedral
a lost soul asks me the way
to the gift shop
Mark Gilbert

in with my taxes
a spring poem
written by hand
Peter Newton

a note in the Wall
then, surrounded by friends
he gropes for a cliché
Marietta Jane McGregor

dementia
I lose the lily
petal by petal
Lori A Minor

mirror mist
I almost believe
that I'm real
Hansha Teki

seven billion
of us interpreting
silence
Hansha Teki

cash-for-gold...
the day I paid the rent
with memories
Maria Laura Valente

WiFi zone
I get disconnected
from myself
Debbi Antebi

putting the comma
in prison sentence –
visiting hours
Debbi Antebi

winter's night
in the finished scarf
a dropped stitch
Mark Miller

my father's Will
not as strong
as I thought he was
Stevie Strang

day of remembrance
I stop to watch
a butterfly
Barbara Kaufmann

tying my shoes lately the ground seems so low
Bob Lucky

drawings to grandma
my daughter stamps it
with a cloud
Ola Lindberg

board meeting
my doodles are
getting better
Kanchan Chatterjee

Ouija board
the window curtain's
soft flutter
Kanchan Chatterjee

dense fog
a dog's barking
quickens my steps
Nina Kovačić

recurring dream...
the lesson
I have yet to learn
Pat Davis

folding her clothes
remembering folding
her first clothes
Hannah Mahoney

senior center
I search for the man
he used to be
Gregory Longenecker

summer's end ...
a new coolness
between the sheets
Lolly Williams

organ harvesting...
my mother's unaccustomed
generosity
Michele L. Harvey

winter chill
one year later I try
mother's lip gloss
Kath Abela Wilson

departed son
the chess board left
as it was
Steven Clarkson

filling your absence
the pharmacist
recounts my pills
Carol Ann Palomba

"What's this called, Grandma?"
"Ampersand", is my reply
& then more questions
Lorraine Ward

Mother's Day
counting my blessings
One . ~~by one~~
Mercy Ikuri

train whistle until I am no longer here
Alan S. Bridges

they hate his drinking --
but they put his ashes in
a wine bottle urn

Maria Corado

snowmelt --
the things I thought
I'd left behind

Julie Bloss Kelsey

wedding anniversary
the librarian gifts me
a book on marriage Emmanuel

Jessie Kalusian

fishing lures
dangle from her ears
singles bar

Dottie Piet

first touch
holding that space
between breaths

Urszula Funnell

orioles
oblivious
to my success

Brad Bennett

recurring weed
a sign we need
to dig deeper

dl mattila

our daughter's wedding
i stop to pick wild roses
for my ex-wife

Tyson West

refugee camp
children
waiting for a childhood
Patricia Pella

new waitress
her smile seems big enough
for something more
Gregory Piko

the sign
five mile point
eight miles
Kristyn Blessing

graveside
my toddler's pink balloon
keeps bobbing
Cynthia Rowe

old sitcoms
I cringe at the laughter
of dead people
Gabriel Bates

photographer's funeral
no pictures
of her
Julie Warther

stored in her phone photos of the unborn child
Sandra Simpson

performance review
the hiss of a cigarette
in a puddle
Joshua Gage

chili night
the last roll
of toilet paper
Joshua Gage

Our first date
To give or not to give him
An apple
Anna Goluba

bed time . . .
she asks if her rag doll
can stay up late
Kala Ramesh

train journey
each one of us
a hula doll
Aparna Pathak

stage four
the doctor's eye contact
wavers
Peter Jastermsky

climate change
her tone begins to sound
monotonous
Angelo B. Ancheta

phone interview
she applies her foundation
with extra care
Amy Losak

Mother's Day
I tiptoe around
the past tense
Tiffany Shaw-Diaz

board meeting
my doodles are
getting better
Kanchan Chatterjee

the girl
selfying her face
cocks her leg anyway
Danny Blackwell

Kwaku Feni Adow, Ghana

after the funeral -
slipping into
father's shoes

evening blackout
the glowing faces
of smartphone light

Adjei Agyei-Baah, Ghana

after the fight
only our butts
meet in bed

cold moon
the mother child takes
her first nipple bite

blind date—
carrying all that is left
in my pocket

ambiguity—
the way he sneaks out
through the back door
of words

Debbi Antebi, UK

spring ginko
we walk past
the cemetery

seashells
I cling on
to summer

full moon
will you be there
when I wake up

stage four -
I ask the oak tree
to console me

low tide
no use hiding
my flaws

Mohammad Azim Khan, Pakistan

tantalizing evening ...
the belly dancer
shakes her coin belt

Michael Dylan Welch, USA

Stephen R. Addiss
used to like haggis;
now he loves haiga
except in the taiga.

David Bingham
wears no gingham
while choosing ku
to share with you.

Jeanne Emrich
has a new trick:
planting haiga seeds
with her journal *Reeds*.

Lorin Ford
fills a gourd
a hundred times
with ku sans rhymes.

Terri L. French
is one feisty wench—
sending her prunes
causes her swoons.

Johnny Baranski, USA

crime scene
a killer frost
still at large

hard time
a dragonfly on
the rock pile

Exxon Valdez
Cap'n Crunch
on the bridge

village graveyard
all but the gossip
laid to rest

campaign rally
the cry of
a loon

plum jelly
the preacher's wife
a little tart

shifting winds
the relief pitcher's
knuckle ball

farewell tour
the rock band's big
black hearse

moist lips
deep-throated
saxophone

Brad Bennett, USA

overlook
I stop listening
to myself

take out...
my clothes carry home
the bacon

park bench
waiting around
for a poem

Jan Benson, USA

heat lightning
his
searching mine

tinny chromatics
of an old spinet
trading up
to wind chimes

Ed Bremson, USA

Independence Day
the only girl at the mall
not checking her phone

Susan Burch, USA

first date
his cologne
all over me

motorboating
my boobs –
his snoring

too soon
I see him
with another
woman –
Instagram

at Five Guys
she twists her burger wrapper
into a cat –
in a whisper she tells me
she might be a lesbian

Alanna C. Burke, USA

dinner date
at least the artichoke
has a heart

Sondra Byrnes, USA

a deadhead deadheading petunias

webmd diagnosis: old age

dharma talk
everyone nodding
but me

backing into a memory
by mistake
lilacs
she sat down
as if i wanted her
to stay

freeway mirage
not sure what i know
and don't know

Pris Campbell, USA

only the cricket's song our abandoned home



pris campbell

first love...
she already breaks
my heart



Bill Cooper, USA

age three
asking directions
to short stop

Charlotte Digregorio, USA

at the diner
she serves us carbs and fats
with her life story

Garry Eaton, Canada

pool hall
he lifts a leg
and clears the table

Terri L. French, USA

a wobbly cart ride
through the frozen food
grocery store orchid

of all the things
to come between us
body pillow

Nar anon meeting
an addict takes out
her knitting needles

this longing
to leave my mark—
wet cement

flight delay
my irritation
arrives on time

Venetian blinds
as close as I'll get

family road trip
a billboard offers me
salvation

art student's loft
calendar photos
in thrift store frames

retired nurse
still folding
hospital corners

50th reunion
the head cheerleader's
last hurrah

alien probe
the old spinster
smiles

eating beans
on a gas planet--
fractions



vintage clothing shops . . .



terri l. french, 2017

armpit stains from another era

Michael Dylan Welch, USA

Carolyn Hall
stands very tall
in the haiku crowd—
she won't be cowed.

Christopher Herold
never imperiled
a haiku submitter
whether happy or bitter.

William the Higginson
is fond of each season,
and wherever he goes
it rains . . . or it snows.

Dorothy Howard
is no coward—
sunbathing when its hailing,
printing haiku that are “failing.”

Jay Friedenberg, USA

beach bikini
the to-do list
and the not to-do list

September gale
the wind chimes
lose their appeal

pretty physics lab partner
today's lesson
is on magnetic attraction

family camping trip
the constant whine
of mosquitos

Chase Gagnon, USA

last night's rain
the lingering scent
of you

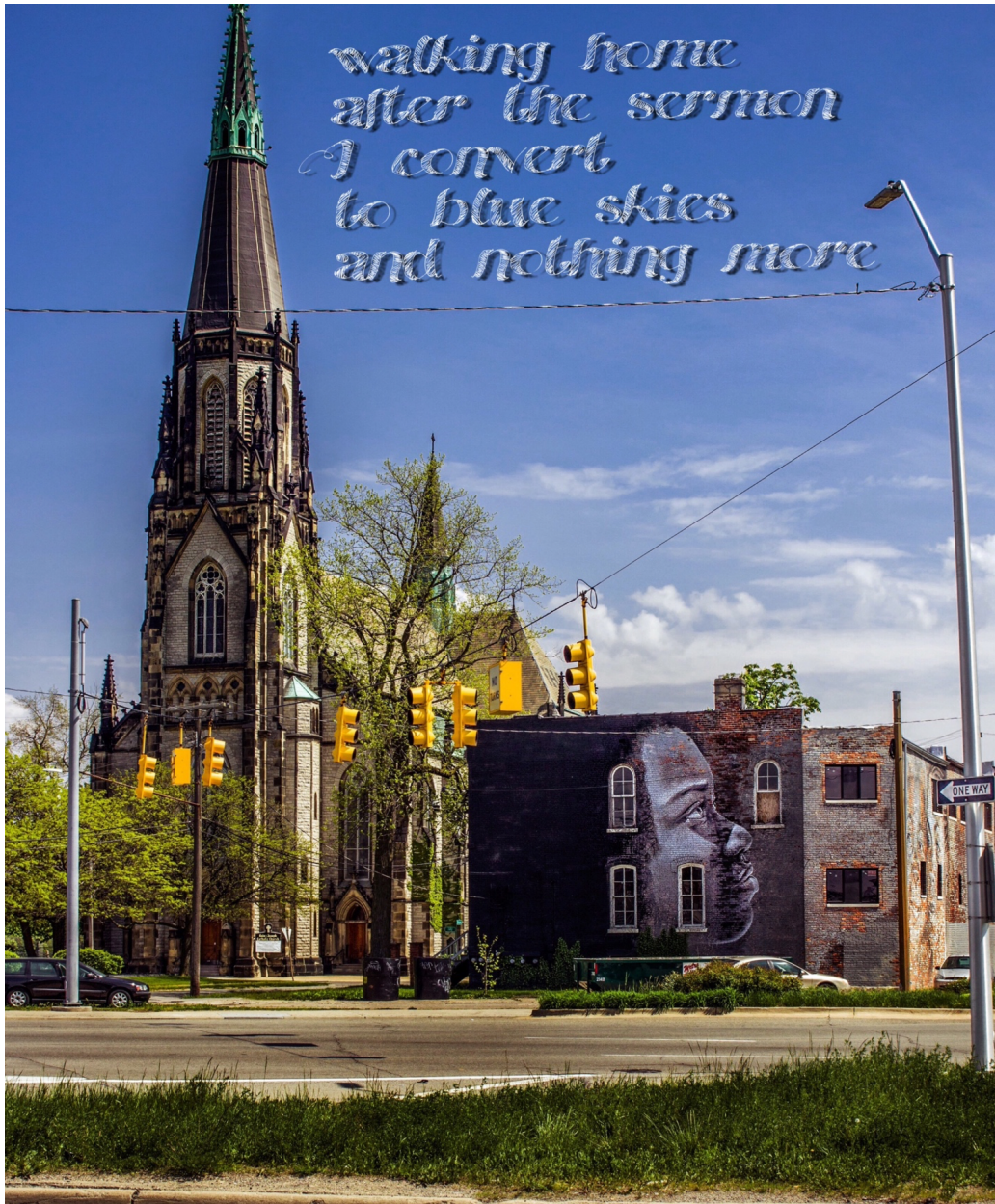
maybe
in another life...
hanging flowers

DRUG FREE SCHOOL ZONE
I wonder how many kids
are on adderall

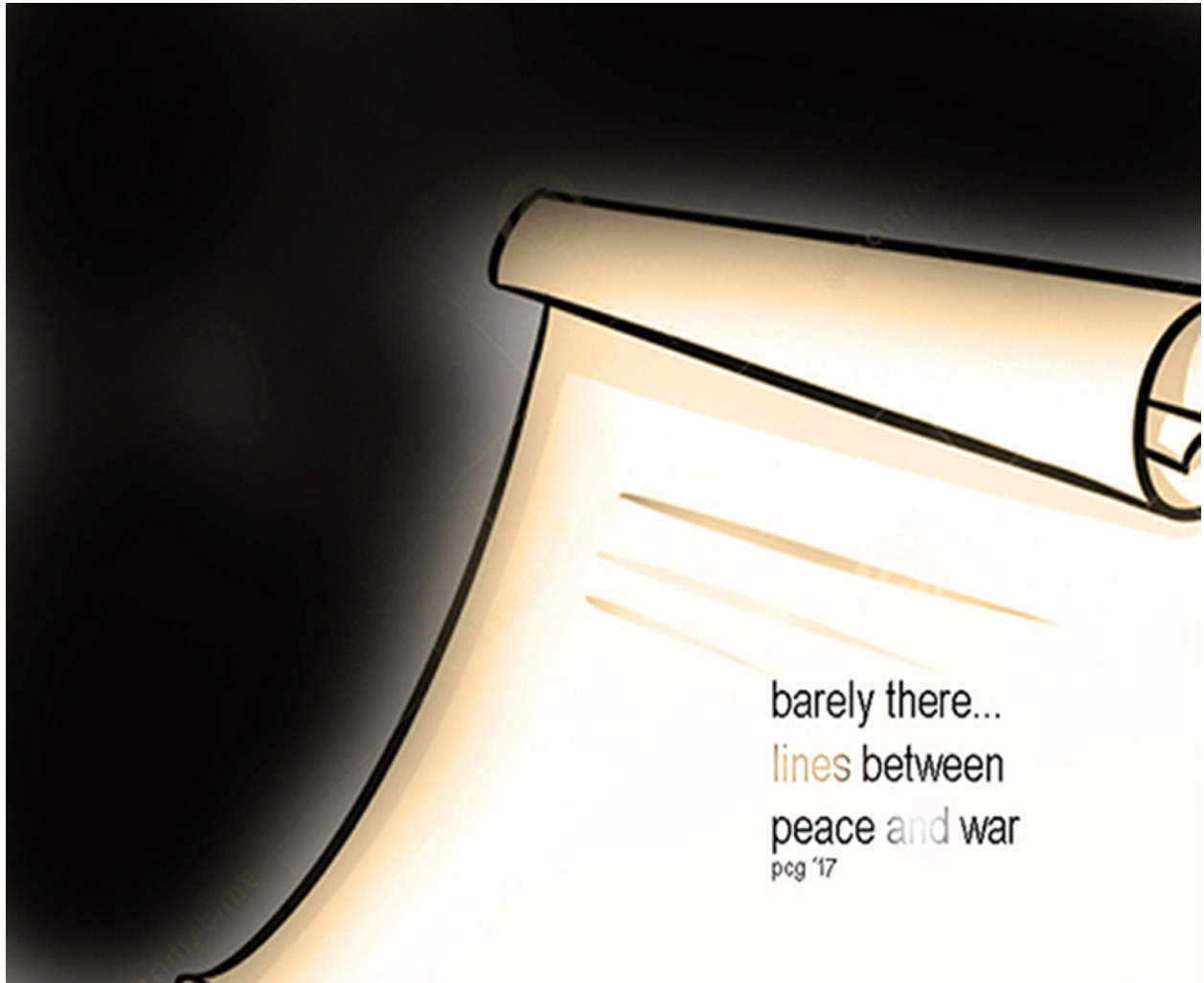
-To Whom it May Concern-

You're already dead. There's no point in crying. Nevermind how it happened, just know you're buried in my backyard. Don't worry, I keep the lawn neat. I pick up the dog shit and trim the rose bushes – but that's beside the point. I realize this news may come as somewhat of a surprise to you, but stop your bitching. You're no forlorn phantom who weeps in the night beside the crashing waves of a misty sea. You are residual energy and nothing more. A heavy imprint on the battlefield of my heart. So let go of your consciousness, all the beatings and all the tears, if not for your sake then for mine. Because lately I've been too busy with living – and although I still mourn you, and will do so forever, I don't believe in ghosts.

crushed firefly
the light fading
into my palm



Pat Geyer, USA



Mark Gilbert, UK

chemotherapy
those tiny imperfections
in the ceiling

driftwood
whether to say something
or not

in the minutes
before the exam
butterflies

Kigo and Seasonal Reference: Cross-cultural Issues in Anglo-American Haiku

Richard Gilbert

Publication: *Kumamoto Studies in English Language and Literature*
49,
Kumamoto University, Kumamoto, Japan, March 2006 (pp. 29-46);
revised from *Simply Haiku* (Autumn 2005, vol 3 no 3).

Introduction

This paper explores conceptions of *kigo* with the goal of clarifying differences in the approach and meaning of *kigo* (Japanese “season words”) across two distinct literary cultures. One area of debate in Anglo-American haiku criticism has concerned the importation of *kigo* as a necessary concept for haiku practice. As haiku in English have no abiding *kigo* tradition, in some quarters the genre has been described as lacking in artfulness and depth.^[1] Attempts have been made to institute *kigo* practice, largely via the publication of *saijiki* (season-word glossaries); however, there is little evidence of poets having sought out these works, over the last several decades. So, can it be concluded that the implementation of a *kigo* practice and culture is unlikely if not impossible, outside of Japan; and if true, what might this imply about the haiku tradition in English?^[2] A second issue concerns the function of *kigo* terms within Japanese poetry. As viewed from the Anglo-American perspective, the *kigo* of Japan seem to convey a naturalistic indication of season, but little more. With the above considerations in mind, some of the challenges involved in instituting a *kigo* culture in English-language haiku will be investigated within a cross-cultural context. As a further note, language issues relating to *kigo* will be discussed for readers unfamiliar with Japanese.

Parsing kigo and seasonal reference

When we look for seasonal reference in English haiku, a non-season-specific nature image, such as “migratory birds” would likely not meet the definition, as we cannot determine a single season for migration, which occurs in both spring and autumn. This fact points to the prevalence of naturalism as an expectation within English-language haiku. Nature^[3] in

English-haiku literary culture generally accords with naturalist views, else the image will not be given credence, and the poem will thereby suffer. Another way to put this is that in order for the reader to enter the poem, the images presented need to be experienced or intuited as “true” within a prevailing cultural context. In this light, it might come as a surprise to the English-haiku poet that “migratory birds” (*wataridori*) is an autumn *kigo* in the Japanese tradition. Birds arrive from Siberia to winter in Japan, departing in the spring;^[4] nonetheless, in the culture of *kigo*, migrating birds migrate only one way, in one season.^[5] This fact offers a first clue that seasonal reference in English and *kigo* as found in Japan do not rest on the same conceptual basis.

To clarify the discussion, “*kigo*” will henceforth indicate the Japanese haiku tradition, while “seasonal reference” will indicate the tradition in English. I would like to show how the two terms “*kigo*” and “seasonal reference” represent different entities, in terms of both intention and culture; that the conceptual base of *kigo* is its culture, rather than its season, and that it is the culture of *kigo* which is the context through which *kigo* has arisen as a literary fundament. The use in English of “season words/seasonal reference” as a translation of “*kigo*” seems a reasonable first choice, as “season word(s),” is the literal translation. However, some confusion arises when by the idea of “season word/reference,” it is imagined that the context of seasonal reference in English equates to that of Japanese haiku, and by implication, that the literary contexts are virtually identical. What has been missing from discussions of *kigo* to date is their cultural context, which reaches to the heart of their expression. It is this aspect which is not easily translated along with the *kigo* terms themselves.

Two haiku in English: Treatments of “no season”

Two representative haiku in English which lack seasonal reference will next be presented, to see how these poems might be treated if an English-language *kigo* culture were implemented. In this case, existing Japanese *kigo* culture will be used as a model.

between silent moonlit hills
something waiting
to be named

— Leslie Giddens (in *Blithe Spirit*)

the river
the river makes
of the moon

— Jim Kacian (in *Mainichi Shimbun*)

In both poems, as a reader, I receive a powerful though secondary sense of season; my impression is subjective, as the season is not given. In Leslie Giddens' haiku, reading the last phrase, "something waiting to be named" I reflect on origins, on seeds waiting to be born, on the origins of names, envisioning these moonlit hills as hills of deep winter or winter's end. The first part of the haiku, "between silent moonlit hills" grounds the poem's primary impression in the natural world (with "silent" implying a witness). Yet "moonlit hills" itself is not specific enough to yield a seasonal reference. In Jim Kacian's haiku, there are two rivers and a moon in the text—though one river is a metaphorical river of moonlight (a 'river of the moon'). We do not find these natural, primordial elements of "river," "moon" or "moonlit hills" to be seasonal references in English, as they encompass our planet in time and space, extending beyond seasonal division. It seems the power inherent in both of these haiku lies in their indication of a non-human-centered imagination—a native wildness, wilderness. In this sense, they resist humanistic inclinations to connote seasonal division. This would seem an exo- or even contra-humanistic power inherent in haiku.

How might these two poems be treated, if translated into a traditional Japanese-haiku form? Considering Giddens' haiku, would "moonlit hills" be *kigo* or not? Searching for "moonlit hills," in the *saijiki*, a *kigo* cannot be found, though "moon" by itself indicates autumn;^[6] this seems unnatural—the moon, just as with, say, a river or mountain, is a primordial element in Anglo-American literary culture.

Importantly, in Japan we would not know for certain whether "moonlit hills" has existence as *kigo* or not, without first checking a *saijiki*. In the Japanese context, a given haiku may remain unresolved by the reader prior to the lookup process, as the poem may not be fully understood or even taken in prior to consulting a separate text. This mode of reading presents a sharp semantic and cultural contrast with that of haiku in English. In that there is

“moon(lit)” in the haiku, and “moon” itself is a *kigo*, autumn would be the season by default.^[7] The *kigo* “moon” envisions the moon of autumn moon-viewing (*tsukimi*). So, “moon” is not just any moon: in Japanese haiku, it is a *kigo* moon: nature becomes reified as an artifact of culture. The bilingual *saijiki* published by the University of Virginia offers this explanation:

Since ancient times, the natural phenomena favored above all by Japanese poets have been the triplet "snow, moon, blossoms" (that is, cherry blossoms). The moon appears in all four seasons, of course, but in both classical poetry and haikai it has been firmly associated with autumn, so that unless otherwise specified, “the moon” means the autumn moon. One reason for this is that as “blossoms” is the pre-eminent image of spring and “snow” is that of winter, the moon came to connote autumn. No less important a reason, surely, is that the moon seems to shine with a special clarity in the months of autumn.^[8]

We find a kind of symbolic, poetic culture implicit in natural phenomena, with certain phenomena assigned to certain seasons, partly for reasons of aesthetic balance, or due to historic antecedents, etc. In terms of *kigo*, the seen moon is related to a *kigo* culture in which the moon is part of a series of literary conventions and cultural associations (including myth and legend)—irruptions of naturalism. Such does not imply that *kigo* lack depth, quite the contrary; yet at the same time, *kigo* is a culture which a naturalist would take exception to. In any case, we find that Giddens’ haiku has no seasonal reference in English, but acquires the autumn *kigo* “moon” in Japanese.

In Kacian’s haiku, imbibing the fullness of the river and brightness of the moon, I sense a brilliant, warm summer night—the enfolded metaphoric image of the moon unwraps as if were at its fullest, brightest apotheosis. Again, the moon figures prominently, and as with Giddens’ haiku, there is no adjectival modifier for “moon,” so moon becomes the *kigo* in Japanese, and we have a poem of autumn. Luckily “river” (without a modifier) is not *kigo*, as in traditional haiku only one *kigo* is allowed per poem. A modifier might be, *risshun no tsuki*, “beginning-of-spring moon.” Here, “moon” is adjectivally modified to connote a different seasonal *kigo*. Since, for *kigo*, every named phenomena pertains to a specific season, and often a timeframe within a season (early, middle, late), modifiers are often used to locate phenomena (e.g. river, moon, rain) within that season—so, we cannot use “moon” if we mean to

indicate a moon of spring, as we can with “moon” for autumn. An autumn moon is a very brief word of 2-*on*, (*tsuki*), while the early-spring moon above (*risshun no tsuki*) is a phrase of 7-*on*. This is another way in which the given seasonal reference becomes an attribute of *kigo* culture. In the extremely short 17-*on* haiku form, an early-spring moon seems verbose compared to the non-adjectival autumn moon. Generally speaking, in *kigo* culture the moon is never a moon in the empirical sense of simply being—uncontained by the filters of season, collocation, literary and linguistic verities, as determined through historical precedent.

Looking at our two haiku, what might be lost by moving them into an imagined formal *kigo* system, in English? It seems unlikely that their authors wished or needed to posit a specific season—though season is hinted, at a distance: the precise distance of the reader’s imagination in meeting the poem. As a reader, I sense the power and purity of nature, image, natural life-force in these haiku; a sense of the purity of not-me, of nature and earth beyond seasonal division. It is tempting to say that a seasonal reference would reduce these poems. And yet it is hard to imagine a *kigo* culture in which the moon would be absent!

Here, the question of *kigo* versus seasonal reference becomes entirely secondary—in either culture or language. The argument against *kigo* in Japan was first advanced in 1912 by Ogiwara Seisensui, who saw *kigo* as an artificial restriction befitting only beginner poets. The term for haiku lacking *kigo* is “*muki* haiku.” However, we cannot rightfully apply this term to haiku in English (such as those above) which lack seasonal reference. It would seem that all English haiku are *muki* from the Japanese point of view, as the context of *kigo* culture does not exist. Rather, in English we have haiku with or without seasonal reference.

In the case of *muki* haiku the haiku poet must either explain they are *muki*, or be known to write *muki* haiku. Otherwise, as in the haiku examples above, we will find a specific season, even if the poet wishes the season to be *muki*. At issue is the treatment in a Japanese context of a haiku which appears to have *kigo*—which the author does not wish to be “read” as having such—while still considering it as haiku, and not a senryu variant (as senryu do not read with *kigo*). These issues are not confronted in English, but immediately would if a

kigo culture were implemented. Various modern poets have offered solutions to the problematics of *kigo*. Natsuishi Ban'ya has for instance introduced system of keywords, a transformation of *kigo* culture into a suggested keyword culture. Along a similar line, last year the delightfully oxymoronic *Modern Haiku 'No Season' Season-word Glossary* [*gendai haiku saijiki muki*] was published (it likewise utilizes a keyword system).^[9] From an Anglo-American perspective, problems relating to the use of *kigo* in Japan and the consequent desire to transmute *kigo* culture may not be readily apparent.

A *kigo* project in English

Recently, the World Haiku Club (WHC) began a “worldwide *kigo* project” in English, which will collect “viable *kigo*.” The prospectus, written by its President, Takiguchi Susumu, states:

The real issue is whether or not finding local season words pertaining to specific climatic and cultural zones or countries in the rest of the world would be possible, plausible, desirable, useful or necessary in terms of making what is written as haiku more like haiku or better haiku. The fact that many poets have thus discarded or dismissed *kigo* (some have even condemned it as being no more than a weather forecast and not poetry) as inapplicable or irrelevant has damaged haiku outside Japan and denied it cultural and historical depth.

Certainly, this view posits the need for *kigo* in English, as it implies that some number of poets have up till now been writing faux haiku—that they could be writing something “more like haiku or better haiku,” with approved English *kigo*. Consequently, the result of not having or rejecting a potential *kigo* tradition is damage and “cultural and historical” superficiality. What exactly is the damage implied—that of the reputation of haiku in English, as viewed from Japan? The statement seems to reflect an opinion held by traditionalists who consider haiku, in whatever language, as something less than artful if lacking *kigo*. As for the denial of historical and cultural depth, this seems a thorny problem. It is true that in many mediocre haiku, the formulaic stylism of seasonal-reference-as-weather-forecast is rife. But then, to look fairly at any literature we ought to examine the best it has to offer, not the worst—there are quite a few excellent haiku not only lacking *kigo* but without seasonal reference—in both English and Japanese. So we enter into the zone of *kigo* politics: that

without *kigo*—and consequently a definitive, accepted agency-published glossary of *kigo* to follow—we cannot have cultural or historical depth.

after the bombing
ruins of a bridge
linked by the fog

— Nebojsa Simin (in *Knots*)[\[10\]](#)

In this haiku, which arguably possesses historical and cultural depth, “fog” may or may not connote season; in any case, the felt season here is war. It is any season, the season of hell. In Japanese, “fog” (*kiri*) is *kigo*. Its use as *kigo* in this haiku would subvert the traditional sense of *kigo*, at the very least. What does “spring” (as the *kigo* season of fog) have to do with this poem. At most, the *kigo* would imply an additional level of irony. The predominant aspect of this natural element lies in its insubstantial “as-if” character, in contrast to the violent machinations of humankind, rather than in any presumed seasonal quality.

Imagining a future *saijiki* in English, how are modern haiku to be treated—how is the contemporary vision of haiku to be expounded? Looking through various Anglo-American season-word projects, what can be witnessed is factory work, specimens, taxonomy. Starting points for focus perhaps, but a work of genius will likely be required before poets will tote that season-word glossary along.

Delimiting *kigo*

It can be argued that *kigo* do not exist outside of the *saijiki* in any real sense. Below, Tsubouchi Nenten broaches the issue delicately when he comments, “The *saijiki* is only one standard of *kigo*; *kigo* are always being born and have died within the nexus of haiku poets.” Quite true, although until the new term is officially documented and published in an approved *saijiki*, has it come into definitive existence as *kigo*? There is a difference between being born and arriving. The “death” of a *kigo* may occur these days as a function of disuse, but it’s hard to shake *kigo* out of electronic dictionaries with so much cheap memory available. It seems fair to say that in Japan *kigo* don’t simply exist, they must also be published—a *kigo* without a *saijiki* is like one hand clapping. This is part of the existential dilemma of *kigo*—their necessity for editorial approval, publication, and hence institutional exclusivity. Their bureaucratization—factors

which have in part caused a number of Japanese haiku poets to subvert or revolutionize *kigo* use, as mentioned. The Kyushu poet Hoshinaga Fumio comments, “Haiku is a centralized art. For instance, looking at the *saijiki*, the *kigo* focus only on the Kyoto or Tokyo (Edo) locales. There are no ‘local’ *saijiki*: you cannot find local characteristics. . . . I have repulsion, revulsion exactly against the formal rules and approach, *kigo*, and various formal necessities” (Gilbert 29-34).[\[11\]](#)

There is a question of source points for a *kigo* culture in English, if they are to reflect literary history and cultural depth. Looking to Japan for conceptual models, the oldest *kigo* originate in Chinese literature. In a like manner, should multi-cultural perspectives be considered mandatory in English-haiku culture? The first major Japanese *saijiki* collections were published in the Edo period, centuries after the earliest poetic anthologies (*Manyōushū*, *Kokin Wakashū*). Following a similar line, should medieval flower language or Elizabethan poetry be consulted for primary sources? Might historical literary “conversations,” the round of succeeding generations of poets’ and critics’ re-interpretations of earlier works, be a central focus? The dimension of literary reference has not yet been investigated; as an example, Edgar Allen Poe’s 1843 story “The Gold Bug” features a fantastic, poetic insect, a type of scarab beetle (*koganemushi*); would this be a likely candidate? Certainly, by lending literary dimension, such conceptual moves would begin to erode the cyclopean stranglehold of naïve realism within the contemporary season-word tradition. On the other hand, these artificially wrought creations may prove entirely spurious. Even accounting for future conceptual evolution, is the Anglo-American genre putting the cart before the horse, in self-willing a glossary of official terms into being? To the present, season-word collections have not included discussions of conceptual relevance within the wider cultural context of contemporary Anglo-American literature.

Confabulations: Kigo equals seasonal reference—as opposed to human nature?

Writing in 1986, Cor van den Heuvel published an influential preface to the second edition of *The Haiku Anthology* (a leading anthology of haiku in English), reprinted in the front of the current third (1999) edition. These sentences have occasioned some confusion:

It seems useful to me to keep the two genres [haiku and senryu] 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. (xlv-xlvi)

Indeed, one reason for the popularity of senryu from the Edo period on was that a *saijiki* became unnecessary. Yet, although haiku is considered a “serious” literature, its roots are likewise to be found within the inclusive humor of the haikai genre. (A recent book (in Japanese) by Tsubouchi Nenten, *Haiku Humor*, addresses this topic.) The above quotation was written at a time when a focused awareness of modern Japanese haiku was just beginning to be cultivated in English. Some 20 years later, the categorization of haiku as relating to nature—and senryu with human nature—seems reductive. While there is a locus to each form, interpenetration, synthesis and fusion are evident.

From the traditionalist point of view, there may be an insistence that haiku have *kigo*, but it is not the case that “the Japanese . . . [insist] that to be a haiku the poem must have a season word.” This has not been true within the last 100 or so years. The contemporary Japanese tradition does not find unanimity regarding *muki* haiku. We have the term “*muki* haiku” itself, which would be an oxymoron according to the above dictum. As well, “*kigo*” is being conflated with “Nature and the seasons”—as *opposed* to human nature (senryu).” Given that numerous examples of anthropomorphism exist in haiku (e.g. from Bashō, “even the monkey needs a raincoat”), it might be that the duality posed between “nature” and “human nature” is lent credence via a somewhat bald statement regarding genre separation. Significantly, senryu, lacking *kigo*, often contain seasonal reference. One does not need *kigo* to indicate season, as English haiku well reveal. In this aspect English haiku and Japanese senryu seem similar. In any case, the projected duality between “nature” and “human nature” seems at variance with the intentionality of Japanese haiku.[\[12\]](#)

Kigo: Ecocritical perspectives

Might having just “seasonal reference” and “non-season” haiku serve well enough in English. In the first American magazine devoted expressly to haiku,

John Bull wrote: “If there is to be a real ‘American Haiku’ we must—by trial and error—work out its own standards” (lxi). In a young tradition, these standards yet remain in flux.

Japanese haiku relate to a prevailing literary culture of nature, a culture of psychological space, and a culture of consciousness. Conversely, in the English tradition we have, primarily, realistic objectifications of nature: to paraphrase Joseph Campbell, we live in an age between myths. There seems a problem in English-haiku criticism concerning the prevalent idea that *kigo equals* nature. This seems a misreading of *kigo*. As Hoshinaga Fumio mentions, “*kigo* [may be] more of a symbolic element. . . . [The writer may experience *kigo*] through your heart (inner sense), not through seeing, touching, and so on” (Gilbert 40). Contemporary *kigo* stylism provides an environment which may be symbolic, surreal, impressionistic, disjunctive. Such subversions of naïve realism approach the mythic, so the archaic may be divined within, as much as the modern. Thus, it may be asked, what is the true intention of *kigo*? As a young genre, the English haiku has a unique opportunity to forge a refreshed sense of culture with regard to nature, and there may be more relevant philosophical issues at hand than the question of how to connote season words. A question yet to be addressed in English haiku is, “what do we mean by nature?” Pulitzer-prize winning poet and essayist Gary Snyder has been pursuing this topic over a lifetime. In his ecocritical essay “Unnatural Writing” he comments that

There is an older sort of nature writing that might be seen as largely essays and writing from a human perspective, middle-class, middlebrow Euro-American. It has a rhetoric of beauty, harmony, and sublimity. . . . Natural history writing [is] semi-scientific, objective, in the descriptive mode. Both these sorts are “naively realistic” in that they unquestioningly accept the front-mounted bifocal human eye, the poor human sense of smell, and other characteristics of our species, plus the assumption that the mind can, without much self-examination, directly and objectively “know” whatever it looks at. (163-64)

These comments also serve as a relevant critique of haiku. Snyder asks the reader in his introductory remarks to carefully examine the nature of human awareness, to question habitually unquestioned characteristics of reality.

Perhaps it is not *kigo* which will link us as international practitioners of haiku, but a deeper understanding of the contemporary ethos of our respective literatures. The central issue for haiku in English may not be so much related to *kigo* and cultural superficiality (the WHC thesis), as with a central question Beat writers such as Snyder first articulated in the 1950s: “How do we grow our own souls?” That is, how do we grow our own culture.

Tsubouchi Nenten: Kigo and the nature of true intention

Tsubouchi Nenten refers to several modes of *kigo* reification in locating the treasure of *kigo* to haiku: its “true intention.” The following quotation is taken from his *An Introduction to Haiku (Haiku Nyūmon)*.^[13]

Concerning the “Glossary of Seasonal Terms for Haiku Composers (*saijiki*)”

There is a measure of covenant in *kigo*. This covenant can be described as one’s true intention or true sensibility. For example, considering “spring wind” (*haru kaze*): there is a word, *shunpūtaitō* (from the Chinese: “wind blowing mild and genial”) which can be applied to human character. It is made of four kanji characters: *haru* (spring) and *kaze* (wind) plus the compound (*taitō*), meaning calm, quiet, peaceful wind. It is a true intention of the spring wind. The true intention is a tradition of the spring wind used by the waka, the Chinese poem, and the haiku, etc. So, the single (*kigo*) word is a distillation wrought by tradition representing the true intention of *kigo*. The *saijiki* elucidates (glosses) the true intentions of such words. In a nutshell, the expression such as “lonely spring breeze” (*sabishii haru kaze*) does not exist as *kigo*.

What?

So, when the spring breeze is felt as lonely, “what am I going to do”?

In this case, the spring breeze: it’s calm and warm; however, I feel that it is lonely—nonetheless, there is no way to concretely express this. Here is my haiku,

春風に母死ぬ龍角散が散り

harukaze ni haha shinu ryuukakusan ga chiri

to the spring wind
mother dead, herbal medicine
scatters

Concerning this haiku, in this case the spring wind blows calmly and peacefully. However, the person (figure) who exists in the wind is looking at the spring breeze feeling sad, because their mother has died. Because the spring breeze is calm and peaceful, the person's mind (heart, feeling) is also (sensed as) fleeting—as unreliable as the herbal powder that scatters to the wind.

Recently, there are people who make *muki* haiku; concerning *kigo*, the external, objective world is divided into four seasons as in a mechanism or system; that is to say, the external, objective world of four seasons (for *kigo*) is something like wearing spectacles (blinkers). For example, the tomato and the cucumber appear in the

market all the year round, though the *kigo* (for those vegetables) is summer. When the external world is delimited in this way at the four seasons, the delimitation marks the rhythm of life. You ask me are *kigo* man-made? Yes, exactly. There are originally no four seasons in the natural world, but humankind delimits the natural world at the four seasons, and so it happens that *kigo* arise, as one result.

In a word, *kigo* is a culture. Because there is a culture, there are generally trends, but sometimes the change is drastic. . . . The *saijiki* is a collection of *kigo*; however, the entries in the *saijiki* do not cover all *kigo*. The *saijiki* is only one standard of *kigo*; *kigo* are always being born and have died within the nexus of haiku poets.
(50-54)

A measure of covenant

Tsubouchi points out just above that “the single (*kigo*) word is a distillation wrought by tradition representing the true intention of *kigo*.” In this sense, each *kigo* possesses a complex alchemy, every term a multidimensional surface measured within a literary cosmos. Modern haiku writers often subvert or otherwise alter the means or methods of *kigo* presentation in their compositions; at the same time, most continue to utilize the transformative poetic power inhering in *kigo* culture, the “environment” spawned by a millennium of *kigo*. This environment includes nature and culture, objective and subjective, fact and fancy—the *topoi* of psyche; that is, “reality” as given by the cultural connotations of the terms. As seen above, Tsubouchi is not discussing the true intentions of seasonal reference, but rather the true intentions of a wellspring of literary, philosophic and spiritual culture. What are these true intentions? And, what are the intentions of Anglo-American haiku, regarding *kigo*?

Would it be best to avoid amassing *kigo* terms-to-be altogether, and seek first the heart of *kigo*, its “true intention,” as Tsubouchi above implies. Perhaps only at such a juncture will the tradition in English have acquired the needed measure of insight required to move it further toward new sensibilities,

expansions of dimension, regarding the actual words of a proposed *kigo* world. Whatever words they might be, these upstart *kigo*, they would be marked but not delimited by haiku — as *kigo* represent a more extensive culture than that inscribed by any single literary genre. *Kigo* are not a subset of haiku, but the obverse: haiku utilize the historical culture and tradition of *kigo*, in which the haiku genre participates.

From the perspective of the Anglo-American genre, as with all unique cultural treasures, *kigo* may be an achievement witnessed, studied and admired, rather than possessed. It is also quite possible that poets and critics will proceed along an entirely different line. In fact, it seems unclear how to proceed regarding the birthing of a *kigo* culture in English. Likely, poets themselves will open us to new haiku vistas, yet there also exists a need for further understanding.

ENDNOTES

[1] See “A *kigo* project in English” in this paper, for a critique along these lines by Takiguchi Susumu.

[2] In this paper “haiku in English” (in shortened form, “English haiku”) is considered to be largely synonymous with Anglo-American haiku. While the English haiku is a worldwide phenomenon, judgment of quality is currently evaluated upon the basis of the Anglo-American haiku tradition.

[3] For the sake of brevity, in this paper “nature” indicates the outdoors; particularly, scenes or images which convey the psycho-aesthetic sense of being autonomous from human intervention.

[4] The University of Virginia *Japanese Haiku, a Topical Dictionary* is an online in-progress work based upon the [Nyūmon Saijiki](#) by the Museum of Haiku Literature in Tokyo. To find the reference, click the link “Full Entries,” then scroll down to “wataridori” <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/japanese/haiku/saijiki/full.html>>.

[5] Traditionally, the arrival of birds in autumn marks the season as a presence, much like specific seasonal varieties of blooming flowers, while the “negative” phenomenon of absenting birds does not occasion significance. This would seem a mark of *kigo* culture.

- [6] University of Virginia (*op. cit.*). Under “Full Entries” find “aki: Autumn,” then the subsection, “The Heavens,” and click the link “tsuki.”
- [7] For those interested in a Japanese translation of “moonlit hills,” some possibilities might be *tsuki oka ni*, *oka ni tsuki*, or *okatsuki*. In each case, the kigo is “*tsuki*,” moon.
- [8] University of Virginia (*op. cit.*). See Endnote 4.
- [9] See “Gendai Haiku Kyokai” in “Works Cited.”
- [10] Nebojsa Simin lives in Novi Sad and is editor-in-chief of the influential Serbian publication *Haiku Letter Magazine*.
- [11] Hoshinaga further comments: “[Notwithstanding,] *Kigo* are very useful and convenient for creating a sense of place (where) and time (when). We can say that a *kigo* is just one word — but this one word can speak volumes. . . . *kigo* [can be] more of a symbolic element. . . . I make *kigo* with my *real* experience, my sense of reality. . .” (Gilbert 34-35).
- [12] Cf. White, Lynn. The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis.” *The Ecocriticism Reader*. Ed. Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Georgia UP, 1996. 3-14.
- [13] The text within parenthesis represents my added comment; this method seemed preferable to taxing the reader with footnotes. The original linear text was also separated into paragraphs. I wish to gratefully acknowledge the Kumamoto poet Kanemitsu Takeyoshi for help with the translation.

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Mark Gilfillan, UK

English Summer
a crow
keeps wicket

Michael Dylan Welch, USA

Ken Jones
holds the phones
when haibun reading
consumes his evening.

Martin Lucas
reduces mucus
in haiku submissions—
among his missions.

A. C. Missias
rhymes with Tobias—
it's gender we don't know
. . . so on we go.

Paul Pfleuger, Jr.
is surely a senior
at gendai haiku
that make it new.

David Priebe
may give you a freebie
of his monthly haiku journal,
so consistent it's infernal.

LeRoy Gorman, Canada

Sunday hours
the liquor store busker
strums in a minor key

booze lunch
the insurance broker
has it covered

up a tree
her short skirt her
peach
blossoms

Jennifer Hambrick, USA

recovery room
i ask the questions
he can't

the one sin
she doesn't confess –
the lies
she tells
the priest

Simon Hanson, Australia
Ron C. Moss, Tasmania, Australia



C.P. Harrison, USA

40th Birthday-
my winter body stretching
my summer clothes

Barbara Kaufmann, USA

waning moon
mother stops eating
ice cream

vital signs
every few minutes
I check the peonies







mid-summer eve
it slips quietly
through my fingers

bk

Mary Kendall, USA

beginner's yoga class...
our first sun salutation
eclipsed by the teacher

OCD
taming laugh lines
on my selfie

proprioception lost in his own world



cloud watching—
hours spent imagining
a different ending

Haiga ~ Mary Kendall



oil slick rainbow
each colour
a different scent

Haiga by Mary Kendall



ice-fishing . . .
what secrets
hide below?

Haiga by Mary Kendall

Brendon Kent, England

missing the ball
the tennis player checks
his racquet

not caught out
the wicket-keeper's wife
plays the field

Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy, UK

crying loudly
my baby has perfected
the beggar's voice

funeral pyre
every cloud shaping
into dad

pulling back dad's feet
i gently close the door
of his hearse

bringing me
back to my senses
her tongue

fart toy
the old man
does it for free

our old house
the veneer peeling off
my memories

at the café
we agree to meet
halfway

high up in the sky
my son's kite, where i
couldn't reach

playing house...
mamma and papa
living happily

my lad insists
that he IS playing
the guitar
of course he is...
only just playing

Phyllis Lee, USA

class reunion

old friends

sharing sins

old age

forgetting and wanting

to forget

another day

fighting depression

the class clown

Eva Limbach, Germany

war bride -
a dove collecting
broken twigs

thunderclouds
all those letters
I didn't write

Chen-ou Liu, Canada

My Millennial Life

ten to eight
I hop from one job
to another

couch surfing
my circle of friends
grows smaller

wingsuit flying
my dream world becomes
larger and larger

my view
on work-life balance
tilted downward

after election
Grandpa rearranges the rocks
in his Zen garden

a drunk yelling
at his wife yelling
at their kids

Eric Lohman, USA

nude beach we air our differences

Michael Dylan Welch, USA

Bruce Ross
rides a hoss,
proclaiming the nature
of haiku nomenclature.

Alexis Rotella
writes no novella—
it's just haiku
she'd rather do.

Robert Spiess
loved to increase
the quality of ku
written by you.

Ebba Story's
never sorry
for choosing quality
—it's her prerogaty.

Gregory Longenecker, USA

childhood
the silence of God
on Sunday afternoons

in the end
it's left to her
Piéta

confessional
I leave the sanctity
of the therapist's office

Dad
I only knew him
half his life

I see
how she suffers
his stroke

the friend
I never had
Schrödinger's cat

spring ahead
fall behind
she's dating someone else

windup toy
he keeps moving
after she's gone

Amy Losak, USA

holding the door
the old lady tells me
"Thank you, momma"

thin gray rain
I paint a senryu
on my nail

twitter chat
breaking through
the morning blinds –

Martha Magenta, England

biopsy
the alien
in me

Hannah Mahoney, USA

gnat cloud
we don't open our mouths
to complain

Nicholas Mathisen, USA

today's forecast
more of the same
small talk

spring cleaning
we tangle over whose hair
clogged the tub

plot twist
the sudden absence
of toilet paper

late night
the cursor
blinks back

elk season
picturing her ex
in the crosshairs

the mechanic
puts it in terms
I pretend to understand

Your Turn

A rengay by Tanya McDonald and Michael Dylan Welch

blonde pigtails
the last Uno card
reflected in her glasses Tanya

losing at Boggle
to the math major Michael

checkmate again
pieces collected
from the checkered quilt Tanya

summer's end
I beat the computer
at backgammon Michael

New Year's Eve
he gets another Yahtzee Tanya

advance to Go . . .
we agree
to call it a draw Michael

Joe McKeon, USA

string bikini
the sudden swelling
of a rogue wave

super moon
she fails to mention
her dark side

history class
the names of the dead
on tattooed arms

rush hour
my GPS recommends
the road less travelled

drought over
one piece of straw
in her hair

Lori A Minor, USA

cat scratch
another lie
about my scars

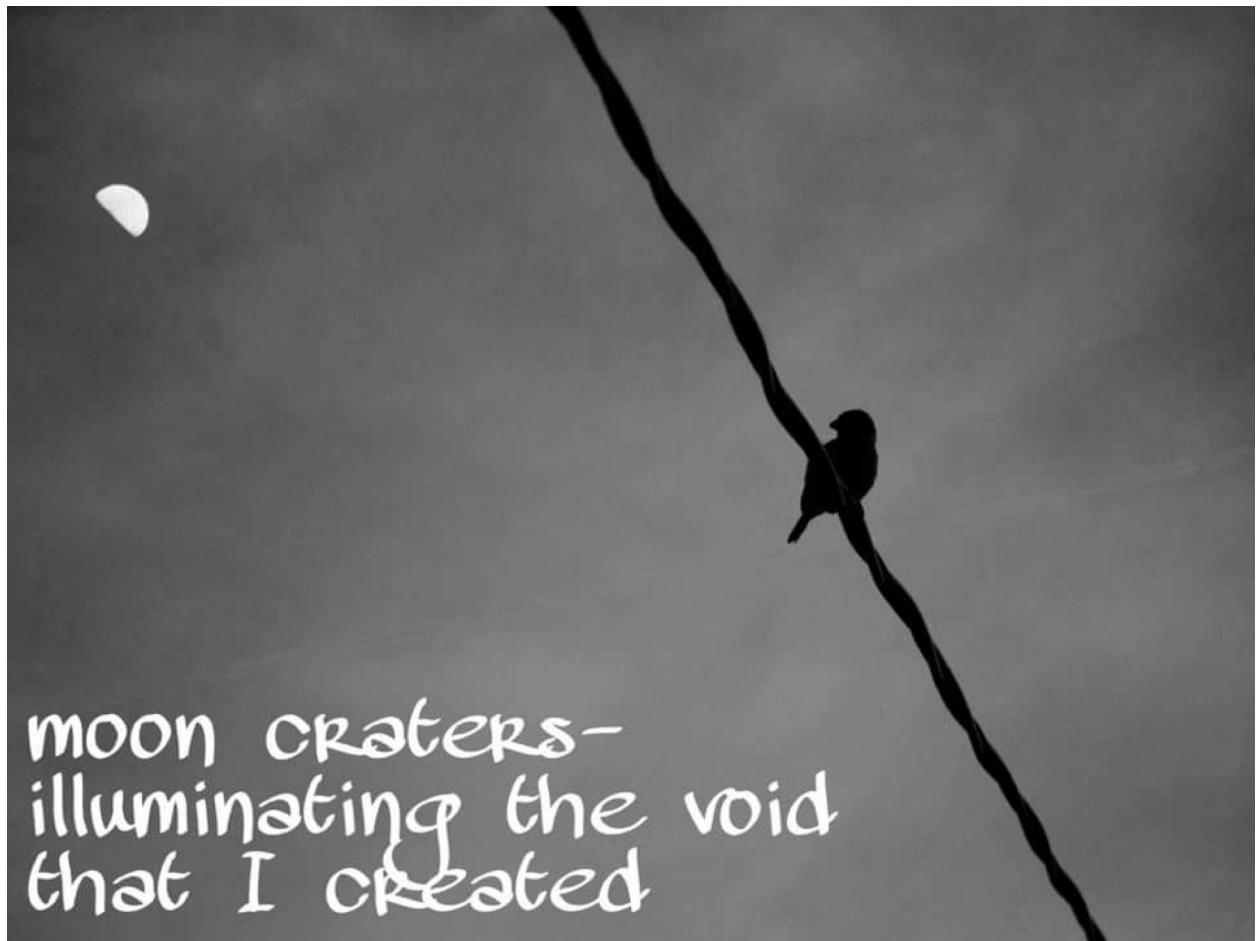
porcelain doll
I reglue pieces
of myself

hide and seek
another game
against myself

dirty laundry
our aromas
become one

connect the dots
I trace a star
in his freckles

finding myself
as gray
as the sky
sips of bland tea
in the city winter



moon craters-
illuminating the void
that I created

Ashish Narain, India

missing
the things about him
she once hated

Lee Nash, France

honeymoon

his 'n' hers towels, pillows

mosquitoes

dice snakes ladders this game of life

Nika, British Columbia, Canada
Jim McKinniss, USA



haiku: Nika photo: Jim McKinniss



*estate sale
the lingering scent
of his cigar*



*one last evening
of forbidden pleasure
Shrove Tuesday*

*haiku: Nika
photo: Jim McKinniss*

Gail Oare, USA

memorial day
the parade lengthens
by a new war

Unexpected

The car was parked the bottom of my driveway, its emergency blinkers on. From the panorama of phlox from the woods across the road showed through the windshield I could see that no one was sitting in the driver's seat. Then I saw him sprinting up the road toward the car. A young man in faded jeans, a bright orange road worker's shirt, and bandana. The tattoo wound down his arm and terminated at the hand that held a large cluster of pink phlox. He jumped into the car, popped the gear and squealed the tires out onto the road and around the bend.

stopping by the woods
on a rosy evening
with and without frost

Ken Olson, USA

jazz singer
the blues in her
rose tattoo

the homeless problem everyone's two cents

Anirudh Raghavan, India

Inhale.....
(The ant on my toe)
Exhale.

Morning Jog –
My muffin top
A mind of its own

Dave Read, Canada

black and white ...
we blame the loss
on the ref

shooter's touch
I practice
my excuses

rebound ...
our centre's
new girlfriend

fadeaway ...
the aging guard's
last shot

wiping Gatorade
from his chin
double dribble

fast break ...
he tightens his shoe
deal

low post
he pivots
on Twitter

backspin ...
I turn back time
on the driveway

unlaced shoe
the holes in
his defense

pickpocket ...
he learns to protect
the ball

Bryan Rickert, USA

trial separation–
searching the house over
for something we lost

Michael Dylan Welch, USA

George Swede
smokes no weed
unless his honey
says its funny.

Charlie Trumbull
likes the rumble
of modern haiku—
if it's fresh and new.

Cor van den Heuvel
never called for removal
of “tundra” from his books—
gaining sad and happy looks.

Dick Whyte
holds no spite
for those who won't write you
topical haiku.

Alexis Rotella, USA

His career began
the day he dipped
a classmate's pigtail
into the inkwell...
sumi-e exhibit

So Much for Family

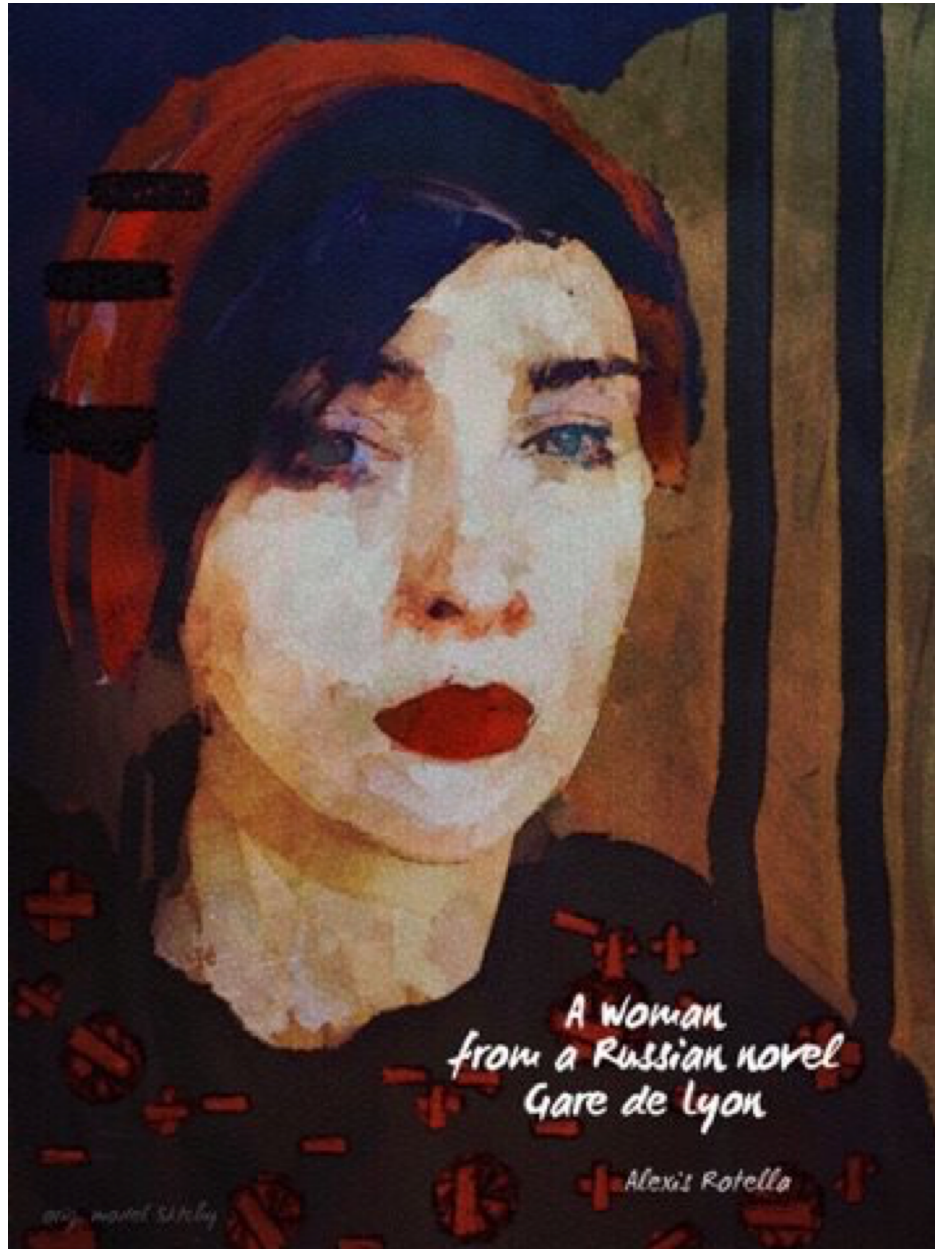
I dress my brother like a girl, put on the bonnet with white polka dots, walk him up the hill to the candy store. Mrs. Milaveck fills a paper bag with Charms, licorice sticks, candy cigarettes, wax lips and Bazooka bubble gum, for free.

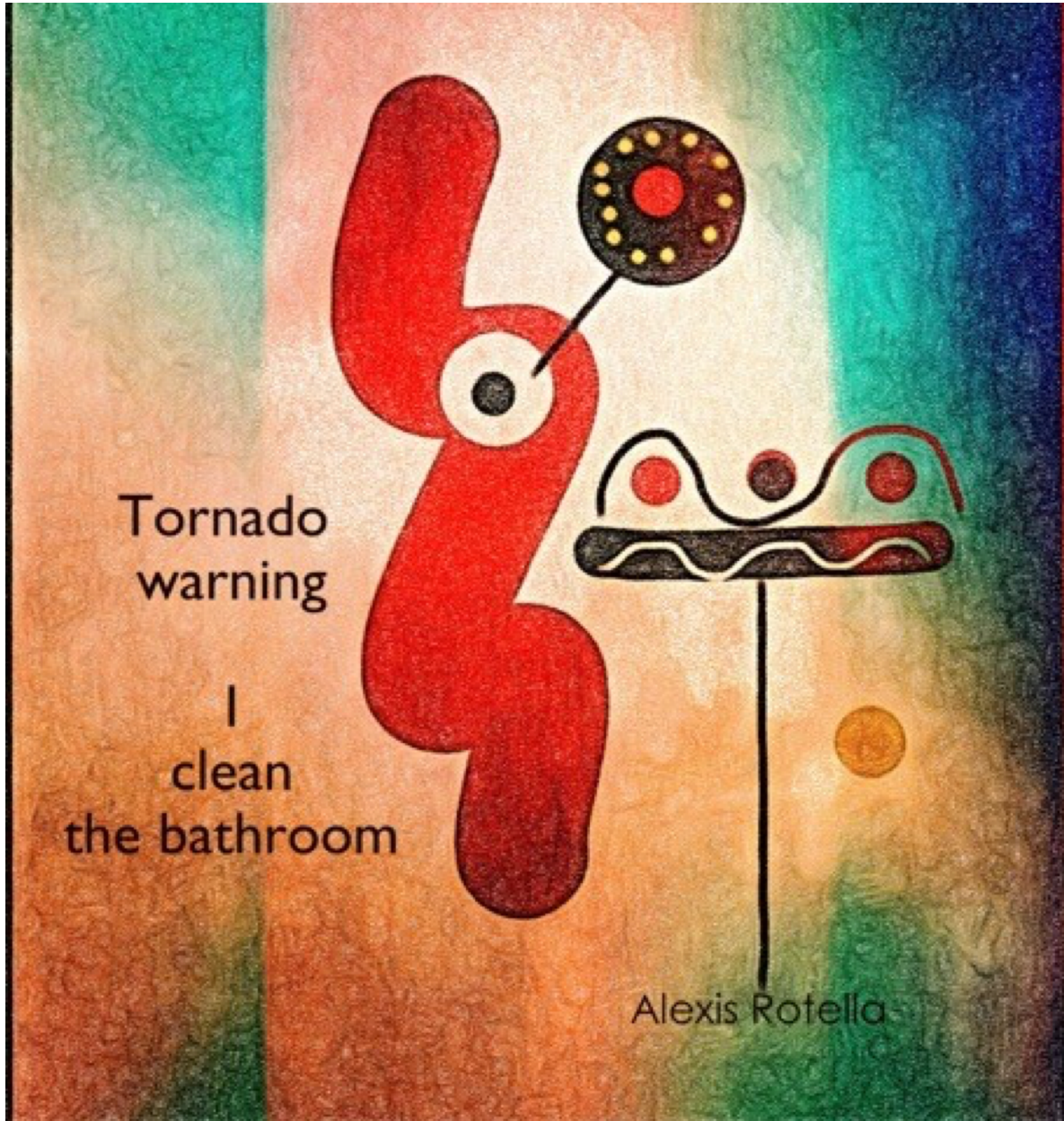
Mom's Funeral
no one's shoulder
to cry on











Agnes Eva Savich, USA

eclipsing the sunset
my children's
laughter

Olivier Schopfer, Switzerland

new glasses
still the same
points of view

evening bus
two English teens
French kissing

bitter morning
losing the sprint race
with the wind

missing you...
the peeling sheets
of the paperbark maple

Tiffany Shaw-Diaz, USA

classic TV
when everything
was black and white

Stanley Sicheloff, USA

between jobs
the recliner gains
200 pounds

Michael Smeer, The Netherlands

star gazing
I quench my thirst
for silence

"oh, little spider,
I will help you along" –
jhgfdgffdsxzz

Christina Sng, Singapore

flames reflected
in a child's haunted eyes
city bombing

sateen sheets
the rough touch
of his hand

cloud trail
following the path
of my father

Debbie Strange, Canada

sheet lightning
my hands find the bones
of your hips

turbulence
so many unaired
grievances

teaching him how
to make cookies . . .
summer snow







petal-strewn
the path we follow
disappears

Rachel Sutcliffe, England

incurable
I fight it
with poetry

bedridden
the blue bottle buzzes
against the pane

it all ends
in lilies
this life

hospital exit
I try to ignore
the revolving door

Julie Warther, USA

engagement photo
his best
court shirt

therapy session
beginning inside
the parenthesis

25 years . . .
a taste of everything
we vowed

how much of it is me . . .
a layer of dust
on the wedding photo

speed dating
he tells her all
about herself

after her life story
she asks if I mind
being a pillow

meeting me halfway both ends of the candle

Bill Waters, USA

school days . . .
no romance
in straight-As

turn of the tide . . .
pulled by the current
of my thoughts

Michael Dylan Welch, USA

plane crash—
all the fortune tellers
who never make their conference

midsummer thunder—
we take turns
having the last word

drifting in
with the spring breeze
exhaust fumes

air show—
the crowd turns to watch
a passing crow

for Lent
the neon buddha
gives up Lent

after the long winter
the neon buddha welcomes
springs' releaf

the neon buddha
wants to know
is "idiot" a cutting word?

at the garden show
the neon buddha sez
here's looking at you, orchid

Smart Cars

A rengay by Michael Dylan Welch and Tanya McDonald

Corvette club—
the stud shows off
his trophy wife

Michael

the brand-new Hummer
out of gas

Tanya

hoisted skyward
by the wrecking magnet
Vega rising

Michael

Ford Focus—
the windshield blurred
by bug splatters

Tanya

overtaken on the freeway
by a Yugo

Michael

Mensa convention—
my keys locked
in the Smart Car

Tanya

Kath Abela Wilson, USA

wishbone
the part of him
that snapped

crow pose
i'm still a mockingbird
at it

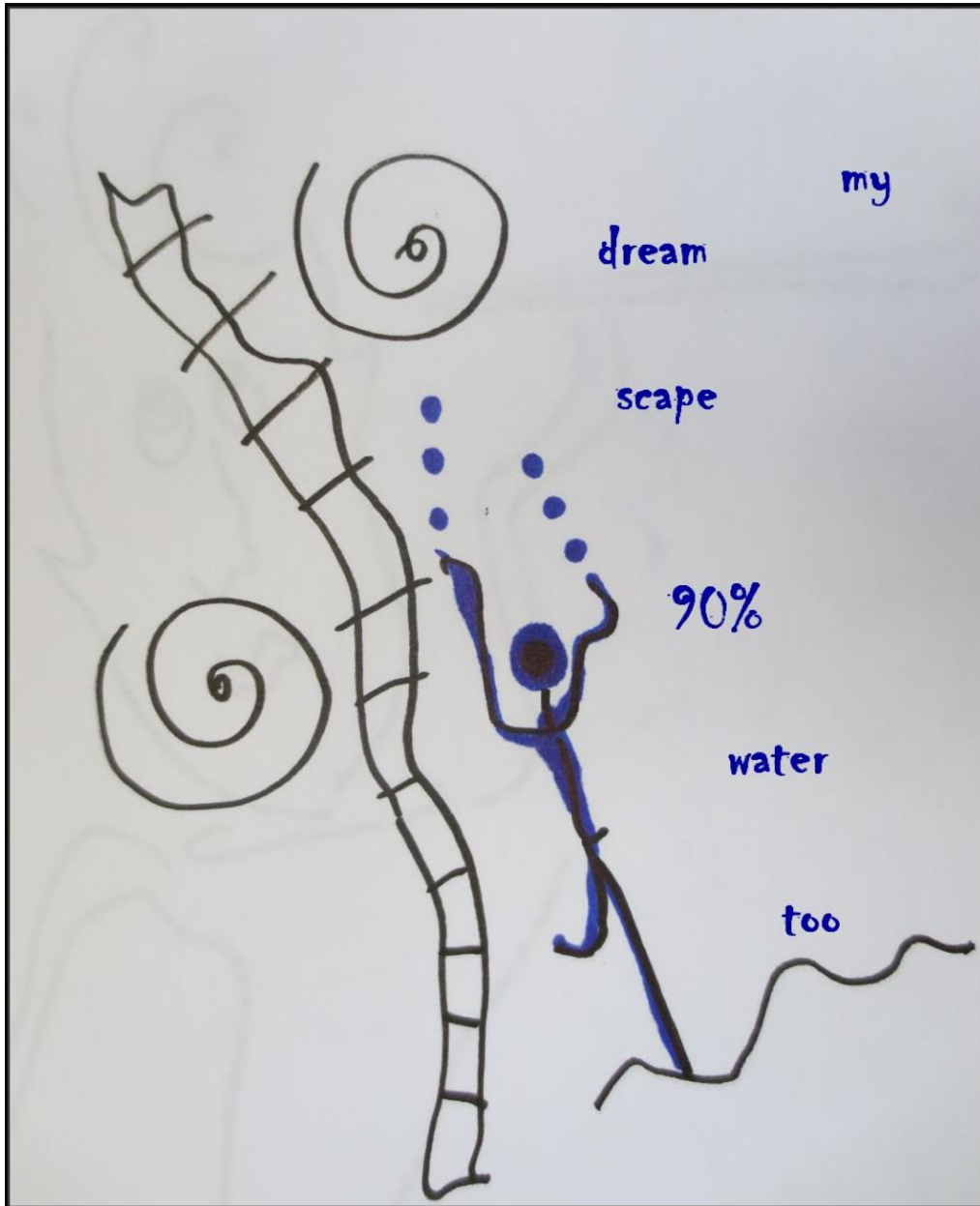
toy sheriff badge
he becomes president
still wearing it

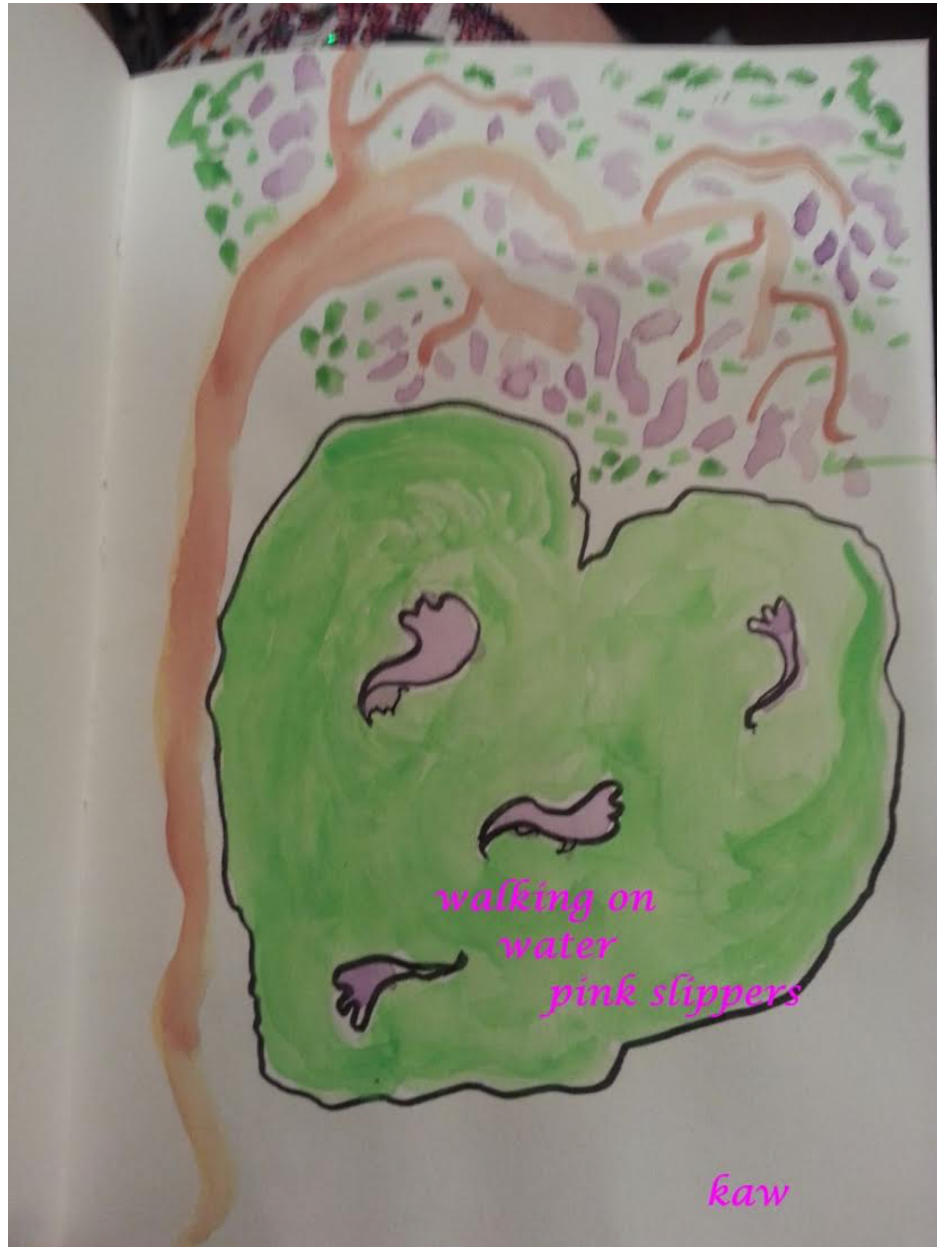
shaped
like the white house
storm clouds

frost flowers
the bouquet I send
to the white house



*day's end
even buddha
has some regrets*





Hatsue Yamamoto, Canada

Silence

leaving Japan
how do I abandon
my son's buried urn

far from home
his laughter in the scent
of cherry blossoms

children's laughter
this yearning
for motherhood

reading Issa
as if it isn't here
morning dew

silence
in the children's playground
cicada shell

unbearable silence
in his finger paintings
December moon

his fourth birthday
the house as silent
as the moon

the next morning
a butterfly
on his tricycle

closing his toy box
a leaf skips across
the frozen lake

children skating...
beneath the ice a kite
with a broken string

first light
losing him again
in a dream

Remembering Carlos Colón

Terri L. French, USA

A Long way from Tupelo

In a Kalamazoo nursing home he convalesces, after hip replacement surgery, in teddy bear jammies and blue suede slippers.

empty stage
Elvis has left
the building

Alan S. Bridges, USA

lost in the woods
a marijuana leaf
points the ways

Inspired by Carlos Colon's:

pointing
my way home
the starfish

Alan adds, "I was lucky enough to meet Carlos in Schenectady at the 2015 HNA Conference, when we both checked out of the hotel at the same time, with "Hey, aren't you..."?"

Danny Blackwell, UK/Spain

“treat me like a fool...”
tossing carwash tokens
into the busker’s hat

one night too lonely too long

El Paso
on the border a radio plays
“i’ll be home for christmas...”

the busker
hijacked by the drunken tourist
singing Elvis

Mark Gilbert, UK

'It's Now or Never'
a turtle-neck sweater
with a ring in the pocket

one sequin
becomes an exploding star
the King they called him

posing like a statue
waiting for the applause
to reach a peak

"Are you Evel?"
the Elvis impersonator
without his wig

just pretending
beneath his sequined jumpsuit
faded trainers