

JUXTA EIGHT

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP IN HAIKU

2022

THE *Haiku* FOUNDATION

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JUXTA**EIGHT**

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Dedicated to the memory
of our good friend and colleague

STEPHEN ADDISS

April 2, 1935 – May 11, 2022

EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to *Juxtapositions* 8! This issue contains three exciting new “firsts” for *Juxta*: a themed issue, a featured conference presentation, and a Best of Issue award.

The theme is “haiku and wellness” in the broadest sense. This issue contains three essays that address the theme in their own ways: “Haiku and Human Flourishing,” “Parkinson’s Toolbox: The Case for Haiku,” and “bird tweets turn into an orchestra: Haiku and Neurodiversity.”

The featured conference presentation, “Bashō’s Haiku Pedagogy as Mindfulness Training,” also engages the issue’s theme. Furthermore, it launches a new section in the journal that will contain a conference presentation or keynote address in an effort to more widely circulate information from important presentations on haiku.

Additionally, this issue contains the first Best of Issue award. We are grateful to an anonymous donor for making a monetary prize available and to our three esteemed judges: Janine Beichman, Cheryl Crowley, and Toru Kiuchi. Congratulations to Adam L. Kern of the University of Wisconsin–Madison (“A Certain Tightness in the Chest: *Sarasen* (Salaryman Senryū on 3-11, Covid-19, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, And Other Such Catastrophes”) and Amanda Monteleone of the University of Texas–Arlington (“Living in Community: The More-than-Human World in Gerald Vizenor’s Haiku”), whose work tied for the **JUXTA** Award for *Juxtapositions* 7.

We have several other notable contributions to this issue. There are two interviews, one with Roberta Beary and one with Robert Epstein; the resources section contains an informative overview of Haikupedia, a valuable resource for scholars; and there are four excellent book reviews.

While there is much to celebrate in *Juxtapositions* 8, it is with great sadness that I must share the passing of one of our editors. Stephen Addiss was a renowned *haiga* artist, educator, and scholar; a wonderful collaborator on this journal; and a very fine person. He will be greatly missed by all of us. Please see Josh Hockensmith's beautiful memorial tribute to Steve at the end of this issue.

Thank you to everyone who made *Juxtapositions* 8 possible, including Managing Editor Jim Kacian and The Haiku Foundation. We hope you enjoy this issue.

Ce ROSENOW
Senior Editor

THE **JUXTA** AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN HAIKU RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

Adam L. KERN
University of Wisconsin–Madison

and

Amanda MONTELEONE
University of Texas – Arlington

are co-recipients of the **JUXTA** Award for

Juxtapositions 7.

The adjudicators were Janine BEICHMAN,
Cheryl CROWLEY, and Toru KIUCHI.

The **JUXTA** Award is a cash stipend granted to the author(s) of the article deemed “best of issue” in each iteration of *Juxtapositions*, and is made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor.

JUXTA

Articles



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

HAIKU AND HUMAN FLOURISHING

Scott MASON

ABSTRACT: Not quite a quarter-century old, the field of Positive Psychology takes as its subject well-being: what it is that constitutes the good life and makes that life worth living. Its goal is nothing less than to increase individual and collective human *flourishing*. Positive Psychology is distinct from—but complementary to—mainstream psychology, which has had as its main focus the understanding and relief of human misery or *languishing*. There exist a variety of pathways to well-being and overall flourishing. These include the arts and humanities, the essential components of human culture. Not even a decade old, the Positive Humanities are “the branch of learning concerned with human culture in its relation to human flourishing.” (Pawelski 20) This article examines the practice of English-language haiku through the lens of Positive Psychology, mindful of implications for the *art* of English-language haiku from current scholarly research and literature in the Positive Humanities. It reveals that the practice of English-language haiku aligns remarkably well with all five of the elements that comprise the pillars of Positive Psychology—more so than does “mainstream” Western poetry or perhaps any other form of Western art. Accordingly, English-language haiku represents a fertile subject for scholarly attention and research, related both to its current and possible future contributions to human flourishing.¹

1. Although this article examines the practice of haiku from the standpoint of its contributions to “positive” states (well-being, overall human flourishing), it should also be noted that the practice of haiku has often served a *therapeutic* role in helping individuals to reflect on, share, and come to terms with a range of “negative” life events (e.g., loss of a loved one, wartime experiences) and circumstances (e.g., chronic disease, incarceration).

*Well, then . . . since we all of us desire to live well,
how can we do so?*

— Socrates²

*Haiku is the final flower of all Eastern culture;
it is also a way of living.*

— R. H. Blyth³

Although haiku poetry was known to and even tried by a number of individuals outside its native Japan in the half century prior to World War II, it only gained any real traction in the West during the years just afterward — in large part because of the landmark volumes on haiku written by the British scholar R. H. Blyth.⁴ In the seven decades since, English-language haiku has become, arguably, “the primary ‘people’s poetry’ worldwide” (Lyles 10). The purpose of this article is to examine the practice, and to understand the global appeal, of English-language haiku in light of the relatively new field of Positive Psychology. It also seeks to supplement that understanding with insights gleaned from the even more recent field of the Positive Humanities.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

When he became president of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998, Dr. Martin Seligman, a clinical practitioner and chairman of the psychology department at the University of Pennsylvania, proposed in his presidential address a new field of “Positive Psychology.” While acknowledging the accomplishments of traditional psychology in understanding and

2. Plato (Euthydemus, 278 E, 279 A) quoting Socrates, see McMahon 47.

3. See Blyth 5.

4. Especially the four-volume *Haiku* from The Hokuseido Press, first published from 1949 to 1952.

treating a range of mental disorders, he argued that attention to optimal human functioning—what makes individuals flourish and communities thrive—might not only increase well-being but also decrease pathology, with both outcomes serving the greater interest of improving people’s lives. This challenge called for separate study and practice; as Seligman noted elsewhere, “[t]he goal of understanding well-being and building the enabling conditions of life is by no means identical with the goal of understanding misery and undoing the disabling conditions of life.” (Seligman 2)

Others had already been exploring related questions, and in 2000 Seligman was joined by Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi of the University of Chicago in co-editing a special edition of APA’s journal *American Psychologist* on the subject of Positive Psychology. In his 2011 book *Flourish* (Seligman 13-26), Seligman crystallized key learnings from the new field of Positive Psychology into a unified theory of well-being which identified five principal elements contributing to that state. Using the mnemonic PERMA, those elements consist of the following:

- ***Positive emotion.*** Happiness and life satisfaction, as subjectively perceived and reported.
- ***Engagement.*** Involvement with an important activity at the level of total absorption in which one loses the sense of time and even self, as (in retrospect) subjectively perceived and reported. This element is grounded in Csikszentmihalyi’s pioneering research into what he labeled a state of “flow.”
- ***Positive Relationships.*** Connections with others that foster well-being.
- ***Meaning.*** The sense of belonging to and serving something believed to be bigger than one’s self.
- ***Accomplishment.*** Success, winning, achievement and/or mastery.

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One might envision these elements as situated along a continuum between what Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, called the *hedonic*, related to basic pleasures (most closely reflected here in *Positive emotion*), and the *eudaimonic*, related to higher-order types of fulfillment (most especially *Meaning* in this construct).

Although usually experienced in some combination, these elements can each be pursued for their own sake. Seligman emphasizes that no single element defines well-being; for instance, well-being consists of more than positive emotions alone. He does assert, however, that “[t]he way we choose our course in life is to maximize all five of these elements.” (Seligman 25)

THE POSITIVE HUMANITIES

In the early 2000s Dr. Seligman established the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania where he and his colleagues developed the first Masters degree program in Positive Psychology. Heading that program was (and is) Dr. James O. Pawelski, who also envisioned a multi-disciplinary field of study and practice, the Positive Humanities, to explore and promote the particular ways in which the arts and humanities support well-being — very much in keeping with their original purpose (McMahon 45-50). In 2014 Pawelski founded the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project⁵ to advance that work, inviting dozens of scholars, arts and humanities practitioners, and assorted other thought leaders to act as advisors and participants. He also enlisted Dr. Louis Tay of Purdue University to serve as the project’s director of research. In 2021, Tay and Pawelski co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of the Positive Humanities* (Tay i-547), a 547-page volume featuring thirty-eight scholarly essay-chapters documenting the current state of research and learning in the field. That work informs much of what appears here.

5. <https://www.humanitiesandhumanflourishing.org/>.

In 2018, Tay, Pawelski and a third colleague proposed a conceptual model (Tay 6-9) comprised of five psychological mechanisms by which the arts and humanities facilitate flourishing outcomes. This model uses the acronym RAISE, representing the psychological mechanisms of Reflection, Acquisition, Immersion, Socialization and Expression. PERMA maps onto RAISE, although imperfectly. The best match is observed with Meaning / Reflection and with Engagement / Immersion; there's a moderate connection with Positive Relationships / Socialization; and the least (but some) similarity is seen with Accomplishment / Acquisition and with Positive Emotion / Expression.

Haiku possesses qualities of both a practice or “way” (think yoga or meditation) and an art form (think narrative fiction), with the perceived balance between the two differing from individual to individual. Accordingly, our examination will proceed here using the PERMA construct from Positive Psychology instead of the RAISE model, with its more focused orientation to the arts and humanities, from the Positive Humanities; however, a RAISE-informed assessment of haiku in its purely *literary* aspects might be worthy of future consideration.

HAIKU AND POSITIVE EMOTION

Haiku in the West is the province of amateurs.

The statement above stands as fact. Virtually no one outside of Japan writes, reads or otherwise deals with haiku for either financial gain or career advancement. Those who do would most likely not fill a small conference room.

But the statement above is no put-down — perhaps just the opposite. Taking the etymology of *amateur* as our guide, those who routinely write, read or otherwise concern themselves with haiku do so out of *love* for the exercise, or at least for some personal enjoyment. Haiku poets tend to write about whatever they please and what

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pleases them. Haiku readers—mostly the same people—read haiku because they find the practice pleasurable, even (dare one say it) fun.

Pleasurable experiences engender positive emotions.

To be sure, “mainstream” (i.e., non-haiku) poetry is likewise anything but commercially lucrative for its practitioners—or at least for all but a handful of notable exceptions like a Billy Collins or the late Mary Oliver. But career advancement is another matter altogether.

Much of the poetry published in the United States and elsewhere is the production of MFA candidates and academics affiliated with creative writing programs or sister disciplines in institutions of higher learning. While it would go too far to suggest that none of this work is produced for the writer’s and reader’s pleasure (unquestionably much of it is), additional or alternative objectives certainly apply. To earn acceptances from the editors of prestigious journals and the favorable regard of fellow academics, these poets may incline, for instance, towards particular modes of writing (e.g., challenging rather than “accessible”) or subjects (e.g., topical concerns or causes like social justice, rather than “traditional” sources of poetic inspiration like the natural world) in which the writer’s and reader’s pleasure or edification is secondary if not entirely beside the point.

The aforementioned Mary Oliver enjoyed both popular acclaim and critical recognition (Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, coveted fellowships) for her poetry. Yet “the scholarly world never fully embraced these inspiring works that transformed the everyday world into the sacred.” (Wilkinson 110) This reception accords with the general skepticism and “hermeneutics of suspicion” (Pawelski 24) that have characterized American and perhaps other Western institutions of higher learning for the last half century or more— institutions that have produced a range of

“critical” theories which entail, for instance, “reading texts against the grain to discover hidden meanings, latent psychopathologies, and corrosive ideologies.” (Pawelski 24) Simple pleasures fare poorly in such a climate.

So, with certain exceptions, haiku and non-haiku poetry tend to march to the beats of very different drummers.

The study of haiku might be characterized as the return to a “hermeneutics of *affirmation*” (Pawelski 24). The haiku editor and poet Martin Lucas had this to say: “A good haiku does not draw attention to its own processes, it directs attention at things, in a way which is outward-looking and, in a sense, celebratory.” (Lucas 8) But those ‘things’ also return the favor; here’s Blyth: “Haiku are an expression of the joy of our reunion with things from which we have been parted by self-consciousness.” (Blyth 232) The aforementioned Billy Collins — a mainstream poet who happens to be well-informed about haiku — declares: “Almost every haiku says the same thing: It’s amazing to be alive here.” (Plimpton)

Such declarations would be all but unthinkable for much of the non-haiku poetry published in this century, or the last, where some of the most prominent titles — *The Waste Land*, *The Age of Anxiety*, *Howl* — speak volumes.

The pleasures of haiku are many. What follows here are just a handful of contributing factors:

- Haiku is a poetry of the senses. It engages, affirms and rewards our most basic modes of connection with the world and each other.
- Haiku is a poetry of discovery, and the *sharing* of those discoveries — including (and most especially) the small everyday wonders which so often go unnoticed and unsung.

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- Haiku is a poetry of the seasons and the natural world. Research has shown that “[s]imply the viewing of natural settings or images can have a positive impact on individuals’ psychological well-being.” (Darewych 118) Perhaps a related benefit attends repeated exposure to haiku.
- Haiku is a poetry of (usually pleasant) surprise. This is the “aha” effect that comes with an unexpected yet somehow satisfying second element following the “cut” in many fine haiku.
- Haiku is a poetry of gratitude and praise — per all the above.

As a practical matter, our current assessment of haiku must consider each of the five PERMA elements on an individual basis (and in one instance non-sequentially, as will be seen). But worth acknowledging is the fact that those elements can and often do interact. So before proceeding to *Engagement*, let us note that the pleasurable aspects of haiku as just described, and the *Positive emotion* which results, can produce a type of *Meaning* as well: “When a poem brings us joy, that poem is conferring a sense that life matters, has purpose, and makes sense. It is a life worth living.” (Wilkinson 103)

HAIKU AND ENGAGEMENT

A uniquely reciprocal brand of engagement is “baked into” the haiku form and, hence, its practice.

The very brevity of haiku means that a great deal must be left to implication on the poet’s part and to inference on the reader’s. Such suggestiveness can take many forms in haiku. One of the principal ones occurs within the “cut” or gap — what the Japanese call *ma* — separating the two parts that comprise almost every haiku.

The poet will try to suggest a particular relationship between those two parts, if only through their very juxtaposition; and the reader, for his or her part, must attempt to intuit one.

While all forms of art and literature place demands on both the “producer” (artist, composer, writer) and the “consumer” (viewer, listener, reader), the balance is seldom even; in nearly all cases the “consumer” can safely assume the more passive role. For all its “accessibility” (clear images, simple diction), haiku requires the reader’s active participation in, among other tasks, reconciling each poem’s two parts. For just this reason it has become a commonplace in haiku circles for the reader to be referred to as a “co-creator.” As Cor van den Heuvel puts it in *The Haiku Anthology*, “[t]o 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.” (van den Heuvel xv-xvi)⁶ He even exhorts that reader to take on the role of “an equal partner” (van den Heuvel lxiv). Described similarly by Blyth, “haiku demand the free poetic life of the reader in parallel with that of the poet.” (Blyth 11)⁷

In the PERMA construct, *Engagement* is built upon the research of Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi into the “optimal experience” of the “flow” state. “Flow experiences are often described by qualities such as a feeling of oneness with the activity, becoming unaware of one’s surroundings, losing track of time, and feeling that the activity is worth doing for its own sake.” (Vrooman 211) The pleasurable experience of flow relies in large part upon both a level of challenge in performing the activity in question and a commensurate level of skill on the performer’s part. In the arts and humanities, “the challenge-skill balance seems to have especially important implications for well-being outcomes.” (Vrooman 211-212)

6. Likewise, Henderson staunchly advocated that “haiku reading is in itself an art” — see Henderson 4.

7. The word “free” is italicized in the original text.

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In writing haiku, the main challenge and principal pleasure comes from trying to convey faithfully the experience of a vivid sensation and/or a deeply-felt moment in just a few words. To meet that challenge and reap the consequent pleasure, a haiku poet does well to first get out of his or her own way. “A poet sees things as they are in proportion as he is selfless.” (Blyth 245)⁸

In reading haiku, the main challenge and principal pleasure comes from the attempt to discern and partake in a personally meaningful simulacrum of the poet’s original experience. This might be akin to—but a highly concentrated form of—the “narrative transportation” (Fitzgerald 223) undertaken by readers who lose themselves, and thereby experience a pleasurable state of “flow,” in the imaginary worlds of longer fictional works.

As short as a human breath, haiku can still be as absorbing as those longer works, both in the process of their creation by the poet and that of their co-creation by the reader. Any haiku aficionado can vouch for that.

HAIKU AND MEANING

Many if not most of those aficionados perceive and experience haiku as a meaningful practice or “way” (one of keen attentiveness and deep appreciation)⁹ as much as a captivating art form. Of all the PERMA elements, *Meaning* is the one most central to haiku, hence its discussion here.

8. This accords with Bashō’s famous dictum: “To learn about pine trees, go to the pine tree; to learn of the bamboo, study bamboo.”

9. “Once on a hospital form, under the category of religious affiliation, I checked ‘other’ and wrote ‘haiku.’ Haiku to me is a way of life, a choice of focus and a form of spiritual appreciation requiring us — reminding us — to see beyond self, or as Bashō said, ‘Haiku is simply what is happening in this place at this moment.’” Clausen, Tom, “A Haiku Way of Life,” *The Haiku Foundation Digital Library*. <https://thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/items/show/742> Accessed September 2022.

The corpus of English-language haiku commentary — including the second epigraph to this article — is replete with direct and indirect references to the significance (Blyth 110), ontological immediacy (van den Heuvel lxiii) and other life-affirming qualities in haiku. Commentators aside, some of the greatest *practitioners* of English-language haiku have spoken thoughtfully and sometimes movingly on the subject as well; a small sampling:

In essence I regard haiku as fundamentally existential and experiential, rather than literary.

— James Hackett¹⁰

Haiku can be accessible and deep, immediate and enduring. They are about life, and my life is richer because of them.

— Peggy Lyles¹¹

[I write haiku] to get in touch with the real.

— Nick Virgilio¹²

How can such diminutive poems take on such momentous significance and profound meaning? Consider just two contributing factors:

- Haiku trades in everyday things and experiences, often recognizing and celebrating the extraordinary in the ordinary. Two preliminary conclusions from current scholarly research in the Positive Humanities suggest the meaning-making importance of just this orientation: “Some art makes the familiar unfamiliar, and the unfamiliar familiar; such shifts in perspective may be key to enriching our daily experiences.” (Westgate 88) “Given its commonplace nature,

10. see van den Heuvel lxv.

11. see Lyles 10.

12. see van den Heuvel xi

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it makes sense that meaning in life is linked to common experiences—experiences that are widely available to us as human beings. Indeed, research has revealed that meaning may spring from unexpectedly mundane places.” (Wilkinson 101)

■ Haiku is likewise grounded in the *sharing* of one’s own personal everyday experiences (by the haiku poet) or the *sharing in* those of others (by the haiku reader). From the poet’s perspective, “[w]hen people perceive that their existence matters to others, they feel their lives are meaningful.” (Wilkinson 107)¹³ Further, “[o]ne aspect of existential mattering is the sense that one has made a mark on others enough to be remembered.” (Wilkinson 107) From the reader’s standpoint, “[w]hen a person finds their experience reflected in art and literature, the person may feel powerfully attached to culture that will outlive the self.” (Wilkinson 107)

Connection may be at the very core of meaning in haiku. It certainly operates *within* most haiku, where “juxtaposed images suggest internal comparisons and allow for layers of meaning.” (Lyles 10) In their more general operation, haiku enable writers and readers alike to connect with the world around them and to feel as though they belong—that is to say, as *a part of* that world rather than *apart from* it. And of course haiku allow people to connect with one another, not just on the page as discussed above but also in the more interactive “real” and virtual worlds discussed next.

HAIKU AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Social interaction and exchange is built into the genetic code of haiku which evolved, after all, from a party game.

13. Compare this with the following from *The Haiku Handbook*: “Sharing is one of the things we want most in life, to give something of ourselves to others, so that they might accept us and our experiences and perceptions as important.” See Higginson 47.

In the centuries prior to the time of Matsuo Bashō (1644 – 1694) and for some period afterwards, members of the Japanese court or the samurai and merchant classes would gather at their leisure to produce *renga*, linked-verse poems whose constituent verses were supplied by different participants in a pre-determined sequence. One of the principal challenges and pleasures of *renga* derived from its “link and shift” imperative: each verse would have to relate (or “link”) to the immediately preceding verse in some fashion; but it would also need to completely dissociate (or “shift” away) from the content or sense of *any other* prior verse. As a result, each *renga* would take its participants on an ever-surprising and wonder-filled romp across the seasons, varied settings, and myriad aspects of the human condition.

The first verse of the *renga* was called the *hokku*, antecedent to the standalone haiku. Composed by the attending *renga* master — an expert poet as well as the judge/editor of others’ verses — the *hokku* would be the sole *renga* verse to feature two internal parts, just like the later haiku. It also served two social functions, at least by the time of Bashō, a recognized *renga* master: to subtly praise the host of the party; and to mark the season in which that party was taking place.

While continuing to practice *renga*, Bashō initiated the development, appreciation and evolution of an independent *hokku* — a movement which two centuries later culminated in its designation, by Masaoka Shiki (1867 – 1902), as “haiku.”

Most of today’s haiku, like other standalone poems, are composed by individuals in the tranquility of their private moments. Yet a palpable sense of community persists for this humble descendant of *renga*. Peggy Lyles observed, “[f]or years, I have thought of English-language haiku as literature poets are creating together.” (Lyles 10) Esteemed haiku practitioner Chuck Brickley characterizes that worldwide assemblage of poets as “a fellowship of kindred spirits.” (Brickley) From what does this sense of collegiality and collective purpose arise?

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The most likely answer has already surfaced. Haiku in the West is the province of amateurs.

Haiku writers and readers partake in the practice of their own volition and for the pure delights it brings them. As mentioned, the pleasures of haiku include those of discovery and the sharing of those discoveries—a desire not always sated on the page. So haiku practitioners freely and frequently put in the effort to revel in their passion collectively and in person. The world of English-language haiku abounds with local group meetings and *ginko* (haiku-generating outdoor ambles); regional get-togethers such as the annual Haiku Circle day event in New England or the Seabeck Haiku Getaway in the Northwest; and more formal national or international gatherings staged by organizations like the Haiku Society of America or Haiku North America. In the virtual realm, the website of The Haiku Foundation serves, in part, as a “watering hole” (or water cooler) where English-language haiku poets the world over informally meet and commune.

The relational aspect of haiku is perhaps best illustrated by leading English-language haiku poet John Stevenson in the Author’s Introduction to his recently-published volume of selected work:

Once involved with haiku . . . I discovered that the social component—the haiku community—was the key. During thirty-five years of writing and sometimes publishing other poetry, I made perhaps a dozen friends. In a little more than half that time I’ve made hundreds of friends through haiku and most of my closest friendships, to this day, have come through either theatre or haiku poetry. What I like about haiku (and to some degree, theatre) is that everybody is good, at least some of the time.¹⁴

Amateurs of the world (love to) unite!

14. See Stevenson 9.

HAIKU AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

While most non-Japanese haiku poets would not abide the absolute authority routinely exercised by Japanese haiku masters — group leaders who will not hesitate to rewrite their members’ poems — the aspiration for personal mastery and recognition can be seen wherever haiku is practiced.

Accomplishment in English-language haiku is recognized in many of the same ways that apply in the non-haiku poetry realm, most notably through publication in respected journals and awards in various contests. (In the latter category, quite a number of English-language haiku competitions attract hundreds or thousands — and occasionally even *tens of thousands* — of entries.) In both realms, journal editors and contest judges will generally come from the upper ranks of practicing poets.

But haiku affords an additional kind of recognition: the opportunity for affirmation from a poet’s *peers* instead of just the “experts.” While workshops with peers are common in both the haiku and non-haiku realms, only the haiku world provides regular, systematic and quantitative forums where a poet can give and receive peer feedback and potential recognition. One such forum is the *kukai*, a friendly in-person or online gathering of poets, each of whose haiku are submitted in advance to a coordinator or host who in turn recirculates the submitted poems in anonymous form to all the participants for voting. Participating poets vote for their favorite poems submitted by others (they cannot vote for their own work) — poems they find most emotionally resonant or they simply consider the “best.” In smaller, more interactive *kukai* sessions, participants will often explain why they voted for a particular poem, before its author is revealed. In the process, most attendees will receive affirmation, elucidation, or both. The Haiku Foundation conducts an online *kukai* with a specific subject prompt every month. Open to all, it regularly attracts scores of participants from dozens of countries on five or six continents.

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Many haiku journals feature “best of issue” selections by their respective editors, but a number of them also invite readers to weigh in with their own preferences, through some formal, quantitative process. Perhaps the best known and most prestigious of these are the annual Readers’ Choices Awards conducted by the online journal *The Heron’s Nest*. Towards the end of each year, readers are invited to submit their ten favorite haiku (rank-ordered) from the approximately 500 poems published in the journal’s four previous quarterly issues. The votes are then tallied to determine a grand prize Poem of the Year (along with other high vote-getters) as well as a Poet of the Year (also with other high finishers).

To some in the non-haiku poetry world, the idea of granting amateurs (including newcomers) an official platform to recognize and celebrate their “favorite” poems might seem quaint or naïve if not hopelessly wrongheaded. Where are the standard bearers?! But haiku poets want the experiences that touched them to touch others — not only editors and judges but also their fellow enthusiasts. For most, haiku is not just a poem and practice — it’s also *a community*.

CONCLUSION

If one were to design the perfect practice for human flourishing based on the principles of Positive Psychology, the result just might be haiku.

Haiku poetry offers a universally accessible way to cultivate and spread positive emotion; to experience deep engagement; to find real meaning in one’s everyday life; to commune with kindred spirits; and to develop some level of mastery. Little wonder its practice has burgeoned in the West — fueled almost entirely by individual passion rather than institutional support. Haiku thrives outside the walls of the academy and beyond the currents of mainstream poetry.

Perhaps none of this should surprise. As Blyth notes at the beginning, haiku is the product — the “final flower” — of Eastern culture, a product which includes as a prime influence one of the important wisdom traditions of that culture: Buddhism, especially Zen Buddhism.¹⁵ Key elements of Buddhist practice share the well-being focus of Positive Psychology¹⁶ — arguably more so than do those of most wisdom traditions in the West.

In an interview (Cheever) just before the pandemic, this writer likened each individual haiku to a “gratitude capsule.” In the following year, a *Gratitude in the Time of COVID-19* anthology initiative (Mason) received the enthusiastic support and active participation of haiku poets around the globe. As it happens, gratitude is the basis of one of the most powerful and effective well-being exercises¹⁷ so far identified in the practice of Positive Psychology.

The foregoing all suggests that English-language haiku could serve as a worthy subject and capacious resource for new research in the understanding and realization of human flourishing. For those so interested, the haiku community stands ready to help — and to share the joy.

15. All but equating the two, Blyth asserted: “Haiku are to be understood from the Zen point of view.” See Blyth 5. While few other scholars might go quite that far, most would not deny the imprint of Buddhism on haiku.

16. “Positive psychology, which focuses on human flourishing rather than mental illness, is also learning a lot from Buddhism, particularly how mindfulness and compassion can enhance wellbeing. This has been the domain of Buddhism for the past two millennia and we’re just adding a scientific perspective.” [underscoring added] Germer, Christopher K. “Mindfulness in Buddhism & Psychology,” *Insight Journal*, Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, 2012. <https://www.buddhistinquiry.org/article/mindfulness-in-buddhism-psychology/> Accessed September 2022.

17. This is “The Gratitude Visit”. See Seligman 30-31. Another is the “What-Went-Well Exercise (Also Called “Three Blessings”).” See Seligman 33-35.

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the white-haired man



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

Parkinson's Toolbox:

The Case for Haiku

Stella PIERIDES

ABSTRACT: Parkinson's Disease (PD)—the fastest growing neurodegenerative condition worldwide — affects a wide range of motor and non-motor functions. At present, there is no cure. Only symptomatic treatment is available, aiming to improve quality of life and slow progression. The aim of this paper is to recommend haiku as a therapeutic tool helping with symptoms and, potentially, rate of progression. To this end, following a brief description of PD, and its symptoms grouped under two areas of loss resulting in life diminishment, I touch upon the general role of art and literature in augmenting pharmacological treatment of the disease, before focusing on some of the qualities of haiku (in the process of writing as well as the created poem) that collectively make haiku a containing vessel that can hold and transform the distress associated with the disease into a more bearable experience.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Parkinson's Disease (PD), named after James Parkinson, the London doctor who first reported the symptoms in 1817, occurs when nerve cells in an area of the brain that controls movement become impaired and/or atrophy. These cells produce dopamine, a neurotransmitter that enables multiple areas of the brain to communicate. Over time, the functioning of these cells declines, they produce less and less dopamine, and eventually die. Since dopamine is important for organizing the brain's commands for movement, its loss gives rise to the movement symptoms seen in people with Parkinson's disease: shaking, stiffness, and difficulties with swallowing, walking, balance, and coordination.

Dopamine also has other functions. It is used by the body to produce adrenaline, the hormone helping us to deal with stress. Given the loss of dopamine, people with PD are faced with additional challenges to cope with all facets — physical, mental, emotional — of stress. Other important systems, too, are affected by the condition. For instance, serotonergic dysfunction is implicated in the so-called 'non-motor' symptoms of PD, which include anxiety, depression, fatigue, apathy, and visual hallucinations. Norepinephrine, needed for proper functioning of the sympathetic nervous system, is also compromised, affecting several of the body's autonomic functions, such as heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, breathing, and digestion.

Thus, far from being a pure movement disorder, PD is now increasingly recognized as resulting in a whole range — of some 40 plus — diverse symptoms (see *Parkinson's UK*), from extreme stiffness and slowness through loss of smell and taste to anxiety and depression. As a result of this recognition, the long-standing emphasis on the dopaminergic identity of PD and, thus, dopamine replacement therapy has been waning, and interest has been extending to the behavioral, cognitive, mood, and autonomic

impairments that are associated with the deficiencies in a whole range of neurotransmitter systems (Barone 364–376). This extension has been echoed in the increasing number of physio- (or neuro-) therapeutic and arts-based approaches that are being developed to ameliorate the impact of PD.

Interventions that target a wider range of PD symptoms involve stimulating the production of ‘feel-good’ chemicals. Intensive physical exercise, in particular, has been elevated to the gold non-pharmacological standard, complementing medication, for helping people with PD: they are encouraged to dance, walk, run, play table tennis, box, swim . . . to the astonishment of those who associate the affliction with tremor, weakness, and paralysis, or only with its advanced stages (*Parkinson’s Life*, for example). Based on a better understanding of ‘neuroplasticity,’ novel approaches aim to promote the learning of new physical abilities and skills (involving mental coordination), as well as the maintenance/recovery of old functions, by fostering the re-formation of synaptic connections (Doidge 33–100).

THE ARTS AND LITERATURE IN PD

In parallel, arts-centered approaches have been developing, based on the realization that art and literature, too, are important in fostering neural connectivity, as well as improving mood and anxiety, and lessening isolation: In an interview with *Parkinson’s Life* (by Sinclair), Trevor Woollard stated that “a lot of the major charities in the sector focus — rightly so — on exercise. But there are huge numbers of people who are less mobile or not sport-orientated . . . And they’re often forgotten . . . Exercise is important — but so is exercising the mind and soul.” Thus, supported by local, national, and international organizations, a variety of projects are now running that encourage participation in artistic activities for the challenges of PD. The aim is not to create masterpieces (though, of course,

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masterpieces may be created), and people don't have to be trained artists to give it a go and realize the benefits.

In fact, an interesting phenomenon that, according to the European Parkinson's Disease Association (EPDA), is "well-known within the Parkinson's community and quite unknown to many others, is a potential link between this neurodegenerative disease and the unlocking of tremendous creative potential". For instance, people with PD who never painted before started painting; those who did, started painting more and producing work of better quality. The reasons behind this surge in creativity are unclear, though there are various explanations that are being investigated (Pelowski et al. 240–243).

Creativity as a manifestation of PD with dopamine supplementation introduces a surprising as well as exciting piece to the puzzle of PD. Whatever its cause, the potential rehabilitative effects of artistic activity are increasingly confirmed by scientists. For instance, testing a group of 18 PD people before and after 20 sessions of art therapy, Cucca et al. (148–154) concluded that the process of art making relies "on sophisticated neurological functions that may be trained to improve visuospatial symptoms" in people with PD whose quality of life may be affected by cumulative disability due to impaired visuospatial skills.

Beyond practice-related benefits of people with PD engaging in artistic activity, a significant proportion of the effort aims to express, or 'show,' what it is like to have Parkinson's using painting and the other arts. Nigel Smith, in the About section of his *YouTube* channel *PARKINSONIA — Poetry on living with Parkinson's*, describes the immensity of the challenge:

Parkinsonia is a strange land that to outward appearances is indistinguishable from any other land here on earth. But look closely and you'll see it is very different indeed. Parkinson's . . . is a dreadful disease the horror of which only its victims truly

know. We hope the words written here may help others to at least understand.

The interest in ‘showing’ is an attempt at communicating, sharing and thereby relieving isolation — as well as creating interest and increasing awareness in the public and fundraising for research to find a cure. In a 2022 video collaboration, “Stand up for Parkinsons,” Martin Pickard and Nigel Smith combine increasing the public’s awareness of what this disease is like with encouraging people with Parkinson’s to exercise.

There are, of course, other benefits. As stated by Trevor Woollard (in the interview by Sinclair): “. . . being creative has many health benefits — it allows us to focus on something positive and escape temporarily. Art also lowers stress and activates our brain’s reward centre.” Escaping the symptoms of PD, however temporarily, is of momentous importance to those in the grip of a relentless affliction. But it is increasingly becoming clear that there is even more that can be attained through engaging in artistic activity.

In addition to the visual arts, the literary arts have become increasingly recognized as helpful to people with PD. Describing the development of the concepts behind the — *Parkinson’s Art* — organization that he founded, Woollard (in the interview by Sinclair) explains:

I realized that being creative and expressing yourself through the visual arts was great, but it could also be done through poetry, for example. And poetry then became a really important and popular section on the website. Reading poetry aloud is really beneficial to your breathing and protecting your voice — working with the words and having that mental stimulation.

And, in the About section of his *YouTube* channel *The Shaken Word*, Martin Pickard introduces his poetry as follows: “Diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease in 2020 the degeneration of my brain seems to

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have sparked a surge of creativity which I am expressing in poetry and art for my own pleasure . . .”

Or, as expressed by Nigel Smith (in the About of his *YouTube* channel): “Poetry conveys thought and emotion in a way that everyday language cannot. It stimulates intellect and imagination and should both roar and whisper at once. It has given me a sense of worth, of value, it has enabled me to find my ‘Hidden Self’ which cannot be hurt by Parkinson’s.”

Frank Ormsby, in his *Parkinson’s Poems*, shares his experience of living with hallucinations — ghost presences — in his poems, which he finds amusing rather than horrifying. In a *Belfast Telegraph* feature, he writes about taking them with him on his daily walk. He says: “It is hard to beat humor as an instrument against disease or unhappiness. I suppose as a writer I have always had a strong sense of the absurd.” Although Ormsby does not mean his writing about his PD symptoms to be a form of art therapy — he feels his work would lose spontaneity were he to set out to write poems as therapy — he brings in the importance of ‘working’ with his symptoms rather than evading them.

Given the diversity and severity of symptoms, and immensity of the experience, perhaps it is not surprising that only a small number of (poetically minded) people with PD have taken up writing haiku. Of course, predominant symptoms of PD may impose limits on the practice of reading and writing of haiku or diminish its healing benefits. In addition, being seen as too exotic or obscure, or too short, may account for the lack of familiarity with the special qualities of haiku. However, as I will argue below, it is these qualities that together make haiku particularly apt for capturing, and to some extent “containing,” the immensity of this disease.

HAIKU AS A HEALING VESSEL

Haiku, the briefest of poems, fewer than 17 syllables long, are set in the present, rendering the experience of a moment in unadorned language in the attempt to share it. The practice of writing haiku involves a number of steps and processes, starting from the inspiration and ending with the poem — though later editing and reworking usually extend the period of involvement. The poet may observe a moment in nature, or at home, may write about a deeply felt moment of connectedness with another person or the world, or a moment of overwhelming sorrow and pain. She may try to convey it in her notebook in words, or with her camera, then later shape it into a draft. . . . There is a whole process involved before the poem reaches its final shape. Given the brevity of the form, composing a haiku, or a good draft version at least, is more achievable than writing other forms of poetry. The process of writing it, too, is more likely to feel satisfying as there is a product at the end.

However, when writing about the experience of pain and distress, the satisfaction of producing a haiku falls far short of explaining what the poem does achieve and how it does it. One answer, I argue, is that it may function as a “containing vessel.”

Visualizing the process as a vessel — echoing, in a sense, Bion’s container/contained concept — might be a way of beginning to explore how writing haiku can be such a therapeutic activity. The concepts of “container” and “the contained” are central to the work of Wilfred Bion — a major figure in psychoanalytic theory, who (in his *Learning from Experience* and later writings) described the development of thinking from the earliest stages of life in terms of an important function of mothering as receiving, temporarily holding, transforming, and returning the transformed distress to the child. For our purposes, in this relational model, containment may be viewed as the relationship between a vessel or space, such

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as the haiku form, and the poet. The haiku form(at) is available to absorb an experience, transform it through the poet's drafting, crafting, and editing process, and give it back transformed, in the final edit, as a resonant poem. Understood in this way, the containing function entails neither passively holding unwanted and dangerous contents without processing them (i.e., acting like a dustbin, with the potential of becoming a pressure cooker) nor pouring them out with the expectation that others will deal with them or that they will be magically altered—but rather actively receiving and translating them into a more bearable form. I plan to explore this concept in depth in another essay.

Before considering the ways in which haiku might be “containing,” a word about “healing.” Healing encapsulates two related but separable concepts: on the one hand, repairing (mainly physical) damage or curing, eliminating symptoms, that is, making healthy again; and, on the other, comforting or soothing, ameliorating. Instances of the first are when a wound heals or we heal from an operation, that is, when we are on the mend and make a complete recovery. The second sense of healing is seen when we recover from a psychological or spiritual wounding, such as a trauma, loss, or grief. There are no visible, physical signs, but we achieve a stage of living comfortably with our respective problem or attaining a degree of spiritual equilibrium. Whenever the concept of healing is used without clarity as to the type of healing, we risk mistaking one for the other. There is no cure for PD at present. So, any promise of a healing practice, medicine, or operation relating to this affliction as curing would be misleading!

With this in mind, in this essay, “healing” is used to refer to qualities of haiku that enable the afflicted to deal with their symptoms and cope in a better way. By enabling transit through stages of loss, grief, anger, resolution, and eventual acceptance, haiku may offer a containing function involving transformation of experience.

It is not entirely new that haiku may have healing properties in this sense. As early as 1978, George Swede observed that while therapists used all kinds of poetry, they rarely employed haiku, perhaps in the mistaken belief that the form was too short to be of any use (39-40). Swede argued for the greater use of haiku in poetry therapy, with haiku not only increasing its effectiveness, but also giving the patient a sense of wonder and hope (41).

One of the most widely mentioned instances of people turning to haiku for solace is the Japan earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011. Tsunami survivor Isao Sato, a resident of Iwate Prefecture that was devastated by the wave, wrote:

Bereft of belongings
 Yet blessed by the touch of the
 Early summer breeze.

(qtd. in Murphy-Shigematsu)

Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu points out how Sato, in expressing loss and discovering how loss can still be followed by gratitude for what is left, is able to both acknowledge and overcome loss.

Another example refers to the ancient custom in Japan of writing a haiku about one's own impending death. These poems, rooted in Buddhism and its notion of the transience and impermanence of life, were natural, graceful, unemotional—in a few words conveying the person's distilled thoughts about death as well as a reflection on their life. Bashō's last poem, though not expressly written as a death poem, is considered such an exemplar.

Sick on a journey,
 Yet over withered fields
 Dreams wander on.

(qtd. in Epstein)

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It is important to notice the distinction between the activity(ies) of writing or reading haiku, and the created, composed or, in the case of reading, re-created poem. In the West, a number of authors have reflected on their use of the haiku process to understand and share experiences of grief and loss.

For instance, to quote Epstein:

. . . haiku (in conjunction with journal writing) has been the primary source for mourning profound losses in my life, especially my parents, and I have found a measure of peace and solace in using haiku as a way of coming to terms with my own mortality, writing what I call death awareness haiku. On a more mundane level, I rely on haiku — or a hybrid mix of haiku and senryu — as a way to give voice to the stresses and strains of everyday life, including chronic illness and pain as well as the vicissitudes of winter. (128)

Of note, Epstein writes about his haiku writing, rather than the quality or publishability of the poems he created, emphasizing the process more than the result: “the act of writing haiku when sick or grieving that has a therapeutic or medicinal effect, which is why I say it is an essential balm for me” (129).

Similarly, Owen Bullock considers the practice of haiku to be a recovery practice—which he put into effect in an immersive teaching program he developed whilst acting as a creative writing mentor for the Australian Defence Force (Arts for Recovery, Resilience, Teamwork and Skills program at the University of Canberra, a partnership with the Australian Defence Force), dealing with afflictions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (1–26). In this instance, the course participants were taught haiku and how to edit the poems. Later, Bullock published selections of the poems.

Accordingly, haiku as a healing, transforming container is an available tool to be used, but by no means a magic wand!

HAIKU IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

One of the major consequences of Parkinson's progression is that it shrinks the world for those afflicted. Daily tasks, such as dressing or eating, become ever more difficult and require a longer time to accomplish (until they can no longer be performed). Beyond such obvious movement-related problems, which eventually lead to the person requiring 24-hour care, other symptoms of the 40 plus involved in PD gradually emerge. Many of these are clearly perceptible to others and socially embarrassing—for instance, drooling, acid reflux, slurred speech due to deteriorating muscle control—and lead to the wish to stay at home and disconnect from the social world, to avoid the discomfort and shame of the loss of control in public. Similarly, reduced control of facial muscles, resulting in what is called “mask” or “poker face,” looking perpetually angry or sad; tremor or stiffness resulting in dropping things; unsteady gait; apathy, often interpreted as uncaring, selfishness, lead to disconnection from society, friends and family, and eventually from oneself. Many others—such as anosmia, fatigue, anxiety, and depression—are often invisible.

Currently symptoms are grouped under motor and non-motor groups. For the purposes of the present discussion, it may be helpful to group them under two areas of loss or diminishment: an area of (loss of) energy/control, such as loss of balance, loss of muscle/motor control, insomnia; and an area (of loss) of connection, such as anxiety and withdrawal. There is, of course, cross-over, as illustrated above. Speech impediments due to loss of muscle control would be grouped under both areas, too, as they also involve loss of connection to the social world, when the person's ability to speak and communicate is compromised.

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It is in this context of Parkinson's progression that haiku can help expand the world and support the person to live with the disease more comfortably. As I will illustrate below, the comforting effect of haiku derives from specific qualities of the form—which collectively can facilitate “containment” through enhancing the capacity to internally manage the troubling thoughts, feelings, and behavior that arise as a consequence of PD. In a sense, these qualities engage psychological strengths through the haiku process and help transform trauma, arising from the disease as well as stigma of the disease (Eccles et al. 1–9), into mental strengths, thus empowering the person with PD to cope with it.

These qualities of haiku—which have been recognized and described by several writers/theorists—include: its brevity, condensation of meaning, focus on the present moment, sensory images (facilitating embodiment), juxtaposition, resonance, and connectivity. I will go briefly through some of them and illustrate how their coming together in a poem may be especially helpful for people with PD.

Brevity—perhaps the most obvious characteristic of the form (17 syllables or usually fewer)—makes it easy to both read/memorize and write haiku. One doesn't have to worry about putting together myriads of words to convey an experience, just a few. Accordingly, writing or reading a few words in a book, tablet, or phone require a lot less energy.

While, as many have discovered, writing a good haiku requires effort, perseverance, and practice, benefiting from the brevity of the form becomes possible. Thus, while the time it takes to write a good haiku is usually considerable, for a first draft of a poem minutes may suffice. This might make it attractive to those who may lack the energy, like people living with PD.

Related to the form's brevity is the high degree of meaning condensation (through the various techniques) in haiku, which

contributes to the form's advantageous features. For instance, season words, or *kigo*, encapsulate and compress a range of meanings, as well as refer to other poems and poets.

In addition, reading haiku (described as a “one breath poem”) aloud may be within the (often) diminishing capacity of vocalization affecting many people with PD, as well as a good exercise to improve speaking voice. And the sense of achievement in completing a poem, or more, in one seating (whether in writing or reading) adds to the form's attraction. The same could not be said if one were writing or reading a novel.

In this sense, writing or reading haiku does not overload the affected person, who is already suffering from loss of energy. At the same time, being able to write a poem, or a promising draft that can be mulled over in the coming days, does offer a sense of achievement. For those capable of movement, Tim Roberts, having developed a haiku practice which includes *ginko*, walking in nature for the purpose of collecting experiences for his haiku, points to a related advantage (in his essay *Haiku & Parkinson's Disease: A Practice*): “Haiku is rewarding and this satisfaction may be giving our brain extra doses of dopamine.” Increasing dopamine production during the process of haiku practice / writing a poem in itself recommends haiku for the Parkinson's toolbox.

Further, haiku, by definition, is poetry of the moment: it aims to convey the experience of a moment with the intention of sharing it with others. This quality may be particularly helpful to people with PD, for whom the environment — more generally, life — is being progressively reduced (e.g., where they can physically go, what they can do). For people with PD (especially in later stages), “Parkinson's moments” — for example, when attempting to button a blouse or when trying to still the unwanted movements of dyskinesia — are feats of closing-in concentration and awareness, as well as painful spaces of helplessness and isolation. In this situation,

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haiku — through the associations, references, allusions evoked, and the connection afforded between writer and reader — becomes a vehicle for expanding the world. This connecting with the able self, as well as with others, is of considerable benefit. Even when bed-bound, the person is being offered the opportunity to cherish the worlds outside their room and be part of the social and cultural world.

Philomene Kocher—writing about the gap in haiku, created by the juxtaposition of two images, and referring to Antonio Damasio’s theory of embodied awareness — highlighted the result of experiencing the moment of full epiphany: “It is important to remember that human nature has an integrity, and that the sensory, emotional, and spiritual ways of connecting to an experience are not separate, but occur together.” (Inviting Connection through the Gap in Haiku 13) It is this quality of all-encompassing experience that provides invaluable support to people—like people with PD — affected in ways that force them to separate muscle action from brain commands or prevent the senses from providing the feedback to the brain they are meant to convey. For instance, people with PD whose sense of smell is compromised may nevertheless recover a sensory experience from memory upon reading about the smell of, say, coffee, in a haiku, allowing them to experience the “full epiphany.”

Connectedness, as a special haiku quality, derives from the conveying of the experience of a moment from writer to reader. In fact, as expressed by Scott Mason (personal communication July 30, 2021):

Connection is in the very DNA of haiku because most quality haiku enlist the reader in the process of reconciling their two internal parts. Reading (and to an extent, writing) haiku is thereby a holistic practice. As such, it’s also a healing practice. Haiku condition us to recognize and appreciate the interrelated

nature of our world and thereby foster a greater sense of belonging and a commensurately reduced sense of alienation, isolation and loneliness.

And (in *The Wonder Code*):

. . . haiku practice rewards and vivifies the reader. Spending time with haiku cannot help but activate a greater sense of participation and ultimately a greater actual engagement, in the world around us. (215)

Understanding fully another person's experience, or conveying it to another—whether face to face, in print, or on social media—promotes the feeling of connection to and integration in the world, when the temptation is to isolate and cut off. This quality would be particularly important for people with PD, whose world—and connectedness—tends to shrink over the course of the disease and who feel increasingly misunderstood, alienated, and isolated.

The connectedness that haiku affords is also important when seen in the context of the disconnection enforced on people affected by PD. There is a relentless 'encouragement' to join dedicated PD activities, groups, communities of similarly affected individuals. While undoubtedly helpful, these segregations, by limiting exposure to the whole world, may also inhibit the psychological processing necessary for strengthening mental resilience and resources. Instead, they may often serve to spare the discomfort of anyone 'unaffected' watching those with PD, leading to a circle of diminishment, with people with PD further hiding their own discomfort, at great psychological cost. As numbers of cases rise exponentially, making PD the fastest growing neurological disease, and with younger people increasingly being diagnosed, the costs of such segregation and isolation are also increasing.

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In this context, haiku may be helpful in increasing awareness in those indirectly affected by or ignorant of the disease. Poet Ce Rosenow and philosopher Maurice Hamington have highlighted haiku's potential to support the development of caring capacities through engaging a caring imagination, and thus helping develop caring knowledge, and potentially caring behavior. They illustrate this haiku quality by discussing a number of poems, such as the one here by George Swede:

at the height
of the argument the old couple
pour each other tea

In this poem, readers who are not yet part of an “old couple” are provided with the opportunity to understand the quiet intimacy created over the many years of a relationship. Reading haiku moves us to respect and learn from the experience of others; and exercising the caring imagination can help us understand experiences we have not encountered ourselves, thereby increasing our knowledge repertoire and encouraging cultivation of caring habits.

Parkinson's
the slowly advancing
desert

— Stella Pierides

The practice of writing a death poem is an instance of the caring imagination being engaged fruitfully by those directly affected. “Haiku can lead to greater knowledge of the uncertainty experienced by a person facing death. This shared understanding can paradoxically increase the potential for a caring relationship when uncertainty itself might have initially created a barrier to a shared understanding” (Rosenow and Hamington 63). The same would apply to people facing the uncertainty associated with a progressive, incurable disease — like people with PD.

Of course, such an attitude of openness to our own experience and that of the others requires openness and commitment to truth and authenticity. “When we compose haiku, if we write with *truth and authenticity*, our practice becomes . . . powerful medicine” (Tim Roberts).

Dreaming of birdsong
I wake to a wolf shaking me —
Tremors again!
— Tim Roberts

The openness to our experience and trust in the power of this brief form is shown in the above poem about tremors by Tim Roberts. It moves us beyond the private horror of night tremors (what is happening to me? why me?) to a wider context, an environmental setting that is wider than the self: human and animal nature, mythological and literary associations (wolves in literature), folklore and fairy tales (werewolves, red riding hood), dream and reality, and life. It successfully connects us with the experience and opens windows enlarging the moment it describes.

The following is a poem about the experience of acid reflux, a common symptom of PD, and the worry of being seen and heard by others even when attending online meetings. Although a symptom belonging to the group of symptoms under bodily control, reduction of stress helps to deal with it.

muting
my microphone —
acid reflux
— Stella Pierides

The sense of control in the ability to mute the microphone and thus avoid embarrassment, supported me in this situation. The

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lightness in the humor counteracting the heaviness of mood involved rendered this experience manageable.

Similarly, the poem below about dyskinesia, the involuntary swaying movements experienced after long-term use of Levodopa (*the drug used in dopamine replacement therapy*), helped me distance myself from the embarrassment and worry about the stigma that unfortunately accompanies these movements:

dyskinesia . . .
how tall grass
sways

— Stella Pierides

Instead of dyskinesia (i.e., being moved by the hand of the disease), the magnetic, lyrical, and relaxing swaying grasses in the wind! Not just a narcissistic image, it reflects an acknowledgement and acceptance that we are all moved by forces beyond our control. This realization helped reduce the embarrassment (a connection-related reaction), which, in turn, brought about a reduction of the dyskinesic movements (a control-related problem).

Both poems helped me bear and cope with socially awkward experiences associated with PD. While this is not meant as an illustration of a once and for all solution—after all, PD is a progressive disease and over time accumulates problems that may not be so readily containable—transforming the experience provided considerable relief along the way and made it easier to stay connected.

Epstein attributes the healing qualities of haiku to returning us to our position within the wider context of nature, including human nature, from which we arose and to which we belong. Writing and reading haiku restores our connection to the world and thus it becomes a healing force.

It may be possible now to recognize poems that gave rise to this kind of resonance, that spoke to us and our friends, as writers or even readers: they have worked as containing vessels for the experience. Unlike other poems we may draft daily, the transforming-vessel poems neither deny or obscure the true meaning and impact of the moment, nor do they broadcast distress in the hope that someone else will pick it up and deal with it.

As pointed out by Robert Epstein: psychologically, the act of writing haiku while ill, or alone and lonely, offers instantaneous company to oneself (129). Writing about being sick, in the process, I bear witness in the act of writing about being sick!

chemo chair
 outside the window
 another

—Gregory Longenecker

This, one might say, “objective” way of watching oneself may be seen as an act of self-compassion, a non-judgmental acknowledgment of one’s own suffering and a self-directed response based upon “the same kindness, concern and support you would show to a good friend” (Neff and Dahm 121). Self-compassion is considered an important element of emotional regulation linked to how we relate to external threats, experience emotions, and deal with them. One might say that watching oneself engaging with the process of haiku — crafting in words the swaying movements, the reflux, tremors, or other manifestations of the disease — fosters such an attitude.

The qualities of haiku are important in offering relief in themselves. However, by their coming-together in the unique structure of the form, haiku can become a powerful force of transformation of the experience conveyed. Watching oneself relate a difficult experience through writing or reading a haiku and the transformative

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impact of release and relief that accompany it, is experiencing the transformative power of haiku. In one sense, it is what is often called an “aha experience,” but more than that it is an embodied coming-together of our emotional, intellectual, as well as social worlds. As such, haiku acts as a transforming vessel, helping us connect what feels uniquely hopeless and unfair, humiliatingly personal, to the wider multi-layered social context and humanity we all share and are part of.

CONCLUSION

By briefly considering some of the key qualities inherent in haiku—such as brevity, condensation of meaning, focus on the present moment, sensory images, resonance, and connectivity and the power that accrues from their coming together—I hope to have offered a glimpse of haiku’s potential to help face, come to terms with, and help mute the “pain” in general and the distress of PD in particular—to paraphrase Epstein, to “express [and so contain] the inexpressible” (126). For me, the worth of haiku lies in its capacity to become such a containing transforming vessel. This briefest of poems has the potential to encapsulate all kinds of experience—the beauty of sunsets and cherry blossoms, the exhilaration of climbing personal ‘mountains,’ but also the depth of loneliness, the pangs of pain, the embarrassment of acid reflux—and transform them, in a few words, into a manageable, livable experience. Whether symptoms of diminishing energy/control, or diminishing connection, as a transforming vessel, available to absorb and translate distress—tremor to a wolf symbol; dyskinesia to swaying grass—haiku offers a powerful tool, helping people with PD stand their ground against the forces of the disease. While these qualities are not unique to haiku, in their totality they contribute to weave a form that, in its transformative power, may be added to the developing arsenal of tools available to people with Parkinson’s to support them navigating their affliction.

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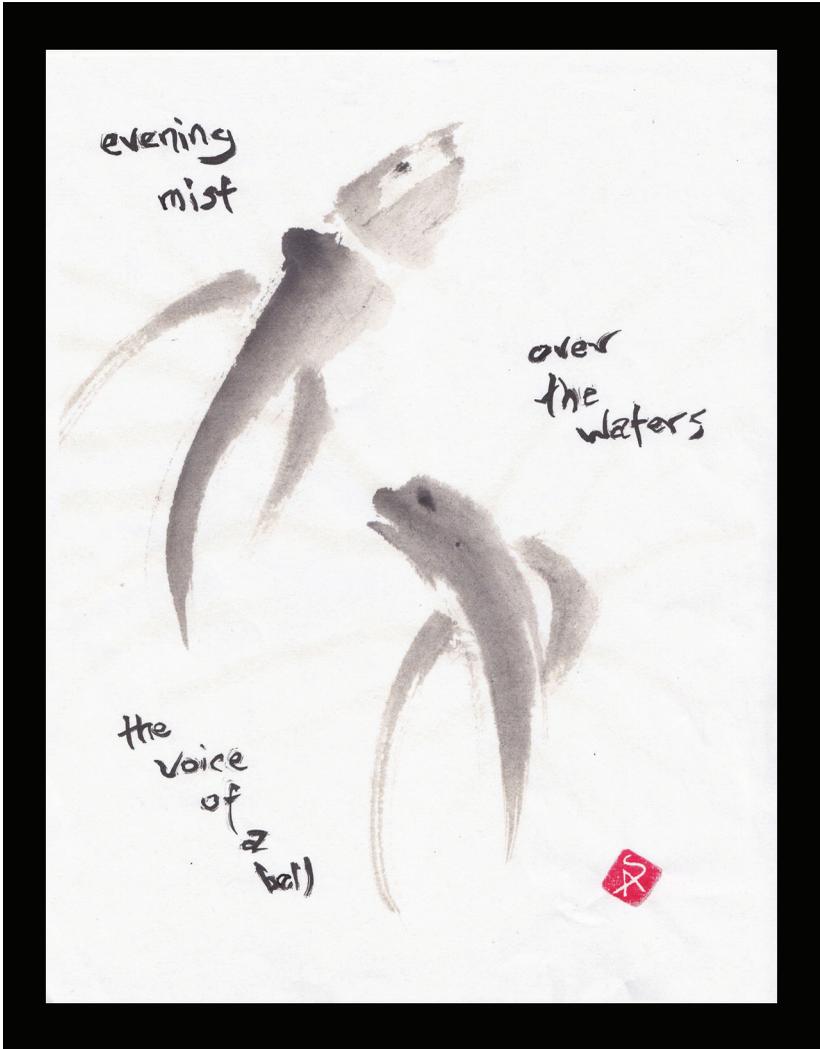
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Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

“bird tweets turn into an orchestra”:

HAIKU AND NEURODIVERSITY

Madelaine Caritas LONGMAN

ABSTRACT: As public discussion of mental health and developmental differences becomes increasingly prevalent, subject matter in English language haiku (ELH) reflects this shift. Several contemporary haiku draw explicitly upon the vocabulary of psychiatric conditions, while others incorporate subtler references to therapy, medication, and diagnosis; however, even haiku which do not overtly address these themes frequently explore experiences resonant with neurodivergence, including heightened sensory perception, synaesthesia, wandering attention, and a fragmented or transient sense of identity. This paper considers contemporary ELH through the lens of the neurodiversity movement, which advocates for approaching cognitive, developmental, and mental health differences as variations to be respected rather than deficits to be corrected. Similarities between ELH and the experiences of people diagnosed with conditions such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and borderline personality disorder destabilize binaries between “typical” and “atypical” minds, raise questions about what thinking styles are desirable, and offer alternatives to pathologization. This paper puts forth that not only may haiku offer therapeutic benefits to some neurodivergent people, but welcoming neurodiverse insights and contributions also benefits the field of haiku. Moreover, as numerous ELH already address experiences commonly associated with neurodivergence, the form holds potential to foster acceptance towards neurological and psychological diversity.

INTRODUCTION

autumn equinox
a pill to keep me
more in the middle

So writes Chad Lee Robinson, one of several contemporary haiku poets whose work touches upon themes of mental health and illness. Almost immediately, the juxtaposition leads a myriad of possible associations to spring forth in the reader's mind: the visual resemblance between the autumn moon and a moon-shaped pill; the contemplative calm of late September paralleled in the private ritual of taking a medication, possibly a mood stabilizer; the mingled hope and melancholy of passing from summer's burning intensity into a new and quieter phase; a sharp awareness of being here, wholly attentive, fragilely balanced between moods and seasons, standing in the middle of a life.

Like Japanese haiku, English language haiku (ELH) is widely considered a form grounded in attentiveness to everyday living (Donegan xi). Prioritizing relatable experiences over the unique and extraordinary, haiku may initially appear a counterintuitive venue for subject matter as seemingly individual as psychiatric status. Even senryu, which frequently focus on human nature and psychology, tend to discuss "typical" psychological experience. (In English, there is generally less strict division between haiku and senryu than in Japanese practice; for the purposes of this paper, the term ELH encompasses both haiku and senryu.) Yet, as frameworks of mental health, mental illness, and cognitive difference become increasingly prevalent in how we speak, live, and make sense of our days, such concepts have, arguably, very much come to constitute a dimension of everyday life. Their increasingly explicit appearance in ELH is therefore perhaps only fitting.

The numerous contemporary haiku addressing emotional, neurological, and cognitive differences not only suggest changing cultural attitudes, but speak to haiku's potential to position seemingly personal experiences within a greater relational context. Upon encountering Robinson's poem, the reader need not share—or even know—the precise nature of the speaker's highs and lows to relate to the emotional delicacy of being “more in the middle,” nor to appreciate the subtle yet profound stakes of the linebreak: “a pill to keep me.” Who has not struggled with changeable moods? Who has not feared losing oneself? “autumn equinox” does not shy away from themes of mental illness, yet this never overshadows that it is at its core a poem about human experience. Haiku's characteristic focus on juxtaposition further ensures this experience remains situated within a larger world. On some level, it does not matter if the reader shares the speaker's diagnosis—they share the autumn equinox. The speaker's mental state may or may not reflect a difference in degree from the reader's own, but it is far from a difference in kind.

In presenting mental difference as part of the spectrum of human experience, rather than as alien or “other,” ELH such as Robinson's resonate with views put forth by the neurodiversity movement. Coined in 1998 by sociologist Judy Singer, herself an autistic person, and soon further popularized by Harvey Blume, neurodiversity is associated with grassroots activism and the disability rights movement. Supporters aim to eradicate stigma around neurological divergence, support the rights and dignity of neurologically varied people, and recognize these individuals' unique strengths and social contributions (Silberman; Singer). The term “neurodiverse” is here used to designate the range of neurological variation within a group, while “neurodivergent” refers to individuals whose minds differ from normative (neurotypical) expectations. Initially focused primarily on the autism spectrum, the growth of the movement has since led people with a wide array

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of commonly pathologized conditions, including but not limited to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Tourette's Syndrome, sensory processing disorder, long term mental illness, dyslexia, and personality disorders, to frame their experiences through the lens of neurodiversity (Singer; Johnson 636).

Contrary to stigmatizing approaches, neurodiversity argues for viewing cognitive, developmental, and mental health variations as differences to be respected rather than deficits to be corrected (Armstrong; Silberman). While there are significant differences between the views of various neurodiversity advocates—such as whether or not diagnostic categories are valid, whether these conditions constitute disabilities, and whether pharmaceutical intervention is desirable—they align in promoting acceptance and understanding of neurodivergent people, encouraging an accessible society, and highlighting that although neurodivergent people may struggle in some areas, their unique way of thinking can be beneficial in others—not only to the individual, but to culture as a whole. While early work focused largely on neurodivergent aptitude for technological fields (Blume), recent research suggests that many neurodivergent people enjoy artistic pursuits and may draw creative connections overlooked by neurotypical peers (Carson 308-309; Grant 113-115; Roth 498-502). This paper therefore posits that neurodiverse insights enrich another field: that of haiku.

As previously mentioned, a significant number of contemporary ELH address subject matter resonant with neurodivergence. Consider these examples:

stripped
of my former self
diagnosis

—Jackie Choi (2022)

every week the same
 tangled branches
 outside my therapist's window
 — Julie Bloss Kelsey (2021)

post-partum
 the sky finally clears
 of last night's storm
 — Vandana Parashar (2021)

Akin to Robinson's "autumn equinox," these pieces present medicalized subject matter as everyday rather than exceptional, inviting readers, whether neurotypical or neurodivergent, into a sense of relation. Though one may not know the specifics of a speaker's thwarted self-diagnosis or cause for seeking therapy, having one's self-constructed narrative called into question or facing down the tangled branches of repetitive thoughts are close to universal experiences. Even when haiku explicitly name conditions the reader may not share, such as Parashar's reference to post-partum depression, the language of diagnosis carries sufficient weight in the cultural imaginary to offer most readers an entry point. Through the juxtaposition, simple language, and concrete sensory detail typical of haiku, Parashar's text meets the reader with closeness that prevents clinical detachment even when drawing upon clinical vocabulary. Rather than cold, the poem's pared-down language may be read as reflecting both the dampening effects of depression and the sudden simple clarity of hope. In three lines, "post-partum" thins the distance between speaker and reader, slowing perception until we too are left staring with exhaustion and wonder at the empty clear sky.

Haiku's immediacy of perception, associative leaps, and sparseness that requires readers complete the poem in their own minds, all function to produce a powerful space of encounter (Kacian et al. 306). This can render the form highly successful in promoting

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readers to identify with experiences they might otherwise distance as “other.” Consider this piece:

sensory processing disorder
bird tweets turn into
an orchestra

—Christine L. Villa (2020)

Readers are unlikely to have literally experienced the disorienting sonic intensity of “bird tweets / turn[ing] into an orchestra.” Yet, in only three lines and the surrounding white space, the poem stirs potent emotions and sensations in the reader—or, more accurately, these emotions and sensations arise in the place where poem and reader meet. The background knowledge of haiku that readers bring to this piece is central to its impact. In another form, bird tweets becoming an orchestra might be dismissed as mere poetic flourish. One may imagine birds joining the song, their voices cascading in unison, intensifying the music to orchestral peak. While such associations remain present, both the phrase “sensory processing disorder” and haiku’s avoidance of figurative language prime one against reading the piece as a straightforward and unamalgamated image of pleasure. In the haiku, bird calls are not simply like an orchestra—they suddenly, inexplicably, are one. The transformation is startling, baffling, gorgeous, noisy, and jarring. There is a hint of synaesthesia as the notes of song “turn,” sonic becoming spatial as it moves through the air. There is beauty in the sudden confusion, confusion in the sudden beauty. Sensory processing disorder is neither reduced to metaphor nor coldly medicalized, but opened into a space of both unease and appreciation which readers coinhabit.

At this point, little has been written about the intersections of haiku and neurodiversity. Yet, as Shirane writes, “the great attraction of haiku is its democracy, its ability to reach out, to be available to everyone” (140). This paper highlights the importance of including

neurodiverse voices in this “everyone.” As Swede notes, haiku may serve an important role in the therapeutic process, aiding people in emotional distress to turn away from inward rumination and out towards connection with the world (40). Unfortunately, while poetry therapy suggests promising avenues in improving confidence, building communication skills, and fostering community amidst autistic people (Minaabad 83-85) and people with mental illnesses (Akhan et al. 206-208; Gillispie 105-106), haiku therapy for neurodivergent populations remains underexplored. This does not mean, however, that neurodiverse people are not exploring haiku on their own accord. Moreover, numerous ELH poets who do not necessarily identify as neurodivergent, nor address overtly medicalized subject matter, frequently tap into emotional and sensory experiences resonant with neurodiversity. In destabilizing binaries between “typical” and “atypical” minds, haiku may, like the neurodiversity movement, prove a powerful means to reduce stigma, recognize value in unconventional thinking, and encourage understanding towards a broader spectrum of human experience. Not only may haiku offer benefits to some neurodivergent people, but neurodiverse insights and creativity hold the potential to enrich haiku — and are, in all likelihood, already doing so.

In ELH, qualities which are medically framed as symptomatic, such as heightened sensory awareness, wandering attention, and a fragmented or transient sense of identity, often appear in neutral, ambivalent, or even positive lights. While neurodiversity encompasses a broad range of experiences, any of which may constitute rich ground for further study, the following sections focus on autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and borderline personality disorder (BPD) for two reasons. Long associated with the neurodiversity movement, autistic and ADHD communities have significant histories of advocating for the positive aspects of these cognitive styles, highlighting traits which notably align with qualities valued in haiku; in contrast,

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regarding BPD as a valuable form of neurodiversity is a more recent and controversial development (Johnson 640). Here, haiku provides a way to nonjudgmentally approach traits associated with the condition, suggesting ELH's potential for destigmatization. Secondly, in examining three very different conditions, this paper posits that haiku can offer a context in which seemingly disparate ways of being can all be approached as variations of human experience, met with empathy and respect rather than stigma. Haiku do not distance these experiences as "other" — rather than diagnose these states of mind, readers are invited to enter into them.

I do not seek to diagnose or pathologize any authors or speakers in the haiku cited, nor to assume haiku are autobiographical. Nor do I aim to overturn the validity of diagnostic categories — or, conversely, to reify these categories by claiming that particular "types" of people write particular types of haiku. While I have grouped the following sections into diagnostic categories for the sake of clarity and convenience, I invite readers to meet these supposed divisions with a mind towards questioning, connecting, and reconceptualizing.

A BRIEF NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In accordance with the preferences of autistic rights groups, such as the Autistic Self Advocacy Network and Autistic Women's Network, I use the phrases "autistic person" rather than "person with autism"; the former phrasing is favored by many members of the autistic community, because it positions autism as a neutral and non-detachable aspect of identity.

LIGHT MAKES THE WATER BEAUTIFUL: HAIKU AND AUTISM

The autism spectrum describes a wide range of developmental differences, including intense sensory perceptions, specific and passionate interests, social difficulties, and/or an atypical relationship to language. Some autistic people use little to no spoken language, communicating instead through writing, signing, or gestures. Some of these gestures, such as hand flapping, have been strongly stigmatized within the medical system, and childhood treatments often heavily focus on eradicating them. Today, however, many autistic rights advocates argue these actions should be respected as meaningful forms of communication and self-expression (Kapp). Haiku, associated with nonjudgmental observation, can be a space in which such actions are approached with an open mind:

autistic child —
wings of butterflies
his gestures

— Daniela Misso (2021)

Rather than simply encourage autistic people to communicate in a more neurotypical fashion, autistic advocates argue that neurotypical people must put in their share of the effort to understand autistic perspectives. For people with different thinking styles to understand one another, both sides must draw upon attentiveness, care, and a willingness to look at the world anew — the very qualities which tend to which give rise to haiku.

therapy session —
with her autistic son
she learns to tie a lace

— Teji Sethi (2020)

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In haiku like the above, autistic people are valued as beloved members of families and communities. Yet what about autistic people who are, or might like to be, haiku poets themselves?

On first glance, the concept of an autistic poet may appear paradoxical. Autism research has historically associated this neurotype with a strong drive towards systematizing rather than empathizing, theorizing that autistic people are more likely to follow rigid rules than to engage in spontaneity or creativity (Baron-Cohen 252-253). Additionally, difficulties using and understanding language are often considered defining features of autism (Roy et al. 33). Not only have such views tended to frame autism in terms of deficits in both creativity and language, they suggest that the greater the intensity of autistic traits, the greater limitations one will face in these areas. As Oliver Sacks writes, “it has usually been assumed that deeply autistic people are scarcely capable of introspection or deep thought, let alone poetic or metaphoric leaps of imagination—or if they are, that they are incapable of communicating these thoughts” (xix).

Yet, as Sacks soon goes on to explain, such assumptions are incorrect—indeed, his words appear in his introduction to *The Mind Tree*, a book of prose and poetry by Tito Mukhopadhyay, an autistic person who communicates primarily through writing. Research into autism reveals other autistic individuals with a strong passion for writing and reading, some of whom even use poetry as their primary form of communication (Roy et al. 35). As nonspeaking autistic poets such as Hannah Emerson gain increasing recognition, assumptions not only about autism, but about what constitutes linguistic skill come into question. Autistic traits may offer advantages to some poets: sensory awareness can shine through vivid detail, a strong sense of focus can help hone one’s craft, and social nonconformity can take the form of creative thinking.

While some autistic people appear to have difficulty understanding conventional figurative language, this too may afford insights. As Kristina Chew writes, many of the metaphors, similes, and idioms which neurotypical populations take for granted “only seem ‘natural’ by convention, by habit, by repeated occurrence” (14). In other words, what is commonly perceived as “poetic” language may not be poetic but merely cliché. Rather than relying on these shortcuts, writes Chew, autistic language is more likely to draw upon “concrete stimuli [. . .] that often provide a strong effect on the senses” (6) and include seemingly “abrupt introduction[s] of unrelated concepts and associations” (7). Noting this resistance to unnecessary figurative language, appeal to concrete sensory detail, and invocation of juxtaposition, Chew could easily be describing haiku.

morning sunshine . . .
 the jingle of coins
 in my pocket

— Pamela Connor (1999, 27)

In the above, the abrupt association between morning sunshine and jingling coins intensifies each element, heightening the senses to the point they cross over. The light itself seems to clink and jingle, the sound of coins to reflect the morning sun. Were the poet to evoke a more conventional associative path, such as alluding to the popular song “A Pocket Full of Sunshine,” the surprise which gives the poem its intensity would only be diluted. Besides, is a pocket full of sunshine really any more “natural” than sunlight jingling like coins? Connor’s text could certainly describe the experience of a neurotypical individual, but its sensory intensity and use of juxtaposition also resonate with neurodivergent thinking styles, therefore calling into question assumptions about the unbridgeable gap between neurotypical and autistic experience. While it is unlikely the poem was written with such intentions, it may make one

wonder: if mental leaps and sensory intensity are to be respected in haiku, might we not also respect them in autistic individuals?

Like haiku poets, people on the autism spectrum are often intensely attuned to the sensory world around them. Savarese and Savarese recount an instance in which their son, DJ, repetitively dipped his head in pool water, humming and flapping his arms in pleasure as he watched the droplets fall. When asked why he did this, he used his speaking device to reply, “Light makes the water beautiful.” (102). The poetry of DJ Savarese’s statement does not stem from figurative language, but sensory lucidity. (It is perhaps no surprise that he later grew up to become a poet.) Whether morning sunshine, the jingle of coins, or the beauty of water and light, effective poetry can gaze upon the world unblurred by habit, awakening the reader to recognize what has been there all along. Viktor Shklovsky terms this paring away of the habits of perception *ostrannenie*, often translated as “estrangement” or “defamiliarization” (286). A haiku poet may call it an “aha” moment.

While some on the autism spectrum are disinclined to draw upon figures of speech such as simile or metaphor, Savarese notes that neurodivergent poets do frequently utilize “radical synaesthesia” (286). Rather than connecting ideas through habitual (neurotypical) associations, autistic poets — like haiku poets — draw connections which leap across the senses. Research on synaesthesia supports that the condition may result from reduced neural pruning, a developmental difference associated with neurodivergence such as autism (Spector and Mauer 177). In poetry, writes Ryskamp, synaesthesia intensifies meaning by layering numerous sensory associations into one term or phrase, “imposing an ambiguous space in which meaning may dwell without disclosure” (25). Through synaesthesia, a poem does not lecture the reader, but rather opens a space of heightened attention where speaker and reader together can dwell. In this space, meaning is not explained but experienced.

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

— James W. Hackett (2013, 20)

Just as neurodivergent writers' keen attention to sensation, juxtaposition, and synaesthesia can enrich the field of haiku, so too might engagement with haiku benefit neurotypical readers in learning to respectfully approach autistic styles of thinking. Autistic gestures and synaesthetic turns of phrase may not immediately disclose their meaning—but this does not mean there is no meaning. Like haiku, understanding another's way of thinking requires active participation: a willingness to put in the time, to enter into encounter, to perceive what is there and not merely what one expects to be there. To recognize a butterfly-like movement as a gesture; to feel the sharpness of a hawk's searching cry. To recognize, in both poetry and people, that different language is not lesser language.

LOOKING UP: HAIKU AND ADHD

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism share numerous parallels, not only in some shared characteristics, but in how people with these characteristics today advocate for more nuanced understanding. Like autism, ADHD has often been framed as a disorder of childhood, a perspective now challenged by numerous neurodivergent adults. Those who live with ADHD often have difficulty fitting into neurotypical expectation; both children and adults may experience wandering attention (such as daydreaming), hyperactivity (such as the urge to walk), or a combination of these features. Advocates of neurodiversity argue these traits can offer advantages such as creative free association, curiosity, energy, and wholehearted engagement during moments when one is focused (Armstrong 37-41). In fact, many people with

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ADHD make a point of clarifying that they do not, in fact, have a deficit in attention — although they may struggle to control what they focus on, their focus itself is often intense. They may notice details and make connections others do not, precisely because they are focused on the “wrong” thing.

abcdefg
ADHD
lmnop

— Seneca Kennedy (2011)

The above haiku, a runner up in the 2011 HaikuNow! Innovative Haiku category, calls up immediate associations with early childhood education. One may imagine oneself in the place of a parent or teacher, attempting with middling success to teach the alphabet to a child unable to sustain interest; however, a knowledge of haiku primes the reader against reading this piece — and this child — merely in terms of “inability.” One may imagine the adult’s mingled exasperation and amusement, yet haiku tradition of conveying moments of heightened awareness suggests that the child’s wandering attention also heightens the adult’s own sense of presence. Perhaps this awareness arises from the child’s freely associative thinking style and the humour, creativity, and surprise it invites. While in another genre, the poem’s playfulness may be dismissed as simply a pun — or worse, a stereotype — haiku’s focus on *karumi* (lightness) welcomes humour but discourages cruelty. This context suggests a speaker laughing with rather than at the child; and moreover, not just laughing with, but learning with.

The poem may even be read through a metatextual lens — after all, like the alphabet song, writing itself is a process of attempting to organize letters into the “right” order. And, like a restless child’s attempt to learn the alphabet, the process of writing is one in which focusing — even briefly — may require significant effort. Yet, as this poem demonstrates, these seemingly unfocused moments

can call us to attention in new ways: through humour, through being together, through the sudden leap of associations in which the “wrong” words fit surprisingly well.

The following haiku, while tonally very different, displays similarly outside-the-box thinking:

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      red
      | brick
      | house
no bud yet
memory |
      |
      tree
for mom
  
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— Nan Dozier (2011)

Unlike Kennedy’s, this haiku does not directly invoke any diagnostic labels. Yet one can imagine a similar sensibility behind it—a wandering eye and mind that may be seen as inattentive but are better understood as distributing their attention with generosity and creativity. Ranging eye movements, often considered a hallmark of ADHD, here allow the speaker—and reader—to both literally and figuratively see a bigger picture. Associative possibilities sprout and branch: does one read “no bud yet. memory” or “no bud, yet memory”?; “memory. tree for mom” or “memory tree for mom”? Perhaps the best answer is that one reads them all, drifting in thought from the red brick roof down to the roots deep under the soil. This contemplative and nonlinear thought process becomes a way of honouring the layers of history and memory embedded in this space, of recognizing how this legacy continues. It is often in moments when one is thinking about nothing in particular that one thinks about what one holds most important. Haiku and the neurodiversity movement alike prompt us to ask: what does it mean to pay attention?

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Contemporary psychology has expanded upon William James' theory of a distinction between directed attention and involuntary attention (James; Bergman et al. 1207). While directed attention requires deliberate concentration to suppress distractions, involuntary attention occurs without effort; a botanist working to cataloguing flora would utilize directed attention, while a hiker might gaze upon the same flowers with involuntary attention. While all people use both, people with ADHD appear to experience an elevated ratio of involuntary to voluntary attention. In addition, even people who do not meet criteria for clinical ADHD can develop Directed Attention Fatigue from prolonged focus without breaks, resulting in tiredness, irritability, and the inability to concentrate (Kuo and Taylor 1580; Wells 782). Involuntary attention therefore plays a vital role in both people with and without ADHD, as it allows the capacity for sustained attention to replenish (Kaplan 498; Bergman et al. 1211). Several researchers have proposed that time in nature is especially effective at restoring attention, as one finds pleasure in noticing "a babbling brook, the stir of leaves, or the chirps of baby birds" (Wells 782). This is supported by studies which found attention capacity and cognitive ability to increase after time spent with nature, such as through hiking (Hartig et al. 21), gardening (Kaplan), or even looking out a window onto greenness (Tennessen and Cimprich 83-85).

Haiku possesses numerous qualities which suggest it too may aid in attention. Not only do haiku traditionally focus on nature—including numerous poems about hiking, gardening, and looking out windows—but their short form renders them convenient to compose while in motion. Many people with ADHD enjoy physical activity, and performing these activities in natural settings may be especially beneficial for improving attention, cognition, and wellbeing (Kuo and Taylor 1584). Haiku walks may therefore hold therapeutic potential, allowing poets to draw upon stimuli from the external world rather than forcing attention at

a screen. Likewise, the nonlinear thinking style associated with ADHD maps well onto the unexpected leaps characteristic of haiku:

looking up
rules of punctuation —
green hills

— Cherie Hunter Day (2013, 158)

Haiku invites us to reconsider how moments generally seen as a lack of attention may instead be a different form of attention. To notice the world outside one's window is still to notice the world: to replenish one's capacity for wonder, pleasure, and surprise. At a time when people of all neurotypes often struggle with burnout and Directed Attention Fatigue, allowing oneself distraction may be paradoxically restorative. Even if one struggles to complete long-term projects or concentrate for extended periods of time, haiku show that full attention, even for a moment, is to be valued.

pausing
halfway up the stair —
white chrysanthemums

— Elizabeth Searle Lamb (2013, 65)

A NAMELESS ACHE:

HAIKU AND BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

As the neurodiversity movement gains recognition, more people are coming to conceive of autism and ADHD in terms of differences rather than deficits. Those diagnosed with other brain-related conditions, such as sensory processing disorder or bipolar disorder, also increasingly self-identify as neurodivergent, advocating for focus on accessibility and destigmatization rather than solely (or at all) on cure.

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At the same time, some conditions, such as clinical depression and post-traumatic stress, are difficult to conceptualize as anything other than wholly negative. Nonetheless, some do report finding meaningful aspects within these experiences (Forgeard 245-247). While psychological suffering deserves recognition, so too do the complex humanity and nuanced emotions of those who live with and through such difficulties. Under duress, one may undergo a melancholy, yet not necessarily hopeless, process of transformation, learning to be present in the world as who one has become. In its resistance of didacticism, haiku can recognize pain without foreclosing other possibilities. Consider this haiku, which appears to explore the lingering aftershocks of post-traumatic stress:

it took him
ten years to come home from war
drifting kelp

— Neal Whitman (2020)

Haiku's keen focus on the present moment, rather than narrative resolution, allows these moments of presence to be valued without downplaying the sense of loss imbricated in them. In the above, imagery of kelp suggests the dark drift of these ten years; the tangled thoughts, the repetitive waves, the open waters of loneliness. Yet juxtaposition, arguably the key element of haiku, is fundamentally grounded in relationship. Although the man and the kelp are both drifting, the poem positions their drifts within a shared world. The reader's senses, perhaps like those of the man, turn away from introspection and out towards relation, recognize that despite one's inner pain, the world still exists, and one exists in it. One sees the kelp. At least for a moment, the man comes home.

Like depression or post-traumatic stress (both of which are frequently comorbid with it), borderline personality disorder is often framed in purely negative terms. Feature such as intense and quickly changing emotions, persistent feelings of emptiness, and

fragmented, unstable, or lack of identity (American Psychiatric Association 663) often cause significant distress. Moreover, due in part to its name, BPD is sometimes stigmatized as not only as a flaw, but a flaw in a person's very personality, extending beyond the brain and into the self (and prompting uncomfortable questions about where to draw these distinctions). Yet, this resistance to recognizing BPD as a form of neurodiversity is arguably precisely why it is important to do so: the experiences of people diagnosed with BPD are too often dismissed as "other," which risks furthering the alienation of an already vulnerable demographic (Lester 70-71). When one engages with an open mind, what is perhaps most disconcerting about borderline traits is not their otherness at all, but how qualities like emotional reactivity, feelings of emptiness, and identity instability apply at times to almost everyone.

river fog —
 a nameless ache
 fills the page

— Hansha Teki (2012)

I am nobody:
 A red sinking autumn sun
 Took my name away

— Richard Wright (1998)

The lack of identity Wright describes not only resonate with pathologized conditions such as BPD, dissociative disorders, and derealization disorder — it resonates with a sense of self-loss almost everyone has at some point experienced.

Emptiness appears persistently in both Japanese and English language haiku; however, it is important to note the differences in cultural connotations regarding the term. In the West (and the DSM), "emptiness" tends to denote a painful feeling of lack, but in Japanese culture, numerous terms often translated as

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“emptiness” hold neutral or positive connotations. One such term, 間 (*ma*), refers to gaps, pauses, and space, such as the white space surrounding haiku on the page. Present in many Japanese art forms, 間 suggests that negative space is equally important as that filled by words, sounds, and images — absence opens an expanse in which that which is present can deepen (Matsumoto). The term 空 (*kū*), drawn from Mahāyāna Buddhism and written with the same character for sky, is associated with impermanence and egolessness, suggesting the illusory nature of both one’s own selfhood and of a lasting material world (Shimizu and Noro). Viewed through this lens, one may question whether the feelings of emptiness and shifting identity associated with BPD are inherently harmful, or if the difficulty they cause may stem at least in part from a poor fit with Western emphasis on individuality and continuous selfhood. While a lack of fixed identity may lead to ambivalent or melancholy emotions, there can in some contexts be a sense of liberation in recognizing one’s cosmic insignificance. Awareness of absence can lead, paradoxically, to a heightened sense of presence, allowing a contemplative pause for one’s temporary life to come into contact with the temporary world:

wildflowers
I cannot name
most of me

— George Swede (2013, 77)

While it would be misleading to equate haiku and Buddhism, it would likewise be an oversight to ignore how values present in influential Japanese haiku continues to inform ELH. While some poets draw explicitly upon Zen practice (Donegan xi-i), the larger number who do not remain informed by haiku’s longstanding themes of impermanence and individual insignificance. Regardless of one’s philosophical or religious affiliations, haiku’s brevity necessitates considered use of negative space and allows little

opportunity for the quirks of a distinct “I” to take center stage. The form is therefore often most effectively utilized when absence itself become part of its meaning. As Gabriel Rosenstock writes,

The path of emptiness leads us to inner spaciousness, immediately or over a lifetime of devotion to the art of emptiness; without this inner spaciousness the world of phenomena cannot be perceived or recorded with the freshness and memorability that good haiku demand.

Emptiness, in this context, becomes a form of expansiveness, allowing what is present—a few words, a particular moment of awareness—to intensify against the backdrop of void.

Perhaps it is this more nuanced attitude which leads Dialectical Behavior Therapy, the primary treatment for BPD, to emphasize sensory attentiveness, nonjudgement, and the transience of emotional states (Butler)—qualities strikingly similar to those valued in haiku. When met without judgement, empty states can become places of meaning, growth, contemplation, and relationship.

shadow after shadow
the flock of migrating geese
passing through us

— Wally Swist (2013, 111)

Through shared emptiness, reader and speaker dissolve at the edges into a porous “us.” Like the Japanese language, which often does not include a personal pronoun, ELH place far less emphasis on the first-person speaker than other forms of English language poetry. “I” is often lowercase or entirely unmentioned—the self not a point, but a place of relation. It would not be a stretch to say that selfhood in ELH is often fragmented, unstable, or lacking: a composite of poet, reader, page, an empty space charged with

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simultaneous transience and continuance. A shadow passing through: the moment we feel it.

at the brink
wind that brought me here
goes on

— Peter Yovu (2013, 145)

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Grounded in explicit and implicit juxtaposition, haiku are, in the words of Jim Kacian, “always about relationship” (306). Through emphasizing immersion within a richly sensory world, combining seemingly disparate elements, and meeting the reader as co-creator in the haiku moment, ELH offer powerful potential to reveal, alter, and create relationships, destabilizing dynamics habitually taken for granted. This can include challenging the deleterious assumption that neurodivergent and disabled people are “those without connection to the world” (Killian 46). As the poems discussed herein reveal, neurodiverse people warrant recognition and inclusion not only as valuable members of society at large, but as valuable members of the haiku community.

The strengths possessed by neurodivergent writers, such as acute sensory perception, ability to draw unexpected associations, and insights into the fleeting nature of selfhood, can offer perceptive contributions to this literary field. Moreover, the fact that many haiku writers who do not identify as neurodivergent also draw upon these themes challenge binaries which are too often taken for granted: typical versus atypical, healthy versus pathological, self versus other. Haiku call us out of opposition and into relation. In its emphasis on “convey[ing] an experience directly without commentary,” (Collins xxxi), the form offers an immediacy of perception rarely found in other genres. An engaged reader enters — to some degree — into another’s synaesthesia; another’s

racing thoughts; another's feelings of emptiness, not to diagnose this experience, but to share in it. If haiku possesses the capacity to cause, in the words of Billy Collins, "in the reader's consciousness a sudden shift, literally a new way of seeing" (xxx-xxxi), this may include seeing the full, varied, and irreplaceable humanity of the neurodiverse people who have been here all along.

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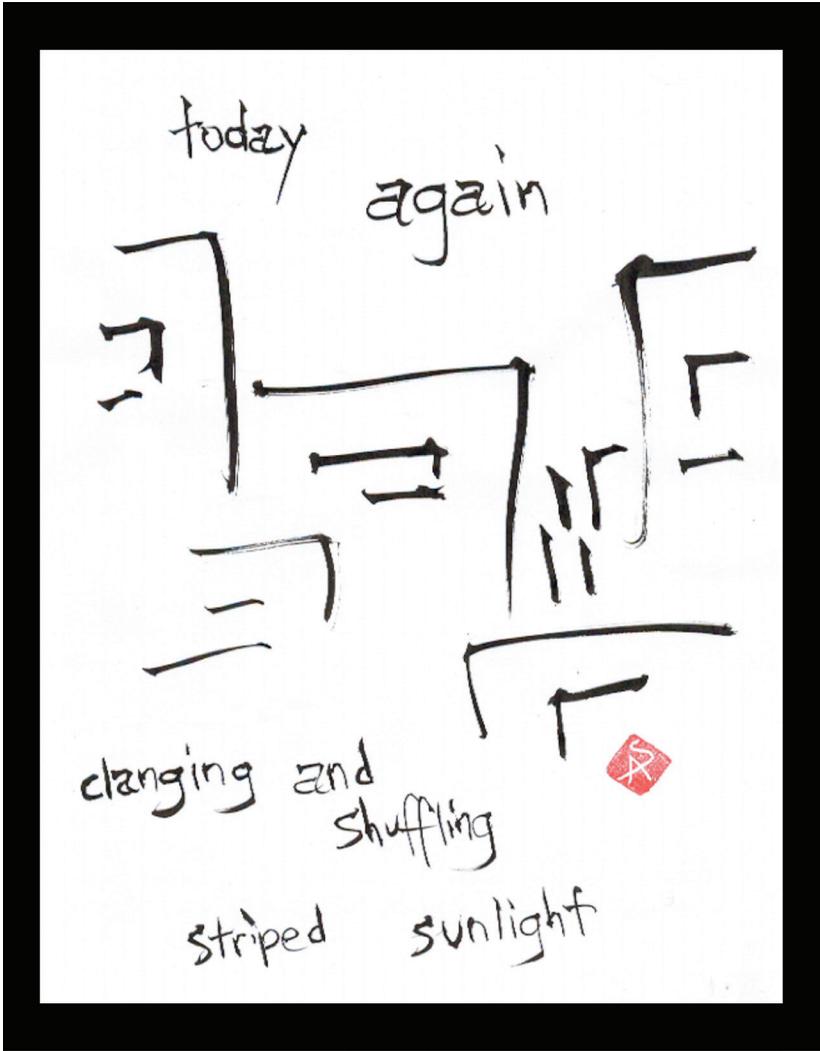
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JUXTA

Interviews



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

HAIKU AND WELLNESS:

An Interview with Robert EPSTEIN

Jay FRIENDENBERG

JF: Hi Robert and welcome. Looking at your history of writing and publications, you have had an almost exclusive approach to haiku, examining its relation to the inter-related topics of health, pain, death, mourning and healing. Can you first tell us a little about your personal history and what brought you to this subject?

RE: Thank you, Jay, for this special opportunity to share with you my love of haiku and my passionate dedication to this form of poetry as a path of healing. I found my way to haiku via a longtime interest in Zen Buddhism that dates back to my senior year in high school (1972). I read Alan Watts's book, *The Way of Zen*, as well as several books by D. T. Suzuki, especially *Zen and Japanese Culture*, which has an entire chapter devoted to Japanese haiku poetry. However, it wasn't until 1990 or so that I dared to try my hand at writing haiku, which slowly became a passion, not just a pastime.

I am forever grateful for taking up this poetic form because around 2000 I developed some mystifying symptoms that were initially frightening and debilitating, including brain fog, malaise, headaches, muscle aches and pains, short-term memory and attentional deficits, gastrointestinal distress, exercise intolerance,

extensive fatigue and insomnia. These symptoms became chronic over time and it took several years to obtain a “diagnosis,” which I regarded as useless: Chronic Fatigue and Fibromyalgia.

Over the course of many years, I have succeeded in managing most of these symptoms but I experienced multiple losses as a formerly healthy and active person. It is not an exaggeration to say that the initial onset of these symptoms thrust me into a major health crisis or ordeal; and healing for me has been ongoing. As the late meditation teacher Stephen Levine was fond of saying, “Healing is the work of a lifetime,” and so it is. My partner, who developed a different set of unrelated chronic health problems several years before I did, struggled as well. Both of us turned our respective health crises into creative undertakings. We wanted to share with others what we learned through the hot coals of hardship and adversity. We co-authored a self-help book, *Living Well with a Hidden Disability* (1999); as well as a book of prose poetry modeled after Lao Tzu’s *The Tao te Ching*. The book is called *Suffering Buddha: The Zen Way Beyond Health and Illness* (2010).

Why have I credited haiku with saving my life, spiritually speaking? As a psychologist, I had several writing projects I wanted to pursue but fatigue as well as attentional and short-term memory deficits made this impossible. I did find—much to my relief—that I could stay focused long enough to write haiku . . . and I did so with a mixture of delight and gratitude. Reading and writing haiku constituted a saving grace for me. I found salvation in observing nature through the lens of poetry, which revealed many truths I discerned thanks to flashes of insight facilitated by intuition.

Turning from my personal experience to writing and publishing, I think it is important to mention that, while working in the field of chemical dependency treatment for many years, I often wished I had a book of recovery-oriented haiku I could share with clients in recovery. Eventually, I took up the project of editing such a book,

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soliciting poems from clients in recovery — those I knew and those I didn't know but who were published haiku poets themselves. This was the first anthology that I published; it was called *The Breath of Recovery: A Collection of Recovery-Oriented Haiku*. The anthology represented the way in which I conceptualized haiku poetry as a healing art.

JF: You have authored and edited numerous books over the years, including *Beyond the Grave: Contemporary Afterlife Haiku* and *Checkout Time is Noon: Death Awareness Haiku*. How do these works differ from each other? Can they be categorized in any way? Are there any overall lessons to be learned here?

RE: As a haiku poet, I regularly read several haiku journals as well as haiku books and I would occasionally encounter death poems, which I always find intriguing and evocative. I didn't think I should wait until I was literally on my deathbed to experiment with writing a death poem, so I turned my attention to writing what I call death awareness haiku, which are poems written with awareness of one's own mortality. I found encouragement in the poet Rilke who insisted: "There is no task as urgent for us as to learn daily how to die." Likewise, the late haiku poet, vincent tripi, observed: "We all pass never having spoken enough about death or about poetry." Perhaps the poet who has spoken most encouragingly about death is Walt Whitman. This excerpt appears in "Song of Myself":

All goes onward and outward . . . and nothing collapses,
And to die is different than anyone supposed, and luckier.

I published the fruit of my own inquiry as *Checkout Time is Noon* in 2012 and because I am still fond of these poems, I wrote an updated Preface and reissued the book this year (2022). A few years ago, I wrote a sequel of sorts to the first book as a means of continuing this exploration into mortality. This book is called *Checkout Time is Soon: More Death Awareness Haiku* (2016).

Why have I written death awareness haiku? I ardently maintain that facing one's mortality is not in any way morbid! On the contrary, I am eternally grateful for the Buddha's teaching on impermanence. He went so far as to declare:

Of all footprints
that of the elephant is supreme,
Of all meditations
that on death is supreme.

Ever since my beloved grandfather died when I was four, I have been filled with dread over death. For years, my partner and I attended annual retreats with Stephen and Ondrea Levine which they called "Conscious Living, Conscious Dying", and these were very meaningful and therapeutic, even. Contemplating death and writing death awareness haiku have played an important part in coming to terms with my own mortality as well as that of loved ones.

I have long-maintained that, as a person who is still alive, I could not say, let alone write about, what happens (if anything) after death. Nevertheless, I paused to question this assumption which I still adhere to, for the most part, but I gave myself the freedom to play with the notion of an afterlife, which led to the publication of a book of my own haiku, *Haiku Forest Afterlife* (2015). Following the publication of this book, I decided to solicit the poetry of fellow *haijin*, which culminated in an anthology on the same theme, *Beyond the Grave* (2015). The title was inspired by a poem by Bashō; I figured that, if the father of haiku could write about the afterlife, so could his poetic descendants. Here is his beautiful poem:

It seems to me that
beyond the grave is like this —
autumn evening

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In a longwinded way of answering your question: *Checkout Time is Noon* (2012; 2022) addresses the theme of death and dying, while *Beyond the Grave* focuses on life after death. Indeed, there is much to learn from the study of our finiteness, which explains why Buddha (as well as many other philosophers and spiritual teachers) implored one and all to meditate on our own mortality. Despite the valiant efforts on the part of thanatologists like Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Ram Dass, and Stephen Levine to call attention to the vital need to bring death out of the shadows, most people still tend to marginalize mortality, which comes as a great cost in terms of living fully. As Stephen used to say: “If you don’t get the teaching of impermanence during your lifetime, you get the crash course at the end.” Nothing could be truer.

JF: Your most recent work, to be published in 2022, is titled *The Haiku Way to Healing: On Illness, Injury and Pain*. Would you like to say something about this?

RE: It’s funny: For many years, I was so preoccupied with my own personal ordeal revolving around illness and pain, I was unable to step back to consider what fellow poets might also have to say about this theme. Of course, I perked up whenever I read a poem about someone’s plight with cancer, heart disease or chronic pain, but these occasional poems didn’t prod me into taking up the role of editor until recently. I think it was the experience of the pandemic, which has affected virtually everyone, that impelled me to put out a call for submissions. I was surprised by the notes of encouragement from fellow contributors, who have all said such a collection is well-timed and much-needed. Only one poet who submitted poems early on said that the topic was a “negative” one, a view with which I couldn’t disagree more. I have thoroughly enjoyed considering the poems and art (*haiga*) that I have received. Corresponding with several poets about the theme has not only been uplifting and meaningful but has counteracted the isolation that the pandemic has imposed on all of us to one degree or another.

I would like to also say that in thinking about what I want to discuss in the Preface to this anthology, I have had a great opportunity to clarify my own understanding of healing, which is very gratifying to me. Of course, I have not evolved any grand theory on this subject—which was never my intent—but my perspective has broadened and some things I have been writing about for the past ten years or so have gotten clearer for me, which I find especially very rewarding.

JF: Many of us are probably familiar with the classic *Japanese Death Poems Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death*. Was this a strong influence on you? Some of the poems in this collection are quite humorous. What role does humor play in understanding pain and death?

RE: I read a handful of death poems in *Modern Haiku* and especially Stanford M. Forrester's *bottle rockets*. Stanford appears to be fond of them. I did find my way to Yoel Hoffmann's anthology of Japanese death poems and loved the book, which I periodically reread. I was especially captivated by Hoffman's conceptualization of the death poem as encapsulating the spiritual essence of one's life. I really took this to heart when I started writing death awareness haiku. I asked myself: What do I want to communicate to fellow poets and readers about my understanding, however incomplete, of life-and-death?

I found myself deeply moved by Bashō's last poem which, strictly speaking, was not a death poem, though it certainly sounds like one. When asked, I believe Bashō asserted that every one of his poems could be considered his death poem. I resonate with this notion and it accords with what J. Krishnamurti, a secular spiritual teacher, implored, again and again: It is vital to die psychologically to the past, moment after moment. For readers unfamiliar with Bashō's last poem, it is:

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sick on a journey
over fields of withered grass
dreams wander on

I love this poem! I find it so moving and poignant. Bashō's poem inspired the title of the anthology of death awareness haiku that I edited, titled *Dreams Wander On: Contemporary Poems of Death Awareness* (2011).

As you rightly point out, more than a few of the death poems in Hoffmann's anthology contain a light-hearted spirit, what Bashō identified as *karumi* in his later years, which he regarded as the highest expression of the haiku spirit. I do regard humor and light-heartedness vital to survival in this wild world — sometimes referred to as a veil of tears — which we are thrown into. But I hasten to add that I don't regard humor as a denial of the harsh realities of life or an escape; rather, humor is the fruit of a wider perspective that acknowledges the hardships and adversities in life while transcending them. From a spiritual vantage point, light-heartedness reflects the perspective that we may be in the world but not of it.

You ask what role humor plays in understanding pain and death. Pain and death are beyond understanding. I am not meaning to sound an anti-intellectual note here. Pain is the body's way of communicating to the mind that some injury or dysfunction needs to be attended to or treated, so pain serves a vital purpose. For this reason, I would not want to eliminate pain, despite the fact that the pharmaceutical industry and medical establishment depend on the false promise of a quick fix.

Still, due to malfunctions in the body and mind, pain can become chronic because modern medicine is limited in its knowledge to discern (diagnose) what is awry. In such cases, humans have to come to terms — that is, make peace — with the reality of chronic pain; and humor serves a vital healing or therapeutic function here.

Likewise, in the face of death, it helps to lean into our finiteness with a light-hearted touch when possible.

Admittedly, this may be easier said than done. As someone who has been terrified of death for much of my life, I count it as an accomplishment to have been able to write the following death awareness haiku, which contains a hint of humor (at least to me):

checkout time is noon
I turn in the key
and everything else

We humans have been conditioned from the earliest days to clutch and hold onto everything: clothes, homes, cars, job titles, money, power, status, relationships, drug-induced experiences, exotic adventures, nostalgic memories and, most importantly, ideas, opinions and beliefs. Leaving aside what one personally thinks of the afterlife, none of us can take a single penny with us. Realizing this sacred truth was, for me, liberating. I came to see the folly of trying to desperately hold onto anything at all. We are all travelers, visitors, renters, in this lifetime, no exceptions.

Here is one more death poem by Kibi from *Japanese Death Poems*, which also has a hint of humor in it:

My one wish
is to live in the capital
of non-action.

JF: Zen philosophy has a lot to say about suffering and has also been a strong influence on haiku. For example, Buddhists state that suffering is inevitable and that to deal with it we should extinguish desire. Do you subscribe to this? There is also the related notion that pain is inevitable but suffering is not. Can you comment on this and its relation to haiku?

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RE: By way of prefacing a reply to your question about suffering, I want to say that I greatly appreciate your acknowledging the significant influence Zen has had on haiku. I say this because there is a contingency of contemporary haiku literary critics who have been working very hard to eradicate any trace of influence Zen has had on haiku. I regard this effort as unfortunate and misguided.

Bashō studied Zen as did a number of his dedicated students and, although Issa was not a Zen Buddhist, his religious view and haiku were infused with another form of Buddhism. The Japanese culture and its arts are rooted in Buddhist aesthetics, which I believe possess healing qualities. *Wabi, sabi, yūgen, fūryū, aware* and *karumi* may all be thought of as containing therapeutic elements. To the extent that traditional and contemporary haiku incorporate these qualities, haiku poetry may be fairly called a holistic — as distinct from a literary — art form. Without these aesthetic qualities as well as some others pertinent to contemporary culture — I dare say that one has hollowed out what is intrinsically vital and healing in haiku.

Although I am not a Buddhist, I am deeply grateful for Buddha's profound teachings. I actually think it is a misunderstanding to say that Buddhism teaches life is suffering. Based on this misunderstanding, more than a few Western critics have dismissed Buddhism as a nihilistic philosophy. Nothing could be further from the truth. I was enormously relieved to happen upon Buddha's acknowledgment of suffering. Finally, someone was willing to tell the truth about the nature of life (rooted in conditioning). But, Buddha never asserted that life is only suffering. If that were the case, he would have wasted his time and energy shaping the Eightfold Path to exiting the Wheel of Birth and Death. Buddha's teachings would have withered on the vine if he had not made clear that suffering is caused by craving or attachment.

Herein lies the fundamental difference between pain and suffering: Pain is indeed inescapable because, as I earlier indicated, we are wired to feel and pain is the way in which the body/mind seeks to call attention to wounds, injuries, malfunctions and injustices that require ministering to. Suffering arises when we are not awake and clear in terms of discerning what pain is endeavoring to communicate. I often tell therapy clients that we humans are wired to feel and feelings are forms of energy that communicate information seeking understanding. If we don't attune to what our feelings are trying to communicate, the volume increases until we do turn our attention to the site of the pain. If this doesn't happen, the pain (whether it be physical, psychological, emotional or spiritual) hardens into suffering, which can take the form of anger, hate, depression, bitterness, hopelessness, despair.

Perhaps because of confusion regarding language, Westerners may misunderstand Buddha's teachings with regards to desire. Desire in and of itself is neither good nor bad. Desire is one translation for craving or attachment. (For a fuller discussion on the topic of desire from a contemporary Buddhist perspective, I refer the interested reader to a book by the Buddhist-oriented psychiatrist, Mark Epstein, [no relation], *Open to Desire: Embracing a Lust for Life* (2005). The more one insists that things be a certain way, rather than the way they are, the more likely one is to suffer. Had I demanded that the medical profession "cure" me of my debilitating symptoms so I could return to living my formerly healthy, active life, I would have likely fallen into a deep depression or even despair. Instead, after trying for years to figure out what was wrong with me, I made some peace with the reality, grieved multiple losses and adapted as best I could. My pain did not devolve into suffering. On the contrary, with the support of haiku (as well as supportive friends and family), I turned proverbial lemons into lemonade, which has quenched my thirst for the past twenty years since becoming chronically ill.

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Does pain have a place in haiku? Yes, it most certainly does. Pain is real; it's an inescapable part of life. Facing pain and responding skillfully is a reflection of resilience (and maturity). In the anthology on healing and illness, injury and pain that I am currently editing, there are many poems about the realities of cancer, migraines, back pain, and more. The act of giving poetic voice to illness, injury and pain elevates the poet and transforms the disability or disorder. This, in my view, is the heart of healing.

How does this happen? For me, healing — as distinct from cure, which all too often turns out to be a medical myth — occurs when I am able to situate what I am grappling with in the broader context of Nature. In the process, I recover my sense of wholeness. By sharing the poems I wrote about my bout with skin cancer in a book called *At the Train Crossing* (2021), I aligned myself with countless others who have personally lived through cancer or know a loved one who has. In this way, poetry leads to a sense of belonging while counteracting isolation and maybe even shame. More than this, sharing my pain and all that goes with it puts me in touch with a sense of universality which the existential psychiatrist, Irvin Yalom, identified as a key healing factor in psychotherapy.

JF: In your writings you deal with the death of both your mother and father. You have written about this extensively, including an article in *Modern Haiku*. How have these experiences affected you and how have they made you stronger?

RE: Prior to losing my parents, I experienced the deaths of other people close to me. Every death is different and there is no preparing for loss. It is naive to think otherwise. I experienced the most searing pain I had ever felt with the death of my father. He had been larger than life, not only for me, but for every member of my family. I was plunged into profound grief; and I immediately turned to journal writing and haiku as the primary means of mourning his passing. Again, I am eternally grateful for haiku as a means for healing from this unfathomable loss.

My father died on the second Sunday in June in 2002. Since that time, I have spent every second Sunday in June in a day of remembrance, writing haiku in honor of my father. I collected these poems into a book in memory of my father, *Haiku Days of Remembrance* (2018). Here is one poem among dozens I have written over the past twenty years:

tall summer grass
so dry it hums
Dad's death day

My dear mother died the day before my 63rd birthday. I want to share what happened on my birthday since it was very significant. I drove to two nurseries in search of a Japanese maple tree, as this one of my mother's favorite trees. She loved Nature and instilled this in both my sister and me. I was unable to find a Japanese maple I liked so I drove home, disappointed. As I was walking from the driveway to the house, there, on the walkway, was a single Japanese maple leaf. Needless to say, I burst into tears. The following poem came instantaneously to me:

63rd birthday —
a lone Japanese maple leaf
Mom's next world greeting

Once again, I wrote and wrote in my journal and penned many haiku about her. It felt to me that, with her death, there was no longer anything standing between death and me. This was profoundly unsettling. I vowed to get to the bottom of life-and-death through mourning my mother's passing, longing to reach some place of peace, if possible, with regards to my fear of death. After weeks of journal writing, I realized something extraordinarily startling and liberating: my mother's death was her last act of love. I knew from then on that she would be with me when it is my turn to breathe my last.

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I wanted to share what I lived through in grieving my mother's death since haiku was so central to that grieving. In drafting the essay that appeared in *Modern Haiku* (2018) I realized that what I had been writing was, in fact, mourning haiku. These poems were inextricably connected to my healing and I hadn't heard anyone else identify them as such, which surprised me. Perhaps this is because few had ever considered that nature-based haiku could be considered a holistic or healing art, but it was crystal clear to me these were, in fact, healing, therapeutic.

Without veering off into a major digression, I want to say that I no longer view mourning as a fixed course in terms of conventional time. Each death leads to grieving that is unique; recovery cannot be prescribed by self or other, including a mental health professional. It is an act of violence, in my opinion, to impose expectations on the bereaved regarding timetables for recovery and there are, in fact, no stages associated with grieving.

JF: There is an entire field in psychology on art therapy with established theories, clinical practices, graduate training programs, etc. What is the connection between art therapy and your work? In what ways does haiku or poetry differ from other forms of art like painting when it comes to being therapeutic?

RE: I am unqualified to respond to the excellent questions that you have posed here as I have had no formal training in art therapy. I don't work from an art therapy frame of reference, though many therapists do, especially out here in California. I have made informal use of haiku poetry with select clients who communicate their interest in, or receptivity to, haiku poetry. For example, I recently met with a client I have been seeing for many years. She is a poet who occasionally writes haiku and was voicing hurt and disappointment in friends who don't give her as much attention as she does to them. I shared a death poem with her by Chogo, which appears in *Japanese Death Poems*:

I long for people —
 then again I loathe them:
 autumn evening.

We both laughed and the client acknowledged that is just how she feels. She expressed appreciation for sharing the poem with me, recognizing that she is not alone in feeling as she does.

On other occasions, I have recited one of my favorite poems by Issa. I do so when a client is being hard on him- or herself as well as impatient, often perfectionistic. The poem is:

slowly, slowly
 the snail climbs
 Mt. Fuji

I may often recount, if the person appears to be suffering from the tyranny of perfectionism what cognitive behavioral therapist, Gary Emery, tells such clients: “If something is worth doing, it’s worth doing poorly.” Between the poem and Emery’s advice, the client is able to at least pause to question his or her insistence on getting the task done pronto without taking into account any of the challenges or pressures he or she is facing.

In regards to the last question you posed about therapeutic differences between haiku poetry and painting, my inclination is to speculate — and that is all I am able to do with no substantive training in art therapy — that which modality might be more efficacious has more to do with the individual client’s predilections than the particular art form. In other words, my intuition tells me that if a given client reads a lot, loves poetry or even prose and describes him- or herself as an auditory learner, rather than someone who is visually-oriented and loves to paint, then I might encourage poetry as a mode of creative self-expression. But, again, an expert in this area might suggest something entirely different.

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JF: What is it specifically about writing that allows us to heal? Is it simply a distraction? Does it allow us to focus on difficult feelings and thus accept them? In what ways is haiku equivalent to or better than writing in general for this process?

RE: You have raised some excellent questions, which I will endeavor to respond to based on my own personal experience as well as work with therapy clients. I will start by saying that I kept a journal for close to thirty years. I wrote in my journal before, during and after I was in my own personal therapy. I found it exceptionally helpful, even therapeutic.

What was it about journal writing which was so helpful? Journal writing reflects an intimate relationship that one establishes with oneself. There were times, of course, when I turned to my journal to vent or rage at someone or something I was upset about. Such venting was cathartic, but not especially therapeutic, per se. I rarely gained any insight during such diatribes. However, I mostly wrote in search of insight or understanding; and I was more willing, on such occasions, to make myself vulnerable — that is, I suspended self-judgment — having realized that self-loathing and self-condemnation virtually never shed light on whatever I was struggling with.

At times, I employed a therapeutic technique in which I created an imaginary character with whom I conducted a dialogue. This was not scripted by any means; quite the contrary, the dialogue that ensued could be characterized by a stream of consciousness that was intended to bypass the ego's scrutiny. On one vivid occasion from years ago which remains vivid to this day, I created a Zen teacher that dialogued with my younger self who was frightened of death. Through the back-and-forth, I discovered to my surprise that I held onto my anger toward my parents, believing that if they only loved me more I would be spared the fate of all human beings; namely, I would not die. When I realized how grossly naive and

absurd this illusion was, I released an enormous burden of anger I had been carrying around for years. This imaginary dialogue was hugely self-healing, to say the least, and nothing like a distraction whatsoever. I should add that this breakthrough realization led to a notable improvement in my relationships with my parents, which all of us appreciated.

I have long-maintained that, in therapy, one can cover up truths with words or uncover truths with words. This is the difference between depth and distraction. Of course, those in therapy who use words to cover up the truth are doing so most often unconsciously. The ramifications of facing the truth of living with an abusive or unfaithful partner, for example, may be very frightening, indeed.

So, I would say that, yes, if one is engaged in journal writing or haiku poetry for the purpose of self-understanding, then these forms of writing can lead to increased self-compassion, self-love and/or self-care, perhaps even significant change. For Fritz Perls, a German psychiatrist who co-founded Gestalt Therapy with his wife, Laura, which became enormously popular in the 1960s, “awareness in and of itself is curative.” By curative, I believe he meant healing. Fritz also importuned clients to “lose your mind and come to your senses.” This latter assertion is particularly relevant to haiku poetry because, from Bashō’s time, the aim was to transcend one’s ego identity in order to become one with the subject. Doing so means realizing the suchness of things which leads to the discovery that, in actuality, there are no things; rather, all things are beings and thus worthy of our compassion. This is the basis for mindfulness meditation teacher Thich Nhat Hanh’s term, inter-being. To come to one’s senses and experience the wonder of oneness, the conditioned self must see through the prison (or hell realm) of the thinking mind. As the Buddha taught, “With our thoughts we create the world.”

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Although not everybody will find haiku poetry healing or therapeutic, many may, but they would need to be inclined toward this form of brief poetry in the first place or open to exploring the art form. I maintain that inherent in nature-based haiku — I cannot say the same for *gendai* haiku which overemphasizes language and artifice — there are healing qualities that even the beginning haiku poet can tap into, though this may take time to root and deepen. (For a list of some of these healing qualities, see the Addendum.) To this extent, I would say that haiku is potentially more healing than writing in general though, as I suggested, even writing in general may be healing insofar as the writer is able to establish and maintain a curious, open and compassionate relationship with oneself during the course of writing.

JF: The world has obviously changed in the past few years. We seem to be confronted with numerous ongoing crises including climate change, pandemics, social upheaval and the decline of democracy. These have obviously affected our health and have led to mass death and suicide. What role can haiku play in helping to understand and deal with these issues?

RE: Indeed, everyone worldwide has been affected to one degree or another by living through the pandemic during the past two years. As you say, many have died while even more have been deeply impacted physically, psychologically, emotionally, spiritually. The toll is incalculable, really.

To cope with this unprecedented crisis, I naturally and readily turned to writing about the myriad ways in which the pandemic affected me and others around me. I gathered these poems together in a book that I published in the early months of the pandemic. Unsurprisingly, it was called *Pandemic Haiku: Living through Covid-19* (2020). I cannot say these poems came anywhere close to being great literature; but I felt impelled to write as a means of coping with fear and anxiety as well as the uncertainty that I felt flooded by.

In the face of pandemics, natural disasters or man-made catastrophes, haiku poetry serves as a record, a personal yet universal account, of the crisis or ordeal. Haiku poetry can unite people living in very different locations, time zones, and cultures. At such times of crisis, we have an opportunity to shed our differences and come together as one human family. Sadly, too many people have retreated into the trenches forged in the identity of separateness and this leads to suspicion, mistrust, alienation, bitterness and hardened hearts . . . the very opposite of what is needed during times of crisis.

For me, insofar as haiku has spread far and wide over the past fifty years or so, having become the world's most prominent form of poetry, it holds out the promise of bringing people together just as music can. Indeed, one might consider haiku poetry to be the music of Nature. As such, it offers extraordinary healing opportunities and we owe it to ourselves and the world to rise above our differences (even within the literary realm) to share this poetic miracle to one and all. As my dear haiku friend, Roberta Beary, declared in *Haiku: The Art of the Short Form*: "Haiku is the best free medicine." And, I might add, it comes with no risks and no adverse side effects.

JF: Is there anything important we haven't covered that you would like to discuss? Any other important take-home lessons? Thanks very much for your time.

RE: In its Zen origins, aesthetics, and aspirations, nature-based haiku poetry has been, in my view, an art form dedicated to fostering harmony and healing. Recent attempts by *gendai* proponents to divorce contemporary haiku from its roots in nature and spirit are akin to cutting out the heart and lungs of a living being while expecting him or her to survive. The net result, I fear, will be a denuded poetry, which may look and sound novel and unusual but in actuality rings hollow, vacuous, indecipherable and forgettable

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with none of the healing qualities that have endured for centuries. Transient diversion and entertainment are no substitute for the elevation, enrichment and transformation that often accompany the remarkable communion taking place beyond space and time between poet and nature as well as poet and reader. If in fact there is a climate crisis building with every passing day, we need now more than ever to strengthen — not diminish or sideline — our intimate connection with nature from which we originate and to which we return. Our survival — indeed, the Earth's continued existence — depends on this integral bond.

I am hoping that our exchange might inspire some future exploration of this important theme on the part of haiku poets. I will let the reader decide in which of the two poems below the potential for true healing resides, acknowledging at the same time that healing is a very individual matter:

no fitting verbs

— Richard Gilbert

the temple bell stops
but the sound keeps coming
out of the flowers

— Bashō



For those who may be interested in delving more deeply into haiku and mortality, I want to mention a couple of essays written by well-respected haiku poets. One is by Ruth Franke, “American Death Poems” (*Blithe Spirit*, 17:1, March 2007); and the other is by George Swede, “Western Death Haiku” (*Simply Haiku*, 2007). As discussed above, I also highly recommend Yoel Hoffmann’s *Japanese Death Poems* (1986).

To the best of my knowledge, I do not know of any writings on haiku and healing, so I am hoping that our exchange might inspire some future exploration of this important theme on the part of haiku poets.

Thank you again for inviting me to participate in this lively dialogue.

ADDENDUM

Healing Qualities Inherent in Nature-Based Haiku

Japanese Aesthetics (Alan Watts)

- *Mono No Aware* (Nostalgic Non-attachment)
- *Sabi* (Tranquil Solitude)
- *Wabi* (Simple, Austere Beauty)
- *Yūgen* (Mysterious Grace)
- *Fūryū* (Self-Aware Acceptance)
- *Karumi* (Light-Heartedness)

Haiku State of Mind (R. H. Blyth)

- Selflessness
- Loneliness
- Grateful Acceptance
- Wordlessness
- Non-Intellectuality
- Contradictoriness
- Humor
- Freedom
- Non-Morality
- Simplicity
- Materiality
- Love
- Courage

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Additional Facilitative Healing Qualities

- Fostering Meditative Awareness
- Willingness to Face What is
- Receptive to Revelations of Truth via Insight and Intuition
- Transcending Suffering Through Connecting with Nature (broadly conceived)
- Embracing Things-as-They-Are (Suchness; Thusness)
- Facing Impermanence (Finiteness; Death)
- Stepping Outside of Conventional Time (Eternal Now)
- Discovering Wholeness (Oneness) through Unwilled Emptiness
- Participating in the Act of Sharing (Belonging; Togetherness)



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

HAIKU HEART:

A Roberta BEARY Interview

Gideon YOUNG

Gideon Young: Welcome, readers, and thank you for entering into this space with us. Dear Roberta, thank you for joining me in conversation, I'm honored.

Let's begin by celebrating your writing practice. What's your favorite writing environment and how do you typically get your best work done?

Roberta Beary: Lenard D. Moore taught me early on about the importance of carrying a small notebook. I took his advice and ran with it. I have a nice collection of museum journals with famous paintings on the cover like *The Scream*, *Starry Night*, and *Nighthawks*, but my favorite sort of journal is still the old school blue-lined composition notebook.

I get my best work done when I am sitting at my desk in my study. The world outside does not exist, especially if it is a sunshiny day. I prefer the rain. One of the good things about living in the west of Ireland is that it rains almost every day.

GY: Living in Ireland, and also having lived in the United States and Japan, what have you gleaned in language and wisdom? How have these cultures created chorus in your life?

RB: I grew up hearing Sicilian (Italian dialect) because it was the language of my mother's parents, my grandparents. Sadly, I have lost most of it, although I continued to study Italian. In high school and college I studied French and Latin. As a working adult and young parent, I studied Japanese in my spare time for seven years, five of which were in Japan. In Ireland I am exposed to the Irish language and am learning to appreciate its intricacies. Every so often I take an online class in beginning Latin because I love the study of words.

All these experiences, these different cultures, gave me a *haiku heart*. I carry it with me wherever I go. My years in Japan taught me to see the beautiful in small things. My five years (and counting) in Ireland taught me that haiku can bridge the gap between people from different cultures and backgrounds. My years lived in America's 'melting pot' help me feel at ease with everyone I meet on my haiku journey.

I'd like to pass this onto you, dear readers, and to you, Gideon. Every morning I drink a quart of hot water mixed with one teaspoon raw honey, one teaspoon lemon juice, three slices of fresh ginger, and a dash of turmeric. I also drink this throughout the day. It is good for head and heart. Never a huge drinker, I stopped drinking alcohol in Feb. 2020.

GY: In all your travels and memories, where would you most like to be magically transported to — to sit, enjoy your favorite bitter hot chocolate, and breathe?

RB: This is a hard one. One thing I love about the west of Ireland is that it has both mountains and seaside within walking distance of my home. I live in a small town, which I find soothing after decades of living in cities: New York, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Tokyo, and London. I don't miss the traffic or the omnipresent vehicles of cities. I like to take walks by the seaside and inhale its fragrance, then walk a bit farther to the mountains and pick

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wildflowers on the way. Part of me longs to return to my childhood home, with its fig tree in the backyard.

GY: Let's visit childhood, if we may, through the lens of music. Music is a theme, by which, you invite readers into deeply personal moments in your poetry collection *Deflection* (Accents Publishing, 2015): birdsong, *summertime blues*, and Vera Lynn's *We'll Meet Again*. In *Wishbone Moon*, a groundbreaking anthology published by Jacar Press in 2018, one of your poems-by-Editor mentions piano. In your haibun "WHEN I READ ABOUT JANIS IAN I AM THE SAME ONLY DIFFERENT", published by *Rattle* on January 25, 2022, once again, music and piano dance their way through your poem.

How has music, and perhaps especially piano, shaped your writing, your life?

RB: I grew up listening to opera, full operas, not highlights, on my mother's record player. My father would sing Irish rebel songs and folk ballads from the 19th century, which his father, who emigrated from Ireland to the United States, had sung to him. We had a baby grand piano and I took lessons. My sister and older brother sang. As a teenager I attended the New York City Opera with my mother. I loved Broadway musicals and would go to see shows when student prices were on offer. Music was a huge part of my childhood and youth and I wanted to give my children a similar experience.

My daughter plays the clarinet and my son is a musician and also teaches music at American University. His main instrument is piano. One of my favorite memories, during my years as a single parent, was hearing my son practice piano. Sometimes my son and daughter would play duets when they were in high school and college. I use haiku to write about these memories, to evoke the past in the present.

GY: Haiku as translation and transformation is vital for wellness. Jane Hirshfield once said she was interested in "poems that know

the world in many ways at once — heart, mind, voice, and body.”
 In your experience, how does the writing and reading of haiku
 encourage or embrace wellness of heart, mind, voice, and body?

And following that, what are your thoughts about the phrase
 “reducing un-wellness,” in relation to haiku as therapeutic practice?

RB: Several years ago I wrote an essay on this topic, “The Healing
 Power of Haiku”, for my community newsletter. Updated, I feel it
 belongs as answer here.

THE HEALING POWER OF HAIKU

I have been writing haiku for more than twenty years. Fifteen years
 ago, I began to write about my own experiences. Some were from
 my distant past:

piano practice
 in the room above me
 my father shouting

some were from my recent past:

funeral home
 here too she straightens
 his tie

and some were from the past that is with me always:

blackout
 my sons speaks a secret
 i always knew

Writing these haiku has helped me understand and accept
 important parts of my past. I am not a psychologist, but I do believe
 in the power of haiku to heal.

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I have a simple method for writing haiku as a means of coming to terms with powerful events from my past, the remote past and the recent past. Instead of blotting out these images in an attempt to forget them, I try to remember them, and remember how I felt when they were happening. In writing about these events, I am released from their power over me. Instead of letting my past control me, I use my past to shape my present.

In looking over my poems, there are several about break-ups. But in writing about the dissolution of a relationship, whether about an old boyfriend from my teenage years:

heatwave
waiting for him to tell me
what I already know

or my ex:

talking divorce
he pours his coffee
then mine

the end result for me is a feeling of letting go of the pain.

no longer married
only their shadows touch
. . . graduation day

Sometimes I use humor in my poetry to make the best of a bad situation:

family picnic
the new wife's rump
bigger than mine

and sometimes I try to capture a special moment that I can look back on in hard times and remember how good my life can be.

my son and i
 counting fireflies
 counting stars

early spring walk
 your hand
 in my pocket

In workshops I give at haiku gatherings, I urge haiku poets to look inside and use what they find. I tell them to take a bad experience and make a good haiku out of it. There is one caveat: if the pain is too recent, give it time. When poets ask me when the right time to write about a painful experience is I tell them, “You will know when the time is right because the words will flow.”

Like haiku itself, the healing power of haiku is something that can go unnoticed unless one pays attention. One small step I take on my own path of the healing power of haiku is to try and write one haiku each day. Once a day I find a place where I can tune out distractions. If I cannot find a quiet place, I work with what I have. I think about a certain image that evokes a feeling inside of me. I try to capture that image and feeling in three lines. When I am done, I feel a special sense of contentment. This is the healing power of haiku.

all day long
 i feel its weight
 the unworn necklace

GY: Thank you so much for sharing that lovely essay on healing. One of the purposes of this interview is to highlight *One Breath*, a multi-year project that explores ideas of power, experience, and healing. Can you please tell us a bit more about the conception, creation, and production of *One Breath*?

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RB: *One Breath* is the book of which I am most proud. It is a collaboration of many voices, one that has the possibility to change the world for the better.

I was originally asked by Clan Beo founder Willie Walsh in 2018 to work on a training project. Clan Beo is an organization which help those with disabilities and their families navigate the social services systems offered to them in Ireland.

Their web page describes the organization this way: Our job is to bend over backwards to promote progressive, respectful social integration for citizens who live with the experience of disability and to stand by others in our world who have been devalued by communities we share. <https://www.clanbeo.org/about-us>

I accepted the request, as a volunteer. I was given a printout of various conversations made by clients of Clan Beo with social services staff. These conversations were compilations of thousands of ‘reluctant engagement’ conversations. (A reluctant engagement refers to a service provider relationship with an imbalance of power. The individual and/or family feel they have no other choice but to be part of that relationship, and reluctantly, they must continue.) My initial goal was to render the conversations about ‘Reluctant Engagements’ more accessible for training purposes. I put them into short narratives. These appear on the reverse side of the haiga in *One Breath*. The conversations are credited for privacy purposes to Clan Beo. This took several months. (During this time I broke my elbow during a bicycle ride gone wrong, and that added an element I hadn’t counted on. How to continue writing without the use of my dominant hand? I also was aware of how people perceived me during this time. Strangers would offer unsolicited advice or make jokes. Some asked if I’d been drinking (I wasn’t). Others helped me in little ways that made a huge difference and I noticed that these people always asked first before offering their help. I remember one server who cut up my dinner for me. A stranger carried my

suitcase. I also suffered chronic pain after the cast came off. Many people told me I looked fine and that they didn't believe I was in pain. Some told me it was 'all in my head.' I filed these experiences away. They became grist for the haiku mill.)

Once the initial project had been completed, and the training program had been in effect for over a year, I had an epiphany. What if the narratives could be used to increase awareness of the plight of these families, of the number of reluctant engagements necessary before one positive is achieved? I contacted Willie Walsh about the idea of my composing haiku around these narratives. Willie Walsh and I talked about how to incorporate the families. We hit upon the idea of a haiga workshop. And who better to conduct the workshop than renowned artist and haiku poet Mary White? She brought a special empathy to the project, as she grew up in a deaf family and as a child and young adult navigated the social services system for her parents. The all day haiga workshop was held on October 5, 2019. Mary White started the session with a Qigong session before moving onto the sumi-e workshop. She generously provided art supplies. When the sumi-e session was over, I led the group on a ginkgo through a nearby private garden with public access. On October 27, 2019, Mary White and I led a presentation at a local arts festival, Westival, which combined my haiku with the artwork done by members of Clan Beo. Willie Walsh produced a 'flip book' for the event which audience members could follow on their phone. But I was not satisfied with this because it didn't do what I had envisioned, which was bring as many people as possible, all around the world, into the haiku circle of these empowering relationships.

I spent the next few years working on the haiku, perfecting them, until I was satisfied they were done and I could step away and move onto the next step of promoting *One Breath* in the global haiku community. During this time Willie Walsh found a designer, Frank Reilly, to work with us on *One Breath*. We envision taking *One*

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Breath to arts festivals throughout Ireland and perhaps around the world. Copies of *One Breath* have been sent to organizations and legislators and other government officials throughout who work with the disabled. At this point, I feel that *One Breath*'s journey has just begun.

GY: As you were writing haiku from others' experiences during this project, how did shouldering their emotional perspectives impact your personal life and writing practice?

RB: It was extremely difficult even though I kept my eye on the prize: spreading the word through haiku coupled with their artwork. I could sense the pain they felt in navigating a bureaucracy which at times either ignored or patronized them. And I could also sense their joy at their accomplishments, when they were able to experience the 'right relationship' with the staff at the institutions which were meant to help, rather than hinder. These 'right relationships' empowered those with disabilities in a way that I wanted to highlight in my haiku.

GY: I love the following haiku from *One Breath*. The phrase "borrowed walking stick" especially resonates with me because I appreciate and follow the tradition of people, who, when they have finished a hike, leave their walking stick at the beginning of the trail for a next person to use. I embrace how this haiku meets the reader in multiple ways.

Can you please share a little bit about how you transposed this particular haiku from the Clan Beo narrative?

on a journey
of rocky pavement
borrowed walking stick

RB: The walking stick is an unseen or white space metaphor I took from the narrative, which to me describes the duality of and

commonality between the service provider and the person who has experienced multiple reluctant engagements. Walking stick is a concrete image with multiple meanings. By adding the word borrowed the image becomes more layered. It can be a symbol of the help that the caregiver provides. It can be a bridge that links the helper and the person being helped. It can be an instrument on the journey towards independence.

GY: *One Breath* is full of gorgeous haiga. As you mentioned, in 2019, some of the families and people of this project came together for a haiga workshop led by Mary White and assisted by Rae MacAllister. Please share about the process of these images coming to be.

RB: *One Breath's* haiga workshop, led by Mary White, will long be remembered by me. To see an example of Mary's work, have a look at the starkly breathtaking bamboo shoot on the back cover of *One Breath's* introductory pamphlet. Besides being a talented artist, Mary is a seasoned haiku poet. She also comes from a family of disability, as she was the speech interpreter for her deaf parents.

Mary brought along her artist friend Rae MacAllister, who assisted in the practicalities of brush painting. All art supplies were provided by the two artists, much to the delight of the participants. Each participant had a connection to Clan Beo either as a person with disabilities or their family.

Mary started the workshop with a Qi Gong practice. After that session, which involved finding our centers through mindful breathing, I did a reading for the participants. I read the more than 2 dozen haiku I had composed from the Clan Beo reluctant engagement narratives.

We suggested that workshop participants follow their own path and create their own individual artistic narrative. After a few hours of creative endeavors, the workshop moved outdoors. I led the participants on a lovely gingko around the gardens of Westport

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House, a local landmark in County Mayo, Ireland. Mindful appreciation of the natural surroundings, including flora and fauna, was encouraged. It was a beautiful autumn day in the west of Ireland. We came back to a delicious bento meal prepared by Willie Walsh. After sharing our meal, participants continued to hone drawing skills under Mary's guidance. It was an all day workshop. But it did not end after the participants left. The collaborative team of Clan Beo, which included Willie Walsh, Mary White and me, spent hours pairing the haiku with the haiga, which were then matched to the narratives.

Over the next several months, I polished and tweaked the haiku to ensure they were of a quality that matched both the artwork and the narratives. I found this part of the process to be especially rewarding.

GY: I really connected with Willie Walsh's words in his brilliantly written introduction — “the idea that ‘partnership’ between people using services and providers is a valid relationship status to work towards” — and how that idea was a challenge for participants; for people to even begin to realize they *could* view their experience through that positive lens. This idea of partnership as a relationship goal of healthcare, social, and community work makes my heart feel open, vulnerable, and hopeful.

What was it like to acknowledge this idea in your work?

RB: The partnership idea is one I experienced when caring for my disabled mother for many years. In her later years, my mother suffered from both dementia and mobility issues. I had to navigate my way around various state, local, and federal government agencies to make sure she was getting the care she was entitled to under applicable laws, rules, and regulations. I was on the receiving end of a plethora of reluctant engagements during that time. It was a time of frustration and exasperation, with little glimmers of hope that fell across my existence like patches of sunlight after rainy season

after rainy season. One experience that stands out is my copying file after file of denials concerning my mother's medically needed requests and sending the entire package to the general counsel of the federal agency responsible for denying those requests, along with a lengthy cover letter which I composed. I never received a written response, but later learned that some of the denials were overruled. A pyrrhic victory as she had been gone for a few years by that time.

The above experience played a huge role during the years I worked on *One Breath*. It hovered in the background, sometimes so close I could taste it, especially when immersing myself in editing the narratives and writing the haiku for *One Breath*.

At the same time the historical basis of *One Breath* was always with me. I often thought of these words on its webpage "People living with the experience of disability have been abused in reluctant engagements in institutions, in their personal relationships, as a result of government policies and by the blindness of fellow citizens." The narratives are a distillation of 30 families telling their story 2760 times. Of those 30 families, 7 could not recall any feelings of empowerment in those interactions.

The tumultuous yet ultimately emotionally rewarding experience of caring for my mother is with me to this day. I can't go back and make things better for my mother. But I hope that my work on *One Breath* will both atone for any mistakes I unknowingly made in caring for her and make things better for others. Its ability to improve people's lives is the reason I am most proud of my work on *One Breath*, and rank it at the top of my publications, including those with multiple book awards.

GY: What was it like to hold *One Breath* in your hands for the very first time, after four years of creation, revision, and production?

RB: Holding *One Breath* in my hands for the first time can only be described as the epitome of my myriad experiences as a haiku poet. I had always believed in the project. The difficult part was to

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get others to believe. I have a reputation for being determined. I take that as a compliment. During those four years, I built upon each disappointment and turned it into a challenge to do better. One thing that kept me going was a mantra I made up: This Will Change Lives for the Better. Eventually that mantra morphed into *One Breath Will Change Lives for the Better*.

GY: What are the next steps for *One Breath*? You mentioned getting it into the hands of policy-makers, leaders. How can we — readers, poets, writers — help this bloom?

RB: It would be wonderful if members of the global haiku community can find it within their hearts to spread the word about Clan Beo's webpage, <https://www.clanbeo.org> which provides an overview of *One Breath*, along with information on how to order the complete boxed set, or individual prints. I would like to see *One Breath* get into as many hands as possible, especially in the disabled community. Copies of *One Breath* already have been donated by Clan Beo to worthy organizations.

My hope is that *One Breath* will be used to spark conversations, even if outside of one's comfort zone, about the disabled community's experience of reluctant engagements, and how we as a society can do better. I see *One Breath* as a global haiku project that has the power to make a difference.

GY: Roberta, Thank You so much for sharing your voice. You are a treasure, and *One Breath*, a triumph and way forward. Any final thoughts, questions, wisdom with which you'd like close, resonating?

RB: This year, *One Breath* was shortlisted for a Touchstone Award, which is a wonderful honor. *One Breath* also received glowing reviews in several haiku journals, such as *Presence* and *Blithe Spirit*, and was written up in *Modern Haiku's* Spotlight series.

While such recognition is nice to receive, it is more important that the message of *One Breath* be spread as far as possible. I have tried to help that process along by entering *One Breath* in various book award contests. In any case where a person receives a ‘free’ review/contest copy, Willie Walsh of Clan Beo asks that the recipient then forward *One Breath*.

Here is his request:

Dear Friend

I hope you enjoy *One Breath*. This publication is intended as a resource to be shared in the community and not as a document that takes up space on a bookshelf. When you are finished with it may I invite you to pass this on as a gift to someone from your community who you think would find it useful. Thank you.

Regards

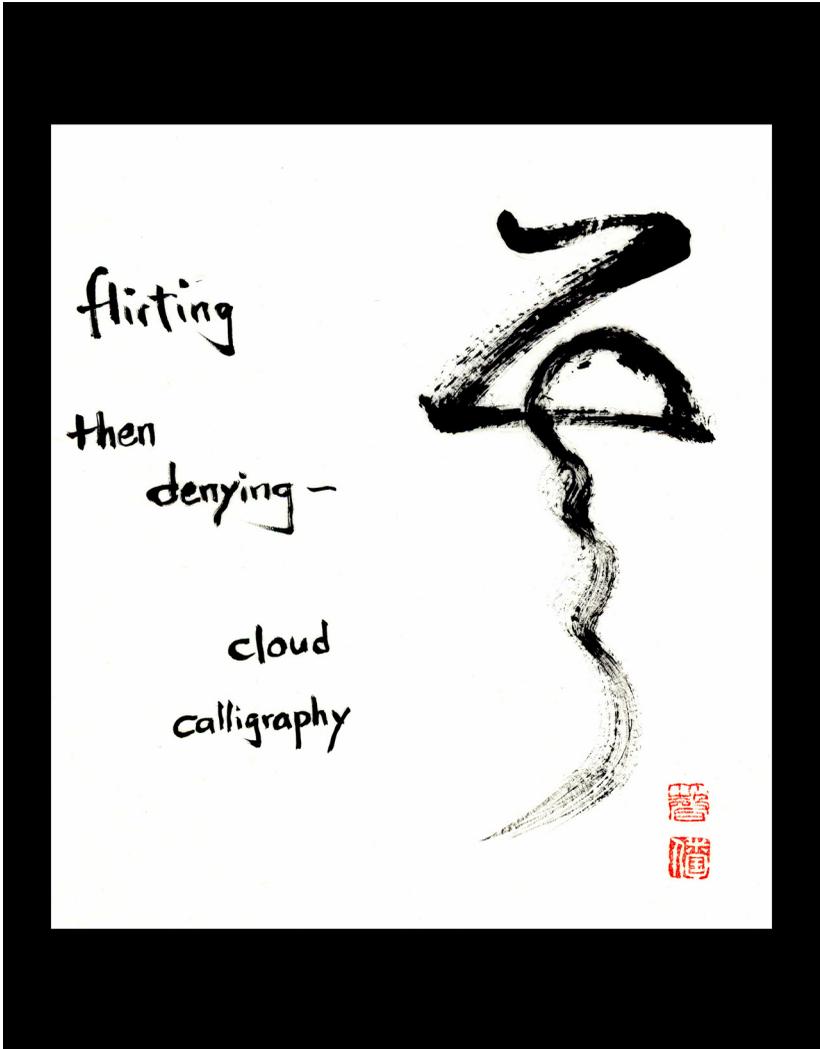
Willie Walsh

If each contest judge forwards *One Breath* to an organization which would benefit by having a copy, the ripple effect would be enormous.

Talks sparked by *One Breath* have begun their global journey. My hope is that as a result of this journey, positive engagements will one day soon outnumber reluctant engagements.

JUXTA

Resources



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

HAIKUPEDIA

Stella PIERIDES

ABSTRACT: This article gives a detailed account of the information an interested reader, researcher, or poet/haikuist would find in Haikupedia, the encyclopedia of “all things haiku,” launched June 20, 2020. Following a brief account of the project’s history, the article describes the organization of the encyclopedia and the range of topics covered. As an illustration, it details the content manual for guiding the preparation of articles in the topic category “Countries.”

ABOUT

Haikupedia (a blending of the words haiku and encyclopedia) is a Web-based, free-content encyclopedia dedicated to all aspects of haiku worldwide. It is a “. . . not-for-profit project of The Haiku Foundation and is compiled, edited, and published by the all-volunteer Haikupedia staff” (qtd. in Haikupedia). It launched on June 20, 2020, under the editorship of Charles Trumbull (Editor-in-Chief).

Haikupedia aims to be an authoritative source on all aspects of haiku that scholars and practitioners of all ages and backgrounds can turn to for reference. To ensure reliability as a source, the entries’ commissioning, submission, review, and updating processes follow a rigorous approach. Commissioned authors are specialists in their subject areas, frequently leading authorities in their fields. Submissions are reviewed by *Haikupedia* area editors and finally approved by the Editor-in-Chief. *Haikupedia* ensures accessibility by its availability to all users of the Internet worldwide. It is thus an essential resource for anyone seeking quick, accessible, and authoritative information on any aspect of haiku. Articles are written with the intention that they can be understood by readers from undergraduate to advanced scholar level.

As a Web-based resource, *Haikupedia* is subject to continual development and updating. This includes the addition of new entries, currently monthly, and the revision of existing entries—the aim being to foster accuracy and consensus for an objective representation of information. *Haikupedia* editors are always receptive to suggestions for correcting errors and omissions, adding new articles, and offers to assist with editorial tasks.

HISTORY

In a joint talk with Jim Kacian and Dave Russo introducing *Haikupedia* at Haiku North America 2017, Charles Trumbull described how he had been collecting English-language full texts and other data about haiku published in English for almost 30 years. The result is his digital Haiku Database, now containing more than a half-million haiku. He had also been assembling encyclopedic-type data about haiku terminology, poets, organizations, publications, etc., that could be difficult to locate in libraries or online, in order to have the information ready to hand in one place.

At the same time, Kacian had initiated work in 2004 on the creation of The Haiku Foundation, a repository for all things haiku. When chartered in 2009, its stated task was to archive the first century of English-language haiku and expand possibilities for the second. To this end, the Foundation had acquired a considerable amount of technical and organizational expertise and a comprehensive website. In addition to several educational and interactive features, it housed the world's largest online repository of materials about English-language haiku.

Given the common purpose, it made sense for Trumbull and Kacian to combine resources. In 2016, they gathered an exploratory team. Dave Russo, a founding member of The Haiku Foundation, took on supervision of website design and maintenance. Stella Pierides, a member of The Haiku Foundation Board who had managed the Per Diem haiku feature of the Foundation, joined as the *Haikupedia* Founding Managing Editor. Iliyana Stoyanova, Communications Officer of the British Haiku Society, joined as the Photo Editor. Theresa Cancro, who was editor of the re:Virals feature for The Haiku Foundation, took over from Pierides as Managing Editor once the intensive launch period June–October 2020 was concluded.

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This small team set up a website for *Haikupedia* and commissioned the first articles, mainly articles on various countries' haiku histories, and poet biographies. New materials were posted weekly during the extended launch period from June 20, 2020, to October 2020. Subsequently, following a three-month interval, *Haikupedia* started releasing batches of articles monthly.

To date *Haikupedia* has primarily contained entries in English, with articles on African, Australian, European, Indian, New Zealand, and North American poets and haiku activities. Going forward, however, the editors plan to focus more on the key area of Japan and include original and parallel articles in other languages.

THE HAIKUPEDIA TEAM

The core *Haikupedia* team (listed as of 2022) consists of:

- Charles Trumbull, Editor-in-Chief
- Stella Pierides, Founding Managing Editor, 2019–2020
- Theresa A. Cancro, Managing Editor, 2020–
- Iliyana Stoyanova, Photo Editor
- Dave Russo, *Haikupedia* Website Manager
- Jim Kacian, Founder/President, The Haiku Foundation

The *Haikupedia* team of contributing editors, commissioning and editing clusters of articles, includes (as of August 2022):

- Adjei Agyei-Baah
- Danny Blackwell
- Tzetzka Ilieva
- Jim Kacian
- David G. Lanoue
- Patricia J. Machmiller
- Paul Miller

- Emiko Miyashita
- Mike Montreuil
- Đurđa Vukelić Rožić
- Mary Stevens
- John Stevenson
- Angela Terry
- Judit Vihar
- Michael Dylan Welch
- Billie Wilson

ORGANIZATION OF THE *HAIKUPEDIA* WEBSITE

A visit to the *Haikupedia* website (<http://www.haikupedia.org>) reveals a wealth of search options. “Topic by Category” shows the categories covered in the encyclopedia:

- About *Haikupedia*: Introduction; The *Haikupedia* Team, Editorial Contributors; Organization of *Haikupedia*; and How Are We Doing?;
- Countries — Substantial, chapbook-length reports on the history and current status of haiku in various countries, regions, and cultures around the world; for example, “Haiku in Southern Africa,” “Haiku in Finland”, and “Haiku in Romania”;
- Awards & Contests — Haiku-related awards and competitions worldwide with information about the sponsors, adjudicators, number of entries, prizes, and winners for each; for example, “Betty Drevniok Award,” “Japan Air Lines National Haiku Contest 1964”, and “Touchstone Distinguished Book Awards”;
- Events — Haiku meetings and other events, including dates and locations, sponsors and organizers, attendees, and main activities and presentations; for

example, “Haiku North America 2015 — Schenectady, New York” and “1st European Haiku Congress, Bad Neuheim, Germany, 2005”;

- Glossary — Glosses and definitions of terms used in and about haiku, poetics and aesthetics, verse forms, and the like; for example, “*Dōjin* (同人)” and “Rengay”;
- Publications — Haiku publishers and publications in print and online (e-zines, websites, webpages, and blogs), including their history as well as subscription and submission information; for example, “Alba Publishing” and “Upstate Dim Sum”;
- Bibliography — Topical lists of the most important print and online books and major articles of or about haikai; no separate Bibliography articles yet;
- Core articles — Substantial, chapbook-length articles about significant topics in haiku; the Core articles classification overlaps articles in other categories; for example, “Kobayashi Issa” and “Matsuyama Declaration”;
- Documents — Full texts of documents and essays important in the history and development of haiku; for example, “Haiku Definitions: Lorraine Ellis Harr” and “Matsuyama Declaration”;
- Biographies — Full-length biographies of significant haiku poets, translators, scholars, and critics; for example, “Kobayashi Issa” and “John Wills”; in addition, *Haikupedia* includes a large number (almost 300 in August 2022) of “short biographies” or “abstracts” of future full biographies, listing only the

essential data and significant achievements of the subject; for example, “Adjei Agyei-Baah” and “Sandra Simpson”;

- Gazetteer — Places mentioned or otherwise crucial in haiku; for example, “Rakushisha” and the “Katikati Haiku Pathway”;
- Organizations — Past and present international, national, and local haiku organizations and groups, their sponsors and organizers, members, and main activities; for example, Haiku Club Plovdiv / Хайку Клуб Пловдив” and “Santa Fe Haiku Study Group”;
- *Saijiki* (forthcoming) — A listing and exploration of the most commonly used Japanese *kigo* and English-language season words together with examples of haiku in which they are used.

Clicking on one of the headings above produces a title list of all entries in that category together with a short description of each.

The Contents option, “Articles by Tag,” provides an alphabetical index of the contents of *Haikupedia*, for example:

▪ M ▪

Machmiller — Patricia J.

MacNeil — Paul

Madagascar — Haiku in

Maeve O’Sullivan

Magdalena Dale

Mahoney — Hannah

Manley — C. R.

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Marcoff — A. A.

Marcyn Del Clements

Maretić — Tomislav

Other options on the Haikupedia home page include a “Contact Us” button and a link to “The Haiku Foundation” home page.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPOSITION AND EDITING

Guidelines are made available to authors and contributing editors. Haikupedia staff members have prepared a stylesheet and content manuals to guide in the preparation of articles for the website. For example, here is a basic outline for “Countries” articles:

- Background on the country, culture, and language(s).
- Early contacts with haiku and first translations of Japanese haiku.
- First composition of haiku in the local language(s); first publication of home-grown haiku, collections, and first anthologies; literary journals and book(s) of original haiku in the local languages—dates, titles, poets.
- First haiku clubs or other organizations.
- Current status of haiku in the country; number of practicing haiku poets, and general comments about their haiku.
- Current clubs and organizations; meetings; conferences; contests.
- Regional activities; composition in dialects and minority languages; youth events.

- International contacts of the local haiku community: participation in international journals, contests, and online haiku activities.
- Sources / Further Reading: both a standard academic bibliography and, as suggestions for further reading, a listing of major sources mentioned or used in the preparation of the article; includes books, anthologies, published articles, conference presentations, etc.
- Photo Gallery and other illustrations: images of persons, gatherings, logos, etc.

GRAPHICS

To the extent possible, *Haikupedia* articles are enlivened by the addition of photographs, organizational logos, and reproductions of journal and book covers.

CITING *HAIKUPEDIA* ARTICLES

Suggested citation format for *Haikupedia* articles in a bibliography:

Moldovan, Vasile, Radu Șerban, and the *Haikupedia* editors.
 “Haiku in Romania.” *Haikupedia* website: <https://haikupedia.org/article-haikupedia/haiku-in-romania/>.

JUXTA

Presentations

by the hydrant

children
singing

street
songs



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

Bashō's Haiku Pedagogy as Mindfulness Training²

Sandra A. WAWRYTKO

ABSTRACT: The connection between Buddhist mindfulness or meditation practice and the unique form of haiku composition developed by Bashō is demonstrated through four interrelated topics. 1. Buddhist mindfulness or meditation focuses on the problem of perceptions as “building blocks of delusion.” Buddhist meditation practices of *śamatha* (stopping) and *vipāśyanā* (insight) expand a narrow egocentric perspective into an allocentric “view of no view.” 2. Mindfulness mirrors the neuroscience of learning set forth in task-driven “fixed mind” and stimulus-driven “growth mind.” 3. Haiku composition and meditational practice allow for epistemological awakening by provoking a cognitive shift facilitated by “going out of your mind.” This includes the extra-neural resources of physical movement, immersion in Nature, and engagement with other minds. 4. I have applied Haiku Pedagogy in diverse learning environments to promote a cognitive shift in students as they deconstruct perceptions and cultivate critical thinking skills. Testimonials from students in such classes reveal encouraging results from teaching haiku composition as well as the use of a “Haiku Essay” format.

1. Based on a presentation at the 26th Annual ASIANetwork Conference, April 2018, under the theme Mindful Connectivity: Asian Perspectives and Influences. For a more detailed discussion of Bashō's haiku philosophy, see Sandra A. Wawrytko, “Aesthetic Principles of Epistemological Awakening: Bi 比 and Xing 興 in Bashō's Haiku Pedagogy,” *Interculturalism and Philosophic Discourse: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Yolaine Escande (Cambridge, 2013), 233-250.

In 1684 a Japanese poet set out on a journey that he subsequently described in his *Record of a Weather-exposed Skeleton* (*Nozarashi Kikō*). Despite his burgeoning success in Edo as a poet and teacher, the reference to a skeleton reflected the internal turmoil lurking beneath his flourishing career due to personal losses. The death of his mother severed his last link to his family. A home that had been built for him by an admirer burned down in a massive conflagration. A banana tree planted beside the hut inspired his haiku name: Bashō (1644–1694), which he cherished because “Being completely useless as wood for building, it never feels the ax.”³ Under the tutelage of Priest Butchō (1642–1716) he began to practice Zen meditation, yet remained restless. And so Bashō embarked on a hazardous nine month trek, accompanied by his friend Naema Chiri (1648–1716). He explains his motives at the beginning of his account:

Following the example of the ancient priest [Kuang-wên 1127-1279] who is said to have travelled thousands of miles caring naught for his provisions and attaining the state of sheer ecstasy under the pure beams of the moon, I left my broken house on the River Sumida in the August of the first year of Jyōkyō [1684] among the wails of the autumn wind.

His opening poem speaks of “. . . the sore wind/Blowing through my heart.”⁴

2. Quoted by Lenore Mayhew trans., *Monkey's Raincoat Sarumino: Linked Poetry of the Bashō School with Haiku Selections* (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1985), 53. Bashō's observation echoes that of Chinese Daoist Zhuangzi (399–295 b.c.e.), who promoted “the usefulness of the useless” with a similar example of a knotted tree rejected by carpenters and thus allowed to flourish; *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1 “Leisurely Strolling.” This is one of two books Bashō owned, the other being a volume of Tang poetry.

3. Bashō, “The Records of a Weather-exposed Skeleton,” in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*, trans. Nobuyuki Yuasa (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972), 51.

Bashō later paired a painting with another poem written during his trek, which is regarded as an outstanding example of *haiga*, or haiku painting. It provides an excellent introduction to the perceptual and epistemological shift that occurs in the composition process.

There beside the road,	<i>Michi-no be-no</i>
A hibiscus and a horse	<i>mukuge wa uma-ni</i>
Has chewed it all up.	<i>kuware keru.</i> ⁵

What is particularly striking about this painting is how it differs from the poem. There is no horse to be seen. Instead the focus is on the hibiscus which is about to disappear. Leon Zolbrod offers a detailed description of the painting that allows us to visualize its aesthetics:

The overall composition has grace and simplicity with the barest minimum of color — pale rose and a dark olive that borders on gray. The calligraphic text at the top runs from the upper left toward the lower right, the reverse of the normal right to left pattern. The line of vision moves from the lower right to upper left, from where the text brings it back toward the center to an imaginary point, or boundary, between text and picture. The seal impression is placed slightly aslant, emphasizing the symmetry of asymmetry, an established aesthetic principle in East Asian painting and calligraphy. A few deft strands of grass in the lower right-hand corner introduce a contrastive element. Parallel as a common everyday image to the horse, which is mentioned in the verse but is not represented in the picture.⁶

4. Leon M. Zolbrod, *Haiku Painting* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1982), 9. Alternate translations: “near the roadside/my horse grazing/on hibiscus”; Jane Reichhold, *Bashō: The Complete Haiku* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2008), 76. “Roses of Sharon/At the roadside/Perishing one after another/In the mouth of a horse.”; Nobuyuki Yuasa, 53.
5. Zolbrod, 9.

As a painter, Bashō shows us his initial perception, the hibiscus. As a poet, and a Buddhist practitioner, that perception provokes a reflection on the profundity of Impermanence, the Buddhist principle of *Anitya* that was deeply imbued in Japanese culture. The physical phenomenon triggers Bashō's realization and confirmation of impermanence or momentariness. Kenneth K. Inada explains the link between external and internal experiences: "each moment of existence is meaningful and significant only to the extent that it is related to other moments or events in the continuum and that, fundamentally, in the relational context of existence, paradoxical as it might seem, the moment describes the context just as much as the context describes the moment. This is the basic premise of reflexive nature inherent to experiential reality, but as this nature goes on with such rapidity it escapes our total perception."⁷

The haiku traces Bashō's cognitive shift as he deconstructs the deluded dualism of self and other, just as he instructed his students: "Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine, or to the bamboo if you want [to] learn about the bamboo. And in doing so, you must leave your subjective preoccupation with yourself. Otherwise you impose yourself on the object and do not learn. Your poetry issues of its own accord when you and the object have become one, when you have plunged deep enough into the object to see something like a hidden glimmer there."⁸ The painting focused on the hibiscus reflects a symmetric self-other dichotomy, the poet as passive observer. Inada identifies the symmetric with conventional, partial truth (*samvṛti*) in the Buddhist continuum of the Twofold Truth: "the symmetric with its dualistic elements hinders or obstructs a clear, full perception of things."⁹ He refers to it as "the lighthouse effect, i.e. it perceives only what comes within the purview of the

6. Kenneth K. Inada, "The Buddhist Aesthetic Nature: a Challenge to Rationalism and Empiricism," *Asian Philosophy*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1994, 142-143.

7. Reichhold, 72.

8. Inada, 148.

beacon light and neglects or ignores what does not.”¹⁰ When that illusion of dualism is shattered by the horse, Bashō becomes aware of the broader context of experience, Interconnectedness (*Pratitya-samutpada*), the complex intertwining of causes and conditions in life. The poet is clearly not the center of reality: he gets a glimpse into the complete truth (*paramārtha-satya*) seen by the Buddha eye after “crossing the bar of hindrance or obstacle to achieve the aim of clear, full perception,” revealed in the asymmetric.¹¹

THE HAIKU PROCESS

To demonstrate the connection between Buddhist mindfulness or meditation practice and the unique form of haiku composition developed by Bashō, we will consider these four key topics:

1. Buddhist mindfulness or meditation
2. Mindfulness in the context of the neuroscience of learning
3. Haiku composition and meditational practice as epistemological awakening
4. Haiku Pedagogy applied in diverse learning environments

9. Inada, 143.

10. Inada, 148. The Five Eyes — physical eye, divine eye, wisdom eye, Dharma eye, and Buddha eye — are mentioned in the *Diamond Sūtra* to trace expanding awareness from mere sensory perception to “the perception of no perception.” Translator Red Pine explains the scope of each eye: the “obstructed” physical eye “sees the near but not the far”; divine eye “sees both near and far” in terms of causes and conditions; wisdom eye “perceives objects in . . . their essential emptiness”; Dharma eye of a bodhisattva “perceives the means to liberate others”; but only Buddha eye sees the full scope of reality, devoid of attachment to perception. *The Diamond Sutra: The Perfection of Wisdom* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 310-313. With the Buddha eye “all sees all”; Hsing Yun, *Describing the Indescribable: A Commentary on the Diamond Sutra*, trans. Tom Graham (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 146.

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1. BUDDHIST MINDFULNESS OR MEDITATION

When an elderly monk asked the Buddha for an abbreviated version of his teaching, Buddha provided precise instructions regarding perceptual practice, with cognition added to the five senses:

“In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Malunkyaputta, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress.”¹²

Buddha’s advice resonates with Bashō’s warning to his students to avoid projecting their perceptions (*lakṣaṇa*) on phenomena. Buddhist Master Hsing Yun notes “Generally speaking, the word *lakshana* in Buddhism refers to deluded awareness. *Lakshana* may be thought of as the building blocks of delusion; they can be thoughts, perceptions, memories, dreams, emotions or any other element of awareness.”¹³ The Middle Way of Buddhism is non-attachment — engaging with sensory experience without becoming attached to our perceptions or seeking absolute detachment, the extreme of asceticism.

Hence Buddha declares that awareness (*apramāda*) is the first step, literally not (a) careless (*pramāda*), that is, careful, heedful, conscientious. Buddha likens this awareness to the footprint of an elephant, which overwhelms all other footprints: “in the same

11. *Malunkyaputta Sutta: To Malunkyaputta*, trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 2005; <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn35/sn35.095.than.html>.

12. Hsing Yun, 47.

way, all skillful qualities are rooted in heedfulness, converge in heedfulness, and heedfulness is reckoned the foremost among them.”¹⁴ This requires a non-discriminating mind, as described in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*:

No view is seeing
Which can see all things;
If one has any views about things,
This is not seeing anything.¹⁵

Robert Thurman associates a high level of awareness with the realization of emptiness, the emptying out of deluded perceptions, citing the *Anavataptaparipṛcchāsūtra*: “He who realizes voidness [*śūnyatā*], that person is consciously aware.” For Thurman “far from obliterating the relative world, [awareness] brings it into highly specific . . . focus.”¹⁶ Inada argues that such a realization is “the foundation of Buddhist aesthetics. . . . the [allocentric] asymmetric prominence over the [egocentric] symmetric.”¹⁷

Chan master Sheng-yen (1931–2009) provided “basic training” for novice practitioners by focusing on purification of “eye consciousness”:

Sometimes I ask people to look at things, or at people sitting across from them. I ask them to look attentively, but to refrain from identifying or categorizing the object [by gender or degree of familiarity] . . . one must refrain from using one’s memory, ideas or any previous experience. Like a camera, one must look without discrimination. If one has been practicing well, it is

13. “Appamada Sutta: Heedfulness” (AN 10.15), trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an10/an10.015.than.html>.

14. *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 1993), 376.

15. Robert Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2008), 158.

16. Inada, 147.

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possible to see things in a different way. . . . Because most of us make discriminations based on our preconceptions, our eye consciousness is static, dull and rigid.¹⁸

Such training paves the way for more formal mindfulness practice, described in great detail in *The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness. For Bhikkhu Bodhi this practice “centers on the methodical cultivation of one simple mental faculty readily available to all of us at any moment. This is the faculty of mindfulness, the capacity for attending to the content of our experience as it becomes manifest in the immediate present.”¹⁹

Two forms of meditation are practiced by Buddhists: calm abiding (*śamatha*) and insight (*vipāśyanā*). The Chinese translations offer provocative images, with the calm abiding character 止 (*zhi*) conveying the stoppage of deluded thought, “abstraction rather than contemplation.”²⁰ The character for insight or discernment 觀 (*guan*) depicts an egret, who serenely waits for its prey to approach, beside a large eye (“seeing”). In terms of the symmetric and asymmetric aspects of momentariness, Inada emphasizes that calm abiding is necessary prior to insight: “The problem lies, I believe, in the inability to understand that the nature of tranquillity and rest exists potentially in one’s own momentariness and consequent failure to implement it. To expand, the cult of tranquillity and rest involves the realisation of the presence of the symmetric elements within the asymmetric nature. It is a realisation of the differentiated within the undifferentiated.”²¹ As

17. Master Sheng-yen, *The Sword of Wisdom: Lectures on The Song of Enlightenment* (Elmhurst: Dharma Drum Publications, 1990), 67-69.

18. Message from Bhikkhu Bodhi in “The Way of Mindfulness: The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and Its Commentary,” by Soma Thera. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wayof.html>.

19. William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1937), 158a.

20. Inada, 150.

Zen Master Dōgen observed, “The whole moon and the whole sky are reflected in a dew-drop on a blade of grass and are reflected in a single drop of water.”²²

2. MINDFULNESS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEUROSCIENCE OF LEARNING

What Buddhists regarded as deluded thinking arises from seeing only what we expect to see due to pre-processed unconscious perception. Neuroscientists have explored this process as “inattentional blindness,” arriving at conclusions that parallel those of the Buddha concerning the key role of awareness or attention. Research suggests “all retinal input is subjected to deep processing, and only those stimuli to which attention is either voluntarily directed or which captures attention at a late stage of processing are perceived . . . attention provides the key that unlocks the gate dividing unconscious perception (which, according to our working hypothesis entails deep processing) from conscious perception.”²³ Two complementary attentional networks have been identified in the bilateral brain: dorsal task-driven attention and ventral stimulus-driven attention.²⁴ Task-driven attention corresponds to the dualistic symmetric, with its narrow egocentric

21. Dōgen, *Shobogenzo* Book 1, 3 “Genjo-koan,” trans. Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Chodo Cross (Dogen Sangha, 2006), 28.

22. Arien Mack and Irwin Rock, (1998), “Inattentional blindness: perception without attention,” in Richard D. Wright (ed), *Visual Attention*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 71,73. See also See Arien Mack, “Inattentional Blindness: Looking without Seeing,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Vol. 12, No. 5 (Oct., 2003), pp. 180-184.

23. See Simone Vossel, Joy J. Geng and Gereon R. Fink, “Dorsal and Ventral Attention Systems: Distinct Neural Circuits but Collaborative Roles,” *Neuroscientist* 2014, 20:2, 150-159 and Michael D. Fox, Maurizio Corbetta, Abraham Z. Snyder, Justin L. Vincent, and Marcus E. Raichle, “Spontaneous neuronal activity distinguishes human dorsal and ventral attention systems,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 103:26 June 27, 2006, 10046-10051

focus; stimulus-driven attention is asymmetric, characterized by allocentric responsiveness to the environment.

Through stimulus-driven attention we can access extra-neural resources, including the embodied cognition of physical movement, physical space, other minds, and technology. Such “thinking outside the brain” is necessary due to the inherent limitations of our attention, memory, abstraction, and persistence.²⁵ Allen Watts conveys this need in a very Zen way, declaring: “When one speaks of awakening, it means de-hypnotization, coming to your senses. But of course in order to do that you have to go *Out of Your Mind*.”²⁶ Bashō reaped the benefits of physical movement in natural spaces that inspired his haikai during his frequent road trips. Neuroscientist Shane O’Mara believes “Our sensory systems work at their best when they’re moving about the world, . . . getting people to engage in physical activity before they engage in a creative act is very powerful. . . . the activation that occurs across the whole of the brain during problem-solving becomes much greater almost as an accident of walking demanding lots of neural resources.”²⁷ Yet Bashō also highly valued on-the-spot (*shasei*) linked verse (*renga*) compositions with students and other poets, where they could “sit down together to work on one poem written collaboratively.”²⁸

James H. Austin spans the fields of neurology and Zen practice as he explains the origins of our deluded perceptions:

24. Annie Murphy Paul, *The Extended Mind: The Power of Thinking Outside the Brain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2021), 2

25. Quoted by Neal Chase, “The Dramatic Worldview of Alan Watts: A Psychological Commentary on Three Lectures Entitled, ‘The Nature of Consciousness,’” April 2015; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275055767>.

26. Quoted by Amy Fleming, “‘It’s a superpower’: how walking makes us healthier, happier and brainier,” *The Guardian*, July 28, 2019; <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jul/28/its-a-superpower-how-walking-makes-us-healthier-happier-and-brainier>.

27. Reichhold, 13.

The neural evidence indicates that we first register these bare sensory perceptions (e.g., touch, proprioception, vision, hearing) in the back half of the brain. As these impulses relay forward in the brain they become much more entangled with myriads of other associations. Elaborate linkages occur, both with language and with other sticky attachments. Many attachments are sponsored by the emotionalized limbic subjectivities and the I-Me-Mine concepts of our Self. Without knowing it, we become conditioned.²⁹

The deconditioning process requires a cognitive shift that opens the path from egocentric to allocentric attention. Haruo Shirane describes how “haikai imagination” stops obstructive attachments through “recontextualization: in defamiliarization, in dislocating habitual, conventionalized perceptions; and in refamiliarization, in recasting established poetic topics into new languages and material cultures marked by a constant search for ‘newness,’ for both new perspectives and new sociolinguistic frontiers.”³⁰

Psychologist Carol Dweck refers to the stagnancy of “fixed mind” that seems to parallel the narrow focus of task-driven attention, while stimulus-driven attention aligns with “growth mind.” Fixed mind, with its egocentric sense of certainty, ultimately hinders the learning process, just as the flexibility of growth mind manifests “resilience and fail-forward perseverance.”³¹ Dweck also studies ways in which a shift from fixed mind to growth mind is possible: “When you enter a mindset, you enter a new world. In one world — the world of fixed traits — success is about proving you’re smart or talented. Validating yourself. In the other — the world of changing qualities — it’s about stretching yourself to learn

28. James H. Austin, *Zen-Brain Horizons: Toward a Living Zen* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014), 18.

29. Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 8.

30. Maria Popova, “Fixed vs. Growth: The Two Basic Mindsets That Shape Our Lives,” <https://www.themarginalian.org/2014/01/29/carol-dweck-mindset/>.

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something new. Developing yourself.”³² Each mind has a unique “internal monologue”—while the fixed mindset engages in “constant judging and evaluation,” a growth mindset has a “voracious appetite for learning, constantly seeking out the kind of input that you can metabolize into learning and constructive action.”³³

Triple Loop Learning outlines a three step process of suspending, redirecting, and letting go that mirrors Buddhist practice, including Bashō’s Haiku Pedagogy. Both are “concerned with the question of profound change (and [radical] innovation) not only in the domain of knowledge, but also in the domain of personality or individual cultivation. . . . the understanding of learning as a process of transferring more or less stable chunks of knowledge from one brain to another is replaced by a more dynamic perspective: learning as a continuous and active process of adaptation and construction in which knowledge is developed in permanent interaction between the cognitive system and its environment.”³⁴ In the first loop “it is necessary to detach and free oneself from well-established patterns of perception and thought.”³⁵ For Buddhists that involves suspending past perceptions of discriminating mind that block access to reality — usually found in the opening line of a haiku. The second loop is redirecting, which “goes beyond reflection; it aims not only at uncovering and questioning premises and cognitive patterns, but at exploring the source of these patterns and, by that, opening up a new space, a space that enables the emergence of new constructions, new profound insights, fundamental change, etc.”³⁶ Hence it is said that the Buddhist practitioner must become

31. Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (Ballantine Books, 2007), quoted by Popova.

32. Popova.

33. Markus F. Peschl, “Triple-Loop Learning as Foundation for Profound Change, Individual Cultivation, and Radical Innovation Construction Processes beyond Scientific and Rational Knowledge,” *Constructivist Foundations* 2007, vol. 2, nos. 2–3, 137.

34. Peschl, 140.

35. Peschl, 140.

“a scientist of the world within, in order to experience truth directly.”³⁷ This crucial transition ideally occurs in the second line of a haiku. The third loop is letting go: “[. . .] you go from ‘looking for something’ to ‘letting something come to you,’ to ‘letting something be revealed.’ . . . you have to get through an empty time, a time of silence, and not grab onto whatever data is immediately available.”³⁸ That would be the closing line, and possible closure, of a well-crafted haiku.

3. HAIKU COMPOSITION AND MEDITATIONAL PRACTICE AS EPISTEMOLOGICAL AWAKENING

We can now turn our full attention to Bashō’s unique pedagogy that teaches haiku composition as a veritable form of Buddhist meditational practice. Although not officially recognized as a Zen master, Bashō’s self-description reveals a sense of fluidity: “Clad in a black robe, I was neither a priest nor an ordinary man, for I wandered ceaselessly, like a bat that passes as a bird at one time and a mouse at another.”³⁹ Similarly, spontaneity was essential for “on-the-spot composition,” which “must occur in an instant, like a woodcutter felling a huge tree, or a swordsman leaping at his enemy. It is also like cutting a ripe watermelon with a sharp knife or like taking a large bite at a pear.”⁴⁰ Multiple “slogans” associated with Bashō’s school reflect a juxtapositioning of seeming opposites, merging the momentariness of the symmetric and the asymmetric:

“awakening to the high, returning to the low” (*kōgo kizoku*)
 “truth of poetic art” (*fūga no makoto*)

36. William Hart, *The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation as Taught by S. N. Goenka* (New York: HarperCollins, 1987), 33.

37. Nathalie Depraz, Francisco J. Varela, & Pierre Vermersch, *On becoming aware. A pragmatics of experiencing* (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2003), 31. Quoted by Peschl, 140.

38. Bashō, “Learn From the Pine,” Robert Hass, ed., *The Essential Haiku: Versions of Bashō, Buson, and Issa* (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1994), 237.

39. Hass, 234.

“following the Creative” (*zōka zuijun*)
 “object and self as one” (*butsuga ichinyo*)
 “the unchanging and the changing” (*fueki ryūkō*)⁴¹

He did not set forth any dogma or even initiate discussions with his students, but responded to questions posed. Like the historical Buddha, he emphasized practice over theory, offering advice specific to each student. In one of his travel journals he reveals that poetry, which began as “little more than a pastime” had become “the full business of my life.”⁴² He aspired to achieve *makoto* (Chinese *cheng* 誠), “sincerity, absence of fault, and seriousness . . . a truth, or higher dimension.”⁴³

How did Bashō’s approach to the haiku, which previously had been dismissed as a popular art form, allow access to such truth? The process can be tracked in the distinct roles played by each of the three lines.

Line 1. **Looking** (Awareness)

focus on the outer situation to illuminate the inner condition;
 right where you are is reality, devoid of cultural sedimentation,
 including temporal distinctions — past, future, or present

“Make the universe your companion, always bearing in mind
 the true nature of things — mountains and rivers, trees and
 grasses, and humanity — and enjoy the falling blossoms and
 the scattering leaves.”⁴⁴

“use the commonplace to escape the commonplace”⁴⁵

40. Shirane, 257.

41. Bashō, *The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel*, quoted by Lucien Stryk, *On Love and Barley: Haiku of Bashō*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 10.

42. Shirane, 258.

43. Bashō, quoted by Hass, 233.

44. Bashō, quoted by Hass, 75.

Line 2. **Seeing** (Wisdom)

a break, “cutting word” (*kireji*); breaking through to a fresh, unmediated, unexpected experience of the commonplace, which “summons the reader to be an active performer and interpreter, to create and complete the work”;⁴⁶ it seems to reflect what neuroscientists discuss as the “circuit-breaker” role performed by stimulus-driven attention when task-driven attention becomes mired in “perseveration”⁴⁷

Śamatha—the meditational practice of stopping the automatic pilot of concepts, constructs, expectations;

intellectual grasp of (understanding/standing under) the interconnectedness of *Pratitya-samutpada*

“I don’t know anything about consciousness. I just try to teach my students how to hear the birds sing.”⁴⁸

Line 3. **Insight** (Compassion)

“just this” — “poetic realization of reality . . . ‘to merge with thussness.’”;⁴⁹ arising from the juxtapositioning of seemingly distinct objects or events, the nondualism of non-

45. Shirane, 83.

46. Fox, et al., 10046. Researchers “speculate that in children, these two networks [DAN dorsal or task-driven attention and VAN ventral or stimulus-driven attention] may be less segregated than in adults, and that bottom-up salience processes and attention to environmental stimuli may be over-represented in the child’s brain. Consistent with the ‘circuit breaker’ function attributed to the VAN, it has been demonstrated in adults that signals in the VAN causally influence activity in the DAN.” Kristafor Farrant and Lucina Q. Uddina, “Asymmetric development of dorsal and ventral attention networks in the human brain,” *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, 12 (2015), 171-72.

47. Shunryu Suzuki-Roshi (1905-1971), quoted by Austin, 52; from D. Chadwick, ed., *Zen is Right Here: Teaching Stories and Anecdotes of Shunryu Suzuki, Author of “Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind”* (Boston: Shambhala, 2007), 107.

48. Austin, 51.

discriminating mind that melds universal and particular, emptiness and wondrous being; “an ‘intimate epistemological dance’ with reality”⁵⁰

direct experience of the interconnectedness of *Pratitya-samutpada*

vipāśyanā meditation, insight that reveals reality as it is (Suchness, 眞如 *zhenru*; Sanskrit *tathātā*);

“the perception of things as they are (*yathābhūtam*)”⁵¹

“a peak experience”: “While he was preparing to meditate, a bird called outside his window. Immediately ‘from my gut, I felt a question arise that I had never heard before: ‘Who hears this sound?’ Arising next was an extraordinary emotionless state during which his former Self/other boundary dissolved. Now, ‘I was the bird and the sound and hearing of the sound, the cushion, the room, everything.’ This was followed by a comprehensive insight: an original ‘emptiness, prior to the oneness, forever awake to itself.”⁵²

Pressed to reveal a shortcut for haiku composition, Bashō simply said “Read Chinese poetry.”⁵³ This curt advice reflected his own celebration of Chinese poets, especially the Tang Dynasty

49. Peschl speaks of this dance as “presencing”: “due to the high level of receptiveness and attention it is possible to ‘catch the wave’ of the environmental dynamics and ‘surf’ it in a process of smooth and intimate interaction between the cognitive and environmental dynamics.” 141. There is also “letting-come . . . the other side of the process of letting-go”: “it has something to do with an attitude of being patient, receptive and epistemologically humble: i.e., to wait with a high level of attention, intellectual accuracy, and to get into a very close and almost intimate relationship with the phenomenon that one wants to study and/or change,” 142.

50. Inada, 147.

51. An account of the awakening experience (*kensho-satori*) of Steve Gray (Adyashanti), as told to Austin, 53.

52. Hass, 76.

luminaries Du Fu 杜甫 (To Ho, 712 – 770), Li Bai 李白 (Rihaku, 701 – 762), and Bo Juyi 白居易 (Hakurakuten, 772 – 846), all of whom skillfully wielded natural images to reveal deep truths. The intertwining relationships among meaning, image, and language were famously elucidated by Chinese philosopher Wang Bi 王弼 (226 – 249):

Image (*xiang*) reveals the meaning (*yi*), and speech (*yan*) clarifies the image. To exhaust the meaning nothing is better than the image; to exhaust the image nothing is better than speech. Speech arises out of images, and we can thus divulge the meaning through the image. . . . Therefore, speech is what clarifies the image and must be forgotten once the image is grasped; image is what preserves the meaning and must be forgotten once the meaning is grasped. [Speech is] like a snare used to catch a rabbit; the snare is to be forgotten once the rabbit is grasped. [Image is] like a net used to catch a fish; the net is to be forgotten once the fish is grasped. Thus, speech is the snare of image, and image is the net of meaning.⁵⁴

A haiku begins with an image gleaned from engaged awareness of the “just this.” It may provoke a meaning or insight that the poet attempts to clarify with words. This requires drawing on the abilities of the Hybrid Brain — the left hemisphere that dominates in language use and the non-verbal right hemisphere that contributes creative imagination. Voluntary, intentional dorsal attention — “orienting after symbolic predictive cues; visual search; visual short-term maintenance” — is complemented by reflexive ventral attention — “orienting to exogenous cues; reorienting to unexpected events; response to contextual cues.”⁵⁵ Scientists working in the field of Artificial Intelligence have been unable to “program” skills related to abstraction and analogies, both of

53. Wang Bi, “*Ming Xiang*,” in “A brief discussion of some basic philosophical ideas of the Yi Jing” [*Zhou-yi lüe-li*], trans. Charles Wei-hsun Fu.

54. Vossel, et al., 150-59.

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which are grounded in sensory data. Melanie Mitchell notes “My intuition is that yes, we will not be able to get to humanlike analogy [in AI] without some kind of embodiment. Having a body might be essential because some of these visual problems require you to think of them in three dimensions. And that, for me, has to do with having lived in the world and moved my head around, and understood how things are related spatially.”⁵⁶

winter downpour	LOOKING awareness of the physical conditions, initial perceptions
even the monkey	BREAK a seeming <i>non sequitur</i> , demonstrating the poet’s receptivity to the entire scene, SEEING the “other” by transcending self
needs a raincoat ⁵⁷	empathy for a fellow sufferer; but does it rise to the level of compassion? is there an allocentric INSIGHT?

4. HAIKU PEDAGOGY APPLIED IN DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

For more than ten years I have included a simplified version of Bashō’s Haiku Pedagogy in multiple classes, including on-the-spot linked verse. This includes seven classes at my home campus (Philosophy and Literature, Philosophy of Art, Global Aesthetics, Asian Leadership Models) as well as two classes at a Buddhist College in Taiwan, with an international group of students, including nuns and monks. Included here are guidelines provided for the students.

55. Gabriella Marks, “The Computer Scientist Training AI to Think With Analogies,” *Quanta Magazine*, July 14, 2021; https://www.quantamagazine.org/melanie-mitchell-trains-ai-to-think-with-analogies-20210714/?utm_source=pocket-newtab.

56. Bashō, trans. Stryk, Poem 63; 39.

Student Haiku Check List

Used to assess the level of “epistemological awakening” in haiku examples (composed by others or the students themselves) with reference to the uplifting emotions of the Four Exalted Dwellings (*brahmavihāras*; Chinese 四無量心四住 *Si wuliang xin*) propounded by the historical Buddha—empathy, compassion, shared joy, and equanimity/liberation.⁵⁸

1. is the poem/poet here, now? (requiring openness, receptivity to the other, empathy)
2. does the format (generally) fit the 5-7-5 template?
3. does it demonstrate phenomenological flow?

Situation—LOOKING	right where you are
Break—SEEING	meditation stopping automatic pilot of concepts, constructs, expectations
Revelation—INSIGHT	meditation of clear observation, seeing reality as it is
4. Is there a sense of sharing? (joy)

Has the poet gone even further realizing interconnectedness with the subject? (compassion)
5. Has the poet disappeared from the poem? has ego-self been dis-solved? (equanimity/liberation)

57. The Four Exalted Dwellings are discussed in multiple Buddhist texts, including *The Kalama Sutta*. See Soma Thera’s translation under the title “The Buddha’s Charter of Free Inquiry”; <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wheel008.html>.

Student self-analysis of haiku composition

I do feel as though I have omitted a subject speaker from the poem. It seems as though it is just a resonant observation of the birds that are communicating, with any hope the reader can grasp the sense of natural beauty that effected my word choice and the contrast of commotion as felt by referring to 'dinnertime plans' which alludes to a sense of busy-ness and movement. The second line indicates a radiant stillness in 'springtime air' which is fresh, and usually associated with fragrant flowers or cleansing rain showers. The third line pulls the reader in to the revelation that they must draw themselves away as the main subject and open their eyes to the possibility of not only humans that can communicate their dinner plans, but that in fact, birds can too.⁵⁹

The poem, I believe, is in the here and now (Crescent moon shows feeling./it dictates our direction,/the hot tea cools down.) It was written from a place of using either ideas or terms that came from other classmates' poems. While there was no literal moon, the crescent moon was Dr. Wawrytko's smile, the situation. At this moment, it showed either appreciation of the work or some critique (what worked and what did not) that was being done during the Haiku Mania. While some did not seem to appreciate the help, it was for the better[ment] of our poem. This was the break in the haiku. Seeing reality as it is, and unfiltered, was knowing that the hot tea was cooling down.⁶⁰

I sat in my courtyard on a recent evening, just after dusk. While sitting on the concrete barrier I noticed many sights and sounds. They were all occurring together because of one another, suddenly I noticed a movement with no sound. In the distance the fronds of a great palm -fern were gently winking

58. Nikky Bringham, *Global Aesthetics*, Spring 2018.

59. Luis Darwin Avalos, *Global Aesthetics*, Spring 2018.

up and down like great eye-lashes. It seemed to me that they were waving. I let the thought ripen and realized that the wind was shaking the fronds. It seemed for a moment that the wind was frolicking like a child, playful and free. It encountered me, quietly observing it at play and became curious. Rather than come to me and examine me directly, (I did not feel any wind where I was sitting) it thought to be friendly and wave from afar- as a child might do. It was acknowledging my presence and confirming my awareness of it.⁶¹

It seems to me that the importance placed upon being in the immediate moment in haiku composition is due to the emphasis placed on achieving an insight into the true nature of reality-- or achieving a clear perception reality as it actually is. This would seem to require confronting reality directly. If one were in a dull gray classroom trying to write a haiku and begins fantasizing about a beautiful ocean, for example, already one has failed the assignment.⁶² In order to ascertain a clear and insightful glimpse into the true nature of reality, it would seem one needs to be in contact with reality.

“LINKED ELEGANCE” (*RENGA*)⁶³

“Haiku-Mania”; linked verse, on-the-spot composition in class

I hear and I forget
 I see and I remember
 I do and I understand

each poet must include something from the previous poem—a word, seasonal reference, philosophical theme, etc.

60. Jennifer Alvarado, *Global Aesthetics*, Spring 2018.

61. Sean Rice, *Global Aesthetics*, Spring 2016.

62. Reichhold, 417.

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don't try to match Saikaku's "world record" — 3.3 seconds per haiku (mere quantity not quality)

Composition Requirements

5-7-5 syllable count (with some flexibility)

cutting word or punctuation demonstrating transition from

Samsara to Nirvana
crooked to straight
particular to universal
symmetric to asymmetric

Guidelines

observe, discover, create, perfect
open up your five senses and your imagination
above all, open your mind
discover Nature that is all around you
use season words when appropriate
jot down ideas as they come to you
search for inspiration in haiku masters
don't surrender to comfortable perceptions, there are always
clearer ways of seeing and writing!

Don't

use worn-out expressions
try to rhyme
use adjectives unless unavoidable
be easily satisfied with your work—even Bashō edited his poems

"All who achieve greatness in art — Saigyō in traditional poetry, Sōgi in linked verse, Sesshū in painting, Rikyū in tea ceremony — possess one thing in common: they are one with nature."⁶⁴

63. Bashō, *The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel*, quoted by Stryk, 10.

The Haiku Essay

A few years ago I began to adapt the cognitive shift embedded in Bashō's Haiku Pedagogy for use in other classes. The intent was to avoid student assignments that focused on mere retrieval of data by rewarding those who told me what I had told them. This has been described by a student at an Ivy League school as the “excellent sheep” model of education that narrowly hones task-driven attention to follow the accepted norm.⁶⁵ Some of my students began to realize the conditioning they had been susceptible to: “When I learned what an excellent sheep was, deep down I knew I was one. The excellent sheep method had always worked for me in high school. . . . Critical thinking taught me to trust my own thought process and be open-minded. . . . I feel I have gained a new perspective on myself. Philosophy has opened my eyes to the untouched parts of the brain I never knew existed.”⁶⁶

The tripartite format of the haiku required a slight adjustment in the framing of the questions:

1. What did you SEE or perceive in class readings or discussions?
2. What is the deeper MEANING of the material?
3. What is the philosophical SIGNIFICANCE of the readings or discussions?

In the final exam students were asked to share their experiences by following these instructions: “Describe the cognitive process of deconstructing perceptions (the building blocks of delusion) embedded in the Haiku Essay format of our weekly essays.” Although students often reported an initial resistance to the

64. William Deresiewicz, “Solitude and Leadership,” *The American Scholar*, Spring 2010; <http://theamericanscholar.org/solitude-and-leadership/#.VEQwxRawTvw>. He describes his students at Yale University as “great kids who had been trained to be world-class hoop jumpers.”

65. Lilianna Ruiz, PHIL200 Critical Thinking and Composition, Fall, 2021.

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essay format, many also came to appreciate the ways in which it allowed them to connect with class materials on a deeper and more personal level.

The Haiku Essay format guided me into taking multiple perspectives that I develop in order to analyze an idea. I felt [I] was shedding layers of delusions as I went from “see” to “mean” to “significance.” . . . I realized that I’d rather lose something that is deluding than to gain something I want. This was something I learned throughout the course but the weekly essays helped me verify the applications of that concept.⁶⁷

At first I had a hard time discerning the difference between meaning and significance. . . . Ultimately I realized that until I established the meaning of the lesson through analysis, only then could I determine its significance to Buddhism as a whole.⁶⁸

The haiku essay format helped to change my cognitive process. The structure made me first observe, then think about it, then really see the significance. . . . This cognitive process forces us to slow down and take a breather instead of jumping into something and risking a wrong perception just to get it done. . . . I hated this structure at first because it took longer than I’d like it to. However through it, I actually was able to grasp the concepts for what they were instead of just assuming or pretending that I knew what was going on.⁶⁹

I personally believe that it nurtured my ability to “connect the dots” in everyday life. It deconstructed my illusions of “issues” I faced as it made me realize that they were just illusions created by my own fears. . . . I actually notice significant improvement in my memory and reaction to things after taking this class.⁷⁰

66. Alejandro E. Segura-Jimenez, PHIL353 Buddhist Philosophy, Fall 2021.

67. Arthur Davis, Buddhist Philosophy, Fall 2021.

68. Claire Conerly, Buddhist Philosophy, Fall 2021.

69. Jumpei Hanaoka, Buddhist Philosophy, Fall 2021.

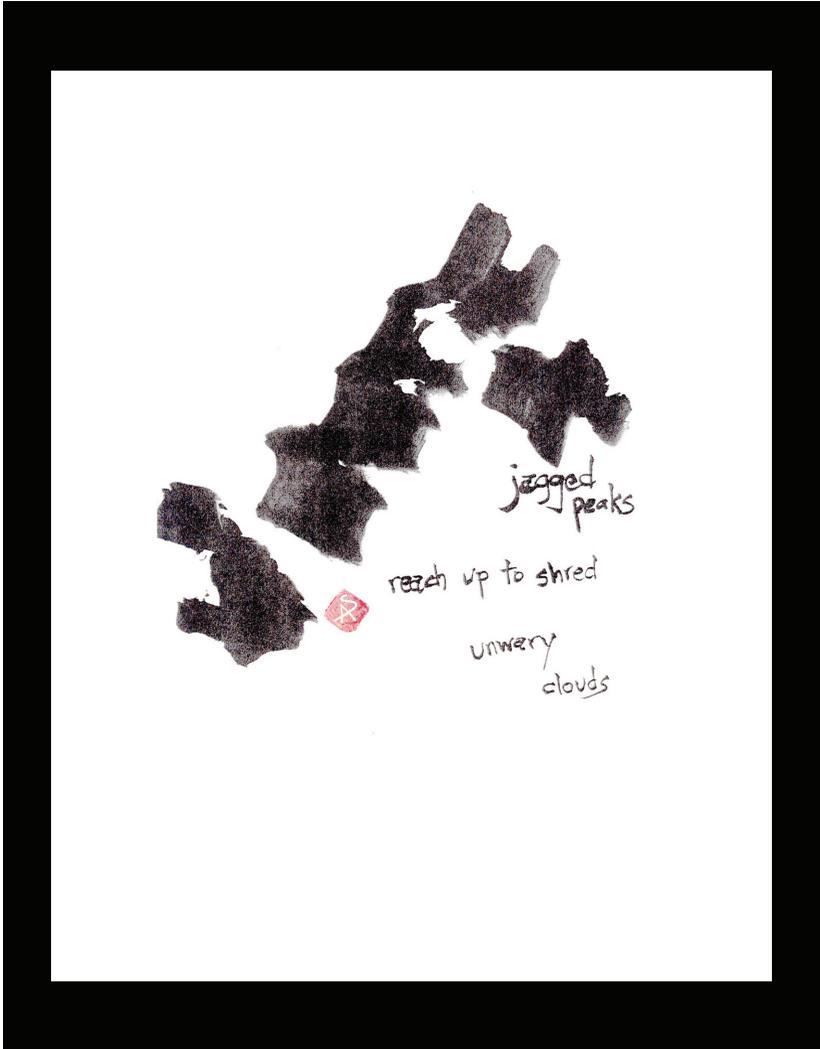
These student introspections reveal the wide-ranging applicability of Bashō's Haiku Pedagogy. Advocating for the timeliness of "nature writing," author Barry Lopez suggests "We are in need not just of another kind of logic, another way of knowing. We need a radically different philosophical sensibility."⁷¹ Bashō seems to offer just that by silencing egoism and anthropocentrism through a reintegration with Nature. Summarizing the elements of haikai Bashō writes: "Its feeling can be called loneliness (*sabi*). . . . Its total effect can be called elegance. . . . Its language can be called aesthetic madness. . . . These three elements do not exalt a humble person to heights. They put an exalted person in a low place. . . . One needs to work to achieve enlightenment and then return to the common world."⁷²

70. Barry Lopez, "A Literature of Place," *Portland Magazine*, University of Portland, Summer 1997; Lopez_A Literature Of Place annotated.pdf.

71. Bashō, "Learn from the Pine," in Hass, 235, 238. "Solitude" may be more appropriate than "loneliness" in this context, as discussed by Deresiewicz. He links solitude with friendship, quoting Emerson — "the soul environs itself with friends, that it may enter into a grander self-acquaintance or solitude."

JUXTA

Reviews



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

Blyth in a Single Volume:

A Review of Poetry and Zen: Letters and Uncollected Writings of R. H. Blyth

Geoffrey M. SILL

Poetry and Zen: Letters and Uncollected Writings of R. H. Blyth. Edited with an introduction by Norman Waddell. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, 2022. Paperback. ISBN: 9781611809985.

R. H. Blyth is known to most readers of haiku as the author of *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics* (1942), the four-volume study *Haiku* (1949-52), the five-volume *Zen and Zen Classics* (1960-70), and the two-volume *A History of Haiku* (1963-4). According to his editor, Norman Waddell, Blyth's writings "helped lay the foundation for the remarkable expansion of Zen in the West and the global popularization of haiku as an international verse form" which took place after his death in 1964.

Blyth was educated in English literature at London University in the early 1920s, and soon after took a teaching position at a university in Korea, which at that time was a colony of Japan. He acquired a knowledge of written Chinese and Japanese in order to read and translate the works of their greatest poets into English. Under the influence of Dr. Daisetz Suzuki, he read the classic texts of Zen

in translation, then in the original languages. Perhaps because of his training in comparative literature, his books consist largely of quotations from Asian and non-Asian authors, classified by the seasons and other subjects, with brief commentaries by Blyth. This literary method will not please some modern students of literature, for whom historical and cultural differences matter much more than they did to Blyth. But the method allows Blyth to introduce the names and works of a great diversity of poets who work on similar themes, with one difference: while European, English, and American poets tend to choose grand or heroic subjects for their odes or epic verse, Japanese poets writing haiku or senryu find significance in “the daily round, the common task.” Unlike Western forms, haiku “leaves the pounds to take care of themselves, and concerns itself with the pennies of life.”

Poetry and Zen revisits many of the topics discussed in his earlier works, but it is unlike any other book by or about Reginald Horace Blyth. Almost half of the book comprises Blyth’s letters to Dora Lord, Robert Aitken, Daisetz Suzuki, and Alan Watts. Dora (I identify them as Blyth does in his salutations) was his beloved cousin with whom he shared the most intimate details of his days (there are also some letters to “Ma” and “Pa”). Blyth’s letters to Dora reveal a tenderness, a humor, and an irony that readers of his academic works will not have seen before. Waddell believes the letters to Dora are of “special importance since they provided virtually the only record of Blyth and his daily life during the prewar period (1929-1940) when he was teaching in Korea, a period that has hitherto been virtually a blank.” Robert Aitken was Blyth’s fellow traveler in Zen and poetry, with whom Blyth shared his spiritual, temporal, and literary concerns, including his constant need for more books. The letters to Aitken were written in the post-war period, when Blyth wrote most of his works, taught at several Japanese universities, and assisted in the transition of Japan from a shamed militaristic empire to a modern democracy.

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Dr. Suzuki was Blyth's mentor in his studies of Zen and "the only person to whom I can write of all my un-Zen, my fears and 'angst.'" To "Mr. Watts" he sent one gracious letter allowing Watts to make any use of Blyth's books that he wished; in another letter to Aitken, he confided that, when Watts visited him, "[Watts] dare not contradict anything I said, laughed uproariously at my feeblest jokes, and sank himself in a hundred fathoms of water as far as I am concerned."

The balance of *Poetry and Zen* consists of six prefaces and introductions, three book reviews, and twenty essays on various subjects. The prefaces were written for student textbooks compiled by Blyth, comprising works by R. L. Stevenson, H. D. Thoreau, and R. W. Emerson (among others), whose works were difficult to obtain in post-war Japan. Thoreau was his favorite, though he often mentions (and quotes) Wordsworth (both William and Dorothy), Whitman, Lawrence, and Shakespeare. The prefaces, which show the effects of Blyth's deep and wide reading in primary sources, might be useful to undergraduate students as introductions to these writers today.

The twenty essays that round out the book generally examine haiku in relation to another subject, such as Buddhism, Zen, senryu, humor, and Japanese culture. All are pleasurable reading, and some bear further study. A previously unpublished fragment, "Thoughts on Haiku," contrasts the haiku of Bashō (in Blyth's translation) with quotations from Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Goethe, and Cervantes to show the relative merits of Japanese and Western literatures. Haiku may lack the "completeness and universality" of Western poems, but the dualism of its treatment of man and nature ("just as nature is contained in man, man is contained in nature") makes up for that deficiency. For Blyth, "haiku is to be on the one hand earthy, belonging to our daily life; on the other hand it is celestial, leading the mind out of itself into another world than this."

Other essays include “What is Poetry,” which supports Blyth’s claim that “there is a spiritual language, as yet undiscovered by psychologists or logicians, which is the fundamental and universal language of poetry.” Unlike most Western poetry, which since the nineteenth century has been adversely affected by what Blyth calls “science,” the goal of which is to distance man from nature, haiku derives from the animism of the *Upanishads*, in which all living things share a universal consciousness. For Blyth, haiku alone provides a way of accessing this consciousness, though writers such as Wordsworth, Thoreau, Emerson, and Lawrence strove to attain it as well. Another essay, “Mushrooms and Humour,” finds evidence of this connection between humans and nature in the Japanese fascination with mushroom hunting. Blyth quotes more than eighty haiku, in Japanese and English translation, about mushrooms that elevate these lowly fungi into “humorous, poetical and lovable things.”

Blyth’s multi-volume studies are immensely informative, but are also a challenge to read. A reader must bring a certain level of knowledge to them in order to follow the many allusions and quotations, or must skip about using the index, in which case some things will inevitably be missed. Waddell claims that Blyth’s “deep and inimitable reflections on life, poetry, and human character” shine “radiantly through all of his writings,” but he also admits that, without Blyth’s letters to Dora Lord and Robert Aitken, we would never know the lived experiences of this remarkable man. This book, with its many personal reflections on Blyth’s life in poetry and politics in post-war Japan, may serve as the memoir he never wrote. It is a pleasure to have a single volume in which Blyth’s thoughts on poetry appear alongside his letters and his informal remarks on Japanese, English, and American authors.

Bending to the Work:

A Review of H. F. Noyes' Favorite Haiku and Other Collected Essays

J. ZIMMERMAN

H. F. Noyes. *Favorite Haiku and Other Collected Essays*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2021. Soft cover. 284 pages. ISBN 978-1-9472-71-81-4.

Favorite Haiku and Other Collected Essays by H. F. (“Tom”) Noyes (1918–2010) opens with his comment on a haiku by Proxade Davis (11):

This huge ocean —
I could stand here forever
it would still come to me

Noyes praises it for leaving him “breathless with admiration for [its] quality of alertness . . . a childlike spirit of wonder, plus . . . the tremendous depth to connect with eternity.”

The bulk of this collection comprises haiku that Noyes particularly admires, together with his very brief appreciative essays on them. The poems that Noyes chooses tend to be accessible and often to have a gently ecstatic energy.

The essays were first assembled in his *Favorite Haiku* volumes one to four, published 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 respectively. This book concludes with the 26 short essays from his fifth volume (2002) of *Favorite Haiku*, where he summarizes the haiku spirit and techniques that most appeal to him. Footnotes on a small portion of the commentaries record them as published initially in haiku journals such as *Brussels Sprout*, *Cicada*, *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, and *Wind Chimes* but dates are not given.

Noyes' deft and concise comments touch on the essence of each chosen haiku. I welcome his emphasis on the poems, rather than responding with self-referential anecdotes. One can thus read this book not only for the many excellent haiku that Noyes selects, but also for insight in how to respond to haiku unselfishly and succinctly.

Noyes, the 2007-2008 Honorary Curator of the American Haiku Archives, came to haiku in the early fifties when his "first Zen teacher, John Cage, presented [him] with the complete set of R. H. Blyth's *Haiku*" as told in an interview with Stephen Addiss (2007). In that interview, Noyes states several concerns about the state of English-language haiku: too many haiku being used as vehicles for "I-me" self-expression especially about illness and death; "too much emphasis on juxtaposition, which requires *a priori* thought and anticipation, obviating spontaneity and immediacy"; not enough "grateful acceptance"; and not enough *sabi*, for which he follows William Higginson's sense of "beauty with a loneliness in time."

In his forward to the first of the five of his *Favorite Haiku* books in this collection, Noyes states modestly that, while he has written these opinions over a quarter century, "They are essentially personal . . . just one man's opinions, but at least I have the excuse of having loved haiku for a very long time" (9).

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In his introduction to the second of his *Favorite Haiku* books, “Volume 2” (62-89 in this collection), Noyes writes: “Two great secrets of haiku are . . . Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity . . . and rather than attempting . . . to choose the haiku moment, let the moment choose you,” adding “what matters above all is that we achieve an expansive focus . . . a wide-open, inclusive world of awareness in which everything is viewed with a fresh impartial eye” (63-64).

For “Volume 3” (90-143), Noyes praises selflessness, relative detachment, and acceptance in haiku poets. Similarly for “Volume 4” (144-197), Noyes declares: “A true haiku poet has shed the illusion of a separate self” (145). Its opening poem is by Foster Jewell (147):

Walking on moss —
my giving to the earth
earth's giving to me

Noyes comments:

A universal haiku effectively expressing our reciprocity with and inseparability from nature. It makes me think of a Zen koan: ‘For every man, under his feet a spot wide enough to stand on.’

The collection concludes with “Volume Five” (198-274), first published separately in 2002 with 26 brief essays on haiku. His introduction to this section concludes with this appreciation of the bittersweet of life:

Haiku are never didactic, but to follow the haiku way leads to a constant learning from nature, to accepting and celebrating the joy-suffering that constitutes wholeness of true living.

Unfortunately, the collection has problems. Here is a subset. Typos abound. The entire heading for volume five's fourth section is omitted: the online pdf version calls it "Section 4: Haiku Theory." Legibility is a problem when haiku are presented side-by-side with poems running into each other. Some indentation and punctuation of the quoted poems differ from that in the pdfs of the original volumes; this muddies the record of which is correct. Publication dates would have made this collection more of a historical record of where and when Noyes first published his commentaries and opinions. The poems commented upon usually lack dates; when a journal issue is credited, the editorial addition of publication year would have been helpful.

One item that especially miffs me is that essay number 22, titled "The KU in Haiku Aesthetics" (259-261), is based throughout on erroneous interpretations of the *kanji* in "haiku." Noyes does not credit a source for his interpretations. Perhaps they were his inventions. He does not show the *kanji* he is referring to, but the two correct *kanji* for haiku are: 俳句.

Perhaps Noyes misunderstood which were the correct *kanji* or perhaps he lacked knowledge of the meaning of the correct *kanji* that a small *kanji* dictionary can provide. The lack of editorial warning on this publication of Noyes' nonsensical interpretation of the "haiku" *kanji* is egregious.

A full discussion of those *kanji* is beyond the scope of this review and, indeed, the skill level of this reviewer. However, here is a concise translation of them. The second *kanji* is straightforward: 句. It means "phrase" or "clause" (Halpern, 695). Contrary to Noyes, it does not signify "playfulness" or "emptiness."

The first *kanji* is a little more complex: 俳. This *kanji* seems to have been used to indicate "vulgar" or "earthy" or "witty" or "funny." It was used to write the first *kanji* in *haikai*, a style whose poetry "began as an avowedly comic form" (Keene, 525). Jonsson (32)

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states that *haikai* was originally (by at least the tenth century) “a Chinese word for joke or fun.” Halpern (40) shows its being used for an actor. Despite Noyes, it does not seem to be a synonym for “naturalness.”

Nonetheless, Noyes has great skill and sensitivity as a commentator, so it is fitting to mention a comment on his haiku by someone equally skilled. The founding editor of *The Heron's Nest*, Christopher Herold, praised this as his first Editor's Choice (1999):

the Milky Way streams–
a farmer bends to his work
widening a ditch
The Heron's Nest 1:1

Herold calls it a “profound haiku, which so wonderfully balances the vast and the small, the ephemeral and the timeless.” Those sensibilities were dear to Noyes, as this collection tries to illustrate.

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Note: I am very grateful to *haijin* Phillip R. Kennedy for his comments on a draft of this review and for his detailed and thoughtful corroboration of my concerns about Noyes writing an erroneous interpretation of the *kanji* for “haiku.” I appreciate linguist Katsuhiko Momoi's additional insight on *kanji*.

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“Everything I See is Haiku”:

A Review of *Well-Versed: Exploring Modern Japanese Haiku*

Adam L. KERN

Ozawa, Minoru, ed. *Well-Versed: Exploring Modern Japanese Haiku*. Translated by Janine Beichman. Photographed by Shinzō and Akira Maeda. Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2021. ISBN 978-4866581798.

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, back in 2018, the publisher of *Mainichi Shinbun*, one of Japan’s major national newspapers that has long run a regular haiku column, issued a book of haiku bringing together some of the leading Japanese poets of the twentieth century. The approximately 300 haiku collected therein, albeit not drawn from the *Mainichi* column per se, were selected, commented upon, and in a few cases composed by a prominent voice in the world of modern and contemporary Japanese haiku criticism and poetry, Ozawa Minoru. The volume under review is not Ozawa’s original Japanese-language collection, then, but an English language version translated by Janine Beichman, enhanced by the addition

of a “Preface to the English Edition” by Ozawa himself, though it is unclear if he wrote in English or Japanese.

Ozawa’s original title, *Meiku no yuen: Kingendai haiku o jikkuri yomu*, means something like *The Grounds of Famed Verses: Close Readings of Modern and Contemporary Haiku*. Beichman’s rendering, *Well-Versed: Exploring Modern Japanese Haiku*, is smoother. And by deploying the expansive term “modern,” Beichman spares readers the complications of Ozawa’s compound term *kingendai*, “modern and contemporary,” referring both to the “modern” Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926), and early Shōwa (1926-1989) periods as well as to the subsequent “contemporary” later Shōwa, Heisei (1989-2019), and Reiwa (2019-present) periods.

Then again, Ozawa’s phrase itself bakes in a consequential redundancy. The very notion of premodern haiku (implied by the qualification of *kingendai*), after all, can be said to exist only retrospectively. Haiku as it is widely known today, as a 17-syllable poem composed by a single individual, is an invention of the late nineteenth century, when the Japanese were embarking on a project of national literary modernization. Previously, 17-syllable poems appeared primarily as part of collaboratively composed linked verse (*renga*) or its more playful version (*haikai no renga*). To be clear, the term “haiku” appeared rarely prior to the 1890s, and even then only as an abbreviation of *haikai no renga no ku*, referring to the stanzas (*ku*) of light or playful (*haikai*) collaboratively-linked verse (*renga*), never to individual standalone verses the way we are conditioned to regard haiku today. Even *haikai* spinoffs that also appear to be standalone verses, most notably the *senryū*, were typically composed in response to other verses or prompts within some collaborative context. Haiku, in other words, is already modern and contemporary.

Surely well versed in this history, Ozawa and Beichman reasonably deploy their respective terms with which most of their readers are familiar. Both the Japanese and English titles tease the implied

question of “whatever happened?” to the putatively “traditional” haiku ever since its imagined heyday of the four grandmasters, Bashō, Buson, Issa, and Shiki. The answer is a matter of debate, with an endless number of footpaths to pursue. Fortunately, we have trusty guides on our odyssey. Holding a position at Atomi Gakuen Women’s University and lecturing at Waseda University, one of the top private educational institutions in Japan, Ozawa (b. 1956) is well known in Japanese haiku circles as the editor of a leading haiku journal, *Sawa*, and as a respected judge for haiku columns in national newspapers. The recipient of the Haiku Poet Association New Poet Award (1998), the Yomiuri Prize for Literature (2005), and the Haiku Poet Association Criticism Award (for his book *Haiku no Hajimaru Basho: Jitsuroku haijin e no michi*, which might be rendered *Haiku Begins: Towards Realizing Your Potential as a Haiku Poet*, Kadokawa Sensho, 2007), Ozawa is no haiku novice. As an accomplished scholar-translator of Japanese poetry in her own right and professor emerita at Daitō Bunka University, neither is Beichman.²

Given that Ozawa’s original collection has been adapted for English readers with only slight modification, and in spite of Beichman’s superb translations of the poems, commentary, and essays, readers unfamiliar with Japanese may find some aspects of *Well-Versed* puzzling. There is little effort beyond Ozawa’s two-page “Preface to the English Edition” to provide necessary information about haiku to English readers. For instance, there is no explanation of why verses in 2 or 4 phrases can still be regarded as haiku. An explanation of this discrepancy, at least, seems incumbent, especially since Ozawa does little if anything to disabuse the general reader from the impression that the modern and contemporary haiku, like “traditional” haiku, is a 17-syllable poem in three phrases arranged into 5-7-5 syllables. In point of fact, there is far greater variety. Moreover, Ozawa’s fundamentally conventional view of form is

1. In the interest of full disclosure, Beichman is a professional acquaintance of the present reviewer.

consistent with some of his other views within the collection that are comparatively conservative.

Chief among which, as we will see, is the notion of Japan as a unique culture. Actually, this reader wishes that room had been made for a “Note on the Translation” that could easily have addressed issues likely to perplex English-language readers not already familiar with modern and contemporary, let alone traditional, Japanese haiku. However wonderful Ozawa’s original book in Japanese is, especially his insightful commentary, I wonder how uninitiated English-language readers will understand the translation without more much-needed contextualization and explication. Perhaps it was out of respect for Ozawa’s tremendous stature in the field that such a note was not undertaken? The publisher would be wise to include one if ever there is a second edition in English. Such a note might address the following topics, as touched on below: the history of the particular lineation that Ozawa claims Beichman invented; the relationship among haiku, Zen Buddhism, Shinto, and Taoism; experimentation in the haiku form; the role of the seasons in modern and contemporary as well as traditional haiku; the place of visuality and the other senses in haiku; and, perhaps most fundamentally, the myth of Japanese uniqueness.

ORGANIZATION AND SEASONS

But first, a word on the overall structure is in order. The collection is organized into several parts: a guide to the book (pp. 4-5); Ozawa’s brief “Preface to the English Edition” (pp. 6-7); the main section of translations (pp. 9-354); an additional section of twenty haiku by Ozawa (pp. 355-358); Ozawa’s “Afterword” (pp. 359-360); and some notes and indices (pp. 361-374). Each haiku entry within the main section (though not Ozawa’s own haiku) thoughtfully consists of five parts: (1) the translation proper, which lays out the phrases of each haiku into individual lines in an arrangement of “progressive

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indentation,” moving from left to right; (2) Ozawa’s commentary, which while impressionistic is typically insightful, sometimes brilliantly so; (3) the Romanized Japanese of the original haiku, with the season word or words set off in a lighter gray typeface than the normal black; (4) a “word-for-word” translation of the haiku, which will satisfy casual readers (though perhaps not those interested in finer syntactical points, especially when it comes to grammatical particles); and (5) an ever-so-brief profile of each poet.

Interestingly, Ozawa states that the haiku in the main section are grouped into five chapters (p. 4). In point of fact, however, there are six: (1) the New Year (pp. 9-34); (2) Spring (pp. 35-132); (3) Summer (pp. 133-206); (4) Autumn (pp. 207-288); (5) Winter (pp. 289-350); and (6) Seasonless verses (pp. 351-354). Although this slip may be chalked up to a simple error, it may also suggest a certain reflexively conventional attitude toward haiku. Many collections of “traditional” haiku are organized into five sections, the four seasons plus the New Year, which in the world of Japanese haiku is usually counted as a fifth season in its own right. The overlooked sixth chapter, then, is probably the one on seasonless verse (*zatsu no ku* and *zappai*), a pivotal type of verse in both *haikai* and *renga* that too often has been overlooked or downright omitted in accounts and collections of traditional as well as modern and contemporary haiku. Given the scant few pages devoted to seasonless verse relative to the lengthiness of the chapters on the conventional five seasons—4 pages versus anywhere from 60 to a 100 pages for the others—the omission at the very least begs the question of the role of seasonless verses in haiku.

The oversight seems to suggest that seasonless verses are included in Ozawa’s collection only pro forma, as though ultimately to uphold the primacy of the usual five seasons in conservative accounts of haiku. A bit more discussion of the role of seasonless poetry in modern and contemporary haiku, as well as traditional haiku, would therefore have helped clarify this significant issue. This is

especially true since the volume under review emphasizes the role of seasons in haiku by the reader-friendly device of setting off each seasonal word or association in a gray typeface contrasting with the black one of the rest of the verses. This device allows readers to instantaneously recognize the seasonal word or association and then, if more information is desired, look it up in an appendix/index. While well intentioned, the device is slightly redundant, since Ozawa inevitably addresses seasonal issues within his commentary to each verse anyway.

To his credit, Ozawa includes several verses that contain two or *more* season words. Consider the following specimen (p. 23), by Masuda Ryū-u (1874-1934):

On a golden kerria's
withered leaf white frost and the first
dawnlight

(*Yamabuki no / kareha no shimo no / hatsuakari*). As Ozawa points out, this verse actually boasts *four* season words: summer's "golden kerria," autumn's "withered leaf," winter's "frost," and the Near Year's "first dawnlight," which Ozawa further contends is the *main* seasonal image. This may well qualify as some kind of world record. Still, such a deviation from the norm is one feature of modern and contemporary haiku (if not traditional haiku itself) worthy of elaboration.

Although most accounts of haiku as a form of standalone poetry prioritize the season word, historically, *haikai* and its spinoffs typically prioritized the cut (*kire*), since this was the main internal instrument of separating verses composed collaboratively in linked verse.³ Emphasizing the season word in gray only reminds

2. The cut (*kire*) is sometimes referred to as the "cutting word" (*kireji*), even though *ji* refers to any Japanese syllabary or Chinese character, albeit more grammatical particle than "word" per se.

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this reviewer, at least, of how haiku is today defined in the black and white terms of having a season word, whereas historically the seasonless verse played a pivotal role in *haikai*, allowing strings of one season to pivot into strings of another season.

Ozawa actually includes only three seasonless verses in the collection. One of these verses uses the conspicuous absence of a season word to reinforce how acutely the poet, Hino Sōjō (1901-1956) — bedridden with tuberculosis in a way that must have felt cut off from life as often symbolized by the natural flow of the seasons — registered the absence of his wife when she went out on mundane household errands (p. 352):

Again and again
I ask myself — is that sound
my wife's footsteps?

(*Matashite mo / tsuma no ashioto / ka to omou*). This verse, it is worth noting, is more about sound than visuality, a point to which we shall later return.

OZAWA'S COMMENTARY

The overemphasis on seasonality aside, the selections are enlivened significantly by the commentary of Ozawa, which overall is superb. For instance, consider how his remarks illuminate the following poem (p. 21), written by Murō Saisei (1889-1962):

On New Year's
I look out at the mountains
but all is snow

(*Shinnen no / yama mite aredo / yuki bakari*). In translation, this haiku may come across as rather lackluster through no fault of the translator. It is a simple statement of direct observation, albeit one

of a landscape that may send shivers down the spine. Still, Ozawa's comments are transformative:

When the Japanese government adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873, the start of the new year and the first day of spring, which coincided under the traditional lunar calendar, became separated by more than thirty days. The poet feels something lacking when he looks out at the nearby mountains on New Year's Day and sees no sign of spring. Yet despite his discontent, the immaculate snow makes him feel the purity and auspiciousness of the new year. Plain and simple though its expression is, this nuanced shift lends the poem added richness. There are two seasonal images, "New Year" and "snow," both of them weighty; but in this case, "New Year" dominates.

This commentary deepened my understanding and appreciation of the verse in translation. Some readers may wonder if the shock of a transition that took place years before the poet's birth is a shock actually experienced by the poet. Such a line of inquiry calls into question the bedrock rule, in modern haiku circles, that haiku should be written based on direct experience. The missing piece for Japanese readers, I would suggest, concerns a kind of nostalgia for the good old days, when one could be experience nature in a pristine, pure state, a nostalgia that is very much at the heart of the reading of haiku as celebrating Japan as the land of Shinto gods. The fact that the verse was written in 1943, at the height of Japan's Pacific War, no doubt adds a whole different level to a nostalgic yearning for the good old days.

Ozawa's commentary is similarly transformative throughout the collection. Although the word-for-word translations gloss over grammatical nuances, Ozawa occasionally chimes in on such points, as with his illuminating discussion of a poem (p. 28) by Yamamoto Yōko (b. 1934):

Mother's house — there
 is the year's first wind
 in the pines

(*Haha ga ya wa / hatsushōrai no / aru tokoro*). According to Ozawa:

The possessive particle used in the Japanese for “mother’s house” (*haha ga ya*) is the classical *ga* rather than the usual *no*. Using *ga* evokes the history and gravitas of the house as home and suggests that this is the house where her mother lived in the past, and that her mother is no longer alive. The use of the simple verb “is” (*aru*) to describe “the first wind in the pines” (*hatsushōrai*) is another subtle effect. To describe the wind with a sound, like “sings” or “echoes,” would destroy the effect. The simple “is” brings the first wind in the pines to life.

Even readers not obsessed by the finer points of Japanese grammar have to admit that such passages deepen one’s understanding if not appreciation.

More often than not, Ozawa provides insightful contextualization of key terms appearing within the poems. Beyond explaining the “poem cards” in the following verse (p. 31), by Ra Sosanjin (1881-1902),

Playing poem cards —
 Team West nothing but
 eyeglasses!

(*Utagaruta / megane bakari ya / nishi no kumi*), Ozawa suggests a probable cultural reference that makes the verse comprehensible:

At New Year, a group of friends has gotten together to play the traditional game of matching poem cards, *utagaruta*, dividing themselves up into Team East and Team West . . . At the same time as this poem, Sosanjin published another: “Being in love / I lose at cards / on purpose!” (*Katsubundan*, February 1901). When this poem was first published, Ozaki Kōyō’s famous novel

Konjiki yasha (The Golden Demon) was being serialized in a newspaper. Its opening scene depicts a game of poem cards at which all three members of the love triangle that dominates the novel are present. I wonder if the poet had this scene in mind.

Only someone deeply familiar with Japanese literature and culture would have been able to provide this illuminating observation.

Unsurprisingly, Ozawa is familiar with the whole gamut of Japanese literature and poetry, from classics, such as the ancient *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves (Man'yōshū)* and the medieval *Essays in Idleness (Tsurezuregusa)*, through early modern works like *The Great Mirror of Male Love (Nanshoku ōkagami)*, to the present day, particularly the other collections of poetry by most if not all the poets represented in the collection. Ozawa's references to these and other works sometimes rely on notes in the original anthologies. For instance, in his discussion of a haiku by Kishimoto Naoki (p. 188), Ozawa acknowledges taking his cue from Kishimoto's book *Jisen jikai besuto 100 (One Hundred of My Own Poems Explained, Furansudo, 2011)*.

Nonetheless, such explanations within haiku collections are relatively uncommon. I suspect that were one to track down all of the original collections from which Ozawa draws his material, the vast majority of annotations in Ozawa's collection would turn out to be his and his alone. In this sense, the title of his collection can be read self-reflexively, characterizing Ozawa as well as the verses collected therein. *Well Versed*, indeed!

TWO CRITICISMS

Ozawa's mastery of the whole gamut of Japanese literature paradoxically brings two points into relief. First is his apparent blind spot of the collaboratively played witty linked verse (*haikai no renga*) from which the modern Japanese haiku more or less sprung.

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While thoroughly conversant in *haikai* (no doubt better than the present reviewer), for whatever reason Ozawa sidesteps the issue of the relationship between *haikai* and modern Japanese haiku, even to the point of failing to make some obvious connections.

For instance, Ozawa writes about a verse by Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959), one of Masaoka Shiki's key disciples who did more to solidify the modern haiku than just about anyone else:

Autumn wind —
everything I see
is haiku

(*Akikaze ya / ganchū no mono / mina haiku*). Ozawa describes this celebrated verse as “a daring meta-haiku,” a “haiku about composing haiku” (p. 254). This haiku clearly mentions haiku. But the verse may be more about the habit of being (to quote Flannery O'Connor about the devotion to the craft of the short story) that is the haiku mindset in general — the way haikuists process the world if not their lives through haiku — than about writing this particular haiku itself per se.

More to the point, one wonders how “daring” this verse really is, when earlier 17-syllable verses about composing 17-syllable verses are not unheard of. Consider the following two examples, both of which deploy the term *haikai* instead of “haiku,” which at the time of composition had not yet been introduced into widespread use.⁴ The first, by an unnamed poet, is more a comment about the enterprise of making a living by writing *haikai*:

blooming for the sake
of this light-verse racket:
cherry blossoms!

(*haikai no / kuchisugi ni saku / sakura kana*).

3. Both translations are drawn from Kern, *The Penguin Book of Haiku*.

The second, by Buson, is self-reflexive in that Buson himself is the very master of light verse whom he himself is poking fun at:

smug-faced
over this New Year's stanza
the light-verse master

(*seitán o / shitarigao naru / haikaishi*). There are untold numbers of such “meta” poems prior to the invention of the modern haiku. One therefore suspects that Ozawa’s interest in the modern haiku extends back into *haikai* only so far as it concerns the inevitable development of modern haiku, not so far as *haikai* itself is concerned. Although such narrow framing allows Ozawa to connect with readers without detracting from his subject at hand by dwelling on *haikai*, a note on the relationship between the two again would have been helpful.

This focus on “modern” haiku to the exclusion of premodern *haikai* suggests a kind of tunnel vision that coincides with my second grumble about Ozawa’s collection. When understandably trying to isolate the unique qualities of his subject, our otherwise surefooted guide sometimes comes close to leading us down the slippery slope of the myth of Japanese uniqueness. In Ozawa’s account, Japan is a peaceful nation of pristine natural scenery, and the haiku, even in its modern iteration, is in essence a kind of “prayer for harmony between heaven and earth” at a time when our world seems “increasingly divided by the great powers and full of ceaseless conflict” (p. 7). While laudable, this idyllic viewpoint of Japan as a land of peaceful people living in harmony with nature too readily leads to a kind of Orientalist mumbo-jumbo that animates some haiku criticism if not poetry itself.

To take an important example of the latter, in his discussion of a verse by Ōtani Hiroshi (b. 1980), Ozawa observes that Japan is “celebrated as ‘a land blessed by the spirit of words’ in the eighth-

century *Man'yōshū*, and the preface to the tenth-century *Kokin wakashū* declares that ‘every living being has its song’ (p. 22). The veracity of these references is one thing. Subscribing to their belief today, when everyone is aware of the existence of other countries in the world besides Japan, is another. Similarly, in his discussion of a verse by Akezumi Reiko (b. 1972), Ozawa states “This is a sacred landscape in which heaven and the lake’s surface reflect one another” (p. 25). In this view, Japan emerges as a land of spirituality, mysticism, holiness.

This Japan is presented in the best possible light, tidied up, a kind of Hallmark greeting card meant for people of all ages. Thankfully, Ozawa includes a few modern haiku written during the Pacific War. Yet these verses focus on shared humanity, steering clear of politically sensitive topics, let alone the militant ideology rampant at the time. For instance, here is one verse (p. 193) by Katayama Tōshi (1912-1944), a poet and soldier killed in action, from his collection *Hoppō heidan* (1940):

The enemy soldier
shooting at me shares
the same brutal heat

(*Ware o utsu / teki to gōsho o / tomo ni seru*). Nor are there any dirty sexy haiku (*bareku*). Or what most people today would characterize as *senryū*. The collected verses all subscribe to what I have described elsewhere as the Grand Narrative of Haiku, presenting Japan and the Japanese people in the most positive light possible. Such is Ozawa’s prerogative as curator of the verses in the collection. And the selections do indeed represent what most people today in Japan as well as elsewhere would regard as haiku. But this view is hardly representative of *all* modern and contemporary haiku, let alone *haikai* and its derivatives.

True, Ozawa does include some verses that deviate from the Grand Narrative. Apart from one 21-syllable verse (discussed below), here is a 9 syllable one (p. 322), by Ozaki Hōsai (1885-1926):

even coughing
alone

(*Seki o shite mo hitori*).

It is as though Ozawa is pushing ever so gingerly to expand the bounds of modern haiku, or at least pushing against how most people think of haiku as invariably assuming 17 syllables. Such incremental iconoclasm is unlikely to change preconceptions in one fell swoop. But it is, at least, a baby step forward. Still, when it comes to “modern” haiku, Ozawa’s selections do not quite capture the wide variety of forms. In this sense, the collection also tends to the conservative.

PROGRESSIVE INDENTATION

Ozawa’s idyllic viewpoint is further evident in his discussion of the lineation of haiku in both Beichman’s translation and the original Japanese version. Beichman has arranged the verses in descending phrases in a kind of “progressive indentation” from left to right. It is not made clear in the book if this phrase is Beichman’s English translation of a phrase in Japanese that Ozawa originally used to describe Beichman’s method, or a phrase Beichman coined (or appropriated from another source?) that Ozawa then introduced into Japanese. Either way, Ozawa in his preface credits Beichman with the technique: “In English, the haiku can not be written vertically, of course, but I am very happy that the progressive indentation from left to right, a form the translator made up for this book, suggests a movement between heaven and earth” (p. 7).

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The usual three-phrase format centered between the left and right margins on the page, to take the most prevalent layout, is rendered in three corresponding steps so the first phrase begins at the left, the second phrase begins under the middle of the first, and the last phrase ends flush right. This may be the closest one can come in English to approximating the supposed verticality of the Japanese without introducing some kind of awkward gimmick, like printing letters completely vertically in a manner reminiscent of e.e. cummings's concrete poetry. The vast majority of translations in Beichman's rendition of Ozawa's collection are indeed laid out this way and, in my opinion, to marvelous effect. Simply put, the progressive indentation works.

Yet in spite of Ozawa's tribute to his translator, the invention of the technique cannot be entirely credited to Beichman alone. Expert though Ozawa may be on modern and contemporary Japanese haiku, he is not primarily a translator of haiku into English. Hence, his pronunciations on English translation might be taken with a grain of salt. In point of fact, the progressive indentation technique should be familiar to some readers as well as to most haiku scholars working in English. Casual haikuists may recognize the technique if they are at all familiar with the layout of James Kirkup's celebrated minimalist translation of Bashō's seemingly ubiquitous verse:⁵

pond
frog
plop!

Even without diving in further, it should be observed that Kirkup was following a long-established technique in English translations

4. Reprinted in Hiroaki Sato, *One Hundred Frogs: From Renga to Haiku to English* (New York: Weatherhill Press, 1983), p. 170. Regrettably, Sato neither provides a citation nor includes in the Bibliography (titled "Sources and Credits") any of Kirkup's solo or collaborative works in which the translation originally appeared.

of haiku of what I would describe, building on Beichman, as *descending* progressive indentation. Harold G. Henderson used the technique over a half dozen decades ago in his groundbreaking *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets, from Bashō to Shiki* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958). Earlier still, the technique appeared in Miyamori Asatarō (ed. and trans.), *An Anthology of Haiku, Ancient and Modern* (Tokyo: Taiseido Press, 1932). Beichman was by no means the first to deploy the technique in English. I doubt she would have suggested she was. A word on the subject thus would also have been appreciated, lest readers be left with the wrong impression.

Such a note might also have provided slightly more contextualization for other issues, as I have been suggesting all along. Chief among which is Ozawa's deeper reasons for endorsing this progressive indentation technique, which strikes this reviewer as very much at issue. While it is true that the vertical arrangement of Japanese haiku in one line is the overriding convention in the layout of modern and contemporary haiku in books, magazines, and newspapers to this day, this is not necessarily true of all haiku and *haikai* historically. Such arrangements were more a matter of the choices of individual publishers or authors or works. One finds all sorts of vertical arrangements, as with two or three lines scattered in *haiga*, for instance. Or in many premodern *haikai* collections, as with the innumerable illustrated versions of *Yanagidaru* published during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At any rate, in this descending progressive indentation method, the verses come across visually as a progression of steps, as though we have left the realm of poetry and entered the domain of do-it-yourself instruction manuals. The form insinuates a kind of scientific logicity that cuts against the grain of intuition at the center of haiku. To be fair, however, if tasked to convey a sense of downward motion in translation, I probably would be unable to dream up a better configuration.

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The issue of lineation is worth stressing because, for Ozawa, the vertical movement of haiku suggests a “movement between heaven and earth” that is essential to his beliefs and understanding of haiku. This vertical movement supposedly binds haiku to Shinto pantheism: “I came to think that the single vertical line of a haiku might well function as something similar to the ancient *yorishiro*, vertical natural forms believed to be scared conduits channeling the power of the gods” (p. 7). Ozawa occasionally takes this connection between Shinto and haiku too far, in this reviewer’s opinion. This is less because haiku should preferably be understood in terms of Zen or, more broadly, even just Buddhism — for it should not and historically is not. Rather, Ozawa’s reading of haiku as primarily Shinto too readily slips into the myth of Japanese uniqueness.

Consider Ozawa’s commentary on the following haiku (p. 342) by Seki Etsushi (b. 1969):

Waxen spaghetti
rises straight up, wound around
a fork frozen in mid-air

(*Rōsei no / pasuta tachinobori / fōku chū ni itsu*). Setting aside the chestnut that Marco Polo brought spaghetti to the West from the far East, spaghetti itself is not exactly an invention of the Shinto gods. This contemporary haiku, describing a plastic food model (*shokuhin sampuru*) in a restaurant’s display window, self-reflexively observes that a lifelike representation can sometimes appear more real than reality, even though parts of it — such as what may be an actual metal fork — might themselves be regarded as “real.” This is a wonderfully meta-representational verse on the very nature of representation itself, a subject we have already noted is found in *haikai*. To this reframing of a realistic-looking plastic and metal replica as a kind of *objet d’art*, Ozawa goes on to suggest (in his commentary on the same page), “You might even read this tower of fake spaghetti as a metaphorical link between heaven and earth,

much as towers and waterfalls are sometimes perceived in Japan.” When such a “modern” haiku is read against conventional tropes within the visual artistic tradition in Japan, Ozawa’s comment may make sense. However, the suggestion that a plastic food replica that raises a real metal fork joins heaven and earth according to the principles of Shinto may also, well, raise some eyebrows.

The introduction of Shinto into haiku layout and commentary more broadly begs the question of the role of Buddhism in haiku, too, a question that Ozawa does not address. Most Japanese readers would already understand the syncretic history and nature of Japanese philosophical, ideological, philosophical, and “religious” systems, for Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, Taoism, and so on, are well known to have comingled as a matter of course. For readers of the English translation, however, the issue probably should be addressed head-on. Not doing so risks suspending the reader uncomfortably mid-air.

ALL THE WORLD’S A SUNNY DAY

This essentialization of Shinto into a pantheism that privileges aesthetics of purity and beauty also comes across in the selection of the photography. Five of the six chapters are punctuated by color inserts of nature photography by the father-son team Maeda Shinzō (1922-1998) and Maeda Akira (b. 1954). Some readers of the English translation may be familiar with the team’s photographic *tour de force*, *Intimate Seasons* (Kodansha USA, 2002). In Japan, the father is widely known for his nearly fifty volumes of landscape photography.

As one might expect of a work lauding the Shinto connection between heaven and earth in haiku, the photography is divine. It serves to give some readers who have never been to Japan a sense of the place represented in many of the haiku. More than that, however, Japan comes across vividly as a land of myriad gorgeous

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landscapes befitting its gods. While some of the represented topics are predictable, even expected, and therefore unfold on double-page spreads—as with the “Terraced Paddy Fields” in Oku-Shinano (pp. 134-135), “Mount Fuji in the Deepening Dusk” (pp. 16-17) and “Shower of Cherry Blossoms” (pp. 42-43)—the particular images themselves are nonetheless breathtaking.

Less predictably, perhaps, are the sunrise over a frozen sea; butterburs in light snowfall; a peach orchard of alternating rows of white and pink blossoms; the moon at dawn over a snowy expanse in Biei (Blue Pond), Hokkaido; the “Bohemian Waxwing” (pp. 294-295) amid a tangle of frozen branches and splotches of ice-encased reddish berries; a field of Japanese silver grass in autumn light; and, most stunningly, the “Mysterious Moonglow” (p. 215) that showcases an impossibly incandescent chrome-yellow orb set against a deep plum and mahogany colored landscape in which ground, mountain, and sky dissolve into one another. Such photos alone are worth the price of admission.

On the one hand, the photos are fortunately not marred with captions. Especially in a book of haiku, reticence is worth a thousand words. On the other hand, the sparse captions are regrettably buried in an index at the end of the book (p. 374). I wish that the captions had been placed in closer proximity to the photos, or that the phrase “and Captions” had been inserted into the title of said index, which simply reads “Photo Credits.” Without such an insertion, it may not be apparent to most readers from the Index that there are captions at all.

Significantly, the inclusion of these photographic images helps perpetuate the longstanding notion that, as a form, haiku is a poetry that prioritizes the sense of vision. Haiku is supposedly a kind of experiential “snapshot” that faithfully records the lived experience of a poet. No doubt this association was made as part of the effort to modernize Japan along the lines of Western-style photorealism

and objectivity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶ Kyoshi's haiku about everything he beholds — his term *ganchū* references that which falls within one's gaze — certainly helped solidify the centrality of visuality. Ozawa's book reinforces this ocularcentrism in large measure by the inclusion of the color photography, in other words, but also by selecting haiku that draw attention to the visual dimension, as with this gem (p. 188) by Kishimoto Naoki (b. 1961):

Something reflected
in the tombstone —
a summer orange

(*Hakaishi ni / utsutte iru wa / natsumikan*).

Be that as it may, visuality can hardly be said to monopolize modern and contemporary haiku any more than it can be said to have monopolized premodern *haikai*. Although he does not press the point, Ozawa observes that haiku sometime play with sound. This is a key assertion, since haiku has too readily been flattened out to a matter of visuality when the other senses, more than making brief cameos, often play leading roles. Japanese poetry from its very inception often began with a concrete visual image from which the poet would spring into other kinds of musings and play, particularly with sound. Just look at the poetry of Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (ca. late 7th to early 8th c.), the preeminent poet of the *Man'yōshū* (ca. late 8th c). And while it is customary to read the haiku of Buson in primarily visual terms because of his occupation as a visual artist, let alone his preeminence within the world of *haiga*, he excelled at sound poetry. This is clear throughout his oeuvre, including the following verse:

5. For more on this issue, see the Introduction to Kern, *The Penguin Book of Haiku* (London: Penguin Classics, 2018).

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bottomless pail
thrashed along by a field-threshing
late-autumn gale

(*soko no nai / oke kokearuku / nowaki kana*). The sophisticated play of vowels and k-line consonants in the Japanese suggest the haphazard if intense tumbling movement of the buffeted pail in the verse. In a similar vein, Bashō's most renowned haiku, which is typically discussed in terms of imagery, in point of fact only directly mentions the bodily sense of sound. The last line emphasizes the point through a rarely acknowledged pun: *mizu no oto*, which literally means "watery sound," can be read punningly as "a sound unseen." The ocularcentric reading of haiku thus has long stressed the literal meaning of this verse without acknowledging the playful pun emphasizing the auditory sense.

Happily, Ozawa includes several haiku that contain no visual image whatsoever, seemingly composed with sound effects in mind. Consider the following verse (p. 72) by Washitani Nanako (1923-2018):

The sound we call
spring rain is here
is now

(*Harusame to / iu oto no shite / kitaru kana*). As Ozawa put it: "This poem has nothing visual in it. It is all sound — a soft, gentle sound."

And here is a verse (p. 27) by Suhara Kazuo (b. 1938) that may initially strike English readers as visual, especially those readers conditioned to regard haiku as visual:

Nipponia nippon soars
above the year's
first mountains and rivers

(*Nipponia / nippon no tatsu / hatsusanga*). Surely, a verse about the Japanese crested ibis (*Nipponia nippon*) towering over the landscape is nothing if not visual. In point of fact, however, the verse is a lament for an endangered species, rarely if ever observed in Japan during the poet's lifetime. "We have destroyed . . . that bird," Ozawa writes in the commentary, "that was once so intimately tied to this land." Hence, the bird appears here more in imagination than in image. Moreover, what is remarkable about the verse is its acoustic play. First, there is the music of the phrase *Nipponia nippon*. Rather than the more mundane Japanese term *toki* 朱鷺, which may suggest nostalgia for a long lost Japanese pastoral past, the use of the foreign loan word suggests a cold, objective, scientific, Western present, if not future. Second, there is the lovely echo in Japanese of *Nipponia* within *hatsusanga*, as well as the repetition of sounds in *tatsu* and *hatsu*. The visuality of this poem, in other words, is remote. The more proximate pleasure derives from sound.

For all of Beichman's brilliance as a translator, her translations do not seek to reproduce these kinds of Japanese acoustic effects in English. Except, perhaps, when replicating the Japanese words themselves, as she does in Suhara's verse. This is probably for the better, since such efforts often result in a sense of strain. Nevertheless, there were times I wish Beichman had exploited sound play in English a bit more. To be fair, however, such risks may well not be rewarded until the ocularcentric reading of haiku is more firmly brought into question.

BEICHMAN'S TRANSLATIONS

Overall, the verses, as well as the prose portions of the book, are rendered expertly by Beichman. One would be hard pressed to find a better choice to render Ozawa's work into English, as should be apparent from the verses already translated herein. If anything, Beichman's translations are *too* elegant. This elegance is so uniform

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across the verses that it is hard to see how English speakers would hear subtle differences in the variety of voices. This is not to complain that the collection is too lovely.

Beichman mostly captures the experimental quality of the modern and contemporary haiku in the collection. Consider the following verse (p. 354), by Takayanagi Jūshin (1923-1983):

Chaos rules the land of Wa —
even huge wolves
and pit vipers
rush everywhere

(*Wakoku jūran / magami / mamushi mo / isogu nari*). The four phrases of Beichman's translation faithfully register the four phrases of the original Japanese. It would be hard to imagine a better rendering.

In a few cases, though, the translations are not reflective of the original syllable count and arrangement. Some of the translations are disproportionately brief or “normal-looking” compared to those originals that flout the traditional syllable structure. One verse, by Katō Chiyoko (1909-1986), has an astoundingly unconventional 21 syllables in a 10-5-6 pattern (p. 204). Yet Beichman's translation carries on as though nothing were out of the ordinary:

Summer lassitude begins
tonight and the mothering is
“all sold out”

(*Natsuyase hajimari yo wa / okaasan / urikire desu*). The form of the translation gives no hint of the radical departure from the norm of the original. One wishes Beichman had gone out on a limb a bit more here. The use of quotation marks *and* italics for emphasis seems a bit over the top, too, almost undoing any emphasis.

Beichman takes a similar liberty in the following verse, which belies the 5-7-5 syllable count of the original verse (p. 122), by Tsugawa Eriko (b. 1968):

So many duplicates of myself
born —
soap bubbles

(*Takusan no / ware ga umaruru / shabondama*).

On one occasion (p. 155), Beichman even expands the original three phrases by Suzuki Masajo (1906-2003) into *seven*:

True love found,
the fireflies
sink down
deep
into
the
grass

(*Koi o ete / hotaru wa kusa ni / shizumikeri*).

The layout of the translation suggests to this (re)viewer an arm carrying an *hors d'oeuvres* tray — perhaps at a firefly viewing party on a sultry summer evening? — almost like a torch, the flame adding even more unwanted heat and light certain to detract from if not repel the fireflies themselves. So much for true love, let alone getting laid.

On the one hand, this lineation verging on concrete poetry is precisely the kind of gimmick that the descending progressive indentation seeks to avoid. On the other, this kind of risk taking is warranted and appreciated, especially in the case of unconventional haiku. And yet at times the translations do not quite capture the unconventionality of the original verses. Consider the translation of a verse (p. 192) by Inahata Kōtarō (b. 1957):

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In a patch of shade
beneath an
anti-submarine rocket missile

(*Asurokku / misairu shita no / katakage ni*). With each phrase falling where it feels most natural, the translation is smooth. Too smooth, perhaps. Beichman glosses over the deliberate jaggedness of the original, with its enjambment, its phrases running across lines, the connection between the missile and the downrange shade made clear not immediately but only, so to speak, at the very end.

Even then, patches of shade typically represent a welcome respite from the heat, whereas in the context of this verse, the phrase seems ironic, with respect to the searing heat of the impending explosion. The original, then, is marked by a syntactical choppiness in a way that mimics the disjointedness of experience as it is being perceived from on high, if not lived, even the experience of realizing one's imminent demise. The verse captures a moment of existential intuition as though one sees how all the remaining pieces of a jigsaw puzzle fall together, somehow sensing the inevitable resolution, or at least disappearance, of all tribulations. The way this grammatical disjointedness points to existential disjointedness thus seems central to the original haiku. The translation, by contrast, glosses over both the grammatical and existential suspense. A rendition that follows the order of the original syntax, and the zooming-in trajectory, while seeking to preserve this disjointedness might therefore read:

anti-submarine missile
underneath it
within the shade

This approximation hardly does justice to the experience of reading the verse in the original Japanese. Fortunately, truly motivated readers can always gain a sense of the original syntax by dipping

into the word-for-word translation, which runs: “ASROC / missile beneath’s / patch of shade in.”

Another example (p. 347) of reversed order, albeit one in which the central image is literally located centrally, is visible in the translation of a verse by Takaha Shugyō (b. 1930):

Give me
an icicle filled with the stars of
Michinoku!

(*Michinoku no / hoshi-iri-tsurara / ware ni kure yo*). Now, it is true that the order of Japanese and English grammars runs contrary, even to the point of seeming at times to be diametrically opposed. So the most natural way to render one language into the other is through a kind of modified inversion. At least in prose. In poetry — especially in poems that privilege visuality — the order in which the reader encounters the images matters even more. There are times when preserving the order of images results in unnatural or strained language, to be sure. These are problems that never rear their head in the present volume. Beichman’s version, after all, is superior to the more literal:

Michinoku stars
within icicles . . .
give ’em to me!

Beichman, in other words, is comfortable reversing the order of images to suit readability. In this and many other regards, her style is, on the main, reliably graceful. The overall effect is marvelous. This grace and smoothness will be appreciated by most readers. Still, I wish that Beichman had preserved the order at the cost of grace and smoothness in those instances when the original haiku sacrifices those qualities to some other purpose. By glossing over these more experimental, unconventional moments, Beichman ends up performing haiku in much the same traditionalist mode

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set forth by Ozawa, which is to say even avant-garde haiku ends up somehow soft pedaled into haiku about the human experience of seeing nature through a Shinto prism.

OZAWA'S POETRY

Ozawa also includes twenty of his own haiku previously published in *Kinuta* (1986), *Ryūzō* (1997), *Shunkan* (2005), and *Sawa* (forthcoming). Here are two of my personal favorites:

The stack of books
collapses — shark in
a distant ocean

(*Hon no yama kuzurete tōki umi ni same*). Unlike the rest of the book, Ozawa provides no slashes in the Romanized transliterations to separate the three phrases. Perhaps this was an oversight? The original verse, after all, still scans to the conventional 5-7-5, even though the disjunction between the two parts of the verse (cut by *-te* form verb *kuzurete*) could not be more radical, even surreal. Then again, given Ozawa's view that haiku should be printed in a single vertical line, this omission may have been intentional. In which case one wonders why Beichman rendered the verse in three phrases anyway, instead of a single line. Some guidance here would have been appreciated.

Regarding the quality of his poetry, Ozawa has an uncanny ability to keenly notice and capture moments afresh, something that typifies the best haiku (p. 356):

The baby sparrows about
to spill out of the nest
somehow don't spill

(*Kosuzume no koboremu bakari koborezaru*).

Ozawa's final verse, a masterpiece of imagistic painting, is a fitting way to end the collection (p. 358):

Almost sliding into the sea
the winter sun
lights the horizon

(*Umi ni iru chokuzen fuyubi hirogareru*).

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, the present collection of modern and contemporary haiku probably should have included a "Note on the Translation." Such a Note could have helped English-language readers better understand the history and conventions of modern and contemporary haiku in relation to *haikai*, which too often gets flattened out into the ostensibly more familiar "traditional" haiku. Such a Note could also have helped ease concerns on the part of readers who may find some of Ozawa's commentary off-putting in its implicit acceptance of the myth of Japanese uniqueness. Such concerns are not insignificant. Still, overall, the collection is a gem-studded trove of modern and contemporary Japanese haiku. Ozawa's sweeping selection of verses by leading poets, Beichman's exquisite English renderings, and the spectacular if repurposed photography of father and son Maeda make *Well-Versed* a sheer delight. The collection is also a definitive contribution to the corpus of "modern" Japanese haiku in translation, one that may well have readers seeing haiku just about everywhere they look.

Beyond Haiku:

A Review of Haiku, Other Arts, and Literary Disciplines

Keith EKISS

Haiku, Other Arts, and Literary Disciplines. Edited by Toru Kiuchi and Yoshinobu Hakutani. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022. Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-7936-4720-7.

INTRODUCTION

Where does a haiku begin, and where does it end? For many readers and practitioners, a haiku is something more than a literary form. Haiku is a discipline, a philosophy, a way of seeing and being in the world. A form of attention. Before the writing begins, a haiku is informed by an individual artistic consciousness and a collective cultural worldview. Haiku can be inspired by other art forms, such as music, and can be absorbed into other forms, including painting.

The editors of *Haiku, Other Arts, and Literary Disciplines* have collected 16 essays (nine by the editors themselves and seven by other writers) that investigate haiku's influence on and formation by disciplines outside the haiku form. Broadly speaking, these

categories are painting, other forms of writing besides haiku (including translation), music, and philosophy, both Eastern and Western.

HAIKU AND PAINTING

Toru Kiuchi begins his essay on “Bashō and Haiga” by defining the genre and tracing its development before and after Bashō’s time. At the simplest level, “‘hai’ and ‘ga’ in *haiga* represent haiku and painting in Japanese, respectively” (17). He continues, “*Haiga* is a form of painting that expresses the content of the haiku as a painting” (17). Kiuchi emphasizes that as a discipline haiga doesn’t require the level of professional commitment expected of other visual art forms. “*Haiga* does not necessarily require much skill in painting” (17). Rather, what matters is painting with a “haiku taste” that allows for suggestion and revelation of subtle essence.

Historically, Kiuchi finds that “haiku and haiga developed side by side” with early efforts by Sōkan and Moritake in the 16th-century (18). The genre gains more widespread development in Bashō’s time, but by the 18th-century “*haiga* has reached its peak in Buson” (18). Curiously enough, Kiuchi notices an increased interest in haiga once English-language readers start to compose their own haiku. Through translation and wide dissemination, a culture’s poetry and artistic traditions can find reinforcement and extension in another language.

Kiuchi notes evidence in Bashō’s haiku of an early, if casual, education in painting:

bamboo shoots—
childish pastime of painting
when I was young
(*takenoko ya / osanaki toki no / e no susabi*)

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Kiuchi speculates that based on Bashō's painting style he was likely influenced by the Kanō school, which flourished from the late 15th-century to Bashō's time, with a possible teacher being Kanō Yasunobu (1614 – 1685), a descendant of the original founder of the school.

According to Kiuchi, there are about 30 surviving haiga by Bashō (along with a few self-portraits). Kiuchi divides Bashō's haiga into two periods: the early haiga which had a casual and even naïve point of view, and the later work which becomes more sophisticated under the tutelage of Bashō's student, Kyoriku.

From sketches of bottle gourd flowers and thatched huts to portraits of itinerant, weather-beaten monks, Bashō painted with a lightness of touch, letting absence provide suggestion and story. Kiuchi's descriptions and analysis of individual haiga bring the paintings to life and provide insight into their composition and literary allusions. For example, in a haiga illustrating a haiku about plovers chirping in the village of Hoshizaski (c.1687), Kiuchi notes that the haiga “provides nothing else than two thatched rooftops, covered with and half buried in snow . . . the vast space [of empty canvas] gives a vivid description of the darkness in winter” (22).

In a haiku of leave-taking composed at the house of his student Takarai Kikaku on October 11th, 1687, Bashō wrote:

“you traveler”
I would like to be called —
first winter rain
(*tabibito to / wagana yobaremu / hatsu shigure*)

The haiku and haiga mark the poet's departure before beginning a western journey recorded in *Record of a Travel-Worn Satchel* and *A Visit to Sarashina Shrine*. Kiuchi describes “three mountains in the distant view and three houses surrounded by forests in the foreground, representing an atmosphere of the passing of first winter rain” (26-27). The editor notes that the haiku alludes to a

Noh play called “A Plum Branch” which narrates the story of a “monk of Mount Minobu in Kai province” who travels around the country. After a winter rain leads him to lodge overnight at an inn, he eventually realizes the innkeeper is a ghost. We can read the haiku and its accompanying painting as a gift to Kikaku, a deep admirer of Noh. In his *Miscellaneous Talk Collection*, Kikaku wrote: “Utai,” the spoken portion of Noh, is “*The Tale of Genji* of haikai,” referring to the vast influence of *Genji* on classical waka (Shirane, 182).

Kyoriku did not join the Bashō school until 1692, two years before the master’s death. Bashō wrote of him: “As for painting, this person is my teacher, and for haiku, I teach him and make this person a disciple” (21). Scholars have noted how Bashō’s haiku changed over the years as he responded to different students in various movements within haiku, and this demonstrates Bashō’s continued interest in developing and changing his art. For Bashō, haiku was never static. Similarly, his interest in the visual complement of the haiga continued even in his later years.

Kiuchi senses Kyoriku’s influence on Bashō’s later haiga, especially:

first snow —
 lying on daffodil leaves
 until they are weighted down
 (*hatsuyuki ya / suisen no ha no / tawamu made*)

Kiuchi writes that the image occupies “almost the whole screen,” rather than relying on a slight gesture, as “the supple leaves of a neat and elegant daffodil” bend down with “a slight sense of weight with the first snow” (29). A modern critic, Tsutomu Ogata, writes of this haiga: “I recommend that this is the true *haiga* in all the paintings by Bashō” (29). Kiuchi finds an elegance and professionalism, an “extensive and essential change,” in these later haiga that he attributes to the friendship with Kyoriku (33).

In one painting, a demonic looking cat stands on hind legs with a napkin covering its head, glaring at the viewer with a wicked smile. You'll find the image in Yosa Buson's "Picture Scroll of Specters," among paintings of a wandering monk surrounded by infant ghosts and an old witch crying in the night, an early illustration by Buson of ghost stories that Noboru Fukushima, in his essay "Buson as Haiku Poet and Painter," places in Buson's learning period.

Of the major haiku poets, we associate Buson most closely with the art of painting. He derived his style, and approach to the painter's life, through a movement then in vogue of imitating Chinese literati painters. Cheryl Crowley in her book *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival* writes: "the ideal of the cultivated amateur, or *bunjin*, . . . allowed artists to simultaneously work as professionals yet appear to transcend the corrupting influences of profit" (14). This approach enabled Buson to receive support from wealthy patrons without learning from an established master. Fukushima notes that "it is unlikely that Buson had a tutor to teach him painting throughout his life" and Crowley corroborates this opinion (40). He likely learned by imitating paintings on display in the homes of his patrons.

Fukushima writes that Buson "is said to have created the *haiga* genre," though this seems unlikely and clearly contradicts the information provided in Kiuchi's chapter on Bashō and by other scholars, including Crowley (37). Fukushima divides Buson's painting into four phases. In addition to the learning phase, there are periods of growth, accomplishment, and maturity.

Strictly speaking, the "Picture Scroll of Specters" isn't haiga because the verbal descriptions in the paintings are not haiku. Buson's haiga begin in the growth period, roughly 1758–1769, exemplified by this haiku of a charcoal peddler with its accompanying haiga.

on a charcoal peddler —
 day ending
 this year ending too
 (*sumiuri ni / hi wa kure kakaru / shiwasu kana*)

Fukushima observes how the black ink of the picture matches the peddler's charcoal and notes the care with which Buson draws the peddler's basket. In comparison to the ghosts of the learning period, Buson paints his images with greater clarity, though without the attainment, especially in color, of the later periods.

In the accomplishment period, Fukushima highlights:

the spring sea
 all day
 swelling, swelling
 (*haru no umi / hinemosu notari / notari kana*)

Linking the haiku to Miyazu Bay near Kyoto where Buson lived as a child, Fukushima discerns a certain nostalgia in the poem and painting. “Compared to the constructional works of Buson in his growth period,” Fukushima writes, “his portraits become more flexible in expression, and he had a unique lyricism. This softness is reflected in the line of paintings. It means that Buson's haiga was completed” (48).

For ten years, Buson wandered the north and followed the path traveled by Bashō. His veneration is evidenced by his pilgrimage, his poetry, and in the mature period, by a major work – an illustrated picture scroll in 1778 of the master's *Narrow Road to the Far North* which contains Bashō's complete text along with color illustrations of the master's journey with Sora. A true masterwork.

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Painted over celadon-green, white peonies drift across the canvas like heavy clouds, and the paint that drips from them falls like rain. Each peony receives its own haiku or haiku-fragment, sketched in the artist's hand.

“The white Peony / at the Moon / one evening / Crumbled /
and / Fell” — Shiki

“The Peony falls / Spilling out / Yesterday's / Rain” — Issa

“From the heart / of the Peony / a drunken / bee” — Bashō

“The Peony / Quivers” — Buson (from “The heavy wagon /
Rumbles by; / The peony quivers.”)

“Ah! the Peonies / for which / Kusunoki took off his / armour”
— Kikaku

The last of the essays in the collection on haiku and painting, “Classic Haiku and Cy Twombly's Modern Painting,” promises a novel insight into the inclusion of haiku in this untitled 2007 painting. However, Yoshinobu Hakutani's essay provides no helpful background on Twombly or the painter's interest in haiku. The essay also offers no real interpretation or account of the effects of including the haiku embedded in the painting. Rather, the author drifts into generalizations about the difference between Bashō and Kikaku. For example, Hakutani writes: “While Bashō was influenced by Confucianism and Zen philosophy, Kikaku was least interested in Eastern philosophies.” What philosophy would Kikaku have known other than Eastern? In fact, R. H. Blyth documents that Kikaku studied Confucianism with a scholar named Kusagari.

You will read a more evocative discussion of this painting, and a richer discussion of Twombly as a painter engaged with poetry,

in Mary Jacobus's *Reading Cy Twombly*. Hakutani gets hung up debating the different aesthetics of Bashō and Kikaku and never really comes back to the painting. Furthermore, the editor misidentifies the source of the haiku, correctly attributing one to Kikaku while identifying the other four as loose translations of Bashō. Jacobus, on the other hand, documents the source of each poem in translations by Lucian Stryk and Blyth.

LITERARY FORMS, PHILOSOPHIES, AND MOVEMENTS

Despite its brevity, the haiku is a porous and portable form, able to absorb religious and philosophical outlooks, sturdy and flexible in its global migration. You'll cross paths with haiku on buses and T-shirts, in books of parody, and they're able to crystalize a narrative moment when included in prose.

Bruce Ross provides an overview of contemporary instances of this absorption in his essay "North American Versions of Haibun and Postmodern American Culture." Ross looks at various definitions of the genre, providing a dictionary definition of a "terse prose-poem," but notes that such compressed definitions fail to "account for the eliding of the form into the other traditional Japanese forms, like the kiko (travel journal) and the nikki (diary)" (126). Ross settles for a definition provided in 1994 by the Haiku Society of America.

A short prose essay in a humorous haikai style, usually including a haiku, often at the end. "Haibun" is sometimes applied to the more serious diary or journal writing typical of Bashō's or Issa's longer works, though technically they are part of diary or journal literature, which is usually more serious than haibun. But it is not unusual for haikai elements to enter into these longer works.

Ross then offers a tour through contemporary examples of the haibun, such as Canadian poet Rod Willmot's *The Ribs of Dragonfly*

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(1984), which combines “the narrator’s experiences while canoeing in nature over the course of three seasons” in conjunction with a problematic love affair with a woman named Leila (127).

A number of Ross’s examples derive from travel literature, which is perhaps not surprising given that for many English language readers the haiku will be closely linked to Basho’s *Narrow Road to the Far North*. For example, Ross sites Robert Spiess’s *Five Caribbean Haibun* from 1972 as “perhaps the earliest published modern chapbook-length haibun” (133). Tom Lynch’s *Rain Drips from the Trees, Haibun along the Trans-Canadian Highway* (1992) follows the author on a hitchhiking trip from Pennsylvania across Canada to British Columbia.

Another example of the haibun in North America tracks the immersion of one author into the discipline of Zen Buddhism. Penny Harter’s “At the Zendo” from 1993 documents her trip to the Dai Bosatsu Zendo, a traditional Zen Buddhist monastery in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York. Yet another example of the genre is the journal that responds to another writer’s haiku “in a mode that resembles what was once called impressionistic criticism” (143). In this regard, Ross provides examples from Tom Tico and Patricia Neubauer, who write about both Japanese and American haiku.

A thread that runs through many of these examples, beyond travel, is the sympathetic relationship Ross posits between 19th-century American transcendentalism and the traditional Japanese relationship with nature. Ross finds this philosophy exemplified in Vincent Tripi’s *Haiku Pond, a trace of the trail . . . and Thoreau* (1997), which Ross reads as an active spiritual communion with the romantic vision as expressed in *Walden*.

Ross’s thesis segues nicely into Tom Lynch’s essay “American Haiku and American Transcendentalism.” Lynch writes that the convergence between haiku and transcendentalism “is most

obvious in a shared belief in the ability of the poet to see the world anew, and in the desire to efface the subject/object dichotomy between the poet and the natural world” (189).

The dual origin of American haiku in the Japanese form, buttressed by American transcendentalism, obtains support in a movement that’s often viewed as antithetical to 19th-century romanticism, that of early 20th-century modernism. As Lynch writes, “No ideas but in things,” William Carlos Williams’s slogan and exhortation to get poets looking directly at the world is itself “a pithy summary of the haiku aesthetic” (197).

Since haiku is sympathetic both to transcendentalism and modernism, and trends and traditions naturally proliferate and evolve, we shouldn’t be surprised at the sheer variety of styles that burgeoned in 20th-century Japan in the wake of the country stepping onto the global political and literary stage. Viewed from a long perspective, the tradition of the Japanese haiku is remarkable in balancing a traditional knowledge with innovative ways to represent a modern sensibility.

Toshio Kimura in his survey of 20th-century Japanese haiku, “Haiku and Modernism in Japan,” describes the following characteristics of modernist poetry that he senses as active in the more recent history of haiku: “avant-garde methods with subjective elements, often with non-expository expression using fragmentary images and sometimes having a connotation involving a new interpretation of the classics” (237).

Seasoned readers of the Japanese tradition will not be surprised to hear that for Kimura the shift begins in the late 19th-century with Masaoka Shiki during the Meiji restoration. Kimura regards Shiki as innovative, but not modernist. His innovation was to go beyond “stereotyped conventional expressions” (238) by advocating for what he called *shasei*, or sketching, and following what Kimura regards as a more Western and realist approach to writing.

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Shiki's student Hekigoto Kawahigashi (1873–1937) begins the move toward modernism and what's called the New Trend Haiku movement. According to Kimura, Kawahigashi thought that Shiki's sketching and traditional use of season words was monotonous. Kawahigashi "asserted that haiku should be written as a subjective and symbolic verse" (238) as exemplified in the following haiku:

Red Camellia,
then white Camellia —
blossoms falling

Kimura thinks of this poem as symbolic rather than imagistic since the combination of red and white colors would readily bring to mind to Japanese readers the idea of good luck.

Seisensui Ogiwara (1884-1976) furthered this impulse, believing that the New Trend haiku was still too traditional, especially in its adherence to the 5-7-5 fixed form. Writers in the Jiyuritsu (Free-Rhythm) movement typically dispensed with season words and syllable count. A sample poem of this movement is one by Hosai Ozaki:

Going around to the backside
of the tombstone

For Kimura, the poem symbolizes the idea of going beyond the traditional reading, perhaps going around the will of the ancestors, to uncover new truths.

In the 1930s, the Newly Rising haiku movement returned to the traditional syllable count. "For the reformist poets, the haiku spirit existed not in the free-form, nor in the existence of seasonal words, but in the fixed form with the modern spirit" (241). Impending war played on the minds of the poets:

An elevator
quietly going up
the night of thunderbolt

In this haiku by Sanki Saito, there's a sense of mechanized movement spinning out of control and leading closer to violence. In 1940, a number of influential poets in the Newly Rising group at Kyoto University were arrested by what Kimura identifies as the Special Higher Police. "The movement was forced to end, and its ambitions were crushed in the middle of the reformation" (243).

In the years after the war, Kimura observes that a "restorative mood became the power behind the postwar avant-garde haiku movements" (243). If a booming economy was bringing success and modern comforts to more people, the haiku poets often resisted this increasing mechanization. Kimura identifies two major movements developing after the war – "the social conscious school and the art conscious school" (244).

Even the poems of the social conscious school, which wanted to reach common people, still betray a touch of surrealism in their imagery, as in this example:

Bank clerks
fluoresce from the morning
like squids

This haiku was written by Tohta Kaneko, who in fact worked for a bank. Squids fluoresce to protect themselves.

Here's another example:

Poems of anger —
frozen ice of a marsh
becoming thick

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Kimura reads this haiku as symbolic of “a cold and harsh time” in a country that was increasingly focused on economic development (244).

The art conscious school returned to the earlier symbolism of the New Trend movement. Kimura regards the vanguard here as influenced by Mallarmé and international currents of French poetry. Here’s an example:

Body bending rainbow
its zenith —
gallows

which Kimura says “symbolizes the poet’s agony in composing poems” (245). Kimura regards this as the last modernist movement before the advent of post-modernism in Japan.

* * *

Ce Rosenow provides a corresponding update on haiku developments in her essay, “American Haiku in the New Millennium: The First Two Decades.” Rosenow begins by confirming the traditional conventions that defined the form for the first 100 years of English-language haiku, including the prominence of juxtaposing two images.

Much of Rosenow’s essay amounts to a review of a review as she recaps Michele Root-Bernstein and Francine Banwarth’s *The Haiku Life*, where the authors discuss their experience and findings as editors of *Frogpond*. Based on their analysis of contemporary haiku that they judged engaging, the editors “developed a new list of characteristics that made a haiku ‘a haiku’” (251). This includes: “sensual imagery, juxtaposition, brevity, and ambiguity in order to create a conceptual space for the reader” (251).

Rosenow charts the shift to non-traditional haiku in English to the influence of Makoto Ueda's 1976 anthology *Modern Japanese Haiku*, which made a wide variety of 20th-century styles available to English-language readers. Curiously, Rosenow finds that American haiku poets didn't absorb these traditions until the new millennium, and she puts forth a number of compelling reasons why American haiku poets might have resisted this change. For many American writers, haiku meant the translations of R. H. Blyth, and Blyth rejected haiku after Shiki. Furthermore, since the American tradition was just getting started, there was little motivation to reject a tradition that was new for contemporary readers. "American poets didn't have previous approaches to haiku that they could modify or reject. Simply adapting the form to English . . . was in itself experimental" (252).

The *gendai* movement in American haiku crystallizes according to Rosenow in Richard Gilbert's critical writing and his anthology, *Poems of Consciousness* (2008). Gilbert places his emphasis on the disjunction inherent in juxtaposition, though Rosenow (correctly, I think) regards this not as a radical break but an extension of the tradition.

CONCLUSION

Elsewhere in the collection, the editors reprint essays on Jack Kerouac and the Beats, Ezra Pound and Imagism, and Black writers James Emanuel and Richard Wright that appeared in Hakutani's 2021 collection *American Haiku, Eastern Philosophies, and Modernist Poetics*. That volume in turn contained reprints from a 2019 book, *Jack Kerouac and the Traditions of Classic and Modern Haiku*. Since I reviewed these essays last year in *Juxta* 7, I'll forego repeating those comments here. Suffice to say that Hakutani has developed something of a cottage industry around reprinting his own essays. Since the volume provides no acknowledgments

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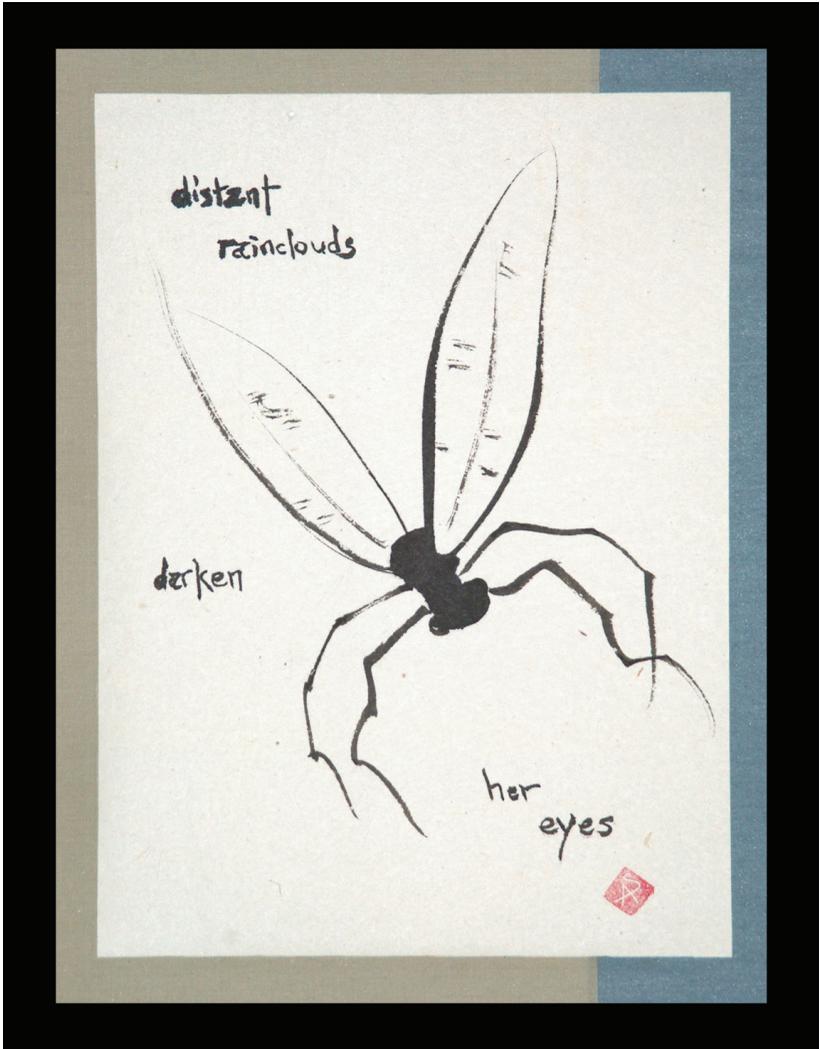
page (there are publication attributions given at the end of a few of the essays), the reader is left guessing when these essays were originally written. For example, the list of Works Cited for Tom Lynch's essay on haiku and transcendentalism lists no works with a publication date later than 1990. Especially in a publication from a scholarly press, a clear indication of publication dates would help the reader to piece together the evolving story of English-language scholarship on traditional, modern, and contemporary haiku. These are not all contemporary essays, and there's no indication whether any of the essays were written expressly for this volume. Nevertheless, if the reader approaches the collection with an open mind, they'll find that the essays provide an opportunity to consider haiku's continuing relationship with other forms of art and writing.

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JUXTA

Haiga



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

IN MEMORY OF STEPHEN ADDISS

This issue of *JUXTA* is dedicated to our friend and colleague, Stephen Addiss, who passed away peacefully at home on May 11th, 2022, at the age of 87. Steve served as a member of *JUXTA*'s editorial board since the journal's founding in 2015, overseeing the selection of *haiga* that have appeared in our pages over the years.

Steve was a prolific scholar and artist who worked across a broad range of subjects and media. Early in his career he studied music composition with John Cage at The New School before forming a folk music duo with Bill Crofut that performed around the world while researching global folk music traditions. While traveling and performing, he fell in love with Asian art and went on to pursue a PhD in East Asian art history and musicology at the University of Michigan. He subsequently became one of the foremost scholars of Japanese art, particularly Zen art and calligraphy.

Instead of staying within a narrow academic specialization, though, the range of Steve's interests, publications, and creative pursuits seemed to expand perpetually. In addition to exhibition catalogs and art history surveys in his subject area, he published an innovative translation of the Tao Te Ching with Stanley Lombardo; an instructional introduction to Chinese calligraphy that included an inkstone and supplies so that the reader could try their own hand; and a boxed set of reproductions of important works of Zen art, each featuring a short art historical description by Steve and a Zen lesson by Roshi John Daido Loori. A typical phone call or email exchange might find him enthusing about the pots he recently fired in the anagama-style kiln he helped to build in rural southwestern Virginia, or the children's book he was writing about stuffed animals teaching Zen lessons. He usually had a truly dizzying number of such projects going at the same time.

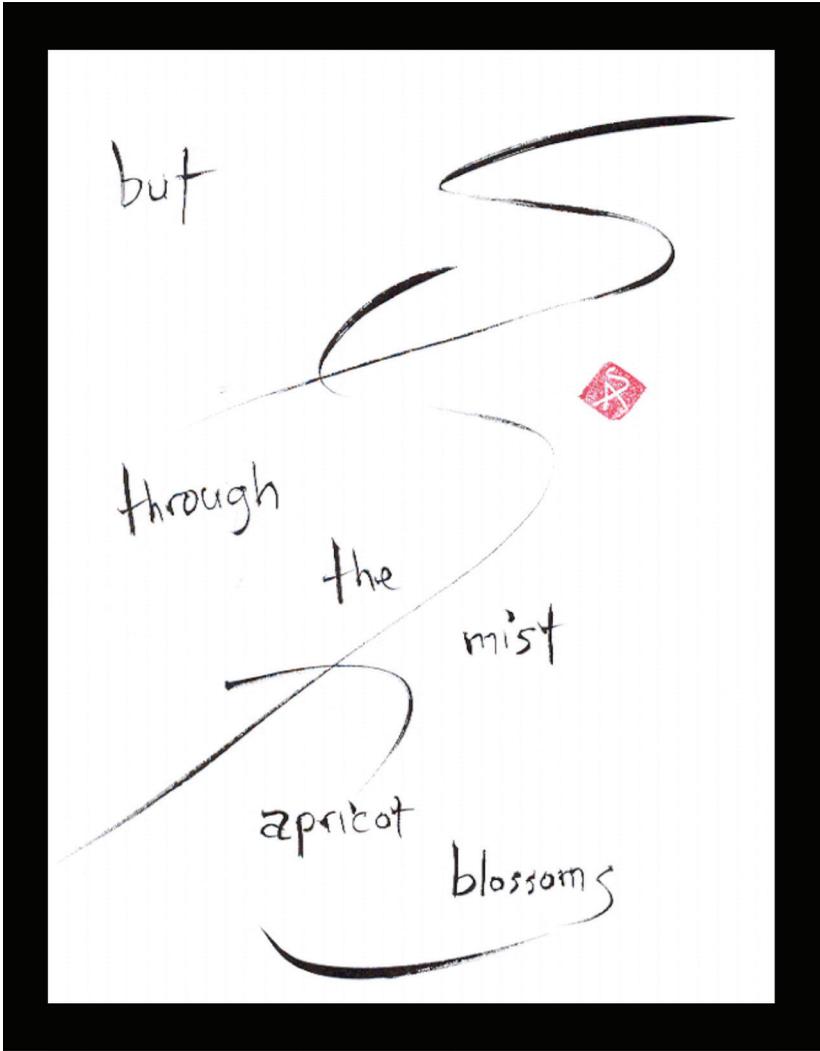
Steve's contributions to the field of English-language haiku reflect the strengths that characterized all of his work: his playful, collaborative nature; a willingness to experiment; a deep erudition that he didn't take too seriously; and the natural ability to communicate his scholarly interests to a popular audience. The series of themed haiku collections that he published with Fumiko and Akira Yamamoto through Weatherhill are a fantastic illustration of these strengths—*A Haiku Menagerie* (1992), *A Haiku Garden* (1996), *Haiku People* (1998), *Haiku Landscapes* (2002), and *Haiku Humor* (2007). Each slim, beautifully designed volume features translations of classic and lesser-known Japanese haiku accompanied by reproductions of woodblock prints. The books were a constant staple in the poetry sections of big-box bookstores at the time—a relatively rare crossover commercial success. His later book, *The Art of Haiku* (Shambhala, 2012), is a more comprehensive narrative survey of the history of haiku and *haiga* that exhibits the same strengths. Steve's own haiku and *haiga* are bracing, funny, poignant without being sentimental, experimental but accessible.

We are fortunate to have Steve's influence and presence as an integral part of the first years of *JUXTA*'s history—his open-heartedness, his intellectual curiosity, his sense of humor and lack of pretension. They're a part of the foundation we'll continue to build upon even as we miss his contributions and his frequent laugh, which always sounded delighted and surprised by whatever insight or suggestion he might be about to make.

— Josh HOCKENSMITH, on behalf of the editorial board

JUXTA

People



Poet/Artist: Stephen Addiss

JUXTA *Contributors*



The haiga of **Stephen ADDISS** have appeared in numerous galleries, and his ink-cuts (a form of paintigraphy) and wood-fired teabowls are coveted by collectors worldwide. His books include *Cloud Calligraphy*, *A Haiku Menagerie*, *The Art of Zen*, *Haiga: Haiku-Painting*, *The Art of Chinese Calligraphy*, *Haiku People*, *A Haiku Garden*, *Haiku Humor*, *Tao Te Ching*, *Japanese Calligraphy*, *Haiku: An Anthology*, and *The Art of Haiku*.

Steve died May 11, 2022, and this issue of *Juxta* is dedicated to his memory.

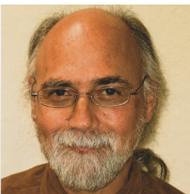


Roberta BEARY identifies as gender-fluid and writes to connect with the silenced, to let them know they are heard. Their debut poetry collection, *The Unworn Necklace*, was selected as a Poetry Society of America finalist. *Carousel*, their most recent collection, is forthcoming from Snapshot Press. The haibun editor at *Modern Haiku* and longtime member of Towpath Haiku, they divide their time between

USA and Ireland.



Keith EKISS is a Jones Lecturer in Creative Writing at Stanford University. He is the author of *Pima Road Notebook* and translator of two works by the Costa Rican poet Eunice Odio, *Territory of Dawn: The Selected Poems of Eunice Odio* and *The Fire's Journey*. Currently, he's translating the poetry of Takarai Kikaku, a student of Bashō.



Robert EPSTEIN is a psychotherapist, haiku poet and anthologist who lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has edited several anthologies, including *The Helping Hand Haiku Anthology* and the forthcoming collection, *The Haiku Way to Healing: On Illness, Injury and Pain*. His most recent books of original haiku and senryu include *A Hummingbird Still: Haiku & Senryu in the Spirit of J. Krishnamurti* and *Checkout Time is Noon: Death Awareness Haiku* (Tenth Anniversary Edition).



Jay FRIEDENBERG is President of the Haiku Society of America and served for two years as Associate Editor of the organization's journal *Frogpond*. He is a member of the Spring Street Haiku Group that meets monthly in New York City. Jay has had his poetry accepted in numerous U.S. and international journals and has published several book collections of his work. He has won multiple U.S. and

International haiku contests.



Adam L. KERN is author and editor of several books on Japanese literature, including *The Penguin Book of Haiku* (Penguin Classics, 2018). Having lived in Tokyo as a high-school exchange student, he studied Japanese literature at the University of Minnesota, the University of Kyoto, and Harvard University, where he earned a Ph.D. in East Asian Languages & Civilizations. Kern is Professor of Japanese

Literature and Visual Culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Madelaine Caritas LONGMAN is the author of the poetry collection *The Danger Model* (2019). Her haiku have appeared in *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *Acorn*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Presence*, and *The Red Moon Anthology of English Language Haiku 2020 and 2021*.



Scott MASON is the author of *The Wonder Code: Discover the Way of Haiku and See the World with New Eyes* (thewondercode.com), a former editor with *The Heron's Nest* (2011-2021) and a current member of the board of The Haiku Foundation. His own haiku have finished first in more than two dozen competitions.



Stella PIERIDES's books *In The Garden of Absence* (2012) and *Of This World: 48 Haibun* (2017) received Haiku Society of America's Merit Book Awards. Her work has appeared in international journals and been translated into many languages. She coordinated the *Per Diem: Daily Haiku* feature of The Haiku Foundation and served as founding

Managing Editor of *Haikupedia*. She is a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors.



Geoffrey M. SILL is an emeritus professor of English at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey. He is the author of books and articles on Daniel Defoe, Walt Whitman, and Frances Burney. He is a member of the Board of the Nick Virgilio Haiku Association. His edition of the complete haiku of Nick Virgilio will be published in 2023.



Sandra A. WAWRYTKO is a Professor in the Department of Philosophy at San Diego State University. Recent publications include “Murasaki’s Epistemological Awakening: Buddhist Philosophical Roots of *The Tale Of Genji*” in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, and “Lessons in Non-Dualism from World Philosophies” in the *Journal of World Philosophies* (6, Winter, 2021) Forthcoming is “Murasaki Shikibu of Japan” and “Sun Bu’Er of China” in *Women Philosophers from Non-Western Traditions: The First Four Thousand Years* (Springer, 2023).



Gideon YOUNG is a member of the Carolina African American Writers’ Collective and a Fellow for A+ Schools of North Carolina. His debut haiku collection *my hands full of light* was published by Backbone Press (2021). His poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and included in *Best Spiritual Literature 2022* (Orison Books). Discover more at www.gideonyoung.com.



J. ZIMMERMAN was featured in *A New Resonance* 8 (2013), the same year she invented the “Buson 100” haiku challenge. She was the first Poet in Residence for the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. Her article “Gender of Poets Winning Haiku and Senryu Contests” appeared in *Presence* (2019); its companion article “Gender of Haiku Poets Published in Journals: Game-On, Ladies?” appeared in *Modern Haiku* (2020). Her post-doc research was on the moon rocks at Washington University.

JUXTA *Staff*



The haiga of **Stephen Admiss** have appeared in numerous galleries, and his ink-cuts (a form of paintilligraphy) and wood-fired teabowls are coveted by collectors worldwide. His books include *Cloud Calligraphy*, *A Haiku Menagerie*, *The Art of Zen*, *Haiga: Haiku-Painting*, *The Art of Chinese Calligraphy*, *Haiku People*, *A Haiku Garden*, *Haiku Humor*, *Tao Te Ching*, *Japanese Calligraphy*, *Haiku: An Anthology*, and *The Art of Haiku*.

Steve died May 11, 2022, and this issue of *Juxta* is dedicated to his memory.



David Grayson has been writing haiku and senryu for twenty years. He authored *Discovering Fire: Haiku & Essays* (Red Moon Press, 2016), and edited *Full of Moonlight* (HSA 2016 Members' Anthology). He was featured in *A New Resonance 6* (Red Moon Press, 2009), *My Neighbor* (Two Autumns Press, 2009) and *Spring Haiku in the Park 2018* (Yuki Teikei Society). He edited two volumes in the Two Autumns book series. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with his family.



Josh Hockensmith is a writer, book artist, and librarian who has worked with haiku since the 1990s when a student at the University of Richmond. He helped found the Richmond Haiku Workshop, which published *South by Southeast* 1999–2013. He is interested in book arts, the history and future of the book, and literary translation. He is the library assistant at Sloane Art Library at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where he is also working toward an MA in Art History.



Jim Kacian is founder and president of The Haiku Foundation (2009), founder and owner of Red Moon Press (1993), editor-in-chief of *Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years* (W. W. Norton, 2013), and managing editor of *Juxtapositions* since its inception in 2015. His latest book of haiku and sequences is *after / image* (2018), and his latest collaboration is with Richard Mavis on *long after*, a 16-language book film

(2021) based on his original trilingual edition published in Italy in 2008.



Adam L. KERN is author and editor of several books on Japanese literature, including *The Penguin Book of Haiku* (Penguin Classics, 2018). Having lived in Tokyo as a high-school exchange student, he studied Japanese literature at the University of Minnesota, the University of Kyoto, and Harvard University, where he earned a Ph.D. in East Asian Languages & Civilizations. Kern is Professor of Japanese Literature and Visual Culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Ce ROSENOW is the author of *Lenard D. Moore and African American Haiku: Merging Traditions*, co-author with Maurice Hamington of *Care Ethics and Poetry*, and co-editor with Bob Arnold of *The Next One Thousand Years: The Selected Poems of Cid Corman*. Her essays have appeared in *Haiku, Other Arts, and Literary Disciplines*; *American Haiku: New Readings*; and *African American Haiku: Cultural Visions*, and others. She is the former president of the Haiku Society of America.



Dave Russo is the digital project manager for The Haiku Foundation and is a founding member of that organization. He is the author of *Summer Music Festival at Natural Chimneys Park*, a small handmade book. And he's the consulting editor for *The Coach Gaither Story*, a sports biography.



Crystal Simone SMITH is the author of four poetry chapbooks including *Wildflowers: Haiku, Senryu, and Haibun* (2016). She is also a co-author of *One Windows Light: A Collection of Haiku*, Unicorn Press, (2018). Her work has appeared in numerous journals including: *Callaloo*, *Nimrod*, *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *The Heron's Nest*, and *Acorn*. She is the Founder and Managing Editor of Backbone Press.

JUXTA *Adjudicators*



Janine BEICHMAN, biographer and translator of Japanese poets, has published *Masaoka Shiki: His Life and Works*, and *Embracing the Firebird: Yosano Akiko and the Birth of the Female Voice in Modern Japanese Poetry*. *Beneath the Sleepless Tossing of the Planets*, her translations of the selected poems of Ōoka Makoto, was awarded the 2019-2020 Japan-United States Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature. Her most recent book is *This Overflowing Light*, translations of the poet Ishigaki Rin.



Cheryl CROWLEY studies the literature of premodern Japan, specializing in the popular verse form *haikai* (ancestor of modern haiku) of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She is also interested in the visual culture of Japan and the poetry and art of premodern China. Her book, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival* (Brill, 2007) explores the intersections of poetry and visual art, elite and popular culture. Recently her research has focused on the work of women *haikai* poets in early modern Japan (1603-1868).



Toru KIUCHI is the editor of two collections of essays, including *American Haiku: New Readings* (2018) and *Haiku, Other Arts, and Literary Disciplines* (2021) (with Yoshinobu Hakutani). He is also the author of *The Critical Response in Japan to African American Writers* (2003) (with Yoshinobu Hakutani and Robert Butler) and *Richard Wright: A Documented Chronology, 1908-1960* (2014) (with Yoshinobu Hakutani).

JUXTA EIGHT is our first themed issue, and our topic is Haiku and Wellness, in the most general sense. It features new scholarship by Scott MASON (“Haiku and Human Flourishing”), Stella PIERIDES (“Parkinson’s Toolbox”), and Madelaine Caritas LONGMAN (“bird tweets turn into an orchestra”); interviews of Robert EPSTEIN (by Jay FRIEDENBERG) and Roberta BEARY (by Gideon YOUNG) wherein wellness is the central theme; a new feature to *Juxta*, the inclusion of a scholarly presentation (“Bashō’s Haiku Pedagogy as Mindfulness Training”, by Sandra A. WAWRYTKO); a report on The Haiku Foundation’s *Haikupedia* resource, by Stella PIERIDES; and reviews by Geoffrey M. SILL, J. ZIMMERMAN, Adam L. KERN, and Keith EKISS. We announce the inaugural *Juxta* Award, and feature the *haiga* of our departed colleague Stephen ADDISS, including a tribute to him by his long-time friend and student, Josh HOCKENSMITH.



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