

Roadrunner Haiku Journal

November 2006 Issue VI:4

Welcome to the Roadrunner Haiku Journal. Roadrunner is a international quarterly online journal that publishes quality English-language haiku and senryu. We chose Roadrunner as the name for the journal because we want it to be at the forefront of haiku thought and practice with a regional flavor.

Jason Sanford Brown

&

Scott Metz,

Editors

[!\[\]\(17413706fd4997a1a4bdf85c6864eee1_img.jpg\) Pushcart Nominees](#)

[!\[\]\(faf942dc3e59ce8eb64b4ac481eca7e0_img.jpg\) Southwestern Haijin Spotlight](#)

[!\[\]\(cf531ed27e91483460120fcc057b3901_img.jpg\) Haiku/Senryu](#)

[!\[\]\(d3102649f02e825ddb76dc3de0190154_img.jpg\) The Scorpion Prize for Issue VI:3](#)

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Pushcart Nominees

This issue's Special Feature will be our [Pushcart](#) Nominees for 2006. Congratulations to the six poets selected and good luck!

the desert
in the still wings
of a dragonfly

Dru Philippou

the cry of a solitary bird just before the creation of green

Patrick Frank

sharp curve-
a weathered cross
nailed to the tree

Tom Clausen

moonflower
the fragrance
of names

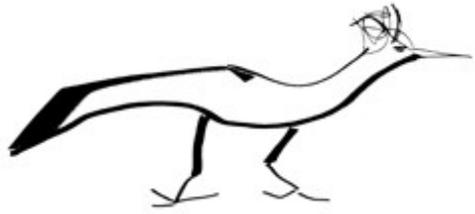
Margarita Engle

deep inside you no more war

Dietmar Tauchner

A hummingbird, red
throat poised over the roses:
the dream I forgot

Diane Wakoski



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Haiku/Senryu

Dietmar Tauchner

via appia
i walk back
in time

deep inside you no more war

lilac scent
all the secrets
we share

Carla Sari

river stroll
he talks
about his life of crime

moon eclipse
I wax
my facial hair

beauty contest
the lissomness
of wild deer

Deborah P Kolodji

moon rock
behind the glass
summer divorce

the whine
in your voice
mosquito fish

the wait
for low tide
starfish

Miriam Sagan

pink lily smell—
a hunger
I can't fill

a small quarrel
Venus and Jupiter
conjunct the moon

facial tic—
snow coming in
off the plains

Graham Nunn

only silence in the shell

at dawn
snake
shedding
autumn leaves

almost a poem spring rain

Diane Wakoski

A hummingbird, red
throat poised over the roses:
the dream I forgot

How different we
are, despite our love for truth:
Fiddlehead and Bibb

If only music
had filled the cathedral. Not
sandals, whispering.

Charles Trumbull

lying abed
awakened by
worm-getters

a pile
of adobe bricks
she won't change her mind

how can I believe
the words of the woman
in the heishi necklace?

Robert Hecht

clearing fog
hills and sky
redraw each other

opened peach
my heart feeling
its dark center

garden store
Buddhas sit
according to price

A. Thiagarajan

up the hill-
a girl pulls me
and my headload

autumn evening
at every episode he asks
who is the hero, who is the villain

sleepless-
she sees a number
in her palm

Bruce Ross

an old wall
just an old concrete wall
summer haze

time and again
the spider misled
summer rain . . .

short sea ferry
the young girl's hair
up to the clouds

Laryalee Fraser

sway
of the harvest moon
the barn door open

northern lights...
the distance between
words

suitcase packed —
the weathervane
points north

Francis Masat

noon —
a boy steps in and out
of his father's shadow

humid night
across a field — soft sounds
of people

October moon —
ghosts and trick-or-treats
disappear

Ian Daw

first incision -
a sparrow vanishes
in the sun

bells fading in the wind drifting seeds

winter dusk -
the wood grain fades
to wood

Helen Buckingham

foxes
fight over
the last of my dream

old school
the coldness
of the triangle

Indian summer
another half-cup
left in the flask

john martone

lichen
book

won't
tell me

who
you are

a fallen sycamore's
getting
up again

this
snail
shell's

trans
pa
rent

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Southwestern Haijin Spotlight

This issue we are proud to showcase the work of Foster Jewell, with an introduction by Karma Tenzing Wangchuk. I would like to thank Charles Trumbull for helping us find these haiku and extend a special thanks to Foster's granddaughter Deborah LaFauce for graciously allowing us to use them.

Foster Jewell

In 1991 I found myself living in El Rito, a village in northern New Mexico, population only 1,200 souls. Later, when I rediscovered haiku in the summer of 1998 after a hiatus of some 30-plus years, I soon also found the poetry of the late Foster Jewell, and was amazed to read that he and his poet-wife, Rhoda de Long Jewell, had lived in this tiny town in the mid-1960s to the very early 1970s.

They were still remembered by many of the old-timers. Greg Martin, whose family has run Martin's General Store since the early 1900s, took piano lessons from Rhoda, and remembered Jewell mostly as a fine sculptor. Elizabeth Searle Lamb of Santa Fe shared fond memories of him, as did others in the haiku world. I don't remember who it was who told me that on his deathbed, unable to speak, Jewell could still write haiku.

The Jewells published a small handful of books while they lived in El Rito, as they would later in Venice, California; Bob Spiess kindly sent some to me so that I could donate them to the El Rito Public Library, wanting to leave something of the Jewell haiku legacy for villagers to enjoy down the years.

Several of Jewell's poems were naturally centered in El Rito and New Mexico. Many were also written about another place I happened to know well, the Anza-Borrego Desert of southern California. In a tribute to Jewell, I wrote a poem about the Dos Cabezas area of the Anza-Borrego and submitted it to the third annual Shiki Internet Haiku contest:

Desert waterhole:
a yellow finch dips its beak
in the puma track.

It won third prize. Had Jewell written it, the poem no doubt would have been much better.

Karma Tenzing Wangchuk

Coming in the night
mushrooms in the orchard
as if we still lived here.

Conflagration
of a butterfly weed!
The crow's cold eye.

Nearing the Mountain
yesterday, and still today...
tomorrow.

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

Finding this cavern—
following the lantern light...
followed by silence.

Dreaming ...
the inconsistent world of cloud
moving away

Dew lights in greasewood —
the lost radiance of stars
that fell in the night.

First light of dawn
and out of lost horizon
looms the Joshua tree.

From vanishing world
a last coyote call.
The final silence.

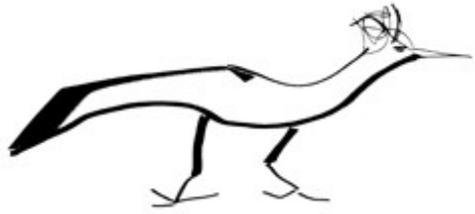
Ghosts of desert roads
and their way of wandering
where I want to go

Hidden from the moon,
a shadow keeps creeping
around this saguaro ...

Gravel flying —
tearing up the arroyo —
roadrunner's wild eye —

These haiku previously appeared in Jewell's books, *Passing Moments*, *Yield of the Fallow*, *Sand Waves*, *Leaves in the Wind* and *The Haiku Anthology*, second edition, van den Heuvel, ed.

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The Scorpion Prize for Best Haiku/Senryu of ISSUE VI:3

I found a number of interesting haiku in this issue of *Roadrunner*. Also, the range of haiku types seems very comparable to that found recently in larger magazines and collections. There are poignant psychological one-liners without nature reference on the one end, and poems that fit very comfortably in the center of the haiku genre, with good form (which I take to mean brief, in three lines with the middle line longer than the first and third, and a single grammatical break) and a seasonal reference along the lines of traditional kigo on the other. Many poems fall somewhere in the middle, exhibiting a looser organic approach to form within the three-line format, and often psychological elements come into the poems directly or through diction. I'll discuss several poems that seem particularly attractive to me, and conclude with my choice for the issue's Scorpion Prize.

Overall, I found the three haiku by Ashley Rodman the most interesting group, partly for its variety and partly because of the obvious care with the words. Of the three, my favorite is:

nude
in the rose moss
a clay pot

I wasn't quite sure what "rose moss" was, but that was quickly solved: it's the plant I know as portulaca (actually a group of plants), sometimes spoken of as a semi-succulent. I know the plant from both my Northeast childhood—my mother grew some in our back yard—and my recent decade in Santa Fe, where both wild and cultivated varieties may be seen.

The bisque-fired red clay pot—I take it to be a generic "flower pot"—with no skin of shiny glaze to protect it, sits among the portulaca. In feeling this companionship, between the vulnerable pot and the fleshy plant, and giving it the sparest of renderings in words, Ashley has produced a gem of haiku connoisseurship. The sly suggestion that the poet may be the nude among the ground-hugging flowers only adds to the pleasure, though I must admit it seems a little improbable, as I've never seen portulaca that I'd have been comfortable stepping on, with or without shoes. For me, this poem has only a slight edge over her other two contributions to this issue; "gravity" and "light curves" are also standouts.

Another haiku in this issue that grabbed me and had me returning more than once is Keith Heiberg's poem:

sudden gust
in the maple:
forgotten rain

There's some discussion these days of "cause-and-effect haiku"—as being somehow defective. But many haiku that follow Harold G. Henderson's suggestion that a haiku should proceed in the order of perception seem, at first glance, to merely report a cause and its effect. The poem above almost seems so, yet it keeps drawing me back. On first reading, I smiled at the apt and compact expression of a common phenomenon: We get splattered by drops of a previous rain storm when a wind suddenly shakes them out of a tree.

But, on rereading, I noticed that this haiku gives me more. I hear the "sudden gust" in the whir and clatter of the maple leaves. And what follows is not just the effect, but a new sensation, the chilly raindrops splattering on pavement, on cars or a building, on my skin. Bob Spiess used to say that multiple-sensory haiku were often better than the simply visual, and I agree. And I richly enjoy "sudden gust" for that amazing percussion and woodwind concert in the maple and the sudden splash on my face that ends it.

Robbie Gamble has also built a fine multi-sensory haiku with this:

muggy night
deep in the fridge
radishes

Ultimately, this grabs me with the cold, sweaty feel of these radishes and the deep harmony of their musty scent with the closeness of hot, humid air. Feeling that outer humidity and heat also suggests a sharp contrast with the crispness when I slice or bite a radish. And the taste of a chilled radish, at once earthy and refreshing, wakes me up via its sharp contrast with the oppressiveness of that "muggy night".

And let's not forget the brilliant colors involved, that more-than-lipstick red and the rich greens attached to these radishes. Deep in the night, deep in the fridge, this sensational experience awaits my approach.

Each of these poems has provided me with fresh experience, or a discovery of fresh language capturing experience, and given me new angles of perception for my own life.

The Scorpion Prize for this issue goes to our featured poet, Victor Ortiz, for his marvelous haiku:

windy ridge
a rusty bed frame

in winter light

On first reading the second line of this haiku, I pictured this bed frame outside, in that wind, those elements. I could almost hear the wind's many small songs weaving their way through the open springs and stays of an old-fashioned bedspring. But coming to this haiku now, perhaps my fifth or seventh reading as I write this, my mind welcomes me indoors, where the wind plays outside, and only the "certain slant of light" that comes through some frame of door or window into the darkness inside will do. I don't know if the author had Emily Dickinson's poem in his ears with that wind when he wrote of this winter light, but it rings in mine: "Heavenly Hurt . . . Sent us of the Air" indeed!

Of course, simply alluding to Dickinson (or any other great poet of the past), intentionally or accidentally, will not make for a good haiku. The sense of space, motion, and height in the words "windy ridge" combines with the physical steel and rust of the bed frame to effectively redefine "winter light" for me. I've always felt that winter light meant a silvery sheen. Now, it comes with a new, more somber color, a deep rust red that both swallows the light and gives back only pin-prick glints of whiteness. This supremely sensual image of decay sets up, for me, a sense of Emily's hovering presence that could never have come without that physicality.

Finally, to return to our most simple and basic concerns for haiku, formally, Ortiz's "windy ridge" moves in a full haiku rhythm, with two strong beats in first and third lines, and three in the middle line. It balances this symmetry with repeating consonants and vowels in those lines—

windy ridge
a rusty bed frame
in winter light

—against the contrasting asymmetry created by the strong grammatical stop after the first line and the unforced run-on of the second line into the third. The shifting positions of the repeated sounds in lines one and three, marked above, and the slightly different rhythmical patterns created by the added unaccented syllable in the last line both gently disguise the repetition of the sound and augment this asymmetry in a quiet way. Nothing in the poem calls attention to all this care with form and sound, but we cannot help being affected by it.

For formal balance, careful attention to sound, and striking images that fully engage multiple senses, Victor Ortiz's "windy ridge" deserves our full attention. Add to these a seasonal theme brilliantly reinvented and echoes of one of our greatest poet's best-known poems, and this is a haiku I'll long remember.

William J. Higginson