

Roadrunner Haiku Journal

February 2007 Issue VII:1

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Welcome to the Roadrunner Haiku Journal. Roadrunner is an 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

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Special Feature: Haibun

Ordinary Women

Waiting in line at the supermarket checkout late at night, I find myself listening to a woman at the next till who's just paid for her groceries. She smiles at the cashier and says, 'thank you for all your help', still smiling as she tucks her receipt and change into her purse. And the smile remains as she pushes her trolley towards the door.

She's still with me while I drive home. Her pale blue coat, how her shoulders were a little hunched. And the way her eyes and cheeks, not only her lips, carried her smile, how it seemed rooted below her skin.

Today, I am still thinking about her. Thinking I should smile more. Thinking about softness.

winter sun
the shadow of a leaf touches
my shadow

Lynne Rees

Desert Walks

In mountain wilderness, my habit is to walk from sunrise to sunset. Friends have suggested that I should pause more, that I should "be in" rather than "move through". But if a meditation serves the spirit, why meddle? Buddhists chant, Dervishes dance, I hike. And sense of place slips in quietly through body's urban armor.

But, here, desert's sun insists on a change. The waterless, sandy stream beds shimmer with heat waves. As on snow, sunray's ricochet off sandstone walls. And, where friends' platitudes have failed, sun trumps mind's will to move. Body, wiser than mind, has closed down—eyes, nose, ears, even skin cringes in the heat.

Midday Sun: I travel short distances, from pool to pool, pools of water, pools of shade; seeking out springs in lusty anticipation, wetting hat and neckband, letting hands and feet linger in wetness—sensuous meanders in muddied places shared with tadpoles.

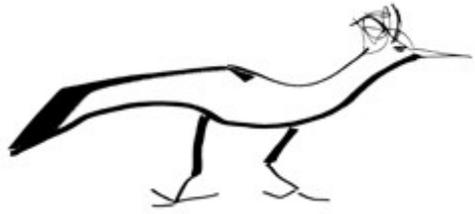
Late Afternoon: Sun's glare diminishes. Winds whisper; skin opens as to a lover's caress. Body's senses unfold, slowly, like a butterfly's wings having just emerged from chrysalis. Eyes inherited from a people who evolved in the filtered light of forest canopy begin again to take in.

Dusk: Frogs sing their lust; bees hum in blooms of yellow barberry. An owl's call; the yip of a coyote—signals that I'm part of a celebration of dusk's softness. When only a few hours ago, the junipers sagged like dusty tramps, turquoise berries glow like fireflies; grasses pulse with iridescent greens; alpen glow creeps up sandstone walls. The desert is dancing in color!

Darkness: I reach camp, a chill in the air, slide into the campfire circle, gather food & drink.

land of little water
it's the walking that
washes you clean

Ray Rasmussen



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Haiku/Senryu

marlene mountain

the weather its scattered mood

autumn catches up the colors of rust behind the shed

on the brink another christian war

Dru Philippou

a flare of birches
the way the river
quenches the light

blooming jasmine
a final shift
of the weathered trellis

lilac fragrance
not yet shaped
by the wind

Jeffrey Winke

crescent moon
in its dark hollow
thoughts recede

shadows
layer themselves
tight doorway

behind that
smirking face
her skull

Helen Buckingham

Leonids night . . .
picking a pomegranate
clean

autumn cancelled -

blossom on the line

church cactus
observing
its own advent

Martin Gottlieb Cohen

winter sunlight curls into the surf

winter rain
buzzards drip
from the water tower

the sounds of mallards fall to the next pond

Patrick Sweeney

tang of scallions
will I
be missed

heat of day. . .
little trouble to save
the green spider

today I let
the heron
cross the sky

john martone

a fossil
turned
to face you

3 mushrooms
my color

one stone
reached out
to you

Marie Summers

mid-spring . . .
the walls swell
under new paint

Easter morning . . .
her shadow finds
the egg

your softness
I fall
into you

George Swede

trapped in a tree
the white plastic bag
stretches
to where the clouds go

sunset . . .
the eastern sky evokes
more memories

morning after
the wind has blown all the
clouds
into my head

Robbie Gamble

cold rain all day inside twilight deepening

All Saints' Day
sweeping up glitter
from her halo

Squad car echoing blue off the yoga studio

Anatoly Kudryavitsky

bamboo stems-
their memories
of the sun

exploring a length of breath autumn wind

an aspen
outside the Deutsche Bank
counting its leaves

Dhugal Lindsay

薄明の男は島よ石榴食ふ
hakumei-no otoko-wa shima-yo zakuro kuu

in the dim light
I am an island. . . picking at
a pomegranate

葱剥くや肢の包帯中の肉
negi muku-ya e-no houtaijuu-no niku

peeling a shallot...
the meat that lies within
my bandaged limb

荒梅雨の水母かけらとなり泳ぐ
arazuyu-no kurage kakera-to nari oyogu

gusts of plum rain
a piece of broken jellyfish
still swims



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Southwestern Haijin Spotlight

Laura Orabone

Born in Texas, raised in southern Oklahoma, Laura Orabone currently resides in Tucson, Arizona with her husband and son. She received her Master's of English in 1996 from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, and arrived in Tucson the following year. Her children's book, *Elena and the Coin: Exploring Tucson's Hispanic Heritage*, was published by the Center for Desert Archaeology in 2000. Her haiku have appeared in several publications, including *The Heron's Nest*, *Frogpond*, *bottlerockets*, *Modern Haiku*, *Roadrunner Haiku Journal*, and *Acorn*. In October 2005, one of her haiku received Honorable Mention at the international Matsuo Basho Haiku Contest in Japan. When she's not writing poetry, Laura is a successful gourd artist and budding gardener.

Cinco de Mayo
the virgin rides
a slice of moon

marigolds
a child suckles
a sugar skull

cottonwoods
following the spring
to its source

starry night
I step into the field
of possibility

hallucinogens
ten thousand years
beside this fire

spring funeral
one chair separates
widow from bride

roadside shrine
a child blows out
all the prayers

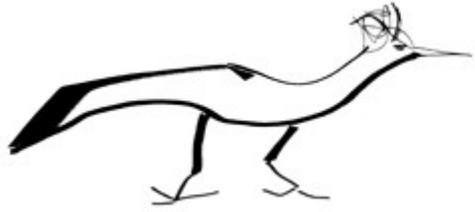
orange blossoms
the sleeping cat's pillow
of death poems

winter rain
I pretend my hand
is yours

Anonymous
searches for her name
on the donor list

Some of these poems originally appeared in *Frogpond*, *The Heron's Nest*, and *Modern Haiku*.

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The Scorpion Prize for Best Haiku/Senryu of ISSUE VI:4

It seems to be the tradition, in presenting the Scorpion Prize, to comment on a number of poems before coming to the selection itself. I'm glad to observe the tradition since there are many poems in the November issue worthy of comment. Here are a few of them.

old school
the coldness
of the triangle

Helen Buckingham

I actually began my education in a country schoolhouse where the children were called in from recess by the clang of a triangle. Students were given their turns at the job of rattling an iron bar around the inside of the iron triangle. As winter came on, before the snow prevented outdoor recess, that bar was sometimes cold enough to sting a little. And the sound of the triangle itself seemed somehow colder. This strikes me as a poem that deals with the immediacy of memory. And this emphasis upon the senses as a gateway to intuition seems very much from the "old school" of haiku.

bells fading in the wind drifting seeds

Ian Daw

Here is a moment of suspension. A different effect could be achieved with the use of present tense, rather than present progressive and present participle (bells fade in the wind seeds drift). This would sharpen the grammatical break(s) and suggest a more capricious wind. Leaving aside the potential for misuse of the present progressive and present participle in haiku, a topic of dispute in some circles, their uses here emphasize the lightness and steadiness of this particular wind. And this effect plays with the openness of these archetypal images. What are the bells telling us - come to church? A life has ended? What kind of seeds are these? Ambiguity is a problem in a haiku if there is any sense that we

ought to know the answers to such questions. But in this instance, it seems clear that we are free to supply the details from our own experiences, actually invited to do so. I heard wedding bells and saw cottonwood seeds.

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

Charles Trumbull

an old wall
just an old concrete wall
summer haze

Bruce Ross

I've put these together, despite being quite different in their intent and effect, because I'm struck by what a lot of mileage each gets from specifying a particular kind of building material. Haiku thrive on this kind of precision.

Northern lights
the distance between
words

Laryalee Fraser

With its simultaneous shift of diction and meaning at the final line break, this is a clever poem. That description is not particularly complementary when applied to a haiku, though cleverness is one possible value for a senryu. This is a nicely observed moment of awe. And, read as senryu, it suggests a correspondence between the mysterious quality of the northern lights and the inexplicable complexity and austere beauty of what may pass between human beings in a moment of silence.

My selection for the Scorpion Prize from among the poems in the November issue is:

lilac scent
all the secrets
we share

Dietmar Tauchner

Ambiguity again; in this case serving to present something ineffable; a gentle teasing. Key words that remain undefined are "secrets" and "we." If this is read with the idea that there are particular answers to the question of who "we" are and what "all the secrets" are, the poem fails. But I prefer to see both as open questions. What would characterize the various secrets shared by any two people - two lovers, best friends, conspirators, the poet and reader - and by all of us that are or ever were sentient human

beings? In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, the ultimate answer to all questions is 42. Here it seems to be lilac scent.

If the narrative qualities of this poem are based upon ambiguity, the diction is clear and striking. And the rhythmic qualities of this poem are interesting. One device I've always appreciated in printed poetry is the offer of choices about which syllables are to be stressed. In this poem, the dominant pattern seems to call for a single stress in the last line, falling upon "share." But there is also the option of a single stress on "we" or of various degrees of shared stress between the two words. Each choice offers nuances.

So much of what I see fails to meet my need for clarity, simplicity, and directness. What makes the ambiguity of this poem effective for me is that it rests upon the foundation of a clear, sensual, and vivid opening image (for those of us who live in a climate where lilacs bloom). Thus grounded in the senses, the answer to each of my subsequent questions is no more and no less than "lilac scent"—a most satisfactory answer.

John Stevenson

P.S. The senryu reading of this poem might suggest that those secrets we don't share with anyone are the ones that stink.

JS.

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