

This Week's Montage

—The Adobe Wall

Comparative Haiku

selected by

Allan Burns

Arroyos and coyotes, saguaros and pueblos, mesas and mesquite: The topography, ecosystems, and cultural heritage of the American Southwest are truly unique. Thankfully, they've inspired some first-rate haiku that capture the unique flavor of the region, most notably in the work of two poets who settled in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and wrung poetry from the dry desert air: Elizabeth Searle Lamb, one of the legendary figures of English-language haiku, and Marian Olson, whose beautiful collection *Desert Hours* was the HSA book of the year in 2008 and who regards Lamb as her mentor. Of their relationship, Olson has recently written: "We studied the latest haiku journals, discussing the essays and poems. We wrote some renga together. We shared poems of others we loved, and sometimes offered a draft of a haiku we were pulling together to get a candid response. She sent me home with rare poetic treasures to study, classic out-of-print books and volumes of the first haiku journals. Little by little she was shaping me without intention or goal" (*Frogpond* 32.2, 2009, pg. 42). Newer to the haiku scene, Edith Bartholomeusz, in neighboring Arizona, has clearly been inspired by the same desert muse. As summer starts to wind down, let that dry wind from the American Southwest blow these shards of resonant imagery and wisdom your way.

E. S. Lamb (1917-2005)

Marian Olson (b. 1939)

Edith Bartholomeusz (b. 1936)

trickster-coyote
graffiti'd on an adobe wall
sudden clap of thunder

a deep voice chanting
the way of the buffalo
silent drums

a flight of birds
breaks the stillness of sky
no cloud moves

field of wild iris—
the pinto pony
kicks up his heels

dust from the ore tailings
a flash of tanager wings
in the hot sun

the hawk—
sun lengthening
the spread of wing

old mission church
pigeon's coo in what's left
of the bell tower

from *Across the Windbarp* (La Alameda Press, 1999)

wintering field
cranes as one
face the coyote

who was here first
the crack deepens
in the adobe wall

birds shift
in the moody sky
one body, one mind

god or no god
does it matter
wild blue flax

D. H. Lawrence shrine
a cock crows
in the still afternoon

open sky
the old hawk
falls alone

stars
before letting go
letting go

1 from *The Heron's Nest* 4.11, 2002
2-7 from *Desert Hours* (Lily Pool Press, 2007)

crimson sunset
coyotes melt into
the desert wash

darkening sky—
a woman's song rises
on the desert breeze

stifling heat—
vultures teeter beneath
monsoon clouds

an armful of lilies
in the fullness of summer
an urn full of ash

twice swept out
twice blown back
a dove's feather

into the sun
where eyes can't follow
a red-tailed hawk

lone hiker
the trail ends where sky
and desert meet

1 from *Frogpond* 28.2, 2005; 2 from *The Heron's Nest* 7.4, 2005; 3 from *The Heron's Nest* 9.1, 2007; 4 from *The Heron's Nest* 9.2, 2007; 5 from *The Heron's Nest* 10.1, 2008; 6 from *The Heron's Nest* 10.2, 2008; 7 from *Hummingbird* 19.1, 2008

Previous Montages

August 9: *The Haiku Capital
of the Midwest*
August 16: *Around the World*

Next Week's Montage: One-Liners

Matsuo Allard
Stuart Quine
Jeff Stillman