

This Week's Montage

—*The Little Truths*

Comparative Haiku

selected by

Allan Burns

We patronize [animals] for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err. For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth.”—Henry Beston, *The Outermost House* (1928)

“Her haiku voice strikes me as one of an observer speaking the little truths of the observed, but always with a certain added quality of affection.”—Paul MacNeil, “Foreword” to *Shaped by the Wind* by Ferris Gilli (Snapshot Press, 2006)

In honor of World Animal Day (October 4).

Kobayashi Issa (1763-1828)

Ferris Gilli (b. 1943)

Cherie Hunter Day (b. 1954)

Having slept, the cat gets up,
yawns, goes out
to make love.

Don't worry, spiders,
I keep house
casually.

Don't kill that fly!
Look—it's wringing its hands,
wringing its feet.

Nursing her child
the mother
counts its fleabites.

All the time I pray to Buddha
I keep on
killing mosquitoes.

The pheasant cries
as if it just noticed
the mountain.

Insects on a bough
floating downriver,
still singing.

from *The Essential Haiku*, edited by Robert Hass
(The Ecco Press, 1994)

wooden bridge
a nuthatch creeps
toward its reflection

company coming
I nudge a little spider
into its hole

night heat
nothing moves
but the gecko's eyes

scorched field
tufts of rabbit fur
dot the barbed wire

leafdrift
the chipmunk's cheek
full of seeds

the female cardinal
lowers her crest
twilight rain

water lapping
at the path's end
murmur of moorhens

1 from *The Heron's Nest* 1.1, 1999
2-4, 6 & 7 from *Shaped by the Wind* (Snapshot Press,
2006)
5 from *The Onawa Poems, 1999-2008*, edited by Paul
MacNeil (Ship Pond Press, 2009)

twilight—
a mud dauber strokes
the weathered board

mole crabs
in the palms of my hands
the retreating surf

swollen stream
a tick on new grass extends
both front legs

a skull no bigger
than my thumbnail
jasmine in bloom

her first fossil
the curve of the creek
in springtime

spring dark
pivot in the flight
of barn swallows

shorter days—
kink in the end
of a lizard's tail

1 from *Modern Haiku* 27.1, 1996
2-5 from *The Horse with One Blue Eye* (Snapshot
Press, 2006)
6 from *Frogpond* 29.1, 2007
7 from *The Heron's Nest* 9.4, 2007

Previous Montages

September 20: Autumn Colors

September 27: New England Sketches

Next Week's Montage: Looking with the Universe

Lee Gurga
Robert Spiess
Charles Trumbull