

*This Week's Montage*

—*Now & Zen*

*Comparative Haiku*

selected by

*Allan Burns*

Twenty years since I began writing haiku, and I realize more than ever: haiku writing is a practice that's easy to take up, but very difficult to really get anywhere in. It's like Buddhism in that respect."—Taneda Santōka (*For All My Walking*, translated by Burton Watson)

Bodhi Day is observed in Japan each December 8<sup>th</sup>, in commemoration of Siddhattha Gotama's experience of enlightenment under a bodhi tree. This event set in motion a creative, evolving cultural force—a philosophy, a practice, a way of liberation—that has reached through time across twenty-six centuries and through space from Gotama's native Kapilvatsu, in northern India, to Japan and beyond. Along its ceaseless journey it has taken myriad forms while retaining a unifying core, and the cultivation it encourages of present-moment awareness and selflessness has informed many arts, including, notably, haiku.

"When going about your daily business, stop occasionally; let go of whatever worries, fantasies, or plans are preoccupying you and imbibe the rich sensuous immediacy of the moment: the call of a startled blackbird slicing through the bass rumble of a truck."—Stephen Batchelor (*Buddhism without Beliefs*)

*Karma Tenjing Wangchuk* (b. 1946)

*vincent tripi* (b. 1941)

*Stanford M. Forrester* (b. 1963)

one moon  
one pond  
one frog

sitting patiently  
without a thought  
the frog

maybe next time  
i'll come back  
as a frog

stone before stone buddha

a turtle rises  
from the stone buddha's shadow  
break of day

the wind  
not always at his back  
—stone buddha

waiting for me  
to give it life—  
my death poem

1-3 from *90 frogs* (bottle rockets press, 2002)  
4-6 from *Stone Buddha* (tel-net, 2009)  
7 from *a motley sangha* (bottle rockets press, 2005)

Ah water-strider never to have left a track!

First snow...  
first monk  
in the snow

Giant swallowtail . . .  
if you could leave me  
soul

Wilderness cabin  
sooner or later they grab  
the book about haiku

where  
the mirror  
once hung  
inside the  
cabin  
meditation

before  
making love  
i write a death poem

from *paperweight for nothing* (tribe press, 2006)

they actually  
are pretty quiet . . .  
wild flowers

Zen garden—  
the monk rakes over  
his thoughts

meditation retreat—  
a jolly buddha  
dangles between her breasts

out of season—  
the haiku poet tells us  
to ignore the frog

Zen retreat—  
i awaken  
with a cup of coffee

one perfect ensō  
after another . . .  
autumn rain

death poem—  
my father left  
without one

1-3 from *January Sun* (bottle rockets press, 2007)  
4-6 from *the toddler's chant* (bottle rockets press, 2009)  
7 from *South by Southeast* 16.2, 2009

*Previous Montages*

*November 22: Three Women*  
*November 29: Confessions*

*Next Week's Montage: Halcyon Days*

Randy Brooks  
David Cobb  
Michael Dylan Welch