

## This Week's Montage

—Halcyon Days

## Comparative Haiku

selected by

Allan Burns

This gallery is occasioned by the so-called “halcyon days” from December 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>, supposedly a period of unusual calm right before the Winter Solstice. According to Greek myth, these conditions eventuate from the nesting of the halcyon (or kingfisher). Of course, whether the weather in any particular region of the globe actually evidences pacific tendencies during this period is quite another matter. Such can be the gap between reality and myth. More generally, “halcyon days” also refers to any period of prosperity, peace, joy, and tranquility, especially as recollected in the context of an idealized past. Our featured poets approach this broad, loose theme in a variety of ways, engaging all the senses and evoking idyllic instances of lost time. Dr. Randy Brooks teaches English at Millikin University in Illinois; he founded the publishing company Brooks Books (originally High/Coo Press) and the journal *Mayfly*. David Cobb is a founder of the British Haiku Society and well-known for his anthologies (including *The Iron Book of British Haiku*, edited with Martin Lucas), collections, haibun, and translations. Michael Dylan Welch, a prolific haikuist named after Dylan Thomas, founded Press Here and the journal *Tundra* and coined the immortal term “déjà-ku.”

Randy Brooks (b. 1954)

David Cobb (b. 1926)

Michael Dylan Welch (b. 1962)

school's out—  
a boy follows his dog  
into the woods

pumpkin pie aroma  
from the back seat—  
Kansas sunrise ahead

sculpture garden . . .  
the marble bench  
cool through my jeans

holding hands . . .  
until we reach  
the blackberries

the bride's mouth  
stuffed with cake . . . the groom  
answers for her

dawn after the birth,  
he brings her  
the first strawberry

stockings on the mantle . . .  
the child's eyes follow sparks  
up the chimney

from *School's Out* (Press Here, 1999)

pear leaves fall:  
a landscape starts to form  
between the branches

pedalling uphill  
a butterfly  
overtakes me

daffodil morning—  
looking for something  
very blue to wear

swirling round  
the mirrored alder tree—  
the alder's leaves

foreign city  
I flop down among pigeons  
who know where they are

my cherry tree  
a-hum with honey bees  
I'll sit awhile

the author in spring  
how his dots and commas  
fly all about

1, 2 & 4 from *Stepping Stones: a way into haiku* by Martin Lucas (The British Haiku Society, 2007)  
3 from *Jumping from Kiyomizu* (Iron Press, 1997)  
5 from *Modern Haiku* 39.1, 2007  
6 & 7 from *Spitting Pips* (Equinox Press, 2009)

first snow . . .  
the children's hangers  
clatter in the closet

paper route  
knocking a row of icicles  
from the eave

spring breeze—  
the pull of her hand  
as we near the pet store

crackling beach fire—  
we hum in place of words  
we can't recall

wedding reception—  
the weight of her bottle  
on the lip of my cup

under the afghan—  
reading Huck Finn  
by penlight

sudden quiet  
after the computer power-down . . .  
risen moon

1-3 from *The Haiku Anthology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, edited by Cor van den Heuvel (W.W. Norton & Company, 1999)  
4 from *The Heron's Nest* 6.11, 2004  
5 from *Frogpond* 29.1, 2006  
6 from *Frogpond* 30.2, 2007  
7 from *Modern Haiku* 39.1, 2008

## Previous Montages

November 29: *Confessions*  
December 6: *Now & Zen*

## Next Week's Montage: *Winter (I)*

Scott Mason  
Ruth Yarrow  
Lorin Ford