

A FEW WORDS ABOUT MACEDONIAN HAIKU

Toni PAVLESKI



The beginnings of haiku in Macedonia are largely unknown. The first publications in the pages of literary magazines appeared as early as the 1960s. Due to the large sweep of time involved, selection of haiku in this essay will necessarily be based solely upon my personal research, view and aesthetic judgment.

A book with the double title *Skiffs—Haiku*, written by Aleksandar Popovski (1932) is the first book of haiku published here. It was officially released by Kocho Racin (Skopje, 1966). The collection consists of 51 three-verse poems, only a dozen of which are written according to the standards of haiku. These few poems are the first authentic haiku in the Macedonian language. By that time, in the Balkans, only a few poets were writing haiku, but they were quickly followed by thousands who adopted it in this region, with many awards and publications in international anthologies. The following two haiku poems are written by Aleksandar Popovski:

there are kind of days
when the silence is speaking
the rest is silent

the nests are so high
on the stone of resistance
thunders are nesting

The first Macedonian book exclusively containing haiku poems is *Peak* by Hristo Petreski (1957), published in 1983 by the publisher Razvitok from Bitola. The same author had previously published 23 haiku in the Zagrebian bi-weekly journal *Oko*. In 1991, the haiku library *Matzuo Basbo* in Odzaci published Petreski's book *A returning traveler* in both Macedonian and Serbian. He wrote the first retrospect of Macedonian haiku, titled *Scripture for the Macedonian Haiku*. Here are two of his remarkable haiku poems:

the songs I've burned
are the songs that have made the best
distance from myself

do not pour water
into the fire, the dust
will burst in your eyes

Several haiku writers appeared in that period, and their poetry is worth mentioning. They include Dobrinka Krstevska, Vidoe Podgorec, Petko Dabeski, Dimitar Argakiev, Aleksandar Prokopiev.

Petko Dabeski (1939) is one of our most active and productive haiku writers. He started with the pioneers of this style in Macedonia and is still writing today. His work has been published in the most prominent Macedonian literary magazines, as an author who has written quite a lot of haiku books, including the remarkable *Not everything is haiku*. He is also the author of the first anthology of Macedonian haiku, published in 2003 and incorporating the work of nine Macedonian poets. Having published a book of haiku was a condition for inclusion in the anthology.

the knee is glowing
on the bare knee the pollen
has gently fallen

I'm laying long
lying with my eyes open
looking into myself

Dimitar Argakiev (1949) is one of the most productive Macedonian haiku authors. His work is translated in many languages. His book of haiku *A day in Drayinci* has been translated into Bulgarian. His haiku have been published in magazines in Germany, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as included in haiku anthologies in the USA, Germany and Bulgaria. He has received awards in haiku contests in Japan.

I wasn't brave
to go out into my yard
there was a dove.

a gentle touch
maybe it's a memory
or a butterfly

Aleksandar Prokopiev (1953) is a remarkable haiku author. He has published his first haiku book *Picture—Wheel* in 1998. He has collaborated with many haiku authors from all over the world. His work has appeared in haiku anthologies . . .

the rooster is here
just in time for the lunch time
the lunch time of ours

my underpanties
are washing in a whirlwind
while I'm watching still.

From among the latest generation of haiku authors, Vladimir Martinovski, Nikola Madzirov, Toni Pavleski and Iskra Doneva are some who deserve mention.

Nikola Madzirov (1973) brilliantly expresses his haiku talent through his book of haiku *Asphalt, but sky*. He writes in a contemporary style, carefully noticing everything that surrounds him. He was the chief editor of the haiku magazine *Ant (Mravka)* that produced 10 issues from 2003–2008. Many young and talented haiku authors were published in this magazine, both in English and Macedonian.

the television
has broken down—inside the screen
we see our faces

a broken button
in a garden of roses
the thread's on the thorn

Toni Pavleski (1970) has won many awards for his writing. He is one of the fifteen writers from the Balkans to appear in the cooperative collection *I'll be a haijin*. He has not yet published a book of his own haiku, but his poems have been published in the most prominent Macedonian magazines, principally in *Ant*. His work has been included in anthologies of Balkan and world haiku. He is a multiple first prize winner of international competitions organized by the journal *DIOGEN*, as well as a first prize winner for haiku at the *Nights of poetry in Melnica*. His haiku is translated in English, Bulgarian, Serbian and Croatian.

a sketch of a wood stove
drawn in a raging snowstorm
by an orphan child.

leap over a thorn
running away from the pain
I broke a flower

Iskra Doneva (1983) is another productive haiku writer. She is the author of the haiku collections *Who will warm up the birds*, *A little grasshopper is playing hopscotch*, *Father* and *Haiku from Lazaropole*. Her poems have been published in most Macedonian haiku magazines, and are regularly found in the haiku journal *Ant*. Her works have been translated into English, Polish and French.

a man with a rod
the fish is in the river
waiting for breakfast

black dust is falling
a matchstick which is half burned
between the fingers

Vladimir Martinovski (1973) is an author interested in literary collaboration with other haiku poets from his surrounding, and in exchanging opinions and essays on haiku writing. He has published the collections *Sea moon* and *Hidden poems*. He is an editor and regular associate of the haiku magazine *Ant*.

how soft they appear
the needles of the pine tree
after the first snow.

we swim on our backs
us—in the ocean
the cloud—in the sky.

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