

**The Kiyoshi Tokutomi Memorial
Haiku Contest**

This contest is for English language haiku written in the traditional form in three lines of 5,7,5 syllables. Each poem is required to contain one and only one season word from an assigned list. The poets chose from among the following kigo:

New Year:

toasting the New Year
first correspondence

Spring:

Hunger Moon, pussy willow, ground
beetles emerge, Memorial Day

Summer:

Pleiades at dawn, ice cream, green-leafed
wind, loon

Autumn:

rose of Sharon, dragonfly, County Fair,
scent of autumn

Winter:

Orion, withered garden, January thaw,
basketball

The contest committee and judges
congratulate the winners and express their
appreciation to everyone who participated.

Artwork from "birches," an etching by Patricia J.
Machmiller.

HONORABLE MENTION

**driving from darkness
through the warm scent of cedars
Pleiades at dawn
Kay F. Anderson**

**late afternoon light
my deceased father's whistle
on the green-leafed wind
Carolyn Thomas**

**the call of a loon –
the Manitoba sunset
deepens to scarlet
Michael Dylan Welch**

**crisp scent of autumn
over the mountain tonight
rides the wind-blown rain
Janeth Hackett Ewald**

**sunlight on a koi
weaving by – a dragonfly
of the same color
Francis Masat**

**January thaw...
an old web in the window
has become a prism
Desiree McMurry**

**January thaw –
the deepening row of holes
under the eavestrough
Michael Dylan Welch**

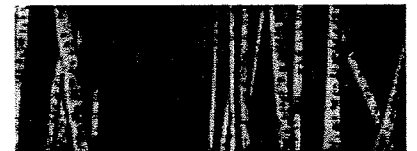
Contest Judges

Patricia Donegan is the author of *Without Warning* (forward by Allen Ginsberg), *Heralding the Milk Light*, and *Hot Haiku*. In 1986-87 she studied with Japanese haiku master Seishi Yamaguchi. She completed a Fulbright grant in Japan, co-authoring *Chiyo-ni Woman Haiku Master* with Yoshie Ishibashi. A member of the Haiku Society of America and the Association for International Renku, she currently teaches creative writing at a university in Tokyo, and is the poetry editor/contributing editor for the *Kyoto Journal*.

Shokan Kondo has been studying haiku and renku since the 70's. He started Renku Performance, and founded the "Renku Uniting Nations." His publications include "*The Principles of Universal Haiku Grammar*." He is head of the Isehara Renku Group, and professor at Seikei University in Tokyo.

Yuki Teikei
Haiku Society

Kiyoshi Tokutomi
Memorial
Haiku Contest
2005



judged by

Patricia Donegan

Shokan Tadashi Kondo

**Kiyoshi Tokutomi
Memorial
Haiku Contest 2005**

Prize Winning Haiku

Judges' Comments

First Prize - \$100

**the scent of autumn-
drawing us out once again
the rusty porch swing**

Michael Dylan Welch

This haiku is appealing because it not only relates to the five senses with its imagery but also appeals to another sense, the feelings: the joy that comes with the human yearning to connect to Nature “once again”. The importance of the kigo in general and in this haiku as well, is not just an indicator of the season, but a way for us to get “outside of the self” – in this case, not only “drawing us out once again” to the autumn season, but letting ourselves be taken out of ourselves, back to our primordial sense of self, to Nature – as Dogen the Japanese Zen master said, “to forget the self is to remember the 10,000 things.” Here the “ing verb” keeps us in the present moment to be aware of the 10,000 things. And the most primordial sense of all, that of “smell” is being called and mixed with other senses in the “rust” of the porch swing – which gives the feeling of the dying aspect of autumn, along with fall’s reddish color, and the peculiar smell of rust itself; plus the sense of sound in the creaking of the rusty swing could possibly be heard in the autumn wind or from the actual sitting on it. As to the form of this haiku, the 5-7-5 format here seems quite natural and smooth, plus saving the specific image for the last line, gives it more emphasis: the clear cut image of the “rusty porch swing” acts as the “red-wheelbarrow” in William’s famous imagist poem – a simple presentation of things as they are. We can then see and appreciate everyday life around us, very simply as in this haiku.

Second Prize - \$50

**small withered garden
the hand of a dying friend
resting in my hand**

Ebba Story

This haiku has an affinity with Basho’s poem: “fallen ill on a journey/my dream wanders/over the withered field”. This haiku by Basho represents the Buddhist concept of “heaven within a withered field.” The withered field does not mean death but is pregnant with rich life, which will sprout again in spring. The “withered garden” in this above haiku is actually full of life. Death is simply a passing point in the huge wheel of life. The small garden is all of what he/she had in his/her life, and it implies that he/she is spending this peaceful moment at home. He/she took good care of this small corner of the world, which probably made many people happy with its flowers and insects. It is what we are all expected to do in our life. A peaceful feeling pervades this haiku, which comes from the word “resting”. This word implies the feelings of the dying friend; he/she is filled with peace. During the Heian period in Japan a man/woman in his/her death bed would hold to a rope tied to the hand of a statue of Kannon (the goddess of compassion) in the belief that the Kannon would take him/her to heaven. The author of this haiku is the Kannon, providing the dying friend with the rope, embodied by repeating the word “hand” twice. This haiku expresses the depth of cosmic sadness of the poet by the last words, “in my hand”.

Third Prize - \$25

**Pleiades at dawn . . .
talking each other to sleep
near the river’s edge**

Francine Banwarth

This haiku has a feeling of the tanka form, and is reminiscent of a fragment of Sappho’s love poem using the same image of the Pleiades constellation; it is in this sense a love haiku. Of course there have been more haiku with the subject of nature and even of politics, but there are also some haiku centering on love. But even in those love haiku, Nature remains as the umbrella as in this haiku. This haiku shows a fine juxtaposition of the vast realm of Nature of the “Pleiades at dawn” contrasted to the smaller human realm, of perhaps lovers, an old couple, or friends talking together outdoors in nature; but there is also a co-mingling which is quite moving. This haiku epitomizes the relaxed feeling coming from the co-emergence of human beings with this peaceful aspect of nature (rather than a wrathful aspect of a hurricane or earthquake): the space of the stars at dawn and the solid ground of earth “near the river’s edge” – a new beginning, a time to finally fall asleep and dream together. As to the form, the 5-7-5 count here has a natural rhythm, the clear image carries the feeling without explanation, and the use of the “ing verb” keeps it to the present moment, which heightens the poignant feeling.