

G E P P O

*the haiku study-work journal of the
Yuki Teikei Haiku Society*

Volume XXXVII:5

September—October 2012

Members' Haiku for Study and Appreciation – Carol Steele, Editor

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|--|
| 9228 | Newly scratched stars
the color of talon parings
Year of the Dragon | 9239 | waving a bonnet —
one of the search party
in the mountain haze |
| 9229 | Stragglng fisherman
the red morning cloud billows
over his torn net | 9240 | a woodcutter's house
cobwebbed in sunlight
the wind of autumn |
| 9230 | Tule fog
the winding road
to the Zen monastery | 9241 | thrift shop treasure
old rusty tin bread box
reaping |
| 9231 | cold wind
on the tip of a pine tree
a slice of moon | 9242 | favorite verse
pulled off the shelf
Thanksgiving |
| 9232 | September morning
watching raindrops
bounce in the puddles | 9243 | no one
in the pumpkin patch
creaky bones |
| 9233 | peaceful
in warm autumn sunlight
the cat and I | 9244 | Seal bobs head in
Rolling waves to
Watch the sunset. |
| 9234 | evening chill
a butterfly's wing
tops the dustpan | 9245 | Warming in the sun-
Turns play
In the lagoon. |
| 9235 | our last child
learns to ride his bike
turning leaves | 9246 | Silver sardines
Flow forward-
One turns back... |
| 9236 | mindless
until a leaf
crosses my path | 9247 | purple asters
a gardener shushes
the drunks |
| 9237 | everything I know
still...
the melon moon | 9248 | drops falling
from the faucet's shadow
cold night |
| 9238 | desert moon . . .
again, the kit-fox
circles the pool | 9249 | live oaks
after the moths have left
autumn chill |

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- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| 9250 | heads lowered
teenage boys trudge glumly
the first day of school | 9264 | home again
after her last treatment
paperwhites |
| 9251 | autumn rain
we snuggle deeper
beneath flannel sheets | 9265 | lingering heat
hanging heavy
on the sun's rays |
| 9252 | bowed bodies
beneath bulging backpacks
end of summer | 9266 | books
with all that information
so silent |
| 9253 | the nightingale's song
fades with the dusk
oh! this middle age | 9267 | September morn
the cage left open
fly, fly |
| 9254 | over night
the first snowfall
gift wrap | 9268 | western window---
the long slant
of autumn sun |
| 9255 | October sky
the glow from a
flickering candle | 9269 | first rain
roots seeking water
through the stony earth |
| 9256 | horses gaze
across the withered field
morning's red sun | 9270 | autumn afternoon---
a tire swing motionless
in the cool air |
| 9257 | deserted well
a toad pops out from
the dusty bucket | 9271 | dancing herself
into a circle...
the earthworm |
| 9258 | chewing gum
sticks me to the sidewalk
last warm day | 9272 | summer trouble
old man on a ladder
with a chain saw |
| 9259 | fresh footprints
in the secret garden...
a disturbed pebble | 9273 | Alstroemeria
so easily the spent stem
pulls up from the earth |
| 9260 | gunshot-----
a red leaf staggers
to the ground | 9274 | a tumbleweed
in tow with a jogger-
autumn wind |
| 9261 | singing his heart out
behind the shower curtain...
one little cricket | 9275 | a torn pre nuptial agreement
in a trash can-
early autumn |
| 9262 | early frost
everyone wonders
who will get the ax | 9276 | autumn season
brings memory
his unrequited love |
| 9263 | harvest moon
at eye level
white chrysanthemum | 9277 | Last day of Summer –
last fly-by of Endeavor
season, era end |
-

-
- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| 9278 | From high overhead
leaves of many colors fall -
a rainbow forest. | 9293 | four-legged companion
on an icy walkway
blind faith |
| 9279 | Lying on the dock
staring at the Milky Way
shooting star streaks by. | 9294 | churning Autumn surf
tossing kelp here and there
mom's old washer |
| 9280 | like too many leaves
on this old rake
--your absence | 9295 | night light-
my cat's eye holds
a piece of the moon |
| 9281 | from Iraq
her boots arrive home
without her | 9296 | high tide-
pelicans windsurf
a mackerel sky |
| 9282 | feeling lost
she consults the palm reader
searching for her youth | 9297 | bat..
one shade darker
than the sky |
| 9283 | at the smooth surf's edge
on wet dawn-pinkened sand
one whimbrel standing | 9298 | he carries
the wind in his hands –
autumn leaf blower |
| 9284 | after each sally
returning to the same stick
--black phoebe | 9299 | three quail scurry
in search of shelter . . .
a blue Ford truck |
| 9285 | September moon--
indifferent cold light shed
on all our follies | 9300 | downpour erases
the lines between lanes-
pray. |
| 9286 | Election Day
in my window my poster
[ROMNEY BIDEN] | 9301 | u pick fruit?
crabapples hang over
my neighbor's fence |
| 9287 | faint breath of wind
the Universe is endless
for insiders only | 9302 | they refuse to evacuate
in time - - - - -
MONSTER STORM |
| 9288 | winters...millions of them...
the sourish taste
of the redwood leaves | 9303 | for the grasshopper
the opposite river bank
is another world |
| 9289 | rolling hills..
the car disappears
appears | 9304 | dropping to the ground
to the better dwelling place
an acorn |
| 9290 | autumn leaves...
my paint brush drips
red | 9305 | for some inhabitants
in the abandoned mine
the moon is still full |
| 9291 | new planner
choosing the names
to include | 9306 | World Series-
the cowboy bar's jukebox
louder than the tv |
| 9292 | silence...
between the sound
Autumn sea | | |
-

Challenge Kigo Haiku - Goldenrod

gramma arranges
cuttings from her weed patch
goldenrod
~Richard St. Clair

goldenrod sentinels
guide our way home-
autumn dusk
~Janis Lukstein

October sun
the sight
of goldenrod
~Barbara Campitelli

overcast sky
next to the goldenrod
lies the sleeping snake
~Marcia Behar

A little brown bird
tweets as it land
on goldenrod
~Majo Leavick

Swaying goldenrod
The tall couple's matching dogs
Meadow-romp
~June Hopper Hymas

Other flowers gone -
dry grassy meadows tinged with
graceful goldenrod.
~David Sherertz

speak earnestly
as if to a microphone –
goldenrod secrets
~Jessica Malone Latham

goldenrod meadow
our young women are to play
the men's game
~Zinovy Vayman

golden rod
imagine myself
about to sneeze
~Michael Henry Lee

autumn love
lady butterfly atop
goldenrod
~John J. Han

**Challenge Kigo –
“Basho’s Day”
by Fay Aoyagi**

Basho passed away on October 12 (mid-November by the modern calendar), 1694. Japanese tend to remember and honor the people on the dates they died. Not only the ancient poets like Basho, the date Yukio Mishima took his own life (November 25) is a kigo.

Try to write homage to Basho in your unique and modern way.

芭蕉忌の枕が鳴るや仮の宿 永田耕衣

bashô ki no makura ga naru ya kari no yado

a pillow makes a sound
on Basho’s death anniversary—
this temporary lodging
Koh’i Nagata

from “*Haiku Dai-Saijiki*” (“Comprehensive Haiku Saijiki”), Kadokawa Shoten, Tokyo, 2006

芭蕉忌の暮れて甘ゆる鳩のこゑ 森 澄雄

bashô ki no kurete amayuru nio no koe

Basho’s Day
sweetening at dusk
a voice of a grebe
Sumio Mori

from “*Haiku Dai-Saijiki*” (“Comprehensive Haiku Saijiki”), Kadokawa Shoten, Tokyo, 2006

Basho’s Day
empty chairs in a circle
at the church’s basement
Fay Aoyagi

(unpublished)

**July—August 2012
Haiku Voted Best
By GEPO Readers**

the only sound
his graveside flag
snapping in the wind
~Joan H. Ward

the yellow moon
polishing a floor
in the breezeway
~Michael McClintock

summer heat
an unexpected blaze
of peonies
~Beverly Acuff Momoi

giggles of children...
squishing the creek bottom
between their toes
~Elinor Phil Huggett

tip-toeing through the
mine field of my sister's mind-
summer thistles
~Betty Arnold

one woodpecker drums
her mating call—sinking deeper
into solitude
~Betty Arnold

on the patio
a full moon and the
smell of skunk
~Marcia Bahar

**Members' Votes for
July—August Haiku**

Janice Lukstein—9150-0, 9151-2, 9152-4

Neal Whitman—9153-2, 9154-0, 9155-4

Joan H. Ward—9156-3, 9157-9, 9158-4

Ruth Holzer—9159-1, 9160-1, 9161-3

Michael McClintock—9162-2, 9163-8, 9164-5

Patricia Prime—9165-4, 9166-6, 9167-0

Beverly Acuff Momoi—9168-8, 9169-0, 9170-1

Joan Zimmerman—9171-0, 9172-2, 9173-3

Elinor Phil Huggett—9174-7, 9175-2, 9176-6

Genie Nakano—9177-0, 9178-4, 9179-3

Richard St. Clair—9180-3, 9181-3, 9182-4

Betty Arnold—9183-7, 9184-0, 9185-7

Zinovy Vayman—9186-1, 9187-6, 9188-2

Christine Michaels—9189-0, 9190-1, 9191-2

Ann Bendexin—9192-0, 9193-2, 9194-0

David Sherertz—9195-3, 9196-0, 9197-2

Elaine Whitman—9198-2, 9199-1, 9200-1

Majo Leavick—9201-2, 9202-0, 9203-0

John J. Han—9204-6, 9205-2, 9206-1

Marcia Behar—9207-3, 9208-2, 9209-7

June Hopper Hymas—9210-2, 9211-1, 9212-3

Judith Schallberger—9213-3, 9214-4, 9215-3

Alison Woolpert—9216-0, 9217-0, 9218-1

Christine Horner—9219-2, 9220-1, 9221-4

Toni Homan—9222-4, 9223-0

John J. Han—9224-2

Christine Horner—9225-3, 9226-2, 9227-7

Yuki Teikei Moon-viewing Party and Pot Luck

October. 27, 2012

The Moon-viewing Party held on October 27 and hosted by Jean Hale with her granddaughter, Megan, was lovely. Great care was taken to prepare a table of delicious food and beverages which added to the tone of welcoming hospitality. In addition, all the guests brought something to share.

The moon was fully visible from Jean's patio, an ideal setting on an exceptionally warm evening with a clear sky. Our small group gathered inside and out sharing food, libations, and poetry writing prior to Mariko Kitakubo's tanka performance. Her musicality added to the richness of her poems; Linda Papanicolaou had the honor of reading the English translations. Mariko also arrived bearing several food dishes of her own creation and gifts for all the guests. The glow of the evening is still within my heart

Judith Schallberger (JMS)

The Point Lobos Ginko at the 5th Haiku Pacific Rim

...the greatest beauty is organic wholeness
the wholeness of life and things.
the divine beauty of the universe.
Love that, not man apart from that...
Robinson Jeffers

We met where the sea wolves have always met. A majority of the conferees and a small group of Point Lobos naturalist/docents (volunteers who also have an interest in poetry) ate from a bountiful and well laden picnic table produced by YT members. After our lunch at the Piney Woods Area, we broke up into four small groups and set off walking up the coast to the Cypress Grove Loop. The weather was just right for the comfortable short hike where we experienced late summer/early

fall in the Central Coast. All the regulars were there, deer browsing in the shade of orange, *Trentepohlia* coated trees, dry rattlesnake grasses, sea otters swimming and feeding out in the kelp beds, a lone egret standing sentinel in the cove. An excellent welcome to the nature and natural spirits of the area! Thanks to all who contributed!

And please send me any Pt. Lobos/Asilomar poetry of yours that you would like to pass on to the Pt. Lobos docents—who are very curious to learn more about haiku and related forms!

Respectfully Submitted,
Roger Abe

Annual YTHS Membership Dues

YTHS membership is for one calendar year: January to January. The fee provides each member with six issues of GEPPPO (only members can submit), notification of events, and the annual membership anthology.

Domestic & Canada dues \$32; Seniors \$26 – International \$40; Seniors \$31. Mail check or money order to membership secretary:

GEPPPO Submission Guidelines due date for next issue is December 20.

Email (preferred) your contact information, poems & votes to
mail your poems & votes with contact info to:
GEPPPO Editor, Carol Steele,

You can submit:

- Up to three haiku appropriate to the season; poems must be in three lines. They will be printed without your name and identified with a number for appreciation and study.

***Yuki Teikei Haiku Society
announces the annual***

***2013 Kiyoshi & Kiyoko Tokutomi
Memorial Haiku Contest***

In-hand Deadline: May 31, 2013

Prizes: \$100 \$50 \$25

Contest Rules:

- Haiku must be in English.
- Haiku must each have 17 syllables in a 5-7-5 pattern.
- Each haiku must use only one kigo from the contest list.
- Haiku with more than one recognized kigo will be disqualified.
- Entries must be original, unpublished, and not under consideration elsewhere. No previous winning haiku are eligible.

2013 Contest Kigo List

New Year: first sun, New Year's reunion

Spring: sugar moon, soap bubble

Summer: iris, iced coffee

Autumn: migrating raptors, grasshopper

Winter: whale, long underwear

Contest Submission Guidelines

- Entry fee \$7.00 per page of three haiku. No limit on entries. Entries will not be returned. No refunds.
- For paper submission, put three poems per page and send 4 copies of each page, with your name and address on only one copy, typed on 8 ½ x 11 paper. (See below for option to email if you pay by Paypal.)
- Make checks or money orders payable to “Yuki Teikei Haiku Society.” Overseas entrants please use International Postal Money Order, in U.S. currency only.
- For a paper copy of the results send a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) marked “Contest Winners.” Writers abroad: Please enclose a self-addressed envelope (SAE) plus enough postage in international reply coupons for air mail return.
- Entries must be original, unpublished, and not under consideration elsewhere. No previous winning haiku are eligible.
- This contest is open to anyone, except for the YT President and Contest Chair.
- Final selection will be made by a distinguished haiku poet. The Society may print winning poems and commentary in its newsletter, web site, annual anthology, and brochures.
- If not pre-paying by Paypal, send entries with entry fee by mail to:
YTHS Tokutomi Contest
J. Zimmerman – Contest Chair
- Alternatively, you may pay the contest entry fee via Paypal to
On the PayPal transmittal page, show the subject as
"2013 Tokutomi Contest entries", and in the message section provide your
name, and number of poems submitted.
- If (and only if) you pay the entry fee by PayPal, you may submit your contest entries by email to .
- These guidelines are also available at the YTHS website, <http://youngleaves.org/>;
- Contest results will be announced in early November at the 2013 YTHS Annual Haiku Retreat. The results will also be available on the YTHS website.

Fifth Haiku Pacific Rim Conference Renku

The art of renku writing was celebrated by a study session and an evening writing party. The four renku writing teams were led by Billy Dee, Patrick Gallagher, Linda Papanicolaou, and Alan Pizzarelli. One of the renku is provided below. Others will be published in subsequent GEPPOs.

Caught in the Breeze

Sabaki:
Linda Papanicolaou

Renju:
RA RogerAbe
BA Betty Raffin Arnold
JB Jerry Ball
AB Ann Bendixen
SD Susan Diridoni
CH Christine Horner
KJM Katherine J Munro (kjmunro)
BAM Beverly Acuff Momoi
JMS Judith Morrison Schallberger
AW Alison Woolpert

Side 1. Jo

Caught in the breeze
the fallen leaves
chase each other
jb

the autumn waves
in Asilomar's blue sea
ch

a cricket's song
starts and stops
starts and stops
ra

grandfather brings out
his antique dominoes
sd

strawberry moon
peeks in the window
of the family room
kjm

filling the night
opera in the park
ab

Side 2. Ha

scheduling
an appointment for
car detailing
jms

what do renku masters
wear beneath their robes?
ra

inside his shopping bag
something lacy
and racy
kjm

a massage
with extra virgin olive oil
ba

hunger moon—
longing for the national
debt to be resolved
jms

the granite keystone
in Julia Morgan's fireplace
ab

our tortoiseshell cat
head bumps her way
between me and the dog
bam

dreaming of a coat
of trentepohlia
ra

overnight
to London for classes
packing for rain
sd

the presumptuousness
of Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape
ch

tracking quince
blossoms into the 14th
century tea house

ab

Easter dresses and hair bows
for the photographer

ch

Side 3. Ha

out of the dusk
comes a boy
with a butterfly net

bam

does the Higgs Boson
really change anything?

aw

all the wars
where every god
is right

ab

Buddhist chanting
stretches across the dunes

ba

unloading exotic
vegetables from the
farmers' market

jms

*ay, mija, put it down
el sapo causa warts!*

aw

the poetry book
falls open
to a folded map

kjm

play date. . .
the boyfriend eyes her seduc-
tively

aw

offering
a list of preferences
in lovemaking

jms

he introduces himself
merely as "her porter"

ra

the ruby moon
above a night marsh
of bending reeds

ch

sardine clouds swim through
the branches of cypress trees

ra

Side 4. Kyu

the lawn glider
goes back
into the shed

jms

in a stack of rocks
the artist sees a duck

sd

on the air
the flutter notes of his
shakuhachi flute

ba

gray whales return
shepherding their young

ch

picnics bloom
on blankets sprinkled
with petals

kjm

sitting in the spring dawn
just sitting

bam

Dojins' Corner

July—August, 2012

Jerry Ball and Patricia Machmiller

First of all, we received some feedback from one of our readers which we would like to share.

Dear Patricia and Jerry,

I have learned so much from reading your critiques in GEPPPO. Sometimes I bring copies to the haiku class I teach for discussion.

In the May/June issue you commented on my poem:

*a plastic palm tree
on the only island he knows...
pet shop turtle*

Thank you for the comments in your critique. Growing up, I spent a lot of time at the pond next to our home observing turtles. I even wrote a short story about the pond in a "Writing Your Life Story" class I'm taking. I think if I were American Indian, my totem would be the turtle, which the Indians hold in high esteem. I like turtles. They are reliable, determined ("I know where I'm going even if this highway is in my way"), calm, and seem to possess a quiet wisdom for those who take the time to learn from them. When I was young I really did have a plastic turtle home with an island on it and with a plastic palm tree for my little turtle that I bought in a pet shop or dime store. While visiting friends on a farm, we brought back from the creek (the same creek that I wrote this month's haiku about squishing the river or creek bottom between our toes—it's a wonderful feeling—you should try it sometime) a turtle that we kept in a box for a few days and it laid a few eggs for us!

In the July/August GEPPPO you critiqued another poem of mine:

*breadcrumbs . . .
all the ducks in the pond
deepen their paddle*

Another experience from the Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford, Illinois. Thanks, Patricia, for pointing out that the ellipses after breadcrumbs do indeed resemble bread crumbs! That is something that never occurred to me.

Elinor Pihl Huggett

And here are our choices for this issue:

jb: 9155, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63*, 73, 75*, 78, 79*, 81, 9227

pjm: 9157, 58, 60, 61*, 64, 76, 80, 83, 87, 93, 98*, 9203, 19*,

*chosen for discussion.

9161 Canada Day cake –
they give me a piece
with part of a word

pjm: Canada Day or *Fête du Canada* is a national holiday celebrated on July 1st with fireworks, parades, and barbecue picnics. It wasn't a feeling of nationalism (I'm not a Canadian) that drew me to this haiku—it was the reference to language, "part of a word." I seemed to me that this phrase in conjunction with a national holiday was like the tip of an iceberg. Canada has long struggled to be unified despite divisions caused by the competition between speakers of its two major languages, French and English, for hegemony in the public space. The push and pull between language as a source of identity and nationalism is an issue in many countries—Spain, India, Belgium, the U.S., to name a few. While not specifically addressed in this haiku, the phrase "part of a word," hints at the conundrum. It made me wonder was this snippet of language in French or English or could it have been indistinguishable, perhaps a phoneme at the root of both languages, demonstrating another form of unity, in a way, a common source.

jb: I have some difficulty with this verse. I must guess that there is a cake for celebra-

tion and that the cake has some lettering on it. That done, I can imagine a scene in which I've received a piece of cake with, as the poet says, part of a word. If there were a Christmas Cake, for example, I might receive a piece with something like "tmas" on it. Now I think I get it. Life is often like that. Even on the best of days, we only get part of a word on our piece of cake. We get part of a word; it's up to us to infer the rest.

Having done this exercise, I like it. The thinking has paid off.

9163 the yellow moon
polishing a floor
in the breezeway

jb: I feel an immediate resonance with this haiku. At first it looks like a shasei (nature sketch), but no. It's a metaphor. An image is generated and polished which appeals to my aesthetic feelings. The "yellow moon" doesn't really *polish* the floor; it only seems that way. But what if I choose to enter the world of imagination in which yellow moons actually polish floors? For me, this conjures a beautiful image. This haiku reminds me that I can choose to enter such a world. Have you tried it? What do you think? Better still, what do you feel?

pjm: A strong, clear image. Sometimes a strong, clear image is compelling enough to carry the poem. Only time will tell if that is the case here. Jerry thinks so; I am less certain.

9175 a tree falls ...
the whole forest
shudders

jb: If you've ever witnessed a tree falling, a sizeable one, it's quite an experience. I happened to be at Big Trees State Park when the rangers felled a large redwood. It is no exaggeration to say, "The whole forest shuddered." The experience put me in mind of my finitude. There are plenty of things bigger than me, yes, and plenty of things better, too. I am tempted to accept myself for what I am. There is a problem here, too. How do I know what I am? This is a perennial question.

Quite recently the San Francisco Giants played in the World Series. In listening to some TV interviews I recall that the players' most frequent advice was/is: "to stay within yourself." "Don't try to be what you are not." When we forget this, we might well be reminded of the "tree that falls in the forest."

pjm: For me this is more like an aphorism than a haiku—a short, pithy statement of cause and effect. As an aphoristic statement it is excellent. And it does convey the feeling of great loss when one of a group goes down. But I miss the seasonal element, the sense that this was a singular event that the writer was witness to, and the intuitive quality that's an essential ingredient in haiku. What if the poem were:

a leaf falls . . .
the whole forest
shudders

Do you see how the suggestion of season and the intuitive leap adds to the effect and transports reader to a different and, I think, deeper realm?

9179 I leave
a glass of wine
for the fruit flies

jb: I like the idea of this haiku very much. I feel a sense of compassion for the hungry (?) fruit flies. I wish that the author had broken the haiku with a cutting word. Examples:

a glass of wine
fruit flies
I decide to leave it

I leave
for the fruit flies
my glass of wine

My apologies to the author for my tinkering. Still, please accept my delight with your verse.

pjm: I don't know, Jerry. Am I overthinking this, but is it compassionate to leave wine for

the fruit flies when you know they will drown?
 Maybe the real intention is to set a trap. Good intentions or not, the consequences are the same. The question that this haiku has raised for me is is compassion a necessary ingredient for great haiku? I'd like to know what you think. And what our readers think.

9198 foggy morning
 a t'ai chi class moves as one
 balanced in the sand

pjm: I find in the slow, graceful unfolding of a t'ai chi movement an echo in the way fog moves as it comes over the hills. It appears to move as one as does the t'ai chi class. This was the poet's discovery and this haiku is written so that we, the readers, can make the same, enchanting discovery.

jb: This verse gives a visual image. Anyone who has observed t'ai chi knows what this is like. The harmony, the resonance, are all forms of the Great Tao. The movement of the class reminds us of this.

9218 snug in the saucer
 wound around the flower pot
 gopher snake dozing

pjm: There is something very satisfying about the way this image fits snugly into the traditional haiku form in the same way the snake fits into the saucer. And the vowels in the haiku tie it together even further: "wound," "around," and "flower" in the second line; "gopher" and "dozing" in the third line; and especially, saucer and pot ending the first and second lines.

jb: Surprise! A gopher snake hanging out with the flower pot! Here we have a haiku of the unexpected. I can hear the voice now. "Maggie, there's a gopher snake 'round the flower pot." The first reaction is get rid of him. But then, why not? He deserves a place doesn't he? We are invited to think about the point of view of the gopher snake. Also, there's a challenge to redefine the word "danger." (Suppose it were a rattlesnake...Oh ...)

Note: Patricia and Jerry invite your response. Please e-mail us at _____

_____ send your
 letters to Carol Steele in care of *GEPP*.

Holiday Party Invitation

You are invited to the Yuki Teikei Annual Holiday Party!
 Newcomers, guests, and partners are welcome. The party

The party starts at 6 pm. Bring a dish for the holiday table.
 Please, no peanuts or peanut content in the dish.

It is a tradition of this annual party that the poets exchange
 a holiday card haiga with the other poets. Thirty copies of
 the haiga card are likely to be enough for the exchange.

Zigzag of the Dragonfly: A Detour Installment #7

Patricia J. Machmiller

I have received some feedback recently from several readers that they are having trouble generating lists of words. Since this is fundamental to writing, I thought it would be worthwhile to take a zag here and revisit “Making the Clay” with some more exercises.

I would like you as a daily routine to pick one letter of the alphabet and generate twenty words that contain that letter. This exercise has no purpose other than to loosen up the brain. Consider it to be like a pianist sitting down at the piano and playing the scales to warm up the fingers and hand muscles.

As an example, I did this exercise this morning. First, I numbered my paper from one to twenty so that while I was doing the exercise I didn’t have to pause and figure out if I had gotten to twenty yet. Then I picked the letter I was going to focus on—the letter “b.” Once I started I tried not to stop and think; I tried very hard to keep writing. Here are the results:

bribe (this is good—it has two b’s in it!)
abandon (the letter doesn’t have to be
the first letter in the word—any
position will do.)

berry
button
but
brie
brackish
barrel
barren

box
boxcar
billy club (phrases are good, especially
if they contain more of the letter you
are seeking)

brew
better
bitter
butter

brrr (expressions are okay)
break
bubble
buttress
Bisquick (proper nouns are good)

I know I said twenty words, but if you are in the flow no need to stop at twenty. This took me about a minute.

So here is your assignment. Each day pick one letter and do this exercise. Start with the consonants and work your way through the alphabet. Then come back and do the vowel sounds. Vowels are trickier because the sounds are spelled differently in different words. For example, “owl” and “round.”

Here is a list of the vowel sounds for you to work your way through. This list comes courtesy of Mimi Ahern, a teacher of phonics.

ow/ou	owl
oi/oy	oink
aw/au	awful
ah/a	ah hah!
a	apple
e	elephant
i	insect
o	octopus
u	umbrella
ā	alien
ē	eel
ī	ice cream
ō	oval
oo	ooze
air	airplane
ar	art
ear	ear
or	orange
ur	urn

If you want to glance at the dictionary before you begin the exercise in order to prime the pump, feel free to do so. But the important thing is that the words be generated by your own brain. This exercise done daily should strengthen your writing muscle. It also will develop your ear. It is my hope that by the next installment of *Zigzag*, you will be ready to go on to the next phase of writing haiku.



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2012-3 YTHS Calendar

- Dec. 8 Holiday Party. 6 – 11 pm at Alison Woolpert's Santa Cruz home. Details within.
- Dec. 20 GEPP0 due date for submissions.
- Jan 1 Yuki Teikei Haiku Society membership dues are payable.
- Jan 12 Meeting at the San Francisco Asian Art Museum to view the exhibition *Out of Character: Decoding Chinese Calligraphy*. Tickets should be ordered in advance. Following the museum visit we will write and share our poems at the nearby home of Patrick Gallagher.
- Feb 2 Haiga workshop at the History Park Hotel, San Jose.
- Feb 10 GEPP0 due date for submissions.
- Mar 9 Saijiki Meeting; writing to provide new poems and descriptions for the Society's San Francisco Bay Area Nature Guide and Saijiki.

