

Under the Basho Vol. 1.1

Autumn 2013

EDITORIAL

Basho, as he traversed the lands, noticed the littlest existences; he noticed the unnoticeable; he noticed transformation at every level. His keen sense of being often returned him to a deep sense of awe as to the workings of the Universe and the comings and goings of all things. He realized that transformation contained the absolute - the truth - the continuum.

Enlightenment is a word routinely tossed into the mix of conversation regarding hokku/haiku. Hokku/haiku are routinely described as poems of an "ah-haa" moment - bringing the reader to a place of sudden understanding. While that might be part of the picture, it is a contraction and not the expansive general character of hokku/haiku.

I question whether or not Basho wrote poetry to expose a sudden enlightenment. It seems to me that he wrote to bring the reader into an environment of awe where the reader was invited to see through the eyes of Basho's heart and soul. He was not simply writing poetry. He was celebrating and revealing the awe of nature and her wondrous, mysterious ways.

It is "awe" where we find Basho dwelling; he lived in a constant state of awe; and, he found it in rocks, cicadas, rivers, frogs, cherry blossoms, and a horse. He sensed the awe of nature through his enriched understanding of not only the transformations of things, but also through the way they interact - a frog jumps into the sound of water - the sound of water that pre-existed - a duality of two things interacting together in a single moment. The water continues to sound after the frog jumped in. The frog continued along his way as well. But, Basho, in describing the event, brings the reader into the activities of nature and her deeper meanings - the frog, the pond, the poet, and the reader have their destinies. And while he has captured a moment- in-time, he is aware that he has not contained it.

Under the Basho is a journal that brings poets together to share their views of the Tao, transformation, and the comings and goings. It is a journal that values the poetics and aesthetics of Basho and yet embraces much dream-space for

modern thinkers and their poetic efforts.

Don Baird, Editor in Chief

Traditional Haiku

salmon berry moon—

winds take what hummingbirds left

of the twilight

Alegria Imperial

a robin singing...

the slow river shucking off

scabs of dirty ice

late season camping...

the old van's frosted windows

framing the winter

Debbie Strange

roll of the apple...

I decide to let birdsong

back out of the box

amongst drifting snow

I wonder how I become...

another shape too

watery sunlight-

the flower's fidelity

with a bumblebee

Alan Summers

Stand Alone Hokku

twilight lake...

my eyes follow a duck

to the other side

spring valley...

among all these flowers:

this one

my slow walk

up the mountain trail...

bitterroot

Ted van Zutphen

spring festival...

a daisy in the officer's

holster

fireworks...

flashing from the roadside

the dead dog's eyes

hawk-spur moon—

hanging on the breeze

her mother's ashes

midsummer storm—

shadows rushing over

a burst of rose

Stewart C Baker

moth dust. . .
a morning glory folds
back into night

new moon --
a dry twig follows
the curve

summer twilight --
the grey heron becomes
the pine

Ramadan --
my neighbour's dishes dried
by the rising sun

blue butterfly. . .
on this sandstone wall
we rest, we fan

Sheila Windsor

waterfall -
a hawk's voice returns
as mist

moonlit leaves -
i follow the path
of a raindrop

midday calm -
a cricket reaches out
to taste the sun

nautilus shell -
the sound of moonlight
at my window

turning blue -
the morning pours
a hill of berries

Sandy Pray

evening chill -
a slice of moon
in the pond

Anne Louise Curran

twilight...

the bluebird's last song falls

from the trees

Pris Campbell

spider web--

my thought caught

in between

Pravat Kumar Padhy

heavy clouds -
the sun bathes
in shadows

Peter Epstein

cricket song . . .
the stars pulsating
in time

chrysalis . . .
a dream within
a dream

blackbird wings . . .
the river bends into
silence

harbor bell . . .
the tide's steady pull
toward morning

Mark E. Brager

each fallen leaf
returning to itself . . .
this journey

entangled . . .
an orca's song
in the depths

whichever
way the wind blows . . .
tumbleweed

Veronika Zora Novak

gulls rise

with every note -

spanish guitar

low tide -

a sand crab struggles

in my footprint

December night -

the sudden hush

of snowfall

Beki Reese

from the hammock...
the time it takes for clouds
to cross the moon

dusk -
one lone cloud reveals
another

Ben Moeller-Gaa

horizons -

the moon song

in blue

afternoon haze . . .

a dream of cobwebs

catching sunlight

sculpting reeds -

even my shadow's

reflection

morning chatter . . .

a kookaburra moon

loudest of all

even the trees

turn in on themselves -

will the sky fall?

Carole Harrison

sudden stop;
the hill falls away
to buttercups

bluefish run —
surf rods flicking
sunlight

cotton grass . . .
tufts of cumulus
drifting in

Catherine J.S. Lee

spring harvest -
the taste of fiddleheads
unfurling

long winter...
even the stars
look tired

final harvest...
the death rattle of
falling leaves

Christopher Provost

cloud drift . . .
an eagle's wing rewrites
the sky

budding aspens --
silence climbs between
the magpies

morning snow . . .
whose tracks unzip
the meadow?

autumn flurry --
how easily the geese
join the wind

ocarina --
his fingers follow
the desert wind

Deborah Barbour Lundy

swirling

into the winter sky ...

hot springs

cabbage butterflies-

a man with an umbrella

when there's no rain

green wind...

all the leaves shining

so sharp

ragbound soul...

the secrets of night

shining clouds

marsh marigolds-

open up my hidden suns

to morning clouds

Alan Summers

loneliness ...

dry reeds rustle

under the moon

morning rush –

the day moon merges

with the sun

rain patter . . .

a scurrying blackbird

keeps the rhythm

Jayashree Maniyil

morning chill...
turning over with
the last leaf

tide pool...
even the moon
pauses here

Jeff Hanson

valley mist . . .

the mountains appear

slope by slope

monsoon pool -

each raindrop wheeling

out of themselves

still backwater ...

my paddle breaks through

the thickness

a sheen

on the cobblestones...

falling leaves

Kala Ramesh

white crane -

I, too, between

here and eternity

river of heaven . . .

searching for a bridge

between the stars

Rebecca Drouilhet

moored yachts -
ripples of late sun
along their flanks

evening chill -
a convergence
of starlings

Elaine Riddell

feeble sunlight

the sound of a stream –

under ice

Andy Burkhart

sand garden -
a chatter of leaves
come to rest

winter moves
through my body -
spider web

expanding night . . .
the sound of a morepork
between stars

moonstruck -
a river wanders off
in the dark

misty rain -
a glimpse of mountains
fill the garden

Hansha Teki

dusty breeze . . .

the diminuendo

of a sunset

pink blue -

the narrow roads

between pines

under the wings

of a butterfly -

pixie dust

waxing grove . . .

the liberal scent

of a blue sky

this weed

is also reluctant . . .

autumn chill

Don Baird

A Glimpse of Tomorrow

apricot and pink. . .

a glimpse of tomorrow

in the clouds

(Sheila Windsor)

setting sun . . .

the mantis folds

in prayer

(Don Baird)

a raven -

slowly turning

into night

(Sandi Pray)

desolate wind —

by a sanctuary light

silence wails

(Hansha Teki)

near dawn...

hungry nestlings call

the early bird

(Howard D. Moore)

a stork

standing on one leg...

the reflection

(Kala Ramesh)

These poems were posted within one day of each other in the Hokku Workshop forum on Facebook. In looking them over, it dawned on me that they produced quite a nice hokku string and story. All poems are published with the expressed permission of the authors. ~ *don baird*

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Modern Haiku

at the florist's –
a pregnant woman's face
among sunflowers

dandelion wine...
a four-leaf clover
in the year book

Diana Teneva

after chemo
glimpsing the full moon
in the first crescent

full moon --
darkness flickers at each turn
of the prayer wheel

all night wind ...
rising, falling
her oxygen mask

Sonam Chhoki

deep in the well

the dark water

deeper still

ocean swell

a coming and going

of harbour lights

Simon Hanson

into this

cottage garden of a day --

Nagasaki

Sheila Windsor

summer evening —
a slip of moonlight
between her thighs

Seretta Martin

ceaseless rain

the morning rises

into itself

Seanán Forbes

100th birthday

on the cupcake

a single candle

first star

my wish burning away

the night sky

Rebecca Drouilhet

night train

my dead uncle punches

tickets to my dreams

Pris Campbell

wall painting--
the spider in the
war field

Pravat Kumar Padhy

origami
three folds ago...
is when I blew it!

the odd sound
at the end of my thoughts
windchimes

past midnight
the buddha before me
still smiling

coyote
nothing
but an echo

gibbous moon
its almost gone now
my glowing shadow

Mike Rehling

homeless shelter--
footprints in frozen mud
from last night's queue

where the trail
parts the woods
a path of sunlight

early frost--
the junkyard padlock
tapping in the wind

summer's end . . .
I slip the cabin key
from my keychain

funeral's end
the meaning
of rain

Michael Dylan Welch

city tunnel

the coming and going

of shadows

Mary Hohlman

lightning ...
through the window
night's viscera

yesterday's
dried up puddle ...
paper boats

Anitha Varma

flash light

a new meaning

in his words

Anusha Tennakoon

the starry night
only Van Gogh would admire
my dog and me

midsummer night
I photoshop
my immigrant dream

petals drifting
she murmurs, "do you see
this silence?"

spring moonlight
pours into my whiskey
thoughts of her

Chen-ou Liu

evening rain . . .

laughter from a book

across the room

Ben Moeller-Gaa

among the clouds
a bird flying from
the smell of thunder

in the evening sky
a flight of wild ducks
singing to the moon

Ed Bremson

full moon

my skin

blooms in the dark

Elva Lauter

last day of school
a stick drags across
the picket fence

pine dunes . . .
i pour the emptiness
from a conch shell

biding time. . .
spit drips down
the basil

split rail fence
a bobolink rides
the thistle

moonlight walk
again she asks me
her first name

Gene Murtha

april snow

the farmer

digs deep

Helen Buckingham

sideways rain
the difference
between siblings

beyond
the crescent moon
the point of no return

hanging
in the thrift shop
my wedding dress

Jennifer Sutherland

repairing gravestones

the spring song of

a chickadee

John J. Han

leaving you behind

my only regret...

fireflies

withered chrysanthemum

my patience too

has its limits

we get born we die

nothing can change this

autumn

Johnny Baranski

over my footprints

the neighbor's

new fence

toddler limbo --

best friends run beneath

the "for sale" sign

remembering the way

she braided my hair

... cinnamon twists

on one hand

but not the other ...

a spot of rain

Julie Bloss Kelsey

at the bus stop
the old lady smiles
my mother's smile

deep creases
on my bluejeans --
dog days. . .

old stamp album --
some lost countries
still in it. . .

Kanchan Chatterjee

night crickets –
mahjong tiles click
toward dawn

summer vacancies –
a tangled hand line
fishes the wind

boulder lichen ...
sometimes a face
seems to plead

Lorin Ford

boat ride --

the kids bend down to

pleat the water

Kumarendra Mallick

derelict

the tin blind

tenuous

her bent head

the shape of duck feet

wafting hair

Lizz Murphy

rice candy

my childhood dissolves

on my tongue

Lolly Williams

moon shadows --
a cigar-box guitar's wail
fills the delta

all the magic
you attribute to me ...
snowflakes

alto sax --
the blue spots
on a butterfly

first star
through unfolding clouds
her diamond stud

deeper cuts
in the cutting board
the ways I've changed

in a firefly's flicker

a glimpse

of something more

S.M. Abeles

around the table -
their voices carry on
life in the shadows

slow decent . . .
the deepening
of a cello

cider mill -
a sudden shift
to the past

Maria Baird

new moon

the baby is cutting teeth

into her dream

Vessislava Savova

lost in dreams . . .

I've never grown up

to play war

slung across horses -

the white wrapped bodies

of autumn clouds

row after row,

children in the fields

of war . . .

refugee -

the dusty tan

of a baby's tear

rocket blast -

their souls ascend

in clouds of blood

Don Baird

One-Line Haiku

boiling pot the rigid angles of the butter

foreclosure sign her heart still with her first husband

alone at sunset a leaf falling through Cummings's poem

mixed in with the potato salad global warming

Stewart C Baker

bush lark's song spills maize-scented dawn

where roads end the Milky Way

hooked by light a koi swims into the bardo net

Sonam Chhoki

naked a crow's nest for each eye

painting into morning moon on moon

cartwheels the new priest turns away

Sheila Windsor

a year after his death the resurrection of her laugh

evening prayer our footprints deepen the tidal pool

dinosaur bones she'll get over it

Seanán Forbes

breaking wave pale in the moonlight his legs engulf me

pieces of me everywhere broken mirror

light on the water a sailor's tremulous shanty

Pris Campbell

summer's end a leaf gone to lace

the hammock's swing keeping summer time

the stream we each take turns finding lonely

Peter Newton

morning breeze the answer to my existence spring daisy

the blooming of her words spring breeze

in the shadows of her wispy hair weeping willow

Mary Hohlman

pulling the radish the earth pulls back

long winter's night sorting the nails from the screws

for half a heartbeat the hummingbird's eye

Mark E. Brager

rainy night the moon in another sky

shedding its song cicada

weight of dead flowers this conscience

apricot streaks her hair streaks the sky

aurora borealis the white wolf I feed

Veronika Zora Novak

a paper cup the dried up fountain

heaving quay the crab gatherer's moon

the closest I am to the sky fog

tea rings in my cup the rippling darkness

Alegria Imperial

the drum of the rain ghosting bare hands

dust bunnies the coins of small change me

dragon tattoo my skinned fables of depression

Alan Summers

full moon too drunk to get out of bed to piss

matinee the black and white war newsreel

taking me out of the war the war

Gene Murtha

full moon the square root of tao its emptiness

between I Thou the windstorm's anarchy

my fragmented day comes to an end a full moon

Johnny Baranski

a dragonfly punctuating silence

peeling an orange the spray his remark stings

dusk smuggles out the horizon autumn night

a tornado spiraling thoughts to the sky

Kala Ramesh

sea grass the shape of the tide

the oil slick slipping into my shell

I and I and I ripples on the river

Lorin Ford

everything in everything else daymoon

not a monsoon but the fading colours of a Danish Sunday

another 'this bomb leads to a beautiful place' suitcase

midnight cigar a car backfires

night the moon where I live a face stays silent

I have no reason to ask you a pillar of others' ashes

Johannes S. H. Bjerg

Concrete Haiku

d d n
a a o
n n i
d d l
d a n d e l i o n
d e l
n i i
a o o
d n n
s
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d
s
o
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g
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o
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Carlos Colón

Sunday at Four II.4 (1993)

**u
nder
thepo
intedhat
apuddleofwitch**

Carlos Colón

Haiku Light October 2000

???

? ? /\ /\

? (cat)

catcatcatcat

catcatcatcat

a a a a

t t t t

Carlos Colón

Woodnotes 23 (1994)

t t t t t t t t t t
 s r r r r r r r r r r r r
 s i i i i i i i i i i
 s c c c c c c c c
 s h h
 s h h
 s h h
 o

Carlos Colón

RAW NerVZ HAIKU II.3 (1995)

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o n
r r c
b o

Carlos Colón

Clocking Out (Tragg Publications, 1996)

Robin

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>>R>>>>>>

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<<<<I<<<<<<

>>>>>>Z>>

Gene Murtha

bluebluebellswhitebluebellsbluebellsall

tangledreaminginofmy

summerhammock

Helen Buckingham

b a l

l o o n i n g

g r a v i t

y ' s k i s s

g o o d

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used book shop

P

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suddenly surrounded by it

G

I

N

Peter Newton

STANDING

ON it's toes THUN

DER CLAPS TOR

MENT the cat's NAP.

Assembled—

school waste bins

roll ro'll stop. r'o'l'l

rol'l'ing with the wind.

full

of bags

red wheel---

full of

rice.

A f l a t

barrow

t y r e d

tray \

— — —

\

... .. , ,

Snow :. storm :. ... , ..

. still : finding :. petals ; .. .

:. from :., a :. cherry :, tree:

. , ; .

OUR OLD BACK

D rain I

O drops N

O dry drying S

R dried, E

'S gone. C

S C R E E N T

Best of . . .

roaring river . . .
one pebble at a time,
carving temples

Ted van Zutphen

backlit afro

no skin tone on the girl

by the window

Stewart C Baker

lighting butter lamps
your death anniversary
what else can I do?

Published in Frogpond 33.3 • 2010

Sonam Chokki

ten thousand poets
have viewed ten thousand moons
this moon, just one

Soji

dappled sunlight. . .

what weight of silence

the fledglings left

Sheila Windsor

children's

book

sh

elves

Michael Dylan Welch

along this path

you become my eyes. . .

autumn horse

Veronika Zora Novak

hot afternoon

the carter wipes his hand

on the donkey's back

Editors' Choice - The Heron's Nest, Sept. Issue, 2007

A. Thiagarajan

twilight rain—
the blue heron mid-lake
somehow smaller

Commended, Traditional haiku

The Haiku Foundation's 2012 Haiku Now Contest

Alegria Imperial

summer night

more questions

than stars

an mayou

a philosopher

lost in thought

so too, a butterfly

Armando H. Corbelle

Grass trembling,
trembling under the sickle
of the moon.

First published; Kusamakura Haiku Contest, 2009

Beate Conrad

February wind

I want to believe

the crocus

Bill Kenney

ice calving...

a moon orchid

sheds its petals

Carol Judkins

late summer...
immersed in the lace
of a dragonfly

Christopher Provost

broken spider web

drifting between the roses

you caress my face

Debbie Strange

clouds descend . . .

my mother loses

her shadow

Deborah Barbour Lundy

windblown -

a dandelion

colonizes

2013 HNA International Haiku Contest 2nd Place

Diana Ming Jeong

spring

crosswalk signals

chirping

Published by Mainichi and Asahi Shimbun

Ed Bremson

drifting rain

my hundred autumn rooms

to be alone

Alan Summers

drinking tea

I swallow

the universe

Elva Lauter

temple bells

the isolated raindrops

on my umbrella

Kala Ramesh

winter...

another button

loose

SCHSG's 2010 anthology "An Island of
Egrets" (pg. 65)

Kimberly Esser

peak summer --

wind stands still under

Banyan tree

Kumarendra Mallick

she whispers
sweet nothings into
his hearing aid

Marcyn Del Clements

riptide unable to help myself

published in Tinywords 13.1 (March 2013)

Marion Clarke

wiping his face

under the umbrella

an old man with books

Ram Krishna Singh

as I awaken
you fade . . .
morning light

Published: Deep in the Arroyo, 2012

Maria Baird

winter deepens —
a woodpecker pecks
the silence

Sandip Chauhan

first frost . . .

a snail draws

its confusion

Sandi Pray

morning after

her little black dress sways

on the clothes line

Frogpond 35:2, 2012

Seretta Martin

fine champagne,
wine and words are
better sipped

Susan Campion

nagasaki . . .

in her belly, the sound

of unopened mail

Haiku Now, 2013, 1st Place

Don Baird

there in the trees to begin with just before and just after love

Roadrunner 11:2

Dr. Richard Gilbert

ahh rainbow!

the light passing

through me

Svetlana Marisova

Ahh, the Light Passing

by Don Baird

Editor in Chief

Weaving down the path of the "*Best Of Showcase*" became, for me, a journey not unlike that of Basho's but in a much more comfortable environment - my green puffy chair of bliss!

"there in the trees to begin with just before and just after love" ~ (dr. richard gilbert) is a moment somewhere in the journey that stops me in my tracks causing me to breathe deeply, relax, rest, and enjoy my wonderment of the Universe - to feel how much I love it all.

Turning to the left, just slightly, is a moment expressed well by my wife:

as I awaken

you fade . . .

morning light

~ maria baird

"And there in the trees, "morning light" brings a sense of everything loving from birth to death and back again. How does one keep their love so close to their heart in sleep? The beauty, the love, the memories of what once was, fading into the light of awakening, gently in the morning light or somewhere in the trees of dawning.

Does the morning and the next steps of your journey keep you - allow you to retain the mood of transition? Or does the moment quickly slip by into the activities of the mundane:

riptide unable to help myself* ~ Marion Clarke

The Universe continues her ways - transformations as the purest continuum of

all things being all things becoming all things and transforming to share:

grass trembling

trembling under the sickle

of the moon

~ Beate Conrad

a philosopher

lost in thought

so too, the butterfly

~ Armando H. Corbelle

Turning toward the breeze, the trees wave, and the seals twinkle in their light barks of beckoning. The butterfly is lost? The butterfly doesn't care or possibly even know? And yet, the endless beating of her wings chases her into another destiny - and soon.

lighting butter lamps

your death anniversary

what else can I do?

~ Sonam Chokki

"What else can I do"? Nothing. That's the point. Nothing. It seems we are all caught by this tide of coming and going ... and going and coming ... in the midst of transformation at all times, never ceasing to be and never ceasing ... We journey; we sniff the beauty, mourn death, and hope. It's all so perfect in the Tao.

But then, out of nowhere, while we wonder and ponder together of this and these:

windblown -

a dandelion

colonizes

~ Diana Ming Jeong

And, it begins again - the cycle of life; the cycle of death; the cycle of being; and, the cycle of not being. It begins again and will also remain as a beginning, a new beginning perpetually unfolding. It's exciting; it's enlivening - to settle in the thought of transformation instead of the acuteness of death. A perpetual state of becomingness begins to emerge; and so does passion and desire:

February wind

I want to believe

the crocus

~ Bill Kenney

And, so do I. But what is the important message of the crocus? Is the message a song of the crocus blossoming in Fall, Winter, and Spring? Does this give us all hope that in any season, we can flower? Can our souls flourish as our bodies drop off? Does the crocus reveal to us, that without regard to season, our beauty is forever in the Great Tao ?

drinking tea

I swallow the

universe

~ Elva Lauter

Yes. I see that and agree! And I sense that the Universe embraces and absorbs us right back. The excitement of this unique and providential experience! The

guttural aspect of being - perpetually being in this great tide is deliciously the "moon and blossoms" of Basho's life and imagination - his reality.

This is one of the most private, personal, and alone journeys that exists - each one of us having destinies of "moons and blossoms" in explicitly personal, transcendent journeys called ourselves.

ahh rainbow!

the light passing

through me

~ Svetlana Marisova

. . . and we, through the light.

Don Baird

Features

Zoka

by Don Baird

Zoka, the continuum of creation (the creative) and transformation, may very well be the soul of modern haiku (hokku). As David Barnhill mentions in his interview with Robert Wilson, “it is the vitality and creativity of nature, its tendency and ability to undergo beautiful and marvelous transformations.”¹ It is the inclusive recognition and hearty embrace of the activity of things and, in particular, the interactivity – the comings and goings of everything. (I’m using “haiku” in the sense that it is currently considered, in general, to be the common name for modern, stand-alone hokku.)

The poet’s real enlightenment is his or her ability to open up to it, tap into it, and translate the zoka at hand into haiku. The poet recognizes what’s going on before his eyes and begins the journey of placing it into a haiku that relays what the poet has been vitalized with. Written in plain and common language without trickery, the activities of zoka *do not demand* intentional complexity or layers as poetry. Those aesthetic attributes *naturally occur* through the pen of an attuned poet.

From the Wu Chi there comes the Tao – the Great Tao – the yin and yang of things – the becoming of things (koto). These qualities interact in various ways. Some collide; others cohabit in a quietude of refined harmony. Strategically, the poet of the Edo period would look to the elegance and harmony of these natural activities while buffering the rougher sides of life. There was a dignity in their approach; there was old and tailored honor. The Japanese approached poetry in a sensitive, humble dignity in regards to nature and her essences. By combining this tradition with a sense of *mono no aware*, zoka, koto (becomingness), kigo (season root/indication) and a proper structure, the hokku grew in beauty, strength and depth of meaning. Basho, became a hokku hero – and arguably the most famous person of all time in Japan.

Within the zoka, transience and the sense of impermanence are additional aspects and clearly Basho haiku/hokku aesthetics. They are uniquely entwined in the guttural tide of zoka. In this, there is no link needed “between” haiku and zen; they are one and the same.

even in Kyoto

hearing the cuckoo’s cry

I long for Kyoto

(Basho, translated by Robert Haas)²

You can sense the longing in this hokku. It is fraught with a lingering of feeling that puts you in deep touch with the inner workings of Basho’s psyche – his heart psyche. This isn’t a poet “using” wabi-sabi; this is a poet “living it” and doing so effortlessly. Clearly, Basho was deeply connected to the “what is” of things. Basho is in “awe” of everything; he is not in a moment of ah-haa but rather in a moment of celebration - a celebration of the Tao in its glory and exciting continuum. He, himself, “follows zoka, returns to zoka.”³

I connected with this very deeply when I realized my German shepherd, Kimbo, was dying. While I was petting him and stroking his soft fur, I was missing him at the same time – while he was alive. I was longing for him yet he was in my arms. There was no separation of things; there was no esoteric link between me, him, zen or the Tao. Not at all. There was only unity; there was only one – a perfect, harmonious oneness. It isn’t something anyone can try for; it’s just what happens when . . .

. . . in some way,

“there is nothing that you can see that is not a flower; there is nothing you can think that is not the moon.” (translated by Reginald Horace Blyth).⁴

It is said that “the Tao that can be described is not the Tao.”⁵ And, in some way, the zoka that can be described, therefore is not the zoka. Nevertheless, by discussing around and in of it, one can begin to see its vastness. One can begin to sense its richness and meaning without it being exhaustively defined. Through the expansion of understanding, the poetic mind is set free. It is through understanding, intuitiveness, engagement, and knowledge of the aesthetics of writing haiku (hokku) that brings a moment to life – that brings a haiku to light.

(the) old pond
a frog jumps in
the sound of water

(translated by R. H. Blyth)

This hokku/haiku is one of the most interesting of Basho's. It's very revealing as to how he creates and develops his poetry. As it appears today, Basho wrote lines 2 and 3 before he composed line 1. He did not actually see a pond; he did not actually see a frog. But, he heard a familiar frog-plop or at least one that clearly reminded him of a frog plopping. He didn't know for sure as to what factually happened. But, from the sound of water-plop, Basho determined the scene in his mind – in his creative self. From reacting to water's sound combined with the possibility of a frog, Basho figured the possibility of what took place and began constructing through his profound imagination, a poem. The final touches of the “where” became all he needed. “Old/ancient pond”, Basho completed his memorable hokku.

This poem birthed from the collectivity of Basho's poetic skills, experiences. It arose from the belly of his knowledge and imagination combined. It became clear to him, through his intense understanding of the Tao, of zoka, and of the mutual interactivity of things and their importance to poetry, how he must write his poem. As the common story goes, an associate with him at the time had a different suggestion of which Basho summarily discarded for his preference - "ancient pond".

We have before us, in Basho's haiku (hokku), an action packed transient moment of nature – of life and one that is demonstrative of zoka. Millions and millions of times a day nature repeats these activities and yet, none of them are identical. And, if they were, the Tao wouldn't care. To the Tao and zoka, it's impersonal. To the poet, it's the richest of things colliding into meaning. As Barnhill continues in his interview, "rather than the crude notion of pretty flowers and moon, everything is beautiful, because everything is the transformation of zoka . . . we should see everything as beautiful (flowers and moon)."

Zoka is a constant changing within-it-all and yet never changing as an aspect of existence or truth. We, when aligned with the zoka, are able to dwell in a constant state of readiness without tension, control, demand or force in its company. In our relaxed readiness, we create the balanced internal environment for a poem to become.

"By surrendering ourselves we become ourselves," Young Ik Suh.⁶ We see, feel, and sense the essence of zoka all around us and we are engulfed deeply within its activities. In that surrender, our openness and child-like freshness connects with What Is – the comings and goings of all things – the interactions of all activity – and the activity itself.

There is nothing happening and yet everything is happening. It isn't important and yet its importance is succinctly clear to a poet with an empty mind; a mind without thought in a pure, pristine, ready position. This unique place of non-thought may be the abode of the primal creator of all poetry.

Notes and References:

1 David Barnhill, *Simply Haiku*, Spring, 2011 - Interview by Robert Wilson

2 *The Essential Haiku*, edited and translated by Robert Hass. Copyright © 1994 by

Robert Hass. First published by The Ecco Press in 1994

3 *Basho's Journey*, Translated by David Landis Barnhill, State University New York

Press, 2005

“Nothing one sees is not a flower, nothing one imagines is not the moon. If what

is seen is not a flower, one is like a barbarian; if what is imagined is not a flower,

one is like a beast. Depart from the barbarian, break away from the beast, follow

the Creative (Zoka), return to the Creative (Zoka).” (Zoka in parenthesis is my

clarification)

4 Matsuo Basho, translated by H. R. Blyth

5 *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu, 6th Century B.C.

6 A comment that martial art master, Young Ik Suh, would make during class. It

endured as one of his class mantras. (1970s)

Publisher Credits:

Simply Haiku, Summer Issue, 2012

As the Crow Flies, 2013, Don Baird, The Little Buddha Press

**More than one fold in the paper:
Kire, kigo, and the vertical axis of meaning in haiku**

by Alan Summers

Are kire and kigo the warp and weft of haiku? Are they still the key ingredients in contemporary haiku?

At a time when haiku writers both inside and outside Japan are reconsidering kigo as a worthy and pertinent device for haiku in the 21st Century I wonder why it might be seen as cliché, or mistakenly relegated to an amusing, if not a perfunctory weather report. Am I missing out on something if I decide to include; exclude kigo; make attempts at kigo; or even make any seasonal reference in my haiku?

My main thrust is that there are still possibilities of kigo as a tool or device as a choice, to be equally considered, as valid, as any other technique of haiku. As a growing school of thought appears to be developing the idea that kigo is obsolete, I'd like this once main defining aspect of haiku, and pre-haiku aka hokku, to be revisited.

But first I'd like to touch on kire, which is still considered, perhaps, as a defining characteristic of haiku practice, with some quotes from Ban'ya Natsuishi.

Kire – The first cut is the deepest

[When haiku needs] *to overcome its shortness, a vital technique, kire (break) is used.*

Contemporary haiku has teikei (fixed form) and jiyuritsu (free form). Here is one of the shortest jiyuritsu haiku:

Coughing, even:

alone

Hosai Ozaki (1885-1926)

[This] jiyuritsu (free form) haiku consisting of "Coughing, even" (six syllables in the original Japanese) and "alone" (three syllables in the original), has kire (break), a shift in the content and rhythm between the two phrases. In only nine syllables of haiku, kire is the key that opens the reader's heart. [1]

Here we have an even shorter haiku:

陽へ病む by Ōhashi Raboku , 4 Japanese characters. [2]

Is kire (still) an important characteristic of English-language haiku composition?

In a forest of paper for the writer, the use of kire in a haiku, the famous poem with its extreme distillation, is perhaps, a useful method to incorporate: It makes the haiku poem both a miniature and expansive poem at the same time. Kire is a potent method of vitalising a short verse into a haiku: Looking at it in another way, an excellent poet is someone who can skilfully fold the kire inside the haiku.

Kire is both the catalyst and the glue to hold the other characteristics of haiku, and it makes it possible for recent contemporary haiku to express the leap in the poet's unique viewpoint and the shift in their poetic form. [3]

I've slightly adapted Ban'ya's English-language version of the following haiku, but retained his use of a slash to indicate the kire:

Behind, a stillness /
my image cut from
a forest of paper

Kan'ichi Abe (1928-2009)

In the space of stillness behind the poet, what his poetic intuition caught was a forest of white thin paper. This leap in poetic intuition, from one moment to the other, lies in the shift occurring between the phrases. [4]

Now I'd like to talk a little about kigo.

Kigo: A tide of longing

"season is the soul of haiku"

William J. Higginson, *The Haiku Seasons* (p20) [5]

"The Haiku Seasons presents the historical and modern Japanese usage of seasonal themes in poetry. It shows, as nothing else in the literature has done, the growing dialogue between poets in Japan and other countries..."

—Elizabeth Searle Lamb, retired editor, Frogpond, Haiku Society of America
[5]

Dono kisetsu ga suki desu ka.

どの季節が好きですか。

Which season do you like?

<http://japanese.about.com/library/media/audio/kisetsu1.mp3>

Kisetsu (season, seasonal aspect): The seasons. The seasonal aspect of the vocabulary (kigo) and subject matter (kidai) of traditional tanka, renga, and haiku; a deep feeling for the passage of time, as known through the objects and events of the seasonal cycle. [6]

Cloud kigo
a light rain patters across
your nightingale floors

Alan Summers [7]

"In search of the ultimate season word to associate with clouds, Alan Summers observes how "rain writes its own story across floorboards that sing like a bird." David McMurray [7]

Do we as people, even if we are not Japanese, have an inbuilt awareness of seasonal beauty and changes, even if we feel outside nature when living in urban environments? Many, if not most of us, live inside our ever grey concrete walls both at home and at work: Even when we go out for pleasure activities in-between home and work we are tempted to exist between work and home in yet more concrete enclaves. Are many of us, too many of us, walled out and away from the existence of nature?

comfort television

I don't move the vase
for the orange asters

Karen Hoy [8]

Vertical axis is a topic for another article, but I'd just like to touch on this often vital or vitalising by-product or device utilising hidden and layered shorthand for other meanings, layering a haiku with more than just a mere surface meaning, and imagistic pairing. Vertical axis shows we are part of the world, be it natural history or social/cultural history, with all its historic markers and literature.

Asters are reminiscent of the October 1918 Aster Revolution in Hungary led by socialist Count Mihály Károlyi, who founded the short-lived Hungarian Democratic Republic. An aspect of people wanting and needing freedom. Asters are also commonly Autumn/Fall flowering plants.

Season words, and the Japanese kigo system, are not only derived from observations of nature, they can allude to a country's historical, cultural and literary past. After all none of us live in isolation, no man is an island [9] from our environment, be it literary, or social, or through some aspect of nature.

Japanese kigo are a strong *allusion* device (there are others) and I worry that kigo is mistakenly seen as cliché and/or as a weather report thrown into the mix so that half the haiku is done already, when in actual fact they can contain cultural and emotional tones of extreme intensity within Japan; and surely at least a warmth of layered (ancestral) memories outside Japan?

Haiku of course has a long list of devices to consider for inclusion, despite its brevity, and all are worth considering. Shirane suggests several devices that can

be used to increase depth in haiku. *“Shirane's dismissal of the seasonal reference is convenient for the thesis of his paper, but does not seem to consider what is most distinctive in the haiku tradition: the kigo or seasonal references that characterize them. It is puzzling that the most obvious possibility for allusion is dismissed out-of-hand”* Lee Gurga. [10]

I feel that non-Japanese haiku can achieve an aspect of kisetu with seasonal words and phrases. It's an experiment worth considering, as any prolific writer of haiku does, after all, need to consider variety in their work, if they are thinking about bringing out a collection. Dialogue is always healthy, and what better dialogue than to attempt to not only write haiku with kigo, but go back to basics as to why kigo are so effective in Japan? Kigo was a technique independent of poetry, but proved so successful that it became a highly respected tool within haiku composition.

As poetry can often be strengthened with a sense of place, as well as time, then perhaps the kigo tradition of Japan should be looked at again for inclusion into haiku?

kicking

through the leaves

sound of its season

Alan Summers [11]

Traditional Japanese haiku often expresses kisetu and the kigo, a word or a phrase that points to a particular season, which can engineer a series of personal associations in the mind of certain readers. With the age of the internet and information gleaned within seconds from a smartphone, tablet, iPad, or a laptop computer, no man need ever be an island, and we all share nature, be it a view

of the sky, drifting clouds, experiencing rain, noticing the sun during the daylight and the moon at night, and sometimes a moon in daylight.

People will at least, on occasion, try to make sense of the world, and now even Smartphone apps have recognised this. Apps are now available that help make sense of the stars, and it was a wonder, and wanting to understand the stars, that surely made us develop spoken and written language. A poet has a wish to communicate, and now we can again point to the stars, but not just with our index fingers, if we choose, or with our modern quill pens, but with these smartphone apps (examples: *BBC News - Smartphone apps that make sense of the stars*, and *New York Times: Watching Out for Falling Stars, With a Smartphone in Hand*).

One of my many aims for a new project is to show that the practice of consideration of incorporating kigo into haiku can still be relevant in the 21st Century. The Kigo Lab Project does not seek to attempt to instil a kigo culture within international English-language haiku writing group of poets: It simply wishes to engage in the possibilities that an attempt at kigo may prove to be yet a potent device in an author's armoury again. One of its many purposes is that an author can consider including kigo in their variety of styles, whether for a collection-in-progress, or for competitions run by various organisations that prefer a seasonal aspect in haiku.

Its aims lie in the experiment of certain well-known words and phrases in the English language which have potential into being utilised, even eventually, however long-term, into evolving as a direct parallel to kigo. This is very much a long-term project, but if never started, then how indeed can it ever succeed? And if it fails, then a collection of potent words and phrases using and storing the power of the seasons and our world's life cycle are accessible for inclusion into at least some haiku compositions. In fact David Cobb has already started with *English Seasonal Images: An Almanac of Haiku Season Words Pertinent to England*. [12]

early dark

the cathedral visible

only as windows

Karen Hoy [13]

Early dark suggests the winter months, where in some world regions, we may be aware of shortening days, but often it's winter where the jolt from day to night is most noticed. The allusion to stained glass windows is inferred, and there is a long history of stained glass windows being the poor man's bible.

Another "poor man's Bible" is the cathedral, especially one of older days in Europe. Most of the "poor" were illiterate. So were quite a number of the rich, but they could hire people to read for them. The poor learned their Scripture in large part from the stained glass, statuary, and other art in the cathedrals. Similarly, the windows themselves were sometimes called "poor man's Bibles" for the same reason. [14]

Among the most innovative English designers [of stained glass art] were the Pre-Raphaelites: William Morris (1834–1898); and Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898), whose work heralded Art Nouveau.

Easter Sunday

baby bumps

among the beer bellies

Karen Hoy [15]

Easter itself has a slew of cultural and religious connections too complex for the point of this particular article except to say briefly that Easter Sunday is seen as a resurrection day i.e. a resurrection Sunday, notably that of Jesus Christ. Fertility, and the using of wine or beer, are closely associated with pre-Christian religions, and some later religions, and there is the wetting the baby's head saying, taking its name from the Christian baptismal rite, and to do with new arrivals, as Jesus was once, with the visit of the Three Wise Men.

Yellow-rattle meadow -
a two-spot ladybird turns
my hand around

Alan Summers [16]

My connection with nature is strong, and never stronger than when I do my field trips, either with guides, or on my own. Yellow-rattle meadows literally reek of Summer although they start in March and not cut down until late July. Yellow Rattle or *Rhinanthus minor* is a fascinating plant often used to reduce grass in meadows to help other plants, and a valuable and attractive wild flower in its own right and typical of traditional English hay meadows.

Old Man's Beard a cyclist wobbles the length of it

Alan Summers [17]

Old Man's Beard – *Clematis vitalba* also known as 'traveller's joy' is extremely abundant in the South West of England where I live. It is the UK's only native Clematis. Commonly known as 'Old Man's Beard', and can be seen scrambling

through hedgerows and trees along the roadside, and is especially obvious in the winter months.

http://www.countrysketches.co.uk/nature_notes/old_mans_beard.htm

The French name for old man's beard is 'herbe aux gueux' – the beggar's or rascal's herb. Beggars were said to use its acrid sap to irritate the skin to give it a sore and ulcerated look in order to induce sympathy in, and a donation from, passers by! <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/old-mans-beard-clematis-vitalba/>

Folklore and Facts

Traveller's joy was associated with the Devil because it does his work for him by trailing into other plants to choke them. It is also connected with the Virgin Mary, and God, because of its white feathery look.

Flower Fairies of the Winter

Cicely Mary Barker (28 June 1895 – 16 February 1973) illustrator:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicely_Mary_Barker

lime quarter

an ice cube collapses

over jazz

Alan Summers [18]

Another haiku that reeks of Summer through its combined use of the words lime, ice cube, and jazz. Jazz alone, feels synonymous with Summer, just search for Jazz on a Summer's day for instance.

the in-between season

I follow the Mogami River

by riceboat

Alan Summers [19]

Maki Nishida, a colleague based in Japan, was able to inform me about the Samurai legends of Suma Temple during my stay in 2002 at Osaka and Kobe, before following in the footsteps of Basho with other haiku poets. She concluded her tale that if you heard the tsukutsukubôshi cicadas in September there would be an *in-between season*. As I was in the grounds of Sumadera in September, and heard them, that legend became a personal fact for me.

Toshugu shrine pines

I try to stay as still -

mist and dew

Alan Summers [20]

Dew is an autumn kigo. Although it's Toshugu that is mentioned, I'm reminded of when Issa visited Mt. Haruna, and of his haikai verse that mention dew in regards to this brief transient life of our's, and of the loss of his son

These haiku are just a few of the possibilities of using kigo, or some variation of seasonal reference, in haiku to showcase rich cultural associations, some of which may be lost to time. A kigo situated inside a haiku can act as a current and ongoing eco-stamp in our changing weather patterns: It can be worthy as

archival material for that fact alone. It's also the bonus of being a joyous type of poetry, or at the very least a useful form of eco-critical writing.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Technique used in Modern Japanese Haiku: Vocabulary and Structure by Ban'ya Natsuishi: Japanese/English JAPANESE HAIKU 2001 (Modern Haiku Association, Tokyo, Japan, December 2000, ISBN 4-89709-336-8)

[2] Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature in the Modern Era—Poetry, Drama, Criticism. (Note that there is another volume with the same title, only differing at the end, where “Fiction” replaces “Poetry, Drama, Criticism”; that other volume is over 1300 pages long, and is not for sale here.) New York: Henry Holt, 1984.

Japanese poet Ōhashi Raboku (1890-1933) holds the record for the world's shortest poem with just four Japanese letters, this haiku: hi e yamu means "Sick with the sun" (translation: Donald Keene) often quoted as “I am sick with the sun.”—Keene’s tr., in which “I am” expresses ideas included in the original, but not its words).

[3] Paraphrased from: Technique used in Modern Japanese Haiku: Vocabulary and Structure by Ban'ya Natsuishi: Japanese/English JAPANESE HAIKU 2001 (Modern Haiku Association, Tokyo, Japan, December 2000, ISBN 4-89709-336-8)

[4] Technique used in Modern Japanese Haiku: Vocabulary and Structure by Ban'ya Natsuishi: Japanese/English JAPANESE HAIKU 2001 (Modern Haiku Association, Tokyo, Japan, December 2000, ISBN 4-89709-336-8)

[5] The Haiku Seasons, Poetry of the Natural World, William J. Higginson, Stone Bridge Press ISBN: 978-1-933330-65-5 www.stonebridge.com

[6] William J. Higginson with Penny Harter, The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku, published by Kodansha International. Copyright (C) 1989 by William J. Higginson.

[7] Asahi Shimbun (Japan, 2013)

[8] Multiverses 1.1 (2012)

[9] No Man Is an Island from "Meditation XVII," by the English poet John Donne.

[10] Toward an Aesthetic for English-Language Haiku by Lee Gurga, Global Haiku Festival, Decatur, IL, April, 2000 re Haruo Shirane's *Traces of Dreams* (Stanford University Press (1998))

[11] Azami #38 (Japan 1996); BBC 1 - Regional arts feature, November 2003

[12] English Seasonal Images: An Almanac of Haiku Season Words Pertinent to England, by David Cobb. 2004. 120 pages. Modern Haiku Volume 36.1 Spring 2005, review by Charles Trumbull.

[13] Another Country, Haiku Poetry from Wales, Edited by Nigel Jenkins, Ken Jones and Lynne Rees (Gomer Press ISBN: 9781848513068)

[14] Walter P. Snyder, *Ask the Pastor: Poor Man's Bible* (1999)

[15] Multiverses 1.1 (2012)

[16] "Hermitage: A Haiku Journal" (editor Ion Codrescu 2005)

[17] a handful of stones e-zine (2011)

[18] Presence No.13 (2001); BBC 1 - Regional arts feature (2003)

[19] There is a small gap between Summer and Autumn if the tsukutsukubôshi cicadas at Sumadera are heard to 'sing' (which I did)] Publications credits: World Haiku Review Japan Article *Vending machines and cicadas* (2003); The In-Between Season (With Words Haiku Pamphlet Series 2012)

[20] Hermitage (2005); The In-Between Season (With Words Haiku Pamphlet Series 2012).

This article is a revised article originally published by Multiverses 1.1 (2012) now sadly defunct.

More than one fold in the paper©Alan Summers 2012-2013

The Disjunctive Dragonfly

by Dr. Richard Gilbert

(Excerpts from *The Disjunctive Dragonfly*, authorized, reviewed and approved by Dr. Richard Gilbert, Red Moon Press, 2013)

"Realism itself is a form of appearance, as the 'real' is given not only by objective sensation (hearing, seeing, touching, etc.), but also by the way in which sense data are synthesized in consciousness to create 'real' experience. Just as a dream can be sensed as vivid reality, it is not only the 'outer' senses alone that dictate 'the real.' Internalized judgments ('stances'), subtle though they may be, existentially validate experience. Poetry in its widest sense deforms or irrupts habitual literalism — challenging or irrupting habitual validations of the real.

In the school of Archetypal Psychology, James Hillman discusses the ego (the sense of the literal 'I') as the literalizing function of the psyche — stating that the ground of psychic life is non-literal. Hillman advances the intriguing psychological notion that mind is fundamentally poetic and metaphoric in nature.* This may be good news for poets, providing a clue as to why haiku often impart a powerful and nearly instantaneous reality-sense. As well, what may be taken as literal reality by one culture, or one individual, may not be literal (that is, 'real') to another — haiku 'realism' is not ultimate truth, or a best representative of either sincerity or verity (makoto) by any means, as some critics have implied."* ~ Dr. Richard Gilbert

The following poems are examples to be pondered (all examples are from the book in discussion, *The Disjunctive Dragonfly*):

under the pillow

lute springs slit

by a minstrel

Jack Galmitz, 2012; RR 12.1

what's left of the light the music absorbs

Phil Rowland, 2012; RR 12.2

salt wind ripples on an inner lake

Cherie Hunter Day, 2010; H21 56; HIE 176

"What these haiku provide is an imagistic paradox generating a deeply inward psychological, philosophical and/or mythic contemplative sense. The key disjunctive aspect in these haiku lies in the cutting edge between the reader's knowledge of the impossibility of the superposed images and the contrary sense, brought by poetry, that the resultant whole is real (true) and believable. Literal and metaphoric sensibilities cannot entirely merge (except mystically or pathologically), yet paradoxically, in these haiku they present as coterminous. Haiku of the impossibly true reveal that realism is a subject of reality. It is notable in this regard that 'poets such as Wallace Stevens use the word 'reality' without shame, acknowledging that 'its connotations are without limit'."*

Incorporating realism with a larger field, haiku of the 'impossibly true' penetrate

to the deeper layers of identity and self, providing a glimpse of the ground of poetic being — 'poems that create a truth that cannot be arrive at by reason (or realism) alone' (Stevens, 1958, p.58)."¹

bleeding under my skin the American dream

Eve Luckring, 2010, RR 10.1

¹The essay quoted and all poems are from pages 61 and 62, *The Disjunctive Dragonfly*, Dr. Richard Gilbert, Red Moon Press, 2013. The reproduction of this material has been authorized by Dr. Richard Gilbert for use by Under the Basho, Don Baird, Hansha Teki, et al.

*Refer to the book's endnotes — pages 117-124

Spotlight

new moon --

a dry twig follows

the curve

Sheila Windsor

