

Honorable Mention

(alphabetical, continued)

After the earthquake
A red autumn butterfly
Settles beside me

Lorraine Ward

Mount Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand

My mind is given a sense of relief from the quietness of the autumn butterfly.

This New Year morning
My father pours the coffee
Talks of his boyhood

Lorraine Ward

Mount Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand

Quiet morning of New Years - Steam from the coffee symbolizes the warm ties of family.

across the dark sea
a winter rain is blowing –
the bell buoy tolls

Mark Arvid White

Palmer, Alaska

This scene is vivid because of the concrete expression in the third line.

the Kiyoshi Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest

This contest is for writers of English-language haiku using a traditional seventeen-syllable form arranged in three lines of 5,7,5 syllables. Each poem must contain one (and only one) kigo or season word from an assigned list. This year, poets could choose from among sixteen season words, referring to Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, or the New Year. In Japan, contests are often held in which all entrants must use the same specified season word. But because this might be too restrictive for some, we try to supply enough season words so that the poets who enter can choose one most harmonious with their life and practice.

In the 1996 contest, 75 poets from around the world submitted some 300 poems. The contest committee included Kiyoko Tokutomi, Ebba Story, and Alice Benedict, and the final judge was Ms. Yoko Senda, an accomplished haiku poet in both the English and Japanese languages, who now resides in Yokohama, Japan.

The contest committee and judge enjoyed the process very much. Of course, we congratulate the winners. But we also want to express our gratitude and appreciation to everyone who entered, and for the many enjoyable poems that were sent!



Kiyoshi Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest

1996

Winning Poems and Authors

1996

Contest Winners

Ms. Yoko Senda's comments, as translated by Mrs. Tokutomi, are included with the winning poems.

First Prize

spring evening stillness
from the nunnery garden
an old cradle song

H. F. Noyes

Politia Attikis, Greece

I like the word "old" for the cradle song. The first line is in cooperation with the second line. It gives a gentle feeling of warmth. This reminds me of a lullaby I heard in my childhood.

Second Prize

Our teenage daughter
swishing in skimpy black silk –
this early summer

D. Claire Gallagher

Sunnyvale, California

The second line's expression, "swishing in skimpy black silk" is interesting. When an adult sees the teenager's youthful glow, it can seem to make a person dizzy. Akiko Yosano's composition of tanka relays this feeling. "early summer" is also a season for teens.

Third Prize

spring evening darkens
reluctantly my mother
says no to more tea

Marian Olson

Arlington, Virginia

A long spring day is ending; the togetherness and talking is also coming to an end. Without saying "it was fun," the good feeling among mother and daughter is apparent. This haiku gives a photograph of the scene. It is as vivid as if I was present. It also gives the effect of spring melancholy.

Honorable Mention

(alphabetical)

huddled together
the street cats in the doorway
escape winter rain

Dennis Davidson

Hoboken, New Jersey

Undesirable street cats can look very appealing.

a woman's laughter
interrupting the silence
of the spring evening

Dennis Davidson

Hoboken, New Jersey

Putting the focus on "laughter" gives the impression of the real thing - as if one is peeking into a scene in a play where something might happen soon.

This remaining snow
the toddler lying in it
to make an angel

D. Claire Gallagher

Sunnyvale, California

This haiku gives the feeling toward the infant, but it does not dote upon the feeling.

Spring evening walk
only we two hand in hand
past the weathered fence

D. Claire Gallagher

Sunnyvale, California

This couple has come through the wind and rain of life hand in hand.

Honorable Mention

(alphabetical, continued)

by the autumn lake
two young climbers pass without
a word of greeting

Pat Gallagher

Sunnyvale, California

Because there is usually a greeting between climbers, I can feel strain in the quietness of the autumn lake - like an overly taut string.

My teapot whistles ...
winter rain beats the window
through a cloud of steam

Constance Mele

Davidson, North Carolina

I feel as though I can see this scene. Heart-warming steam of the tea-pot and cold rain are distinctly separated by the window. I wished to pick this as the winning haiku also.

early spring evening
pausing on a street corner
for the crescent moon

Susan Rudnick

New York, New York

This scene was caught with sharp observation. The moon was not full or half, but crescent. It matches the tone of this haiku.