



Judge's Introduction
Isamu Hashimoto

Haiku, as we all know, originally had three essential elements. They were to have 17 *onji* (kana letters in Japanese) or 5-7-5 syllables in English language, *kigo* or season words, and *haikai* or the side-long but penetrating glance at life.

Recently in the U.S. such strict rules have not been widely appreciated because haikuists think such have nothing to do with the real nature of their haiku. They simply try to get the haiku moment or 'ah' moments. Under such circumstances, the pieces they produce might not be called haiku. If they want to call them haiku, their work should have some fixed style according to their language standards, and also some references to nature. Freestyle is not a fixed style because it varies each time in content and form. In short verse in fixed style many valuable things unexpectedly can move rhythmically and with liveliness.

However, freestyle haiku is now prevailing all over the United States and a vast majority of *haijin* have been presenting their haiku more in freestyle than in other forms. Therefore, in 'Haiku in English' column, in the *Mainichi Daily News*, Japan, I urged them to write haiku in another form, apart from their favorite.

I wrote, "After this annual selection for 1999, the judges cannot help feeling the recent haiku tendency toward free-style haiku has been more predominant than those in the 5-7-5 syllabic category. This, I must say, is a tendency both in quantity and quality. We don't want to see the traditional way of writing fading away. We have been enjoying immensely the many masterpieces written in the traditional 5-7-5 form by famous writers like Mr. J. W. Hackett or Mr. James Kirkup. The more *haijin* write in the strict syllabic style, the more we will see excellent haiku being brought forth. Of this we are sure. Here may we ask and urge world *haijin* to write the same content, the same haiku, in both styles for a challenge. The authors should then decide which style is better suited to the content."

The great American haiku poet, Robert Spiess said in his letter to me about another important haiku element, *kigo*, "(*Kigo* is) not necessary, but usually desirable. As human beings we arose from and remain a part of nature. A *kigo* helps us to feel our kinship with all creation, and that other life and 'non-life' have the right to exist."



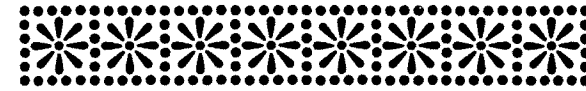
*The Kiyoshi Tokutomi
Memorial Haiku Contest*

This contest is for English-language haiku written in the traditional seventeen syllable form in three lines of 5, 7, 5 syllables. Each poem is required contain one, and only one, season word (*kigo*) from an assigned list.

This year poets could choose from among designated season words, as follows. New Year: first sparrow, first sunrise, first dream, new diary; spring: spring evening, long day spring, storm, soap bubble, Easter, cat's love, tulip, magnolia; summer: billowing clouds, bare feet, ant gladiola; autumn: beginning of autumn, long night, moon, shooting star, scarecrow, closing the pasture, Star Festival; winter: days getting shorter, the skate or skating, withered field, winter mountain, winter vacation.

The contest committee was Kiyoko Tokutomi, Roger Abe, and Patrick Gallagher, and the final judge was Isamu Hashimoto, English-language haiku columnist for the *Manichi Daily News*, Tokyo, Japan.

The contest committee and judge congratulate the winners! But we also want to express our appreciation to everyone who entered.



**Yuki Teikei
Haiku Society**



**Kiyoshi Tokutomi
Memorial
Haiku Contest**

2000



**Judged by
Isamu Hashimoto**



Kiyoshi Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest 2000

Mr. Hashimotos introductory comment:

I selected the three below as the prize-winning haiku and there aren't any distinctive differences in quality between them. They are all excellent haiku having kigo best suited to the content and having melodious haiku syllables in English without any awkward adjustment to the 5-7-5 counting. Marvelous feats have been done in them.

Looking forward to having more traditional masterpieces of haiku next year.

First Prize

on Easter morning
the bread dough breathes and rises
under its damp cloth

Margaret Chula

Judge's comment:

The key and punch phrase is 'breathes and rises,' and this shasei or objective description makes us imagine a happy family expecting the Easter festival. Haiku has no ample space to depict fully, so suppression is essential and also it is important not to express trivial human feelings directly and superficially, but to leave them in something's care. In the first prize winner, the haiku spirit lies in the second line. This is really a traditional masterpiece.

Second Prize

blowing soap bubbles
on her eightieth birthday
the years glide away

Margaret Chula

Judge's comment:

The author never says 'happy or something' in the lines. That's haiku, suppressing such human sentiment and putting it on some other objectives. In rainbow color on the round surface of each bubble, we can clearly see the many incidents of the happy life. Haiku exists between or behind the simple lines.

Third Prize

the morning paper
a black ant punctuating
the big black headline

Yvonne Hardenbrook

Judge's comment:

Ordinary people must have passed an ant away and just shaken it out of the paper and resumed the reading. But the eyes of real haijin never missed the haiku scene. 'The morning paper' is fixed and not movable. If you substitute 'the evening newspaper' instead, you could not impressively see the big ant punctuating the headline in the dusk.

Honorable Mentions

the cat comes indoors
to sit on the window sill;
night of shooting stars

Helen Shaffer

Walking in bare feet—
she moves with easy grace
across the tiled floor

Robert Major

after arguing,
white magnolia blossom cool
against my cheek

Michael Dylan Welch

On the horizon,
attended by one bright star...
a sliver of moon

Robert Major

the winters first freeze
an empty cobweb sparkles
in the morning light

Gary Barnes

Smoky moon rising
little boys eat marshmallows
cooked at the campfire

Jan McMillan

cool sunless seashore
chair on a wet patio
still rocking empty

Nina A. Wicker

tulip festival—
the colours of all the cars
in the parking lot

Michael Dylan Welch

the beginning of autumn—
in the garden, grandparents
asleep in deck chairs

Patricia Prime

Star Festival eve
in the mail box a letter
from an old lover

Margaret Chula