

## The Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest

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

### New Year:

New Year's morning

### Spring:

jacaranda, hermit crab

### Summer:

mosquito, lemonade

### Autumn:

waters of autumn, hurricane

### Winter:

Veterans Day, cold sparrows

## HONORABLE MENTION

*a white bird settles  
where the ocean is calmest  
this New Year's morning.*

Carolyn Thomas

*Blue unicycle  
riding by New Year's morning  
balanced ...unbalanced*

Joan Zimmerman

*stain-ringed coffee mugs—  
only two weeks since his death  
this New Year's morning*

Deborah P Kolodji

*Just the old blossoms  
from the jacaranda trees—  
the sea is rising*

Eduard Tarā

*hurricane season  
the once grand Central Hotel  
now the Cent Hotel*

André Surridge

*hurricane season—  
she keeps two bags packed to go  
for her and the cat*

Janelle Barrera

*sparkling lemonade  
the laughter of a toddler  
bubbles up his nose*

André Surridge

*kids' lemonade stand—  
for the crotchety neighbour  
they double the price*

Michael Dylan Welch

*taste of lemonade  
on the lips of my daughter's  
kindergarten kiss*

Roberta Beary

*when the wind picks up  
half the roofline is revealed  
to be cold sparrows*

Michael Nichols-Wisdom

YKT website: [www.youngleaves.org](http://www.youngleaves.org)

## Contest Judges

**Naoki Kishimoto**, born in 1961 in Okayama Prefecture. Inspired by Ryunosuke Akutagawa's haiku, he began writing haiku in junior high school. As a student at Tokyo University, he joined haiku groups led by Tetsuo Kosada, Akito Arima, and Seison Yamaguchi. He won the Shinjinsho (New Voice) Award from the Association of Haiku Poets (Haijin Kyokai) in 1995. He has published three haiku collections, *Keito (Cockscomb, 1986)*, *Shun* (name of an ancient Chinese king, 1994), and *Kentan (Healthy Appetite, 1999)*, as well as two books of essays on haiku. He is a leading member of the Ten'i (Providence), Yane (Roof), and Yu haiku groups. His writing, following the traditional style, is known for its simplicity and plainness.

**Yoko Senda**, born in 1962, began writing haiku when she was fifteen. As a student at the University of Tokyo, she joined Aki (Autumn) haiku group led by the late Yatsuka Ishihara as well as a haiku seminar led by Tetsuo Kosada. She joined Akito Arima's Teni (Providence) haiku group when it was established in 1990. She has published two haiku collections, *Hashi no anata ni (Beyond the Bridge, 1991)*, and *Kumo wa ohkan (Crown Cloud, 1999)*, and is a coauthor of *Jyuumi no gendai haijin ron (Twelve Essays on Modern Haiku Poets, 2005)*, in which she writes about Ishihara. She is also a member of the Association of Haiku Poets, and the Japan Writer's Association.

Cover Art: *drift of white silk . . .*

(detail from a haiku etching)

Patricia J. Machmiller

Yuki Teikei  
Haiku Society

Tokutomi Memorial  
Haiku Contest

2007



Judged by

Yoko Senda

Naoki Kishimoto

# The Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest 2007

## Prize Winning Haiku

## Judges' Comments

## First Prize - \$100

**blue jacaranda . . .  
the house a little smaller  
than I remembered**

**Ellen Compton**

Blue jacaranda is now blooming. It might be blooming in the poet's childhood. In the poet's memory the house was bigger than it looks now. When you were a child, everything around you seemed big. Later on you are surprised to find it a little smaller than you remembered. Through the blooming jacaranda, readers of this haiku are impressed with the passing of the time. Flowers are the same flowers, but a person can not be the same person year after year. (NK)

A blue jacaranda tree is in full bloom. Imagine how beautiful and gorgeous it is. I hear that Japanese-Americans in Hawaii call the flowers "Hawaiian cherry blossoms" or "violet cherry blossoms" and truly love them. Presumably, blue jacaranda blossoms are also important and special flowers to the writer of this haiku.

In her childhood, she must have been playing around the jacaranda tree in the garden of the old house, experiencing a shower of blossoms, filled with joy and ecstasy. It is said that a petal fallen on the head of a person will bring him luck. Nobody knows if it is true, but we know that life can never be one-hundred percent ideal and happy. That is why we have nostalgic feelings. That is why the writer of this haiku, who is surprised at the actual size of the house much smaller than the size in his memory, looks back to the past with nostalgia and recognizes that time really flies like an arrow.

By writing only "blue jacaranda" in the first line and omitting any other detail, this haiku has left us room for imagination and has acquired depth as a poem. (YS)

## Second Prize - \$50

**hurricane has passed  
the sky is wiping its face  
with gray handkerchiefs**

**Ed Grossmith**

When a hurricane has passed, gray clouds are scudding across the sky. The poet compares the clouds to handkerchiefs. Having wiped its face with hurricane clouds, the sky will clear up. (NK)

A hurricane is a natural phenomenon that causes serious damage to cities, towns and villages. However, the hurricane in this haiku looks like a naughty boy. It came with gale-force winds and rain, but after it passed, the world seems to be full of joy and humor instead of grief and despair.

Why? As everyone knows, it is due to excellent personification of the sky. To the eyes of the writer of this haiku, clouds in the sky are handkerchiefs. Now that the hurricane is over, the blue sky and sunshine are starting to reappear. The once-raging dark sky is rapidly clearing up, and is wiping its face with grey handkerchiefs made of clouds as if a man wipes the sweat and breathes a sigh of relief, saying, "It's over. It's time to get to work." Although housing areas must be devastated, the sky's behavior is creating a humorous atmosphere.

This haiku shows that poetry and poetic imagination are supported by excellent techniques. (YS)

## Third Prize - \$25

**a star is fading  
into her lemonade glass  
hospital silence**

**Eduard Tarã**

A woman is sitting by a window holding a lemonade glass. Stars can be seen from the window. The glass overlaps one star. It seems as if the star were fading into the lemonade. The scene suddenly shifts. The romantic situation turns into a silent hospital wing, the place where life and death are next to each other. (NK)

Hospitalization is a special experience. Once we are hospitalized, we are forced to see patients who are critically ill and think of the meaning of life and death, regardless of the degree of our own illness. The woman drinking a glass of lemonade may have an operation tomorrow because of a malignant disease, or she may be on the road to recovery after she overcomes serious symptoms. I don't know. The haiku tells us nothing. It leaves room for imagination. However, in a silent hospital at night, seeing a star fading into the lemonade glass, the woman must be feeling that her passing life is in contact with eternity. The starlight fading into the glass is a beautiful symbol of eternity and moment. We admire eternity, but we have no option but to live every moment we have, however ephemeral it may be.

In this haiku, a philosophical and deep thought is expressed with ingenuity through sensuous beauty. (YS)