

Contest Judges

...Ordered by the Seasons

the harvested field
migrant worker lifts his eyes
toward the mountain

Priscilla Lignori

coffee pot gurgle
heard from the empty doorway—
school begins again

Kit Nagamura

his motorcycle
miles and miles and miles and miles
of harvested fields

Deborah P Kolodji

early plum blossoms—
a man who worked on haiku
to his last moment

Hiroyuki Murakami

For information about the YTHS society
and about future contests please check
our website:

www.youngleaves.org

...2017 Contest Kigo

New Year: first morning
Spring: tadpole, departing spring
Summer: midday nap, flea
Autumn: school begins, harvested fields
Winter: winter cloud, early plum blossom

Nanae Tamura is a haiku poet, haiku essayist, and translator. She has written a column in the “Shiki-shimpo” (Shiki Newsletter) for more than two decades. Translator for the yearly Shiki Calendar of Ehime University, she also translated and co-edited with Cor van den Heuvel the book *Baseball Haiku* (W.W. Norton & Co. 2007). She learned haiku mainly from her third teacher, Kiyoko Tsuda, who was a disciple of Takako Hashimoto and Seishi Yamaguchi. She is a judge of both the non-Japanese haiku for the “City Haiku Post” and the Haiku Koshien (Nationwide haiku competition for high school students held in Matsuyama). In her words, “I love haiku because it brings me close to nature and has magical power to tell me who I am always.”

Nozomi Sugiyama was born and raised in Hiroshima. After moving to Matsuyama in 1993, she joined the Japanese Haiku group Kunugi (Japanese Chestnut Oak), which follows the yuki teikei form of haiku. She is the current dojin and editor of “Kunugi,” the group’s monthly magazine. As a member of the Association of Haiku Poets, in 2010 she published a haiku collection, *Gacho (A Sketch Book)*. She has been teaching haiku and renku for beginners, as well as lecturing at the NHK (Japanese Broadcasting Association) Culture Center on *Oku no Hosomichi, Bashō’s Narrow Road to the Deep North*. In fear of death by boredom, she constantly kept herself busy. Now, however, she believes that perhaps the most precious resource is, indeed, idle time to hatch haiku and enrich her life.

Yuki Teikei Haiku Society

Announces



Winners of the Tokutomi 2017 Haiku Contest

Nine Honorable Mentions...

early plum blossoms
the preliminary folds
for a paper crane

Barbara Snow

lavender lipstick
the first morning of the year
without my mother

Kath Abela Wilson

how strongly I sense
the presence of your absence—
first morning alone

Earl Keener

in lieu of “hello”
my niece’s daughter shows me
her jar of tadpoles

Karina M. Young

scent of an old barn—
the orange cat stretches out
for its midday nap

Linda Papanicolaou

Contest Guidelines...

This contest is for English language haiku written in the traditional form of three lines using 5, 7, 5 syllables. Each poem is required to contain one (and only one) season word (kigo) from the following list chosen for this year’s contest.

2017 Prize-winning Haiku

Comments by the Judges
Nanae Tamura
Nozomi Sugiyama

Kiyoshi and Kiyoko Tokutomi
Haiku Contest

The Annual Tokutomi Haiku Contest of the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society (YTHS) is named for Mr. Kiyoshi and Mrs. Kiyoko Tokutomi, bilingual speakers of English and Japanese. They founded the Society in 1975 to foster writing haiku in English along traditional Japanese guidelines, with the inclusion of a season word in each haiku and the use of a 5-7-5 syllabic pattern. YTHS studies (but is not limited to) this form. The Tokutomi Haiku Contest is the longest-lived contest in the West that requires contest entries to follow this traditional form.

Title of the Cover Art Work:

“Sakura Garden” by Tei Matsushita,
Courtesy of Patricia Machmiller

First Prize: \$100

early plum blossom
the faint recollection that
i’ve been here before

Michael Henry Lee

Haiku can sometimes be rather personal and express very private inner scenery evoked by what you have been given from Mother Nature or your own experiences. This haiku expresses an emotion on encountering an early plum blossom, forming a murmurlike phrase. The poet probably sees one dignified plum blossom as if it is a divine messenger of spring. We should say that there are a number of haiku expressing similar feelings of déjà vu. However, this haiku is a success because of the splendid usage of kigo, a winter plum blossom, and the word “here” in the third line. If it was just about a plum blossom, the effect and atmosphere of this haiku would be completely different. The word “here” implies: “I am alive and am enjoying my life and waiting for the coming of spring.” Surely the murmur reaches the heart of the readers.

Second Prize: \$50

winter clouds blanket
tents in the refugee camp
stray cats yowl all night

Neal Whitman

This poem shows that we can use the tiny form of the haiku to describe not only our everyday lives but also an unfamiliar world. Perhaps the poet got this information through the TV, a magazine, or newspaper. The refugees’ lives are very different from our own; however, a growing number of displaced people live all over the world. The poet is sensitive enough to feel the deep sorrow of those who are forced to live in a refugee camp. He/she doesn’t use any big words to describe the depressed feelings, but the winter clouds that cover the camp completely symbolize the tough situation. And the yowl of a stray cat heightens the effect. It resonates with the people’s cry who lost their home or had to live separately from their beloved families. It resonates with the cry of those who have been forced to leave their hometown.

Third Prize: \$25

first morning sunrise
shines through the open window
spotless countertop

Jenny Katherine Luu

Everything seems different and new on New Year’s Day, and we feel a solemn atmosphere permeates the air. In Japan we wear our best clothes and use new chopsticks. Many people are willing to climb a hill or go to the seashore to see the newly born sunrise because we believe it gives us health benefits and peace of mind. In this haiku, the poet welcomes the first sunrise through the open window. The rays of the sun shine on the spotless counter top to bless the people in the house. The sun seems to promise a joyful start to the year.