

Haiku Page

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Issue 12, 2026

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Editor John Zheng

Art Editor Albert Y. Wong

Founded as a print brochure/journal in 2008 and transitioned online in 2017, *Haiku Page* now distributes its PDF edition free to contributors. It publishes haiku, senryu, tanka, haiga, haibun, tanka prose, and short essays. Submissions are accepted via email (haikupage@yahoo.com) during March, with publication following in June. All rights revert to authors upon publication.

Haiku Page

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Everyday Ironies and Existential Glimpses:
A Case Study of Contemporary Senryu
—John J. Han

Call for Submissions

Introduction

Why edit an issue of senryu? While haiku looks outward to find solace in nature, senryu looks inward at our ironic, chaotic, or tragicomic realities. If haiku brings a sunshine smile, senryu brings a wry smile—a bitter one, a cheeky or goofy one.

Our connection to nature reflects our human nature, which sometimes feels a bit uneasy with itself. While haiku can offer a beautiful escape into the awe of the natural world, we inevitably return to daily life, television, and the world outside. We need senryu to capture this messy reality. We need a taste of tragic magic, a frown, a question, or a walk into wondering where to go.

Haiku Page no longer appears in print or traditional online formats. Instead, it is distributed purely as a free PDF version. In the spirit of the classical poets Basho, Li Bai, and Du Fu—who exchanged their poems with friends through simple letters or gatherings—we use modern technology to return to a gift economy. This is our classical philosophy of sharing, which eliminates financial burdens for both the makers and the readers.

Thank you for journeying through this issue of *Haiku Page*. The life of these poems does not end in this issue. We invite you to keep it in motion. Please forward this PDF to friends, share it with fellow poets, or post it freely on your websites to keep it alive. Until we meet again in the pages of the next issue, keep looking inward, keep looking outward, and keep writing to surprise.

Blessings to your creative life!

JZ, Editor

Special Feature

Seven Contemporary South Korean Senryu
Translated by John J. Han

Miye Kim 김미예

움켜쥐었다
이리 다 버릴 것을
색바랜 상자

tightly in hand
destined to be discarded
a faded box

Jeong-geun Park 박정근

세상 시끄럽다
선거철 악다구니
그리운 들녘

election-time shouting
how noisy the world is
the fields I miss

So-jeong Kim 김소정

집이 없어도
의연히 비를 맞네
민달팽이여

without any home
enduring the rain
a slug

Young-hye Yun 윤영혜

상사의 농담
웃음 버튼 눌렀다
속은 퇴사 중

boss's joke
I press the laugh button
inside I quit

Chun-myeong Lee 이춘명

봄은 지나고
꼭 다문 입술소리
너와의 거리

spring gone
the sound of sealed lips
the distance between us

Heo Jun 허준

스마트폰 속
공자님 가라사데
잠부터 자라

inside my smartphone
Confucius says—
sleep first

John J. Han 한재남

책장이 비어—
수십 년의 먼지

bookshelf emptied—
decades of dust

World Senryu

Sheikha A.

tsuri-doro –
floating in the breeze
father's voice

street hawker –
a cheeky magpie
mimics his cues

Omarion Anderson

mama's pork chop
just one bite
my tongue backflips

fishing trip—
reunion
of father and son

Joanna Ashwell

snow melt
a carrot slipping
into the smile

fortune cookie
adrift in the crumble
of small talk

Jerome Berglund

April
gotta pay taxes
to the giants

boomer cento:
I'm on vacation not following the news
until I get back

Claudia Brefeld

mosquito cloud –
a drunken man
slaps himself

landslide –
more than silence
afterwards

hitch hiking
his life
in 100 km

Christina Chin

not acquainted
with sirens
a sudden chill

sewing winter coat
needle stops in her hand
thinking of the past

wind blows
across the border
empty helmet plumes

Elliot Diamond

library–
his page turns
the light

Charlotte Digregorio

arriving at her bedside
i kiss her
cold face

after Mama's death . . .
in my old easter basket
i save her clothespins

stopped by a cop . . .
a passing driver
smiles

widowed once more . . .
the chill
of loneliness

threat of more layoffs . . .
dust plumes hover
over the demolition

Tuyet Van Do

tiny feet
in her hands
–baby sister

emergency unit
two cops smiling at
their phones

Robert Epstein

in the garage
atop his four-wheel walker
a case of Coors

my pinky finger
arthritis points
northwest

Jared Frank

sailboat
cutter
of horizons

computer glow
on sun-starved houseplants
digital gardening

William Scott Galasso

standing in the queue
my wife's hand squeezes
my back pocket

baby's squall hitting high C...my last nerve twitches

John J. Han

boarding the plane –
for a few hours
we are one

return from travel –
my own pillow
so soft

bald speaker
a closer look reveals
some hair

hotel room –
I fall asleep
on my glasses

ancient crown –
someone polished
its shine

Monica Kakkar

payday . . .
butterfingers brimming
with garlic butter

Deborah Karl-Brandt

rebel phase
in a traditional updo
her blue hair

not done with the stretching
the dog waits patiently
for its owner

she talks so fast
that my head is spinning
and the wifi gets cut off

black out night
not even the moon is there
to share a drink

haiku e-book ...
the AI assistant offers
a summary

David J Kelly

blocked drain
the upstairs shower
now a downstairs one

disembarkation
waves of nausea
reach the shore

Nicholas Klacsanzky

kinhin letting a wedgie come and go

twiddling thumbs
the therapy session
splits in voices

morning fishing
the catch of the day
my breath

Chen-ou Liu

daydreaming ...
a burst of birdsong
then droppings

gated cul-de-sac
diverse shapes and heights
of white picket fences

Joanne Morcom

bird song
the antidote
to war news

nursing home
the resident cat
walks with a limp

Mary Oishi

key in my door
sound of vows kept
another day

fake cries –
already got my number
five months old

old man tells
in great detail...
try to hide our yawns

forty years
speaks of nothing but
the glory days

Pravat Kumar Padhy

empty platform
a lone passenger reads
Shakespeare's Sonnet 29

Schrödinger's cat
mouse replaced by its predator
with a quantum computer

bird counting –
a sudden drop in
happiness index

the other nature
I recall lines
of Karai Senryū

Never Let Me Go
he tilts the soil upside down
for another crop

Tony Pupello

Dream Speech –
sitting around
an all-white table

concrete dusk
the senior's muted
street bop

hard drive:
his life
on back-up

talk of AI
so grateful my pencil
doesn't

Geethanjali Rajan

his voice
down to a whisper –
“stage IV”

new year’s eve
this itch to dial
my late father

so much more to say garbled static

foggy day after surgery

answering questions
from black pigeonholes
online conference

Kala Ramesh

cataract removed
i now see
my wrinkles

religious
discourse
the
mind
absorbed
in
deep
slumber

karmic bubbles ...
the old pond belches
a million tadpoles

taboo word an asterisk blurs the [insult](#)

those milking
the "sacred" cows be shunned:
daughter turns vegan

Valincia Richard

spring sunset
our shadows lean
into one shape

old jokes
even time
holds its belly

grandma's story
time hums
in our bones

Mark Ritchie

underground
in the train's slipstream
the smell of graffiti

Calota Rodica

He sends a red heart.
Autocorrect changes it
to “cold.” Much clearer.

Ce Rosenow

on the other side
of the covered bridge
the same conversation

the text
from an inconstant friend
all emojis

accepting
the half-hearted apology
I shave mold off the cheese

waking me
from my dream
the dog's dream howl

Barbara Rybak

my daughter
called my twin brother “daddy”
I look at my wife

he saw
his birthday present
my sexy bodysuit

Aleksandra Rybczyńska

cotton candy
my daughter asks
how clouds taste

mum's pendant
in the amber cage
ancient fly

every year earlier Christmas adverts

Joshua St. Claire

diet coke
she pops the top
on her narcissism

batting practice
another baseball mom
hits on my wife

Debbie Strange

cold wave
the time it takes to find
our ice legs

active shooter
fawns are taught
to go to ground

Leon Tefft

block party
the neighbor's curtains part
then close

striptease
removing his
confidence first

Christine Wenk-Harrison

clock snooze button –
hoping to catch
the end of the dream

insomnia
she dreams
of planting poppies

John Zheng

time ripped
in long layover...
a mind collage

class reunion
wrinkles doubling
with laughs

homecoming...
chopsticks stirring
the hot pot

Haibun / Tanka Prose

Jackie Chou

**I Am Not Offended
When People Ignore My Friend Requests**

I too must become a ghost to some—the apartment manager whose paper-strewn desk gives me anxiety, and so I slip out the glass door each morning without a nod or a greeting.

a failed attempt
to capture the kitten
her fleeting shadow

The boys in school I thought I was writing about for the longest time, have become ghosts with blurry faces. I realized it was not them I fondled, but the words on the page.

gas station sushi
his fresh face
has become stale

The person by my side has become a ghost to me, staying quiet, unable to grasp what I'm saying.

misogynistic jokes
he forgets to put the *e*
at the end of *blonde*

Glenn G. Coats

Out of the Blue

Never liked the rabbit. Moved her farther and farther from the house till she froze along the hedgerow. Wouldn't have a cat, said they were haunted—slinked like ghosts through the darkness. Buried enough hamsters to call a spot Boot Hill. Found a home for my border collie after he ate the London broil.

Now at ninety something, he orders two parakeets and a cage. Cream, blue, and black—beautiful. Rolls the cage beside his easy chair. Quiet at first—now they squawk louder than the television. My father doesn't understand a single thing I say.

a new rattle in the dash winter roads

Jared Frank

amygdala's minotaur

my past
corners of
her smile

When a childhood toy
would go missing
I'd imagine it hidden
in some secret room
just behind a wooden door
that I could never find.

Now, instead of searching
for the door's entrance
if I feel myself getting close
I squeeze my eyes and turn away
to make sure it stays
just beyond my reach.

drinking
lethe
droplets

John J. Han

A Debate on Seniors

On social media, a discussion asks what is worse for seniors—poverty and ill health, or loneliness. Some call loneliness a luxury, something the poor and unwell would trade for stability. Others suggest money can ease isolation, bringing family or caregivers closer and improving access to care.

colleagues' visiting kids—
candy in my hand
again

Deborah Karl-Brandt

Years of War

I am about to leave the office and hold the door open for her. Walking is clearly difficult for her. She thanks me so politely. Yes, it's not easy at almost ninety. She buried her husband a long time ago and doesn't get along with her four children. They rarely come by to check on her.

She was born in the Province of Upper Silesia. Did that mean anything to me? When she was twelve years old, the Russians came to her village. She has never been able to forget what they did to her, over and over again. And yet she later married and bore her husband four children. The old lady cries.

her pain
has now become mine
winter wind

David McMurray

Japanese-made

When I started editing a haiku column in Tokyo, I realized the extent to which I didn't know the names of plants and birds around Japan. Last spring I stopped someone on the street to ask politely what bird it was making a strange sound, only to find out that I was listening to a frog. Now I know leopard frogs and green tree frogs croak and sing ribbit in Disney animation, but learning how to write the sounds that mating frogs make in Japan is much more of a challenge. While I was touring in Kyushu I asked myself to decide whether the onomatopoeic sound of the frog in Japanese (kero kero) was better to use in my column than the English, but I never did find out where the frog was.

Honda, Toyota,
Nissan, Subaru, Datsun
kero kero ka?

Mary Oishi

Shock Before Sushi

She orders a bento box and me, a spider roll and agedashi tofu. As the server snatches up the menus, my old friend asks me across the table, *So, what have you decided to do for your birthday?* Huh??? Cue Twilight Zone theme. Does she mean my birthday *next* year? The lightbulb gradually comes on. When I tell her that the party was last month, doesn't she remember, she says, *Was I there?*

fallen leaf
riddled with holes
brilliant reds lost

Susan Weaver

No Script for This
for Josh Neth

among the props
your light-up nose
for Rudolf
I smile, tear up
in spite of myself

It all must go. Tangles of sleeves spilling out of cartons, costumes from a score of productions, must go. The set from the last play, Sam Shepard's *True West* — a kitchen with running water where, in a favorite scene, eleven toasters popped toast — must go. Business records. Stage platforms, lighting and sound systems. All must be out of our rehearsal-and-storage space the size of a school gym, since the rent more than doubled. Board members of this shoestring company have taken our turns. Sorting and donating. Moving what we'll keep to a tiny storage unit. Soon the vision behind it, you with the warm voice, the ability to play any role, you'll go. Today we finish the job.

seven years
and all that talent . . .
costumes to a thrift shop
to be or not to be
takes on new meaning

Haiga / Photoku

Joanna Ashwell



**topsy turvy dreams
I reassess
my future sky**

Joanna Ashwell

Jerome Berglund



Jerome Berglund



Claudia Brefeld



Claudia Brefeld



Claudia Brefeld



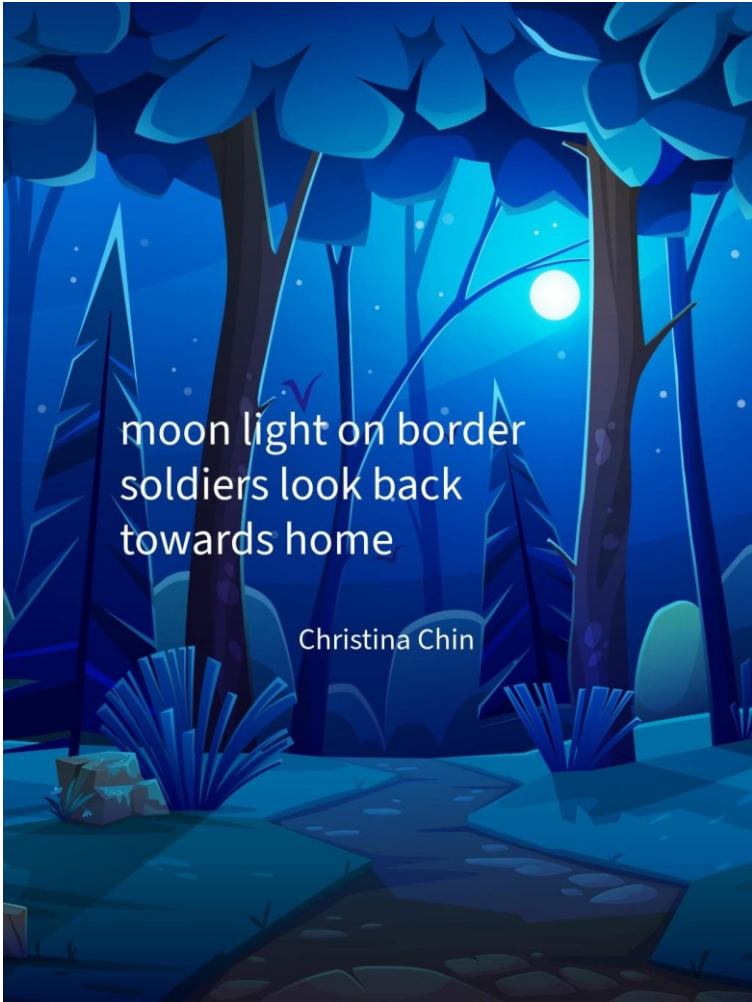
Christina Chin



wife's tears fall cold
husband dreams
of home

Christina Chin

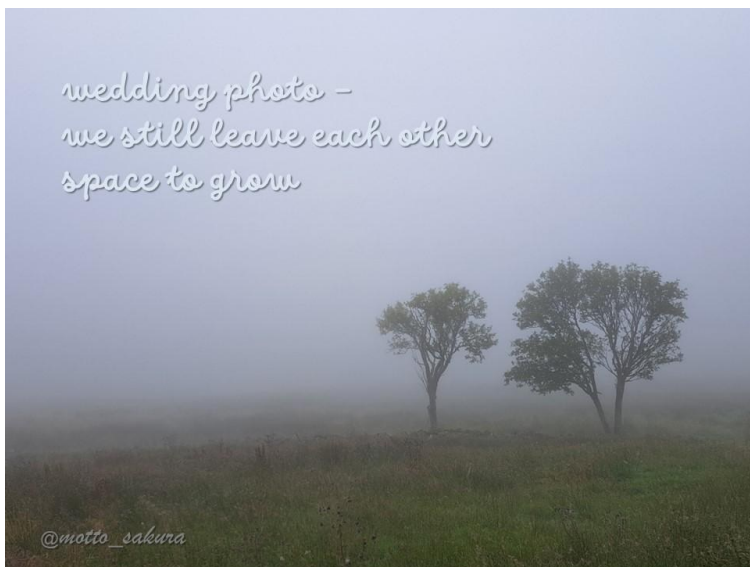
Christina Chin



moon light on border
soldiers look back
towards home

Christina Chin

David J Kelly



Urszula Marciniak



**church wedding and
petal for yes, petal for no...
what will he say?**

Urszula Marciniak

Nika / Jim McKinniss



haiku: Nika photo: Jim McKinniss

Nika / Jim McKinniss

morning whistle
I leave the comfort
of her bed

haiku: Nika photo: Jim McKinniss



Maryam & Akiba Mermey



Maryam & Akiba Mermey



Mary Oishi



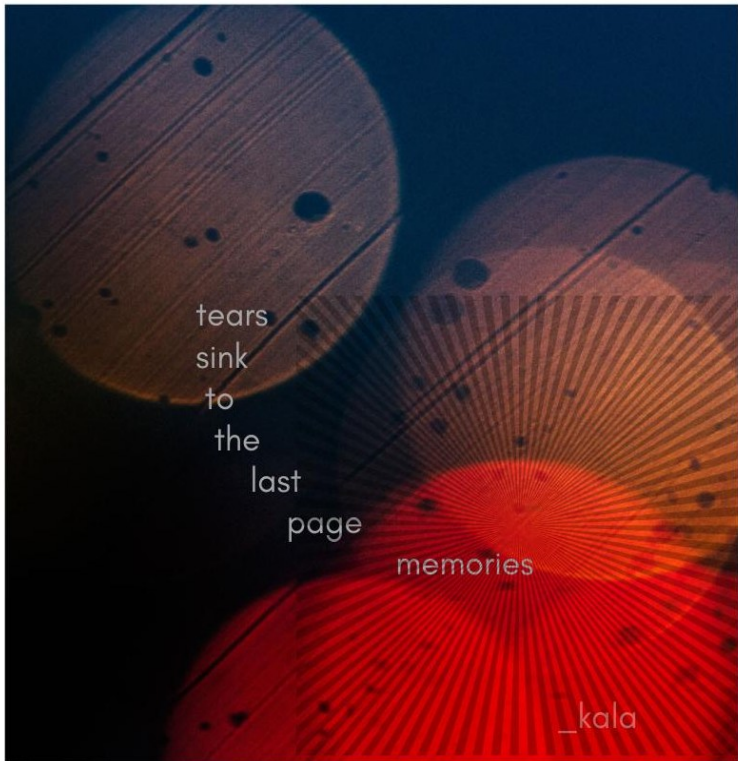
morphine dream—
she sips green tea
from a phantom cup

Mary Oishi

Geethanjali Rajan / Dhaatri Vengunad



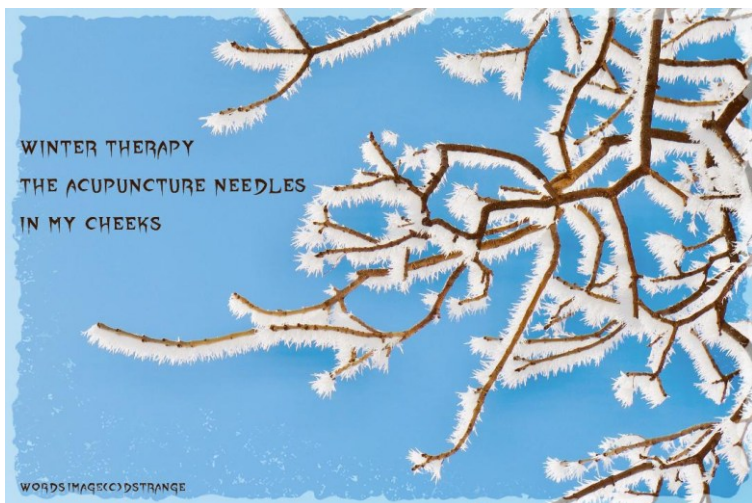
Kala Ramesh



Kala Ramesh



Debbie Strange



Debbie Strange



Debbie Strange



John Zheng



John Zheng



Essay

John J. Han

**Everyday Ironies and Existential Glimpses:
A Case Study of Contemporary Senryu**

In writing senryu, I often draw on episodes and observations from everyday life. Many of my poems are conceived during my commute to and from work. My recurring subjects include aging (especially forgetfulness and other physical or cognitive changes), humorous street scenes, domestic life, interactions with students, workplace situations, the business world, the gap between appearance and reality, my experiences as a poet, and lingering habits from the past, among others.

This essay examines how senryu captures humor, contradiction, and insight within ordinary experience through four thematic groupings drawn from my published work: aging and personal reflection; everyday life and modern ironies; relationships and social dynamics; and existential reflection. The poems on aging blend humor with a quiet awareness of bodily and emotional change, while those on daily life capture irony in technology, work, and routine. The section on relationships explores how social expectations and interpersonal dynamics generate subtle comedy and tension, revealing underlying cultural norms. Finally, the existential group shows how senryu can shift from humor to philosophical reflection, engaging themes of mortality, guilt, perception, and the cyclical nature of time.

The poems included below consist of twenty-seven independent three-line senryu originally published in various short poetry journals. They demonstrate senryu's ability to transform mundane experiences into condensed moments of recognition in which humor and introspection coexist. Because poets bring different preoccupations to their work, each may gravitate toward distinct thematic

concerns. Accordingly, this essay offers one possible approach to senryu through the lens of my own interests and creative preoccupations.

1. Aging and Personal Reflections

at sixty
I can hear my heart's desire
ringing in the ears
Failed Haiku 2.21 (1 Sept. 2017)

AARP mail—
for the first time in ten years
I keep it
Failed Haiku 2.20 (1 Aug. 2017)

near retirement
deleting an e-mail
from LinkedIn
Failed Haiku 2.19 (1 July 2017)

some more gray hair—
she gives me a Bible
in large print
Failed Haiku 2.19 (1 July 2017)

a new year—
one more pill
to swallow
Gary Hotham, ed. *Take-Out Window: Haiku Society of America 2014 Members' Anthology*

old age
blessed with crowns
in the mouth
Four and Twenty: A Short Form Poetry Journal 6.7 (July 2013)

These senryu explore themes of aging, health, and personal experience, reflecting both the humor and the sadness that accompany growing older. They highlight physical signs of aging as well as the mental and emotional shifts that come with this stage of life. Poems such as “AARP mail” and “deleting an e-mail / from LinkedIn” suggest how one’s relationship to professional identity and social recognition quietly changes over time, showing how actions that once carried forward-looking energy can acquire a tone of detachment; even seemingly minor gestures become meaningful markers of transition.

At the same time, these senryu resist a purely melancholic reading by incorporating humor and irony. The juxtaposition of physical decline with ordinary details—such as mail, email, or medication—creates a subtle comedic effect that softens the emotional weight of aging. In this way, the poems suggest that growing older is not only a process of loss but also one of recontextualization.

2. Everyday Life and Modern Ironies

pretty dental hygienist
for the third time I hear
her stomach growl
Failed Haiku 2.21 (1 Sept. 2017)

browsing Goodreads...
my book rated five stars
by the publisher
Failed Haiku 2.20 (1 Aug. 2017)

haiku—
after writing a good one
I lose my notepad
Failed Haiku 2.20 (1 Aug. 2017)

tailgating a slow driver
who turns out to be
my boss
Failed Haiku 2.20 (1 Aug. 2017)

first summer break—
the professor's parents take
her to Disneyland
Failed Haiku 2.16 (1 April 2017)

Christmas morning
still roaming the mall
in a nightmare
Failed Haiku 2.16 (1 April 2017)

coming out—
I decide not to hide
my hairline
Mariposa 33 (Autumn/Winter 2015)

Fourth of July—
celebrating with fireworks
from China
kernels Summer 2013

Chinese buffet—
the white man uses chopsticks
I use a fork
Asahi Haikuist Network (16 Nov. 2012)

elevator—
waiting for two minutes
for a two-second ride
Prune Juice: Journal of Senryu & Kyoka 6
(Summer 2011)

out of boredom
he sends himself a text
it isn't delivered
Prune Juice 6 (Summer 2011)

new resolution...
he's relieved that he finally
broke it
Robert Epstein, ed., *Now This: Contemporary
Poems of Beginnings, Renewals, and Firsts*
(2013)

I walk three miles for health...
starving I munch
butter cookies
Four and Twenty Week of Sept. 10, 2013
(poem of the week)

These senryu focus on the banal yet humorous aspects of daily life, often shaped by irony, contradiction, or unexpected outcomes. They address modern experiences such as technology, social norms, and daily routines with a lighthearted tone. In many cases, humor arises from incongruity—between expectation and reality, appearance and hidden detail, or intention and consequence. At the same time, these poems suggest that modern life is structured by subtle forms of dissonance, where even routine actions carry unintended meanings or outcomes. Taken together, these senryu demonstrate how the ordinary can be both amusing and surprisingly eye-opening.

3. Relationships and Social Dynamics

he is proud
of the neighbor's mansion
next to his small house
Prune Juice 6 (Summer 2011)

Labor Day
she gives me
a long fix-it list
Failed Haiku 2.19 (1 July 2017)

a new book sale skill:
copies of the same book,
various prices
Failed Haiku 2.21 (1 Sept. 2017)

mood swing—
overnight tornado
now a breeze
Four and Twenty 6.7 (July 2013)

These senryu explore interactions between people and the subtle social nuances of life. They touch on themes of pride, responsibility, resolutions, and health, often juxtaposing intentions with outcomes, providing a candid look at the humor and absurdity inherent in everyday relationships and social expectations. These poems suggest that social life is shaped not only by what is said or done, but also by the gaps between intention and interpretation, expectation and outcome.

4. Existential Reflections

church bells...
the pack of gum I stole
fifty years ago
Frogpond 37.2 (Spring/Summer 2014)

my doctor asks
if my tongue is sore
now it is
Frogpond 37.3 (Autumn 2014)

zoo
the monkey examines
each of us
South by Southeast 20.3 (Summer 2013)

new year's day
the sun rises,
the same old one
Failed Haiku 2.16 (1 April 2017)

Despite their humor, these senryu are more philosophical and somber than the previous ones, reflecting on self-awareness, illness, and life's cyclical nature. The poem about the stolen gum, inspired by the well-known episode of pear-stealing in St. Augustine's *Confessions*, expresses deep self-reflection, while the doctor's question underscores how minor discomforts can gain sudden significance. The zoo senryu, inspired by Mark Twain's "The Lowest Animal," contrasts human self-awareness with the monkey's casual observation. Finally, the New Year's Day poem, influenced by Ecclesiastes 1:9, contemplates the passage of time and a sense of stagnation. Altogether, these poems demonstrate how a brief poetic form can accommodate existential inquiry without abandoning humor.

Conclusion

In contrast to haiku, which is traditionally grounded in nature imagery and seasonal awareness, senryu is rooted in human nature and everyday experience. Whereas haiku often requires careful observation of the natural world followed by a contemplative connection to human life, senryu tends to emerge more quickly from passing yet eye-opening moments in daily interactions, routines, and behaviors. Because it does not rely on natural imagery or seasonal reference points, senryu can be a more flexible

and accessible poetic form. It allows for immediate engagement with lived experience, capturing the humor, contradiction, and complexity embedded in ordinary human situations.

Writing senryu also becomes a way of deepening one's understanding of human behavior and thought. When we observe and record someone's quirky habit, an odd social situation, or a moment that provokes reflection, we are, in effect, also reflecting on ourselves, since human nature is shared and recognizable across individuals. In this regard, senryu serves not only as observation but also as a subtle form of self-inquiry.

Historically, senryu in Japan were often published anonymously in their early development because they did not carry the same literary prestige as haiku. Today, however, there are numerous venues for senryu publication in both print and online spaces, and writing senryu is no longer seen as marginal. This is especially true in the United States, where humor and wit are culturally valued, and senryu has therefore flourished as an expressive poetic form.

Call for Submissions

Haiku Page Special Issue (2027)

Theme: Surprise

For our 2027 special issue, we are seeking work that captures the theme of **Surprise**. A good poem should delight both the physical eye and the mind's eye with an “aha” moment—a moment to lick the lips of the mind.

Submission Guidelines & Timeline

Categories: Haiku, senryu, haibun, tanka prose, haiga, and essays on surprise.

Submission Window: Open strictly from **March 1 to March 31, 2027**.

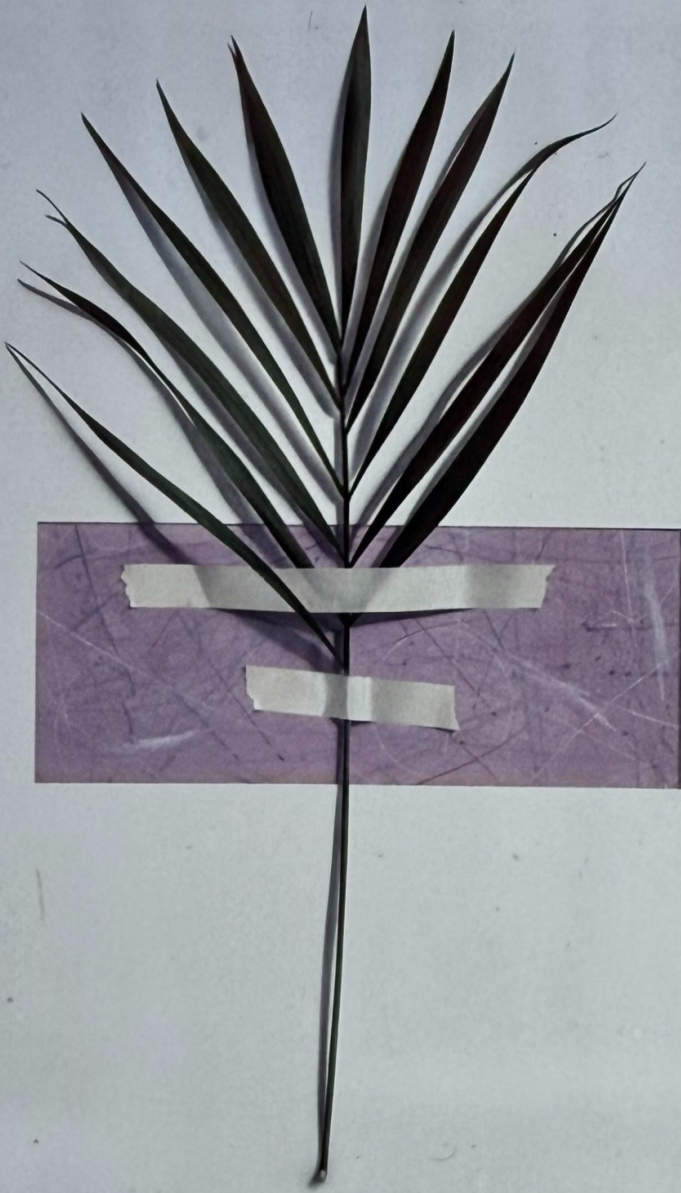
Where to submit: haikupage@yahoo.com

Email Subject: Please type **Sub HP** in the Subject line and paste your submission in the message box.

Notifications: Sent out to selected authors in **April 2027**.

Production & Distribution: Typesetting begins in May, with final distribution in **June 2027**.

Editorial Note: Due to the editor's limited vision, individual queries cannot be answered. Please ensure your submission is final when sent.



specimen sheet
a fleeting moment
of the taped desire