

PRUNE JUICE



ISSUE 5 WINTER 2011

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Journal of Senryu & Kyoka

Issue 5 : Winter 2011
ISSN: 1945-8894

Edited by Liam Wilkinson

Prune Juice : Journal of Senryu & Kyoka
Issue 5 : Winter 2011
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Prune Juice: Journal of Senryu & Kyoka is a biannual
digital journal dedicated to publishing and promoting modern
English senryu and kyoka . It is edited by Liam Wilkinson.
Please send all submissions and correspondence to
prunejuicejournal@yahoo.co.uk.

ISSN1945-8894
www.prunejuice.wordpress.com

EDITOR'S NOTE

Like many people, I discovered modern haiku and senryu when I first read Cor Van Den Heuvel's *The Haiku Anthology* – a book that has since become as vital a feature in my life as a toothbrush. I was studying for a degree in English Literature at the time and, feeling rather bloated after being force-fed enough Pound and Eliot to kill a horse, I wandered to my local bookshop and discovered a whole new world of little, big poems. It was a world inhabited by such writers as Clement Hoyt, Alan Pizzarelli, Alexis Rotella and George Swede; a place where Jack Kerouac could be found straining at padlocks, where Garry Gay was lost in a cloud of barbecue smoke and the great Raymond Roseliep was capturing silence with a tape recorder. Like Mickey Mouse's broomsticks, I was immediately enchanted. All I wanted was to return to my damp little dormitory and, under the dim light of a desk-lamp, imitate the minimal, experimental lines of Bob Boldman and Marlene Mountain and strive to capture image and emotion as acutely as Nicholas Virgilio (something, I've since realised, that may be completely impossible).

Little did I know that I would spend the next decade deeply immersed in haiku and its related forms, moving back and forth between the great Japanese masters and those who had reintroduced the form to a modern world. Scraps of paper, old envelopes, sticky notes and the margins of my lecture notebooks would become a mess of scrawls, filled with ideas for little poems – poems that would not, perhaps, find their form for many years. I would fall deeply in love with the poems of Basho and head over heels for those of Issa. I would learn the difference between haiku and senryu and, later, how the two are never completely separate. I would also learn the difference between a good haiku/senryu and a bad one, but would struggle to understand precisely why, as one struggles to understand any kind of magic. One thing I did understand fully was that, along this far-reaching road, I would always have *The Haiku Anthology* and the great masters of haiku and senryu in my pocket.

As we enter another decade in this new century, its with great delight that we can still experience these little poems with both hindsight and foresight. This fifth issue of *Prune Juice* provides crystal-clear proof that we, as human beings, are still striving to record small moments of clarity in concise poetry, often with astounding results that can, for a brief moment, stop even the heaviest globe from spinning.

Liam Wilkinson
January 2011

the baseball comic
hits one out of the park and
leaves them in stitches

David Ash

her lingering kiss
filling him with suspicion—
“But she hates lattes...”

David Ash

documentary
shows polar bears in the wild,
then drinking cola

David Ash

if you cannot wait
for wine to age properly,
make it from raisins

David Ash

as I enter the dark room
a figure approaches -
the ghost in the mirror

Bob Brill

failed on take off
my flying carpet
needs a new motherboard

Bob Brill

the old farmer
his lorry filled
with grandchildren

Bouwe Brouwer

air guitar player
the girls pretend
he's not there

Bouwe Brouwer

Colosseum
a tourist wrestles
his camera

Bouwe Brouwer

midday moon
finishing the words
of the stutterer

Bouwe Brouwer

take off
he reads a book
on statistics

Bouwe Brouwer

the blond hairdresser
i suddenly seem
ten years younger

Bouwe Brouwer

our neutered squirrel -
still searching
for nuts

Bruce R. Boynton

after dinner
I get a lap dance
from the cat

Bruce R. Boynton

taking the last
bourbon chocolate
a teetotaler

Bruce R. Boynton

crescent moon
...rolling
her first ever joint

Helen Buckingham

traffic jam--
a busker arrives
on sax

Helen Buckingham

outdoor Shakespeare
the director cues
a gust of wind

Simon Chard

cut backs . . .
the beauty assistant
chewing her fingers

Simon Chard

folding laundry
a sock
I don't know

Aubrie Cox

churchyard shadows
the priest confesses
to an empty room

Aubrie Cox

smoldering ruins —
the fire chief pauses
for a smoke

Curtis Dunlap

laughing and screaming
around the sprinkler,
children pretending
that water
is acid rain

Curtis Dunlap

my dead father...
thinking his point of view
in my turning life

Murray Dunlap

trying not
to eye her cleavage—
verbal intercourse

Carlin T. Dupus

Half-joking, she says
“I like my men
big, dumb and buffed”

Bruce England

All I have
from our affair –
this lousy haiku

Bruce England

what is dusting
after all...
but moving
the ancestors
about?

Claire Everett

this moment
needs
a paperweight

Claire Everett

smoking chimneys--
the old town never could
kick the habit

Claire Everett

in the afterlife
Picasso just uploaded
his profile picture

Claire Everett

stick thin and disjointed
colours barely scribbled in
without you
I am a child's drawing
of me

Claire Everett

a Muse?
she certainly
does..

Claire Everett

my mind
stayed out all night --
came back at sunrise
still smelling
of dreams

Claire Everett

for thirty minutes
lost in my tanka diary
at this coffee shop,
I look up realizing
Shiki has suddenly disappeared

Sanford Goldstein

I prune juice
my way through three
kyoka
recalling the tall glasses
my wife's father drank

Sanford Goldstein

once
there were small kites
with white strings
nowadays my tanka strings
are seldom pulled

Sanford Goldstein

wimpish
hiding under my narrow bed
from boyhood fears
wimpish as a man
upholding no cause

Sanford Goldstein

the charcoal-maker
says to me in slow Japanese
the poor lead a busy life
I have a sudden image
of Bill Gates

Sanford Goldstein

wrapping
his overseas mail parcel
with scotch tape,
discovers he has included
his thumb

Sanford Goldstein

his girls
buy and buy and buy
as if knowing
their checkbook father
will soon depart

Sanford Goldstein

at the conference
sitting on Japanese mats
and focusing,
finds two small holes
in his brown corduroy crotch

Sanford Goldstein

punched
in the face by
a bully,
hand against his mouth, he says
your punch changes nothing

Sanford Goldstein

all day
at his computer
games,
my friend's nephew
finally goes out for ping-pong

Sanford Goldstein

new toilet seat
the house
finally ours

Jennifer Gomoll Popolis

top shelf
who knows what the hell
I'm groping for

Jennifer Gomoll Popolis

reading the book
my shadow looks more interested
than it is

C. P. Harrison

in the garden -
a cricket with my
ringtone

C. P. Harrison

waking up -
the gnat in my nose
as confused as I

C. P. Harrison

dividing our things
with the slowly dying
houseplant

C. P. Harrison

cigarettes everywhere -
my very first day
a quitter

C. P. Harrison

every day
at every bush, every tree
our dog stops to sniff . . .
don't rush him, my husband says,
he's reading the newspaper

Peggy Heinrich

he never asks
about *my* life
narcissus in bloom

Peggy Heinrich

bitter cold morning
we make the decision to
talk through our lawyers

C. William Hinderliter

winter fog
strolling in the darkness
past the old church ruins
I suddenly notice
that I'm whistling hymns

C. William Hinderliter

Sunday
he gets up early
so he can
beat his neighbors
to the washing machine

M. Kei

Egyptians
worshipped cats,
a fact which
my own puss
never lets me forget

M. Kei

tightrope walking,
juggling, clowning, taming -
my household circus

Natalia Kuznetsova

visiting grandma
a digital picture frame
her game of guess who

G. R. LeBlanc

seventh grade
for the first time he blushes
when asked about girls

G. R. LeBlanc

soup kitchen
before her shift, she takes off
her diamonds

Catherine J. S. Lee

the gleaming brass
of miniature locomotives
his chores undone

Catherine J. S. Lee

arguing over costs...
a man of few words
in the coffin

Chen-ou Liu

gazing up
at an eagle hovering
in the sky
I think of
kung pao chicken for dinner

Chen-ou Liu

chocolate wrapper
the crinkle of memory
underfoot

Bob Lucky

a beggar
follows me across the road
when I turn
to make him go away
he hands me the pen I dropped

Bob Lucky

family reunion
grandma and baby's
toothless grins

Daniela Mejia

done
living in the past
I cancel TiVo

Dave Moore

she blows a kiss
and grabs an arm—
nickel slots

Dave Moore

daughter asleep
the argument resumes
in whispers

Dave Moore

feeding his baby
the new father gives me
nothing but mush

Dave Moore

trying to hide
what's happening
in that stall
he makes as much noise
as he can

Dave Moore

The potato peeler on the table
pointing to him—
life is sometimes quiet.

Gene Myers

the banana sticker
on my forehead
amuses my daughter
and also
my new clients

Christina Nguyen

after work
the social media manager
walks home
to read a book
alone

Christina Nguyen

one poem
fifty retweets
the editor e-mails
to tell me
she rejected it

Christina Nguyen

unreasonably demanding
the boss
whose wife
is due
next month

Polona Oblak

this grave which is not
our responsibility
we clean the marble
and throw away the flowers
we brought a year ago

Polona Oblak

tour of duty over
back home the bed
not quite right

Stephen A. Peters

one note
the same note again
it could be a text

Patricia Prime

Our chiropractor
and his wife take us out
for a goodbye dinner
and just happen to mention
they're swingers.

Alexis Rotella

Dinner party–
the brunette
tells everyone
it's hard
being beautiful.

Alexis Rotella

He's dining
on roast beef
with all his dead relatives—
last visit to a neighbor
in Hospice.

Alexis Rotella

Picnic in the park—
the one I fancy
doesn't show . . .

que Seurat
Seurat.

Alexis Rotella

Cocktail party –
cornered by a man
pontificating fluff.

Alexis Rotella

*I can never take you home
to meet my parents,
he tells me –
my Jewish prince,
the love of my life.*

Alexis Rotella

Love you,
he said,
and the moon's a canoe.

Alexis Rotella

I left before I fell
from his pedestal –
too hard
pretending to be
marble.

Alexis Rotella

Don't tell a soul
she tells everyone she knows—
this dress is an Armani
and I bought it
for five bucks.

Alexis Rotella

science lab
new teacher
quite the specimen

Claudette Russell

yoga class
my ego
stretches too far

Claudette Russell

nursing home luncheon
my mother serves up
guilt

Claudette Russell

dinner date
so hungry
I swallow all your lies

Claudette Russell

gridlock
the GPS
stops talking

Claudette Russell

Even she
couldn't quite explain
why she'd forgotten
the cello in the taxi—
autumn rain

Miriam Sagan

in the middle of it all
- stuck –
her dodgem

David Serjeant

gifted a day
when I can do
nothing
I end up
wasting it

David Serjeant

in the portrait
of my daughter
my mother's knowing look

David Serjeant

last
in the dad's race
my daughter's cheers

David Serjeant

waking up
in each others arms
narcolepsy

Stanley Siceloff

yoga lesson -
nice to meet you,
body!

Valeria Simonova-Cecon

my thirtieth birthday -
a wardrobe is
just a wardrobe

Valeria Simonova-Cecon

he just won't
return my calls -
Basho's frog

Paul Smith

first signs of grey -
I turn the volume up
a little louder

Paul Smith

must be
New Year's for the trees
they're throwing
yellow, orange, red confetti
and getting naked

Sheila Sondik

ladies softball–
all the bases
I never reached

John Soules

old age home—
the same stories
growing older

John Soules

new teeth–
so many reasons
to smile

John Soules

in sleepy anger
clicking on the lamp
for one *fly*

Craig Steele

eating lunch
after my vasectomy...
i peel a seedless banana

Craig Steele

I always wonder
how many women I have
ruined Dylan for

Lucas Stensland

broken window
sitting on the naughty step
grandpa

André Surridge

asthma
his doctor recommends
learning the trombone

André Surridge

unscripted sneeze
Marley's ghost sheds a cloud
of talcum powder

André Surridge

mental hospital
she offers hush money
to the moon

André Surridge

red sky
this morning...
the shepherd
is running around
like a blue-arse fly

André Surridge

slow blink
of God's good eye
this eclipse...
doubt and darkness fill
every corner of the soul

André Surridge

at the Chinese restaurant
our sweet date
turns sour

Liam Wilkinson

in her trolley
goat's cheese
and the kids

Liam Wilkinson

blue tears—
her Prince
croaks

Liam Wilkinson

The next issue of *Prune Juice*
will be published in July 2011.

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