



Seasonal Psalms

selected haiku & eastern verse

Andreas Gripp

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Poetry books by the author

Gullible Skeptic (2001)
Captain Fascist and the Plastic Storm Troopers (2002)
The Cosmopolitan Day of Reckoning (2003)
Mr. Rubik's House of Cards (2004)
Like Darwin Among the Gods (2005)
The Language of Sparrows (2006)
T.O. Loveless & other poems (2007)
Angel Clare (2007)
Beads on Blossoms (2008)
The Lesser Light (2009)
Anathema: Poems Selected & New (2009)
The Fall (2010)
Perennial: Poems Selected & New Volume 2 (2011)
The Apostasy of Daylight (2012)
Selected Poems 2000-2012 (2013)
The Breakfast of Birds (2013)
The Penitent, or Cannon Foster's Dissonance Revolution (2013)
The Better Kiss (2014)
Holy Rollers (2015)
Apocrypha: Poems Selected & New Volume 3 (2015)
Selected Poems 2000-2016 (2016)
Seasonal Psalms: selected haiku & eastern verse (2017)

Poetry chapbooks by the author

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Fish Out of Water (2000)
Captain Fascist (chapbook version) (2001)
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Anno Domino (Haiku/Senryu) (2005)
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Dr. Lerner's Study Notes (2009)
In the Breath of Woven Seasons (Haiku) (2010)
Metronome (2010)
Under the Evergreens (2011)
Ex gratia (2011)
Garden Sunrise (2012)
The Rest of Yesterday (2014)
All Here Sail in a River of Light (w/Katherine L. Gordon) (2014)
Christmas Poems (2016)

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Harmonia Press

Seasonal Psalms: selected haiku & eastern verse

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Sketchbook, Canadian Zen Haiku, Autumn Leaves, Feast of Equinox

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Anno Domino, In a Sea of Green Tea, Beads on Blossoms, In the Breath of Woven Seasons, Under the Evergreens, Garden Sunrise, The Rest of Yesterday, Christmas Poems

A brief note on Haiku, Sijo and Tanka

A **haiku** in English is a very short poem following to a greater or lesser extent the form and style of the Japanese haiku. A typical haiku is a three-line observation about a fleeting moment involving nature and usually not exceeding 17 syllables.

Sijo is a Korean poetic form of three long lines (or broken into six shorter lines as has been done in this collection) for a total of 44 to 46 syllables. Sijo may be narrative or thematic and is often more lyrical and personal than other East Asian poetic forms, and the final line can take a profound turn.

A **Tanka** consists of five lines with a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable pattern and is Japanese in origin. Interaction with the natural world is an ongoing theme.

Much of the above concise definitions have been sourced from *Wikipedia*.

Introduction to Shanzi

by John Daleiden (from *Sketchbook* magazine)

The Shanzi is a fascinating and flexible new form. In December of 2005, Andreas Gripp, a Canadian poet living in London, Ontario, announced his newly created form on the World Haiku Review “Poetry Bridge” online forum.

The Shanzi is written in 7 lines with breaks of 2, 2 and 3. The poem contains 31 syllables arranged in this manner: 4-5, 5-4, 4-4-5.

The first 2 lines introduce the image/subject; the next 2 lines amplify what is affected by the image/subject; the last 3 lines focus on a new image/subject that complement and provide a meditative conclusion.

Shanzi may be titled.

The Shanzi, *Backyard in June* (page 29 of this book), by Andreas Gripp, presents a familiar, early summer experience with delicate images and a pleasant surprise. In the first two couplet verses, the surroundings of a June garden where butterfly and moth fly undisturbed among the blooms introduce a serene setting with an economy of words; these carefully selected images paint a picture of quiet and solitude. The third verse introduces the complementary elements of “tender breezes” and a human “breathing” vividly captured together, wrapped in the “embrace” of “silence.” All of the images complement both the act of breathing and the environment of “silence” in a June garden.

The use of sound in the repeated consonance of the “b” in the words “Backyard,” “butterfly,” “Undisturbed,” “by,” “breezes,” “embrace,” and “breathing” provides a gentle but unifying effect that reinforces the nature images in the poem with the imitated sound of a pleasant breeze.

haiku

“Where humanity
sowed faith, hope, and unity,
joy’s garden blossomed.”

— Aberjhani, *The River of Winged Dreams*

Beginning of Spring
Cherry blossoms in bloom
An oriole overhead

Easter snow-melt
Under water's weight,
a tulip strains to stand

Windy afternoon
Bright kites stretch to meet the clouds
Flags flapping below

The melt of March
a memory
A bluebird's April warble

Blue jay
in the branches
The swell and burst of buds

Pigeons flock to me
while I toss day-old bread
Thankful for bargains

Watering kitchen plants
while rain
hits the roof

Starling snatches
wriggling worm
Sunrise

Bouncing moth
by the crocus
Kitten ready to pounce

Child tossing stones
in a stagnant lily pond
The splash of Basho's frog

Flowers
unfurling
with the dawn

Dawn's dew
beads on blossoms
Hummingbird hovers

Swallows swoop on seeds
on the longest day of light
Solstice

Quarter phase of moon
visible in the daylight
An owl awakens

By the shrubbery:
the cat's purr muted
by the lawnmower

Robins burst from trees,
fly in synchronicity
Patterns of circles

The scent of cedar
as reeds begin to sway
A lone heron in the distance

We run in ocean surf,
hands sprayed with foam,
wet with splash and sweat

Seashell on the sand
Still
and silent

Three-quarter moon
Herons in their nests
Turtles pulled by tides

Chocolate rivulets
on our hands
The melt from midday sun

Petals close
in plunging rain
Burgeoning thunder

By the reeds
of the old wooden bridge:
a mother and her ducklings

Nights grow cooler now
We savour the warmth of fire
Blackened marshmallows

Full moon
free of clouds
Crescendo of crickets

Beetle creeping
on organic arc
The swell of ripened squash

Within the shadow
cast on grass,
the cat, content

Ferris wheel kisses
Scents of apple, caramel
Weekend country fair

Bumblebee
in the bramble
Autumn blossom

Sunlight squeezes
through a coloured canopy
Shadows beneath the trees

Autumn blossom:
blooming 'fore the first
of frost

Leaves aloft
in Autumn air
Wind undressing trees

Bagging leaves and brush
Ladybug leaps
and glides

Birds flee in unison,
fly in V-formation
Gales rail against them

Autumn sunrise
The now leafless tree
barren of birds

Amid the fallow brown,
a black squirrel
buries wind-blown bulbs

Fall's early flakes:
whiter than dust
in the light

A spectrum of stars
swirl in a whirlpool
Galaxy's gravity

Sparks and crackles
from the fireplace
The scent of cinnamon tea

Cardinal
in the pine
Christmas red and green

Outside, the wind whisks flakes
Inside, you shake my gift to you
Snow globe

In wind chill we skate
The pond froze early this year
Our blades dull from use

We build a snowman
You leave to get a carrot,
holding my fedora

Dawn's light divulges
an overnight visitor
Path of rabbit tracks

Steps unseen
in summer
Winter footprints on the lawn

Ice and snow
stick to barren branches
Winter's foliage

Slumbering forest
cloaked in snowfall
The sound of snapping twigs

Warm oolong tea
served after snowfall
Hands envelop cup

Grey rabbit fleeing fox
White hare in the snow
sitting calmly

Raucous recess
Wayward waxwing
dodging snowballs

Snowy owl
swoons
in swollen moon

The eve of equinox
Stars stroked by green
Aurora

shanzi

“Poetry is when an emotion
has found its thought
and the thought has found words.”

— Robert Frost

Backyard in June

In the garden,
butterfly and moth

Petals undisturbed
by quiet flight

Tender breezes
and my breathing
embrace the silence

Fireflies

Summer sunset
Fireflies abound

Their quiet wings bounce
light through the air

Above them, stars
break through the dusk
and vanishing blue

Perseids

Watching meteors
on an August night

Normally, the stars
would grasp our gaze

Fleeting movement,
not faithful light,
takes our attention

The Birth of an Urban Tree

Gifts from squirrels:
pinecones on my porch

Ragged broom sweeps them
away as dust

One sails higher
than the others,
dropping like a seed

Harvesting the Herbs

Summer's last light
Orange moon rising

Harvesting the herbs
for Winter use

Within the ground,
rows of carrots
slumber in their womb

With Jasmine, in the Kitchen

Kale, Jasmine rice,
soya sauce and sprouts

simmer on a stove –
steam scales the wall

You're seasoning
with parsley, dill –
I whisper your name

Camouflage

Grey cottontail
hopping in the yard

Grass losing its green
to Autumn's chill

A white rabbit
in the bushes
awaiting snowfall

January's Illusion

Winds blow the snow
into rippling drifts

The farmer's flat field,
a lake of white

Waves crest in gusts –
the barn a barge
in winter's mirage

Fluctuation

Icicles melt
in the afternoon

Puddles form below
reflecting sun

Evening freezes
fallen water
Mirror for the moon

Sandalwood

Incense rising
above the candles

Three monks meditate
in calm of night

Crescent moonlight
enters window,
tinting smoke and flame

sijo

“To read a poem is to hear it
with our eyes; to hear it
is to see it with our ears.”

— Octavio Paz

My garden blossoms by its roots,
the spray of water they absorb.
Keeping green each leaf and stem,
I rarely see them, these veins:
Below the ground, the earth
an unlit heart to which they reach.

A bald eagle, perched in the pine,
staring down at us below.
We are unwelcome visitors,
disturbing the bush and the brush.
Bald? No, *white*, like the mountain tops:
a *crown* of kingly feathers.

There is bamboo in the dill
and udon soup you've made for me.
A thoughtful gift, reminiscent
of our walk in the hills
where we spotted its growth
in places said were not possible.

The soup simmers softly
on the stove. I season,
basil sweet to the taste
as sage brings aroma to the air.
I stir the broth in circles,
steam ascending slowly to the ceiling.

This teapot without a handle
was a gift from a Buddhist monk.
He said *wait until it's warm,*
neither hot nor cold to the touch –
and when you pour from out of it
you'll find balance in your palms.

My Sensei stood by the river
that I said he'd never crossed.
*But I already have, he sighed,
for the world is round, not flat –
and the other side of the bank
is the place I'm presently on.*

tanka

“Poetry is just the evidence of life.
If your life is burning well,
poetry is just the ash.”

— Leonard Cohen

Our daughter races,
attempting to catch the birds.
If she had the wings
of a pigeon, she'd leave us,
dropping occasional notes.

The waves crash ashore
on this island's barren beach.
Turtles bury eggs,
labour slowly to the sea,
oblivious to outcomes.

Memories comfort
in the rest of yesterday;
the autumnal leaves
scraping upon my window:
red, yellow, a few still green

Fire is our future,
we learned in astrophysics.
Dharma says *detach*:
the sun to swell and swallow,
with even the ashes gone.

The final poem
is not of words on paper,
letters spelling thought,
but of spaces on this page,
how light the white of silence.

“A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness
and sings to cheer its own solitude
with sweet sounds.”

— Percy Bysshe Shelley



Andreas Gripp is the author of 22 books of poetry, 16 chapbooks, 2 novels, and 1 collection of short fiction. He lives in London, Ontario, with his wife Carrie Lee, and their two cats, Mabel and Mila.

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