

*Kiyoshi and Kiyoko
Tokutomi
Haiku Contest 2014*

Judges:

*Makoto Nakanishi
and*

Kaoru "Hana" Fujimoto

*Prize-Winning Haiku
with Judges' Comments*

Who the Tokutomis Were

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 five-seven-five 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.

(YTHS, November 2014)

First Prize – \$100

**morning solitude
on a rippling mountain stream
two fly fishermen**

Linda Papanicolaou

We chose “morning solitude” for its sincere objective description, which is an important element in creating haiku. This is a poem about exactly what the poet saw and felt.

Fly fishing is a very American kigo and we could imagine the big outdoors of America, its scenery, and the arc of the fishing line in the air in the quiet world of morning solitude. There is good harmony of objective description and subjective description here.

“Two” fishermen is effective in this haiku. The mention of a single person and solitude would be too close a connection. Two people in solitude is much more interesting. The people are together and yet each in his own place, finding solitude together, just as at the tea ceremony or at haiku meeting (*kukai*).

Second Prize – \$50

**early summer rain
Mom hums some forgotten tune
in a minor key**

Gregory Longenecker

This “early summer rain” haiku shows a good juxtaposition of the kigo and Mom humming. We picture this rain as having a lightness to it, with the sun breaking through the clouds and perhaps illuminating it in places.

Mom tries to have her memories break through as she tries to remember the words of an old forgotten song. When she hums the tune in a minor key in a bright summer rain, you can see the symmetry of the minor-key (“darker”) melody and the bright rain.

Third Prize – \$25

**an apple blossom
landing in the outstretched hand
of my little boy**

Mimi Ahern

A good haiku makes us feel good. This is a significant criterion when we choose haiku. The poet creates a positive view in writing this haiku because a little boy’s outstretched hand offers exactly this positive view to the world. Although this is not an unique haiku, it catches the haiku moment and we could feel the peacefulness.

HONORABLE MENTION

here and there a spot
on my son's first letter home --
early summer rain
Sheila Windsor

I hum to myself
scrubbing before surgery
early summer rain
Neal Whitman

the burial done
waiting on the car windshield
white apple blossoms
Priscilla H. Lignori

sparrow on the fence
it was there . . . then it wasn't
early summer rain
Kyle Sullivan

unobserved, the wren
trills a robust melody
belying his size
Christine Lamb Stern

slowly-rising moon
I dip a paddle into
the silent farm pond
Desiree McMurry

collecting pennies
for the children's hospital
early summer rain
Beverly Acuff Momoi

on a bridle path
the scent of apple blossoms
in my horse's mane
Debbie Strange

another blue sky,
another day without you . . .
apple blossom rain
Deborah P Kolodji

tonight's rising moon
whispers of jazz invite me
to the balcony
Poppy Herrin

Kigo for the Contest

The contest coordinator selected these kigo for the 2014 contest: for New Year, *toasting the New Year* and *first calligraphy*; for spring, *apple blossom* and *lamb*; for summer, *early summer rain* and *fly-fishing*; for autumn, *rising moon* and *chrysanthemum*; and for winter, *withered garden* and *wren*. Some modifications to the contest kigo were acceptable, including the alteration of a kigo from singular to plural (or vice versa).

See the YTHS web site
www.youngleaves.org for more information
including future contests.

CONTEST JUDGES

Makoto Nakanishi is a professor at Ehime University, Faculty of Education, in Matsuyama, Japan. He has conducted research extensively on literacy education in primary and secondary schools. In 2012 he presented his paper “Young Buds” at the 5th Haiku Pacific Rim Conference, cosponsored by YTHS. His English-language poems have been published in western journals and anthologies, including the 2012 *Take Five: Best Contemporary Tanka, Volume 4* (2012).

Kaoru “Hana” Fujimoto is a Councilor of the Haiku International Association (HIA) in Tokyo, Japan, and a member of the Japan Traditional Haiku Association. She writes for the haiku magazine *Tamamo* (waterweed), first published in 1930 by Takahama Kyoshi and his daughter, Tatsuko Hoshino. For ten years she has worked at the Tokyo Bureau of the *New York Times*. She appreciates being a judge with Nakanishi-sensei for Yuki Teikei Haiku Society.

Yuki Teikei
Haiku Society
Announces



Winners of the
Tokutomi
Haiku Contest 2014