Comment on “World Haiku 2020 No.16”

Tim Gardiner　UK

The latest issue of World Haiku contains a wide array of haiku in differing styles. In a recent essay published in Blithe Spirit, journal of the British Haiku Society, I mentioned the importance of minimalism in haiku, reminiscent of the spare music of many post-punk rock musicians in the UK. I prefer my haiku to be lean and tightly constructed with a simple rhythm. There are many excellent examples in the recent World Haiku; here are a few of my favourite examples:

Takyura Nara

long night

dregs

of a mechanical love

This haiku is wonderfully spare in its use of language, with two short lines and one long one where the sadness of a lifeless relationship becomes apparent.

John Martone

zero

that big

clear lens

Martone takes this minimalism even further, presenting a zen-like treatise on failure in just five perfectly chosen words.

Natsuo Kougyoku

holding Okinawa

hostage

fine weather in May

I just adore this haiku, with the short second line emphasising the writer’s displeasure with the fine weather. There may even be a clear climate change warning here.

Saki Inui

snow falls:

I want to return

to rain

Most of us long for snow in the UK in a world where climate change makes this a rare occurrence in the lowlands. The writer’s longing for rain is such a wonderful contrast with the snow fall, which also suggests underlying issues of isolation and despair.

Yoshihiko Furuta

burning a candle

is your ticket

on the streetcar

My final choice is this poem about a streetcar, which immediately brings to mind the classic film starring Marlon Brando. The key line is burning a candle; perhaps a metaphor for the transience of existence (wabi-sabi).

My own contribution to the minimalist poetry of the World Haiku Association conference, came in response to the emotional performance of the morin khuur player:

morin khurr rhythm my staccato tears

Hope this is the kind of thing you’re after Ban’ya. Also did you want the Hiroshima haibun below for Gin-yu? If not, it doesn’t matter.