

# Third Annual Jane Reichhold Haiga Competition Results

## Multi-Media Category

Judging this contest was a true delicacy and honor! I would like to thank not only Mike Rehling for asking me to take part in this exciting contest, but also everyone who submitted. Thank you for making my job difficult as I selected the winner and honorable mentions. Judging this contest was most certainly a learning experience as I looked at haiga in a way I had never done before, dissecting each piece of the image and the ku separately, then together. It was like starting a puzzle with just the edge pieces and working my way into the center to reveal the most beautiful image!

**Lori Ann Minor**

**Overall Winner: sedimentary rock the impact of his words**



**Robin Anna Smith**

There are several reasons this particular haiga grabbed my attention and really just stuck with me. First, the image juxtaposes with the poem so beautifully. When you read the second half of the ku “impact of his words”, not only do you find the juxtaposition, but also linking and shifting. By looking at the image, you expect the writer to go a more physical route, but instead it shifts away from the image with “words”.

I love the impact this piece has on the reader as there are two completely different interpretations that come to mind. The first being domestic abuse. The first part of the poem, “sedimentary rock” reminds me of the male of the household. While growing up, I was taught that the male head-of-house is the rock and foundation of the family. With this haiga, I am reminded of that. I get the impression that this man is abusive to his family. He has blood on his knuckles, indicating the possibility of physical abuse, then with the ku, we learn it’s his words that cause the most impact. As a victim of abuse myself, I have to say that while bruises heal, it’s the words that stick with me forever. To take this piece a step further, maybe the rock, being stagnant, represents the family member being stuck between a rock and a hard place in their decision to leave. With the rock being specifically sedimentary, which is naturally caused by weather and erosion, the family has become weathered by this man’s words. Or maybe, the man himself has become weathered, which leads me to my second interpretation; self abuse. What if the man in this haiga has bloody knuckles because he is hitting a wall in his life? Maybe he’s the one who feels stuck and has said many things and made a lot of decisions that he regrets. If it’s late in his life, or he feels as if he doesn’t have much life left, he could be realizing the impact he has made on other people and is beating himself up for it, with the weathered rock representing the damage he has done and the wall that he is physically, or metaphorically hitting. Either way, this is a brilliant piece no matter how you dissect it and is well deserving of a win!

### Honorable Mention: gender binary society labels me a zero



**Robin Anna Smith**

What can I say other than pure perfection! This is a great example of the image adding to a poem, which is exactly what I'm looking for in a haiga. The ku by itself is just so powerful, but adding the binary code into the image makes the poem pop even more. Gender binary is the distinct separation of male and female and non-binary is not identifying with one gender over another. With all of the hate from society on gender identity, it becomes clear that society labeling this person a zero most likely means that the writer identifies as something other than the norm, such as non-binary. Perhaps the writer can't even see themselves as a "ten" because of what society has said about them.

Going back to the binary code in the background of the image, it's almost like society is talking in a secret code about this person behind their back. We've all been there when we see or hear someone talking about us, or even feel the judgemental stares without anyone having to say a word. I get the sense that this person deals with this more than they should ever have to.

There's also a bit of a careless attitude toward the situation. Perhaps the writer has come to peace with it all in a "so what?" flare. I don't think I'd get that same perspective if the ku was three lines, but the one-liner lends itself well to that reaction. The flare of the ku, in my opinion, is quite stark. There's just this "I don't fit in? That's cool. Thanks society" approach that really makes me smile. We've still got a long way to go, but look how far we've come!

Honorable Mention: dire prognosis / what does a housecat know of death



Marianne Paul

This haiga wouldn't have the same effect if it were just a photo of a housecat. What juxtaposes so beautifully with this ku is the digital painting of what could be a housecat, or even a tiger, which is unclear due to the close-up of the feline's face, leaving it up to the viewer to decide for themselves. If you look closely enough into the cat's eye, you can almost see the silhouette of a person raising their arm. Is their owner waving goodbye?

It is no secret that cats are said to sense illness and it's not uncommon for mother cats to abandon their sick kittens. Perhaps this cat has smelled death upon her own young and will soon leave them to die. Or, what if it's the cat's beloved human unknowingly victimised by death's embrace? If cats can sense illness, maybe the cat knows before their owner and the sweet feline friend is trying to comfort them the best way they know how. I think the image genuinely lends its hand to this interpretation as the intensity of the cat's eye represents the third eye, or sixth sense that senses death.

The myth that cats have nine lives really comes into play here as well. Perhaps it's the cat who has faced death, one, two, or many times. Does this housecat know of death because he has experienced it first hand? Maybe even being reincarnated into a brave, majestic, fierce Tiger ready to face death head on for the last time.

What kind of loss will this cat face? Loss of child, loss of owner, or loss of self?

**Honorable Mention: forgiveness the pond's calm face becomes mine**



*forgiveness the pond's calm face becomes mine*

**Sandi Pray**

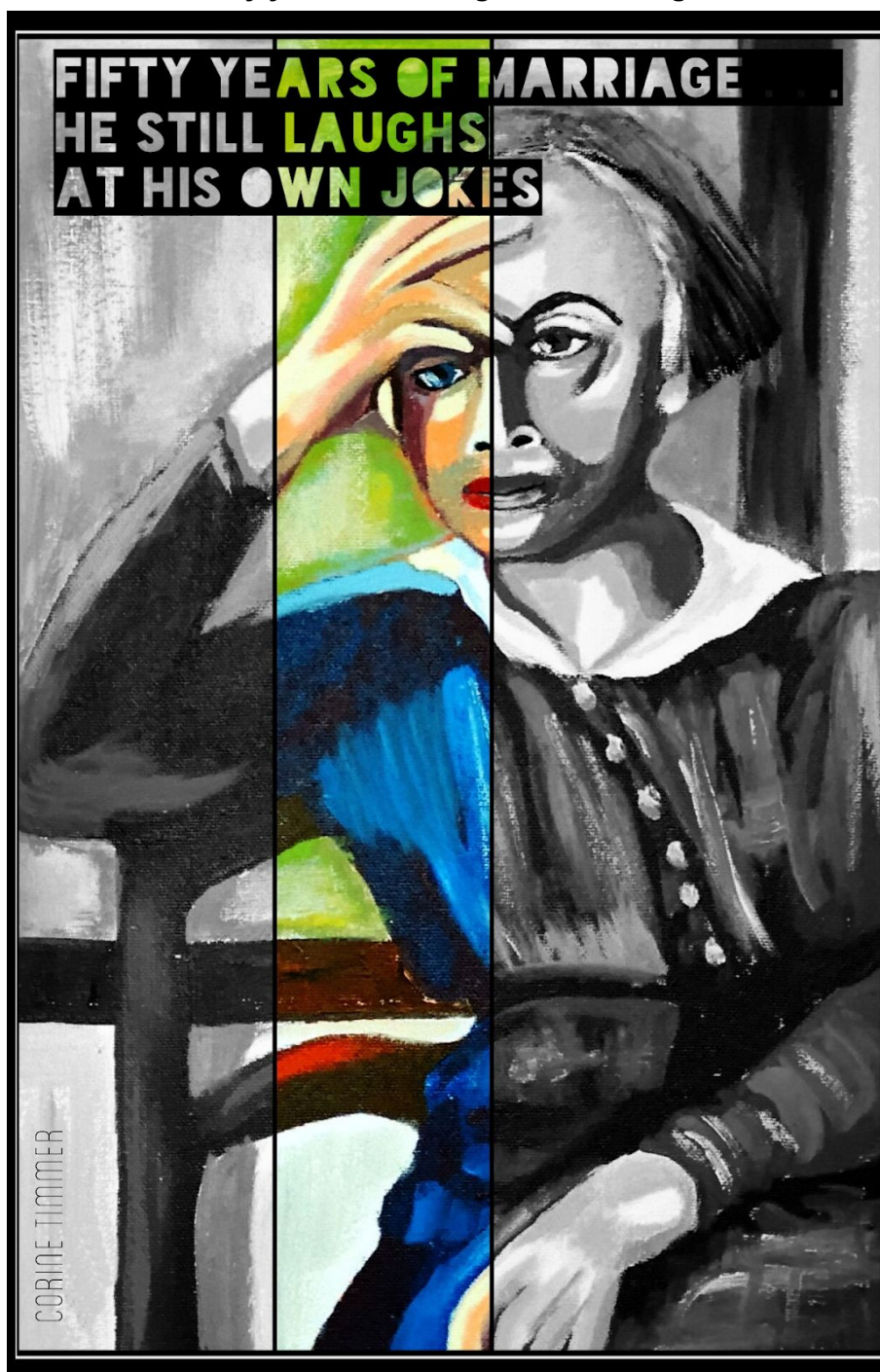
This is truly a stunning piece! The delicacy of the ku genuinely compliments the intricacy of the image by creating a parallel and juxtaposition. To me, this haiga symbolizes the art of letting go

and freeing yourself of guilt, anger, and grudges. Ponds are a resting place. It's where you go to calm the mind and practice tranquility. I think the writer is expressing the sense of peace and serenity that comes after forgiveness, whether it's you that is forgiving someone else, or that someone has forgiven you of transgressions against them.

The image gives a pristine sensation because it is calm. While simple, straightforward, and delicate, there are still many aspects to focus on. One thing in particular that stuck out to me in the image is the water rippling behind the bird, not around it. This reads as if the writer has finally let go of a grudge they have been lugging around for quite some time. Withholding grudges comes anger and I think the writer shows a gorgeous comparison between letting go of this anger and the calm of the pond. "the pond's calm face becomes mine" is such a lovely transition as perhaps the writer has pondered forgiveness for quite some time.

To learn forgiveness is the ultimate unconditional love and we see that in the beauty of this entire piece.

Honorable Mention: fifty years of marriage / he still laughs / at his own jokes



Corine Timmer

I must admit this piece made me giggle. It's such a pure moment and is completely relatable as we see this often, whether it be grandparents, a spouse, or strangers we encounter. The image is brilliant. This woman is clearly "so over" her husband's jokes she's probably heard over and over for the majority of their marriage. There's such an eyeroll moment here that I love because

it shows the reality and every day human nature that every couple has or will experience. I also have to comment on the color choices in this image, as there is the small sliver of color between black and white, showing that their marriage is not dead, but fully alive and well. Maybe the husband even cracks a new joke-- one of those punny "dad" or "grandpa" jokes that makes his wife just chuckle as she shakes her head.

The ku compliments this piece so well by playing out a story. There is a clear transition between the freshness of the marriage into "fifty years later" and every aspect of the entire haiga shows this, including her clothes and wrinkles, making it known that she is indeed older. The look of frustration on her face just gives this moment of "you're still doing that, huh?" and I love the predictability shown in knowing he's probably going to keep laughing at his jokes. I don't think it's that her husband has become predictable, but instead that fifty years together means she has learned his every mannerism and knows him better than he knows himself.

Overall, this piece shows a real moment that can be applied to a situation we have experienced first hand.

Photographic Category  
Steve Hodge

First Place

Hifsa Ashraf



This haiga works for me on many levels. On one level, the idea of losing oneself in the act of seeking self enlightenment affirms the purpose of the search for enlightenment. In her journey toward enlightenment, the poet finds that she has lost her “self” in the process. On another level, there is subtle irony – even humor – in the idea that one might lose oneself in the process of seeking *self* enlightenment.

This is a fine senryu on its own but the image presents the same dichotomy that the senryu does, at least to my Western eye. I see crosses in the three wooden panels between the windows. The windows themselves might represent enlightenment, while the crosses might indicate that the poet has found herself considering the possibility that philosophies other than her own might hold the key to enlightenment. Or she might have found a universal key to enlightenment; one which includes the collective wisdom of a multitude of philosophies. While I'm sure that the track light in the top-center of the cupola is coincidental, I can't help smiling when I imagine someone who is seeking enlightenment looking up to find an electric light above his or her head.

Am I reading too much into this haiga? Maybe. I'm not a person of profound religious or philosophical beliefs. But I like this haiga for the possibilities that it presents to me.

Second Place

Alexis Rotella



This haiga hit home for me. A friend had a stillborn daughter when we were in college. The experience was devastating for her, of course, but she said that when she first learned that her daughter had been stillborn, it didn't feel real to her; that she felt emotionally numb until she saw the baby. Even then, she said, she didn't cry. She looked at her daughter and thought about the life she might have lived – imagined her going to school, getting married, having children, growing old. It wasn't until she saw how tiny her daughter's perfect little fingernails were that she finally broke down.

For a brief moment when I first saw this image it appeared to me to be of a woman's pubic hair. The image of lifeless flowers, void of color, reinforced that first impression after I'd read the poem and understood the tragic depth of this haiga. I'm not sure what the poet had in mind when she added the birds ascending toward the flowers, but I like to think that they are a sign of hope – loving family and friends flocking to the side of a mother who will need their love and support to help her start to rebuild her shattered life.

Like the experience of knowing a friend who went through this terrible pain, this beautiful and tragic haiga will stay with me for a long time.

## Third Place

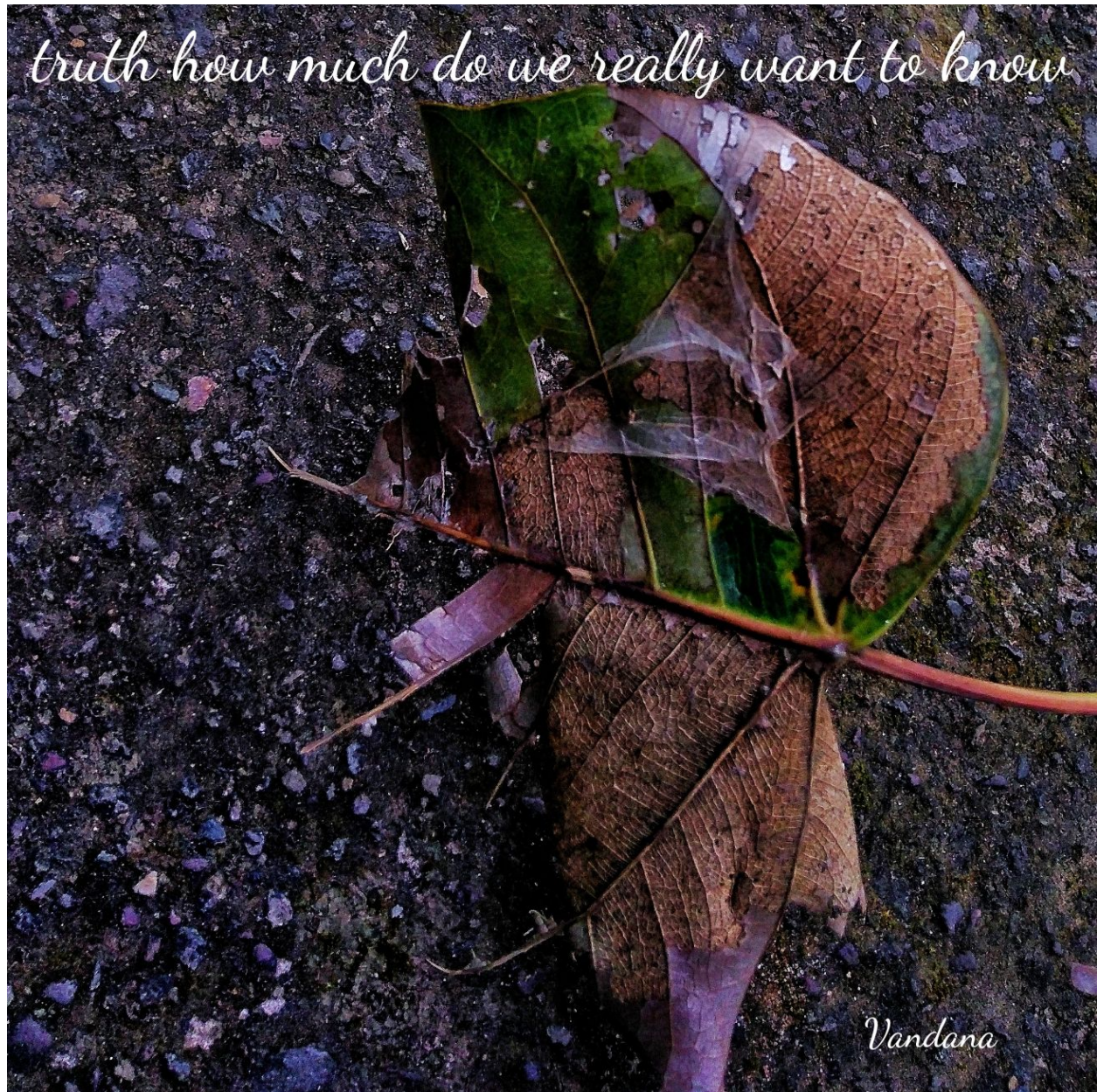
Barbara Kaufmann



I loved this haiga the moment I saw it. As with many senryu, I like its simple premise – two people taking advantage of a steady rain to drop what they were doing and sit and hold hands. No metaphors or profound hidden meanings. Does the “steady” rain indicate that the couple are going steady or have enjoyed a steady relationship? Nope. Not for me. Does the wilted flower indicate that trouble may lay ahead for this couple? Nope again. Is it a romantic couple? A parent and child? Siblings? Who cares! It’s a lovely moment and a lovely image. That’s more than enough for me.

Runners Up

Vandana Parashar



## Carol Raisfeld



Christina Sng



Traditional Category  
Ron C. Moss

1st prize



promising me  
we will find a way  
stage four cancer

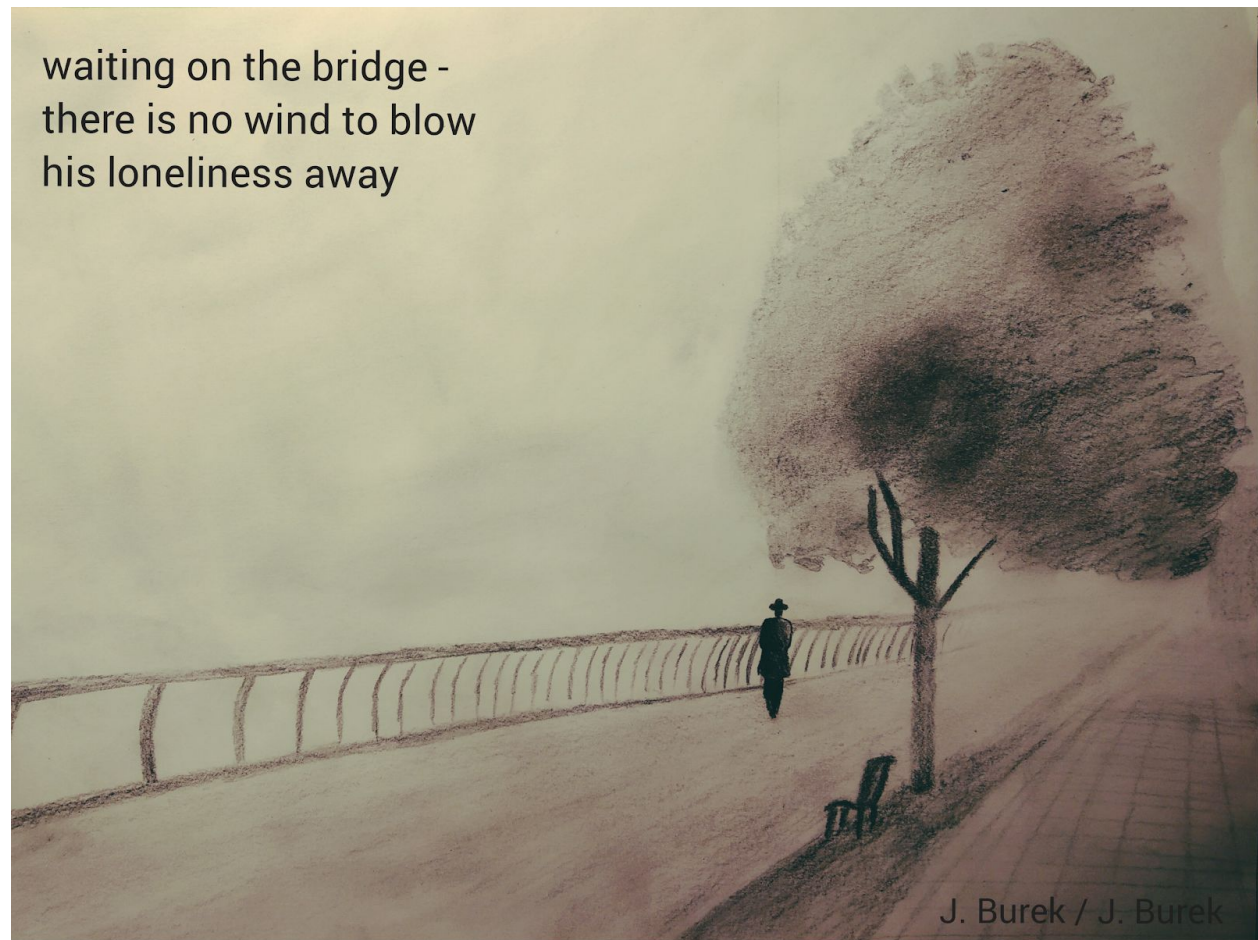
*Christina Sng*

Christina Sng

promising me  
we will find a way  
stage four cancer

Simple, effective, and powerful, these are the first things that come to mind when I first saw this very effective haiga. Many of the traditional components are there, from the light simple touch of the brushwork, to the sparse but emotional senryu that resonates deeply. We see the ants crossing what looks like a stick over a puddle, which is a lovely link to finding the way and a promise of hope. This haiga reminded me a lot of the classic ink paintings and their ability to say so much in a few deft strokes and not overwhelm but compliment the words.

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize



**Jasmina Burek - haiku / Jana Burek - drawing**

waiting on a bridge  
there is no wind to blow  
the loneliness away

I was immediately struck by the deep wabi-sabi feeling of the drawing, which created a mood that worked with the words and made it timeless. This could have been written in another time and place, and the drawing is expressive and full of power and energy. We have the words of a journey and bridge, which could easily be a reflection of the passage of our own lives. The loneliness that we sometimes feel, and the winds of change that move continually move us.

3rd Prize



buddha like  
nature  
i swear  
at the guy  
who  
cuts me  
off

p.a. babusci

Pamela A. Babusci

buddha like  
nature  
i swear  
at he guy  
who cuts me off

A very amusing senryu, which is executed with a strong meaning, which is reflected in the equally expressive brushwork. The vertical placement of the words adds a pleasing design element and adds to the feeling of emotion and force. So much is revealed in an individual's brushwork and the use of this traditional method is layered with meaning and power.

Highly Commended

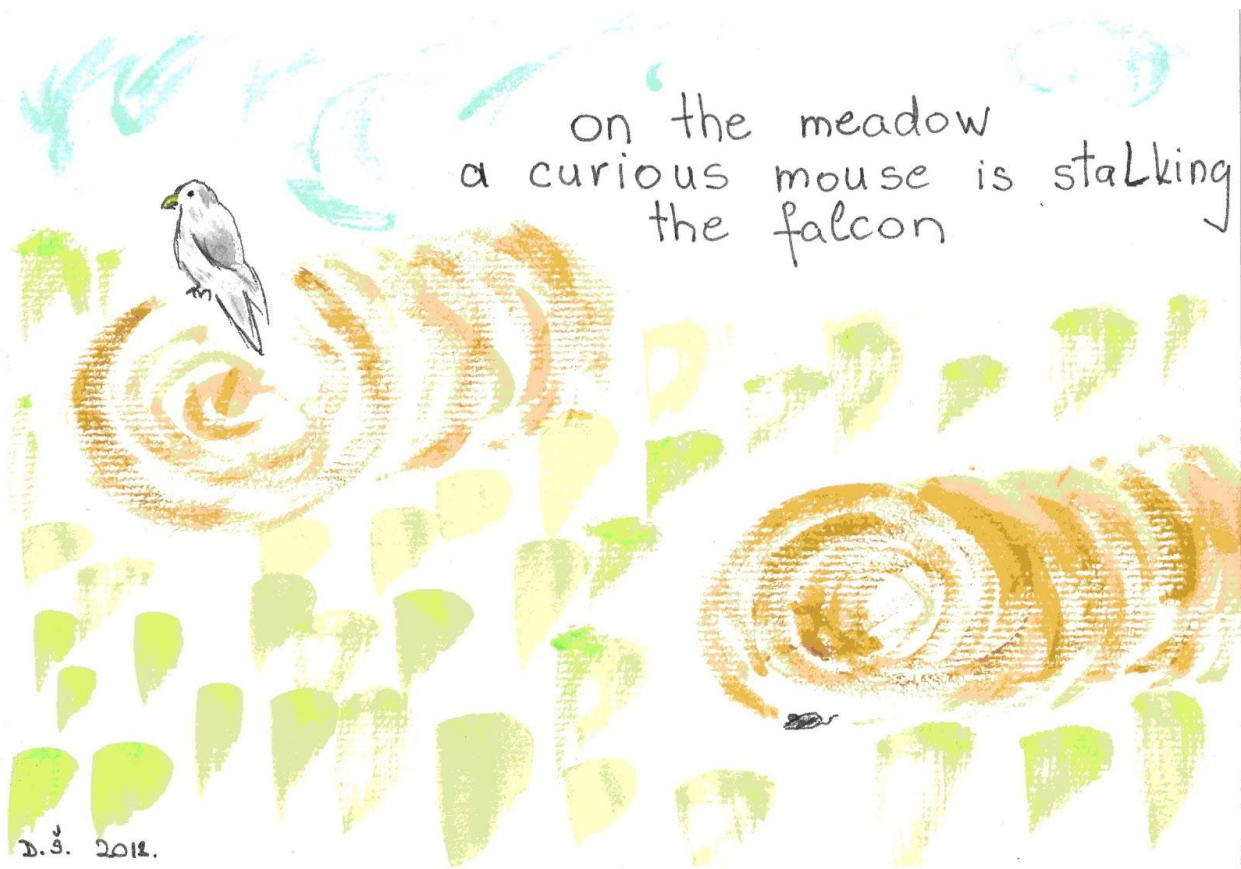


**Poet: Johnnie Johnson Hafernik (haiga signed JJH)**  
**Artist: Dorothy S. Messerschmitt (haiga signed Dody)**

weathered sign  
"caterpillar sanctuary"  
none in sight

This delightful watercolour flower is very striking and executed with skill and flair and blends well with the placement of the calligraphy. The shapes of the petals connect with the mention of a caterpillar even, if we cannot find it. There is a humorous touch to this haiga, in the best tradition of senryu – not overstated but enough to bring a smile and let us ponder.

Highly Commended



**Dubravka Šćukanec**

on the meadow  
a curious mouse is stalking  
the falcon

A lovely drawing with colour work that gives this entry a light touch, treasured by the masters of old. We also have wry humour in the best tradition of Issa, which makes this a delightful composition. The carefully written calligraphy shows a concentrated mind, which blends nicely with the colour and shapes of the drawing.

Highly Commended

*unseasonal snow*

*a wren's song trickles*

*over my whiskey*



**John Hawkhead**

unseasonal snow  
a wren's song trickles  
over my whisky

The trickling wren's song over the surprising image of whisky, makes this an interesting haiga. The pen and watercolour wren is beautifully done and shows the artist's familiarity with the subject. The light touch of the wren balanced on the edge, gives a well-balanced design element. The generous use of white space adds to this effect and strengthens the feeling of snow.