

FULL CIRCLE

a selection of haiku

John Xavier

*And the days are not full enough
And the nights are not full enough
And life slips by like a field mouse
Not shaking the grass*

Ezra Pound

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PREFACE

The way we look at the world transforms who we are. In writing haiku, the poet is self-consciously striving to achieve a tranquility within themselves to arrive at the profundity of individual moments. Because of this, haiku requires a greater development of personality than most poetic forms. True haiku at least. In regard to my own achievements in this respect, I must admit that not every poem has been entirely successful but, I have had the good fortune to experience instances of seemingly absolute clarity as a result of practicing this venerable art. Of course I owe this not only to my own writing but also to reading the work of others, especially those written by the original Japanese masters. If this book can provide anything remotely similar for another then it'll have fulfilled its purpose. And if there's one thing above all that I've learned from haiku, it's that we gain most by increasing our own sense of appreciation.

AUTUMN

shrivelled leaves –
floating in an empty
goldfish pond

sunflowers with
drooping black faces –
clouds gathering

amid sand and logs –
mice roaming
in daylight

a calm night –
I listen to the waves
rolling in the dark

the injured ladybugs
always find my
shoulder

orange peel in dirt
and the black shimmer
of gathering ants

shaded streets
where yellow leaves
shower the dawn

swaying in
the evening wind –
an empty bird house

wrestling dogs –
owners socializing
with coffees in hand

a sudden gust
and a plume of leaves
scatter the street

chestnuts and
their exploded husks –
I watch my step

hosing down a wall –
a tired old man
shrugs off the chill

gleaming, vanishing –
flies caught in twilight
through the trees

waiting for sunset –
the chill breeze sneaking
inside my jacket

stooping heron –
coolly eyes an enamored
photographer

ripples in the lake –
after the loon
takes off

parting clouds –
now suddenly the
yellow grass is golden

the weeds also –
withering from the
seeping autumn

eddies in leaf piles –
squirrels sharing
their secrets

a neon sign –
the falling leaves
in violet light

mist, headlights,
and an umbrella
broken on the curb

dark pigeons
landing in golden leaves,
scattering them

idle in the night –
a black Ford Mustang
gleams with city lights

scarlet
and pale pink –
leaves along concrete

autumn –
in city parks
Midas wreaks havoc

city worker
with a leaf blower –
the crows scatter too

the gospels of graffiti
across garbage bins
in empty alleys

fenced-off jungle gym –
orange leaves
piling up

dark glistening streets –
black pools tingling
with soft rain

an old man busking –
his dreams
never came true

Muslim girl in
a head scarf wearing
sandals in autumn twilight

spiraling leaf –
a golden death lost
in an explosion

the old hotel in autumn –
ivy crawling up it
like fire

forty seven
brown pine cones –
ten thousand orange needles

rain patter on my window –
plus here and there,
fireworks

crushed beer cans
lying in the grass –
last night's fun

fire crackers
and wild screaming –
the joys of devils

beside some pools
left by last night's rain,
a goblin mask

November begins –
red poppies everywhere
like open wounds

the cars screeched,
the witnesses rushed,
the blood pooled

midnight in neon –
the overflowing drains
dashed by cars

books piled
along the street –
rain got to them first

today only one
busker braves the chill –
autumn setting in

pinned to their chests –
the only red flowers
I see now

bright blue sky –
amber leaves encircling
the tennis courts

squirrels on a
chain link fence –
scattering from me

unseen waterfall –
arriving at my feet
in a slow stream

leaf fall in darkness –
lit yellow street lamps
under a pale sky

in drizzling rain –
sallow hued leaves
strewn across red brick

imagining a heron's cry
underneath their
wasting nests

the rain on my window
in synch with these
impatient fingers

rain clouds –
still the moonlight
pierces them

one bee –
stumbling over
fading irises

fierce wind –
leaves colliding
with the passing cars

downtown –
wind thrashing
the tops of bamboo

well-kept lawns –
dew glistening
from street lamps

a tree's shadow –
amid the orange leaves,
mushrooms hiding

steam curling
from a house vent –
the silent well-lit street

grimacing
porch pumpkin –
a crow playing dentist

lampposts at night –
the soft rain falling
in their auras

crows gathered
at the tree's base –
foraging through leaves

leaves crowd the pool
of a condo complex –
red, yellow, green, orange

father and son –
two red umbrellas
crossing a stone bridge

strewn leaves –
their water stains
left on stones

parked cars –
varying leaf piles
betraying time

flooded train tracks –
rotting beams buried in
shards of granite

black power lines –
the perched crow
gently grooms a friend

white autumn sky –
impassive as the
bright leaves fall to earth

passing clouds –
the sun, a bull charging
a toreador's cape

empty tennis court –
now only the leaves going
back and forth

crows foraging –
creeping dirt patches
swallowing the grass

copious
orange berries
bend drooping stems

a dropped rake –
the abandoned park
still unfinished

dogs barking –
the peaceful sound
of rain disrupted

a screeching train –
people's lips
moving

rain at night –
under umbrellas,
faces, phone lit

WINTER

the first snow –
a barrage melting
into sidewalks

cold morning –
on distant mountains,
snow-capped trees

early winter –
snow patches
surviving in shade

silver pool –
Medusa's gazed
on all these bare trees

stirring a pot –
my thoughts as tangled
as these noodles

snow at night –
gleaming in the air
of well-lit alleys

her long hair –
snowflakes vanishing
one by one

under a fir tree –
watching the snowfall
spiral in the wind

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