
REVIEWS

The Collected Haiku of Raymond Roseliep, edited by Randy & Shirley Brooks (Taylorville, Il: Brooks Books, 2018). 223 pages; 6" x 9". Hardcover. ISBN 978-1-929820-15-3. Price: \$40.00 from www.brooksbookshaiku.com

Reviewed by George Swede

Poet, priest, and educator Raymond Roseliep studied and worked for most of his sixty-six-year life at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. A year after his death in 1983, his colleagues and local residents held a memorial. The event attracted a number of poets from outside Iowa, including Randy and Shirley Brooks, Lee Gurga, Anita Krumins, Robert Spiess, and me—a photo from that event hangs in my study showing four of us: Randy, Bob, Anita, and me.

I provide these details for the sake of full disclosure about this reviewer's prior interest in Roseliep (although we never met) as well as my long and close association with the publishers of his collected haiku. In 1982, Randy and Shirley published a chapbook of mine, *All of Her Shadows* (under their imprint High/Coo Press). In 1983, High/Coo Press put out *Cicada Voices: Selected Haiku of Eric Amann 1966-1979* which I edited. Then, in 2000, Randy and Shirley published my selected haiku, *Almost Unseen*, under their new imprint, Brooks Books. Furthermore, Randy and I co-edited *Global Haiku: Twenty-five Poets World-wide* for an English publisher (Iron Press, 2000).

A DUBUQUE ICON

Raymond Roseliep has achieved what most other poets can only dream of—supporters of his poetry are still active thirty-five years after his death. The Roseliep Legacy Group “helped establish the special

collection of Raymond Roseliep's personal library, memorabilia, correspondence and notebooks at the Loras College Library" and "helped support publication of this collection" (Publisher's Note).

Among the patrons are two individuals well-known to readers of this journal: Bill Pauly, whose work has appeared frequently in *Modern Haiku*, and Donna M. Bauerly, whose literary biography, *Raymond Roseliep: Man of Art Who Loves the Rose* (The Haiku Foundation, 2015) was reviewed very favorably in *Modern Haiku*, 47.2 (2016).

A GIANT STEP IN HAIKU SCHOLARSHIP

Roseliep was a prolific haiku poet, and published constantly—from when he began to write in the form in 1960, to the time of his death. Despite their subject's enormous output, Randy and Shirley Brooks found all the citations for each individual haiku, as well as for each haiku sequence, and organized them according to the date of first publication, all painstaking work that would have flummoxed many scholars. Also admirable, the editors avoid making judgments about the quality of their subject's haiku—apart from a few forgivable slips. Their goal is to provide the data for others to analyze. In other words, casting a critical eye has been left to the casual reader, the fan, and the scholar.

I have only one quibble—the editors do not provide any numerical data, e.g., the total number of haiku in the collected works—any such tabulations are left to the reader. Having been trained in experimental psychology, where numbers are the chief currency, I braved doing a count of all the poems in *Collected Haiku*, including the links of all the sequences. Actually, I took a shortcut—added-up the haiku on every tenth page (20 of them) and calculated their mean (14) and then multiplied the mean by the number of pages on which poems appear (190). The total ended-up being 2,660 (more or less).

The editors have organized Roseliep's published haiku in order from 1962 to 2018. For example, scholars wanting to know what Roseliep published in 1974 have only to thumb through the pages to the heading for that year and find four individual haiku and one sequence as well as a full publication history listed below each composition.

With such a user-friendly system, anyone can easily calculate other information, such as the year of Roseliep's smallest output and the year with the largest—the smallest was 1972 (p. 39) with three haiku and the largest was 1980 (pp. 128-154) with an astonishing 242 individual haiku and 24 sequences. What accounts for the vast difference in output? A possible answer can be found at the end of the book where the editors provide "A Roseliep Chronology" taken from Donna Bauerly's literary biography. It reveals that in 1972 Roseliep visited the Mayo Clinic for "his continuing voice difficulties" and was "diagnosed as having 'nervous tension'" (p. 222). Presumably, during that year his state of mind was too distracted to pursue his muse.

Other tidbits can quickly be discovered, such as Roseliep's most widely published haiku (p.138).

Campfire extinguished,
the woman washing dishes
in a pan of stars

This poem appeared in twenty-four publications, starting with being the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Contest winner in 1980 to last appearing in *Frogpond*, 39:2 (2016), p. 98.

Overall, as far as I am aware, Randy and Shirley Brooks have created the best compendium yet published for the output of an English-language haiku poet. Undoubtedly, it will become the baseline for all future such efforts.

ROSELIEP'S STYLE AND SCOPE, 1962-1969 (PP.16-33)

Most of Roseliep's work during the 1960s involves sequences, often with each link given its own title in capitals (p. 23):

THREE NOTES TO TOKYO

THESE CHOPSTICKS

you have sent are one
 gift I hold less gingerly
 than your giving hand.

SLANTED EYES

disentangle you
 entirely, and I haven't
 who am so wide eyed.

YOUR RICE FIELDS

ply their needle point
 far from the winter craft in
 my picture window.

Roseliep's first individual haiku appeared in 1965, and has both a title as well as an unorthodox form for that decade (p.22):

LOVE SONG

The
 gentian
 sleeps
 in
 waters
 that
 are
 your
 eyes.

Note the punctuation—a period was the typical way for Roseliep to end either a link in a sequence or a stand-alone haiku.

The next year, 1966, was a breakout for Roseliep’s individual haiku with fourteen appearing in mainstream journals (pp. 25-26). The following one reveals the sly sense of humor that permeates the range of his work (p. 26):

ESCHATOLOGY

While all your bowers
crisp in heat, gardener Christ,
have one more rose leap.

In 1968, Roseliep experimented with a number of acrostic haiku (p. 27).

“RUMMAGING INTO HIS LIVING”

W eathered by
H eight
A nd wind
U pon
D ark Pegasus, he’s
E yeing your
N ow.

Roseliep ends the decade of the 1960s with a visual poem in which the word “egg” is repeated numerous times in an oval shape (p. 33). Haiku dedicated to various poets and other figures first made their appearance in this decade and continued to various degrees throughout Roseliep’s career.

ROSELIEP’S STYLE AND SCOPE, 1970-79 (PP. 33 TO 127)

The decade of 1970-79 was Roseliep’s most productive and experimental for both haiku and visual poems. He continued with capitalized titles at first; then, in 1971, started to write some title-free haiku (p. 37).

wind bringing redleaf
and redface
to my door

Father, I called
running through cornfield,
met by scarecrow

Along with his abandonment of titles, he also stopped using terminal punctuation.

His interest in visual poems continued in the early 1970s (p. 40).

NUN

FACE TO FACE

no
n
e

g
O!
d

In 1977, he developed an interest in one-line haiku which flourished briefly (p. 80).

after he left the cricket's stiletto

one bed the moon we take little space

For most of this decade, however, Roseliep cemented the style for which he became most widely known (p. 108 & p. 120).

brushing my sins
the muscatel breath
of the priest

the firefly you caught
lights the church you make
with your hands

In 1978, Roseliep adopted the Japanese haigo (haiku name) of Sobi Shi. As the editors explain, "In Japanese, 'sobi' means exactly 'rose' in the world of poetry. 'Shi' is literally 'child,' but for haigo 'shi' means 'a man of art.'" Thus, Sobi Shi is the clever Japanese equivalent of the Germanic meaning of Roselieb: "rose / love," or "lover of the rose." A more general translation could be "a man of art who loves the rose (p. 104)."

Year of the horse:
 Sobi-Shi's heart goes thudding
 softly through the wood
 (p.103)

ROSELIEP'S STYLE AND SCOPE, 1980-1983 (PP. 128 TO 200)

In the four years prior to his death, Roseliep's muse triggered a tsunami of 616 individual haiku and 75 sequences.

By then his style had firmly settled into mostly uniform three-line haiku as well as, once in a while, the indentation of one or two lines or the placement of a word or a sequence on a diagonal.

Occasionally, Roseliep returned to a capitalized title for a stand-alone haiku, sometimes not in need of one (as in "Parent"), but, on other occasions, aptly so (as in "Nobel Recipient"). Notice, however, the inconsistent use of the period which happened more than once with such pieces (159).

PARENT

armload of child
 unloaded . . .
 the weight of night.

NOBEL RECIPIENT

in her old sweater
 crumbs the birds missed
 in Calcutta

As shown with the last example, praises of famous persons continued during this final period. This happened even more frequently with sequences (p.136).

THE EIGHTEENTH OF SEPTEMBER
(Katherine Ann Porter: 1890-1980)

on one so still
the shadow
of a bird

out of what mist
one hand still
holding

her one
“we’ll meet”
still

Although Roseliep’s style was generally uniform in this period, he engaged in a second flurry of one-liners. The first was in 1977 when he published eight (see above) and the other in 1983 he put out thirteen more (pp. 196-197).

dewdrop juggling the morning star

cripple his shadow climbing the oak

ROSELIEP’S HAIKU PUBLISHED AFTER HIS DEATH, 1984 TO 2018
(PP. 200—206)

Since the year after Roseliep’s death, sixty-eight of his haiku and two of his sequences were posthumously published in various publications, including eight in this collection.

A mystery emerges about fifteen of these poems published in *Modern Haiku* from 1985 to 1994. They all appeared under the name of Raymond Ray with three of them co-authored by Rupert Spear. While the editors reveal that these were pseudonyms for Raymond Roseliep and Robert Spiess, they do not speculate as to why the fake names were used.

Nor do they explain why nine different issues of *Modern Haiku* were involved over a period of ten years after Roseliep's death. They have left these puzzles for other scholars to solve,

ROSELIEP'S LEGACY ASSURED

Poets toil in relative obscurity compared to those in other literary endeavors. The vast majority know that their work, no matter how well received, will eventually be tossed into history's waste bin. The only chance for them to avoid this fate depends on their having followers—relatives, friends, scholars—willing to commit money and time to keep the memory of their work alive.

The Collected Haiku of Raymond Roseliep is a scholarly triumph for Randy and Shirley Brooks and also proves that the support of The Roseliep Legacy Group is well-deserved. While readers will quibble about whether many of the haiku are true to the form, this doesn't matter. All of the work within is poetry. And, in the end, this will be all that matters.

Discovered beside Roseliep's deathbed was this poem, believed to be his last (p. 205):

of berry
nip
you dissolve

Sour Pickle: One-Line Haiku, by Stuart Quine (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2018). 108 pages; 6" x 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-910185-95-7. Price: \$16.00 from www.albapublishing.com

Reviewed by Dave Read

Sour Pickle, the debut collection of Stuart Quine, is a book that exclusively features one-line haiku. Quine utilizes this short form as his vehicle for tackling themes such as the process of change and the