

民旬

folk Ku



a journal by
king river press



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Design, editing and publishing by King River Press. Cover design is a fusion of ideas inspired by out-of-print public domain images from international folk story books. Shiki's haiku herein were sourced from the Shiki Museum website: shiki-museum.com with translations from the Japanese by King River Press.

Image of Shiki adapted from portrait by 中村不折 Nakamura Fusetsu (1866-1943). Some details of the short introductory biography of Shiki were sourced from Beichman, Janine, "Masaoka Shiki: His Life and Works," *The Haiku Foundation Digital Library*, accessed May 2023.

<https://www.thehaikufoundation.org/omeka/items/show/2573>

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This copy: PDF e-book (free)
Print copy: ISBN 978-0-6483088-8-1

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a journal in honour of Master Masaoka Shiki (1867 - 1902)



when I die
what kind of lantern
should I wish for?

われ死なばどんな燈籠を願ふべき

Masaoka Shiki – Autumn 1893

welcome to the inaugural edition of 民句 folk ku

In 2022, King River Press coined the term *folk ku* – 民句 min-ku in Japanese or mǐn jù in Chinese – to honour the memory of Japan's Meiji era writer, Master Masaoka Shiki 正岡子規 (1867 - 1902) – the founder of standalone haiku 俳句.

During the early 1890s, with a concern that Japanese verse was dying, and partly inspired (and perhaps threatened) by the influence of Western-style Victorian era literature and realist painting, Shiki sought to popularise and simplify haiku 俳句 and later tanka 短歌, by proposing a new style he called 'sketching from life' – shasei 寫生, which is the Chinese term for sketch. It is believed that the reforms Shiki pioneered saved Japanese short-form poetry from an uncertain death, which we should perhaps be forever grateful for.

Shiki was born in 1867 into a low-ranking samurai family in Matsuyama City, Iyo/Ehime Prefecture, Japan. Shiki's father died when he was young and he was then brought up by his mother, Yae (a sewer), and later also cared for by his younger sister, Ritsu. When young, Shiki received tutoring in literature, including Chinese classics from his grandfather and other teachers.

In 1883, Shiki moved to Tokyo with his maternal guardian/uncle and studied up to middle school. In Tokyo, he further developed his interest in politics and at one stage considered a career in that area. But later after studying at Tokyo/Imperial University, he left politics behind and pursued writing. Around that time, in his late teens, Shiki also became very interested in baseball and writing Japanese short-form poetry. Shortly after this, in 1889, he sadly contracted tuberculosis.

During the Sino-Japanese war (1894 - 1895), Shiki was posted as an army correspondent in Dalian 大連, China, where he also did some travel and met with fellow writers and artists. Unfortunately, this post was shortened as the living conditions were very poor and his health deteriorated. On return to Japan, he was hospitalised and almost died. Shiki spent the remainder of his life suffering from tuberculosis, eventually dying of associated symptoms in 1902 at the young age of 35.

Despite being ill for much of his later years, Shiki wrote more than 24,000 haiku and related verses, led groups of poets and published a range of works. Many of these are archived on the Shiki Museum website, which without, we could not have accessed the wide variety of his life's works - some of these haiku are included within. We are extremely grateful and thankful for this extraordinary public resource.

Shiki is known throughout the haiku world for his curious, honest, simple, matter of fact, down-to-earth verses, his love of baseball, food (especially persimmons), travel and the natural world. His life was one of relative poverty, great losses and suffering, but nevertheless, he threw himself tirelessly and whole-heartedly into all the things he was passionate about and held dear.

Adopting Shiki's first principle, *shasei* 寫生, the haiku, senryu and tanka within the pages of 民句 folk ku journal are all written from real life experiences. It is therefore with deep respect and in honour of Master Shiki that King River Press presents the verses within 民句 folk ku journal as a gift in his memory.

We would like to thank all the talented and generous poets from around the world who trusted us with their precious folk memories; some very personal, all super special. This diverse collection of haiku, senryu and tanka capture a myriad of life experiences spanning the length and breadth of life, death and beyond.

Thank you to contributors and readers for being a part of our inaugural issue. We are looking forward to the second edition, which will be open for submissions mid-September to mid-October; to be published in November 2023.

Enjoy!

SB Wright – Rural South Australia

withered mallee
passing, all its leaves
take flight

tuberose
Nana lights the funeral pyre
behind both ears

Kimberly A. Horning – St. Augustine Florida USA

Cat Stone – Tasmania Australia

A witness to all
life's trials, troubles and treasures.
His battered old hat.

in a wheelchair
still I double knot
mother's shoes

Bryan Rickert – Belleville Illinois USA

Marcia Burton – Salt Spring Island Canada

a little tug boat
emerging from the grey mist
tows spring behind it

pond breeze
reeds heavy with dew
and moonlight

Ron C. Moss – Tasmania Australia

Masaoka Shiki – Autumn 1888

糸萩の露こぼしけり青蛙

dew drops from
the bush clover drip upon
a green tree frog

Delicate moonshine
thorns sharp as a witch's glare
a long, hard winter.

Blackthorn

Anna Chorlton – Liskeard Cornwall UK

SB Wright – Rural South Australia

from the wood stove
a memory of grandma's perfect
sponge cake

building sandcastles
sky darkens FLASH! thunder
Dad's arms, I'm safe

In memory of my father, Jan Rotsteeg (1929-1978)

zandtaartjes bakken
donkere lucht FLITS! donder
Pap's armen, veilig

Ter herinnering aan mijn vader, Jan Rotsteeg (1929-1978)

Marjolein Rotsteeg – Hoenderloo The Netherlands

Marcia Burton – Salt Spring Island Canada

each year when the sun
returns to the kitchen eave
first fledgling swallow

reading table
of the public library
the mark you left
a bright spot of the sun
in the woods where I travel

Milan Rajkumar – Imphal India

Dana Clark-Millar – Bend Oregon USA

atop a mountain
feeling closer to a God
I don't believe in

spring
a desire to fossilize
this time of year

春此頃化石せんとの願あり

Masaoka Shiki – Spring 1900

Bryan Rickert – Belleville Illinois USA

reading haiku
my wife's
little snore

morning news
dad's customary
curse

jutarnje vijesti
očeva uobičajena
psovka

Tomislav Sjekloća – Cetinje Montenegro

The Wondering Heart – Glasgow Scotland

Alone on the street,
I salute the midnight sun,
-- sometimes the war wounds.

support group
she plays with the phantom ring
on her finger

a divorce recovery support group in a church basement, Toronto

Chen-ou Liu – Ajax Ontario Canada

Anna Chorlton – Liskeard Cornwall UK

Wood anemone,
a sea
of woodland stars.

lightning flash
what the thunder
makes of it

Ron C. Moss – Tasmania Australia

Masaoka Shiki – Winter 1895

庵寂びぬ落葉掃く音風の音

hermitage
the sound of the wind
rustling leaves

The old fireplace
is the last thing left standing,
-- a new road opens.

The Wondering Heart – Glasgow Scotland

Lafcadio – Chattanooga Tennessee USA

all the sunsets
outside my window
finding beauty
in the aging hands
of my mother

apples from the neighbours' tree
kids pick the best ones
for their teachers

Susan Austin – Hobart Tasmania Australia

Edward Cody Huddleston – Baxley Georgia USA

TV box
my old career
as a stay-at-home astronaut

hay raking with grandpa
still quite a jumper
one-legged grasshopper

grabuljanje sijena s đedom
i dalje dobar skakač
jednonogi skakavac

Tomislav Sjekloća – Cetinje Montenegro

Clive Bennett – Wales UK

hide-and-seek ...
in the churchyard
a new headstone

butterflies often dance
across the dreams
of the aged

蝶しばし舞ふや翁の夢の上

Masaoka Shiki – Spring 1893

Mark Gilbert – Nottingham UK

hush of willow ...
the old cricket pitch
gone to seed

thanks to you
I have the playroom
all to myself

RIP Brian (1962-1975) - brother/friend

Kimberly A. Horning – St. Augustine Florida USA

Cat Stone – Tasmania Australia

Yes, I'm fine, thank you.
All my pain hidden
from those who don't need to know.

searching through the lawn
at last she finds her grandchild
a four-leaf clover

dedicated to my Scots-Irish Grammi, Lillian Maxwell (1915-1995)

Shelli Jankowski-Smith – Swampscott Massachusetts USA

Govind Joshi – Dehradun India

grandmother's gift
motimum planted
in an ice-cream cup

now the kids are seven and nine
I gaze
at the view

Once kids reach a certain age, it feels there's a bit more breathing space.

Susan Austin – Hobart Tasmania Australia

Christina Chin - Malaysia / Uchechukwu Onyedikam – Nigeria

a five-stanza tan renga

village meeting
a candlelight ritual
... the slaughter
of two sacrificial
goats

back to the root
forward...
to herbs
farmers are hurting
because cows fart

the nightmare
before sunrise
stuck in my throat
the unheard scream roaring
Adam's apple



rendezvous
the night of firefly
"shall we make it eternity?"
the death lure
of a femme fatales

water to wine
mother's undying love
at the wedding
many drink but few
are called to his table

Masaoka Shiki – Winter 1894

日のさすや枯野のはての本願寺

at the edge of sunshine
and dry fields
Hongan Temple

sunset--
before the streetlights come on
a boy pedals fast

Rob McKinnon – Bridgewater South Australia

Damir Damir – Kotor Yugoslavia

Transatlantic
I share the moon with
a stranger from Goa

shell seeking...
a sandpiper stands
in my footprint

beachcombing at low tide, Winter 2022

Farah Ali – Brighton UK

Martha Vandivier – California USA

Emotional world
Spinning 'round the sun leaving...
Unanswered questions.

new clouds
like puffy crinolines -
nose in the air

dedicated to the Iraqi painter Abdul Qadir Al Rassam (1882 – 1952)

Barbara Anna Gaiardoni – Verona Italy

Govind Joshi – Dehradun India

turning red radish
into a flower
father's carving

tea room –
in the five-foot garden
fallen leaves

茶坐敷の五尺の庭を落葉哉

Masaoka Shiki – Winter 1892

James Penha – Bali Indonesia

sunrise sneaking
between the boards of this shack
steals my morning sleep

dozing off
during morning zazen
the distance
between the roshi and me
becomes shorter and shorter

a zen center in Toronto

Chen-ou Liu – Ajax Ontario Canada

Martha Vandivier – California USA

One wish for a touch
A quiet sign of his love
Happens on his terms

dahlia
the painting I wish
I could paint

for my father, a painter

Jamie Wimberly – Alpharetta Georgia USA

Jacoby Crane フクロウさん / Fukurōu-san
Chesterfield Derbyshire UK

Ancient oak stands stoic,
Endless stories it could tell,
Gripped in solitude.

keeping one jumper
back from the charity pile
last thing she knitted

after sorting through my late mother's things

Tracy Davidson – Stratford-upon-Avon UK

Masaoka Shiki – Autumn 1892

明月の露にぬれたり淡路嶋

soaked in the dew
of a bright moon
Awaji Island

before the cold comes
my father and I hold hands
Indian Summer

*Written after my dad's latest hospital stay. We all, including
him, thought he wasn't going to make it, but thankfully he did.*

Dana Clark-Millar – Bend Oregon USA

Tina Mowrey – Austin Texas USA

searching the earth
for a daughter's name
rowan tree

hand in hand we sit
with years of words between us
eloquent silence

25th wedding anniversary

Wordy McWord – London England

Mark Gilbert – Nottingham UK

mother and daughter
a punnet of raspberries
and a jar of jam

scraping Mam's sospan
for one last drop
of poetry

*For my mother who always read poetry to me in her kitchen
(sospan is Welsh for saucepan)*

Adele Evershed – Wilton Connecticut USA

Mili Zhao – London UK

aged ginkgo
the harsh weather
breaks its bones

bitter persimmons
such a pity to leave them
behind

渋柿のとり残されてあはれ也

Masaoka Shiki – Autumn 1889

Toyomi Iwawaki-Riebel – Germany

Die Knospen
der Kirschblüten sprießen,
als ob das reine Land entstünde

さくら蕾浄土湧き出づるごとく
sakuratsubomi jôdo wakiizuru gotoku

The buds
of the cherry blossoms sprout
as if the pure land is emerging

lavender fields
a bee interrupts
our first kiss

Worcestershire, 2005

Farah Ali – Brighton UK

Tony Williams – Glasgow Scotland UK

peeling
the last of the onions...
I think of mum

summer twilight . . .
dad shows me how
to be a wizard

When I was about 8 years old, my father would tell me he was a wizard and did magic tricks, like moving stones with "telekinesis."

Nicholas Klacsanzky – Burien Washington USA

Damir Damir – Kotor Yugoslavia

sunset
my boyish eye
fleeing towards you

The love of doves —
in the hope of a nest
on an apple branch

林檎枝に巣を掛けむとす鳩の恋
ringoe ni su wo kaken to su hato no koi

Die Liebe der Tauben —
in der Hoffnung auf ein Nest
auf einem Apfelzweig

Toyomi Iwawaki-Riebel – Germany

Bisshie – Zürich Switzerland

sun up
the circular motion of cows
chewing cud

another world
same wonky pigeon
on the station concourse

wherever I travel, there always seems to be a lame pigeon following

Tracy Davidson – Stratford-upon-Avon UK

Christopher Peys – Los Angeles California USA

grandpa's rosary
a war's worth of Hail Marys
for his new grandson

spring training
from father to son —
grandpa's fastball

summer grass
and baseball
way beyond reach

夏草やベースボールの人遠し

Masaoka Shiki – Summer 1898

Jane Williams – Tasmania Australia

grandchild in my arms
how they will ache tomorrow
with emptiness

contemplating hope
I wait for the birdsong
to reach me

On a dark day, reflecting on all the good things around me

C.X. Turner – Birmingham UK

Joanna Lai – Hong Kong

Those times I felt weak
My cheek resting on your back
"Papa has got you!"

Falling sound asleep like that
Knew I was safe in your hands

Time flies, people age
Youth and strength both washed away
Like sand in rivers

My arms reaching out
Nothing but air and space left
Time -- a cruel killer!

弱い時
この背に頬寄せ
「パパは居るよ！」

このまま寝入り
安らがせたよ

時が逝く
強み流され
川砂だ

手を伸ばす
空っぽ。。。時は
殺し屋だ

Dedicated to my father. There is still a void in my heart after all these years. I hope he knows that I am doing fine now.

Jane Williams – Tasmania Australia

sunlit facetime
my granddaughter shows off
her toy garden

pebble beach
sailing toy boats
past sheep bones

Duncan Richardson – Brisbane Australia

Tina Mowrey – Austin Texas USA

summer camp
tipping the canoe
on purpose

under the covers
listening to the radio
way past bedtime

Clive Bennett – Wales UK

Masaoka Shiki – Spring 1894

梅ちるや一寸程の魚躍る

plum blossoms fall
and fish leap
an inch or so

beneath
an old oak tree
I breathe

My favourite place to stop on a walk

C.X. Turner – Birmingham UK

Paul Engel – Chicago Illinois USA

jumping stepping stones
ground covered in Spring snow?
white petals!

harvest moon
warli dolls circle
the bonfire

Warli painting is a tribal art of Maharashtra, India

Daya Bhat – Bangalore India

B. L. Bruce – Corralitos USA

summer's end
the melon's heart
hollowing

coats soaking wet
Wellingtons covered in mud
forest walk trophies

*Feeling after having gone for a walk despite
the very uninviting meteorological conditions.*

doorweekte jassen
laarzen omhuld met modder
trofee rondje bos

*Het gevoel na toch te zijn gaan wandelen ondanks
de weinig uitnodigende meteorologische condities.*

Marjolein Rotsteeg – Hoenderloo The Netherlands

Jerome Berglund – Minneapolis USA

angel food cake
on the cross
snow

cold saki
and pomelo miso
warming on the old stove

冷酒や柚味噌を炙る古火桶

Masaoka Shiki – Autumn 1899

Tony Williams – Glasgow Scotland UK

fresh nettles
I numb my fingers
in the rush of a stream

terminal year
the fireflies'
last light

Dedicated to the memory of Valerie Lynn Quigley

Edward Cody Huddleston – Baxley Georgia USA

John Hawkhead – Bradford on Avon UK

loose earth mound
snowflake by snowflake
her second shroud

released softly
the scent of old floorboards
their child stepped through

tapping messages
my father's headstone transformed
to a thrush anvil

for Mary, Claire and Harry H.

Adele Evershed – Wilton Connecticut USA

Mam's ghost
bubbling up...
cloudberry jam

family album
fills in the blanks
early alzheimer's

Dedicated to Aunt Nancy

Eavonka Ettinger – Long Beach California USA

Masaoka Shiki – Autumn 1895

晩鐘や寺の熟柿の落つる音

evening bell
the sound of ripe persimmons
falling at the temple

snow grains
the field dad had no time
to plant

for my father, Ewen MacKenzie (1912 - 2003)

Debbie Strange – Winnipeg Manitoba Canada

B. L. Bruce – Corralitos USA

dawn spills
over the mountaintop
summer tea

last chance
to lay on mom's breast
mastectomy

Dedicated to my brave mother, Dianne

Eavonka Ettinger – Long Beach California USA

Jacob Blunner – Flint Michigan USA

teaching my son
how father
tied a fly

prairie road
one headlight drifts
over the line

*for Mike, Kelly, Elizabeth (age 5), Curtis (age 2) Strange
who perished together in a motor vehicle accident*

Debbie Strange – Winnipeg Manitoba Canada

Christina Chin – Malaysia / Paul Callus – *Hal Safi* Malta

new year—
prosperity guppies
in the terracotta pot
*the harmonious energy
of feng shui*

lights out
around the dark road
lanterns

灯の消えて闇路をめぐる灯笼哉

Masaoka Shiki – Autumn 1893

Michael Feil – Berwyn Pennsylvania USA

whip down the asphalt,
tires humming in the heat
her heart fluttering

Tumbling through the door
Gastronomy and gossip
Laughter filled catch-ups

Family get-togethers

SOUM – Wellington/Levin New Zealand

James Penha – Bali Indonesia

wild soursop
not quite ripe—pick now or leave
to bless someone else

leaf wind . . .
hearing my twin
in my laugh

I was away in Ukraine for six years and very seldom saw my twin brother.

Nicholas Klacsanzky – Burien Washington USA

Bisshie – Zürich Switzerland

milky way
the outer rings
of cow pats

making space
for another elephant
terracotta fair

Daya Bhat – Bangalore India

Masaoka Shiki – Autumn 1895

尼寺や寂莫として秋の行く

the nunnery
silent and desolate
ringing out the autumn

jar of pennies
each coin
the year they met

still married, still happy

Bill Waters – Pennington New Jersey USA

Jacoby Crane フクロウさん / Fukurōu-san
Chesterfield Derbyshire UK

A dewy grass bed,
Laid beneath the mikan tree,
Stars within its leaves,
Constellation of sweet suns,
Glistens in komorebi.

so far from the nest
will anyone who knows you
know your tree

Charles leaving home for College – October 2021

Herb Tate – Jersey UK

Paul Engel – Chicago Illinois USA

granddaughters
come running!
buttercups in bloom

a butterfly
always dreaming of flowers
in a harsh world

Muhammad Bilal Ameer – Lahore Pakistan

Christopher Peys – Los Angeles California USA

torn, tattered, stained
and all the flavor of us
family cookbook

