

HaigaMania

What a perfect exercise to do soon after finishing the Poetry Postcard Fest! Fumiko Kimura, in her book *Persimmon and Frog* notes that: “In Japan, the combination of Haiku poem and image in a painting is called Haiga. Words and image interrelate, but one is not illustrative of the other... By adding words the viewer’s imagination is stimulated, and there is an intellectual enrichment. The look of words also enhances and compliments the design.” She notes that it was a talk by Sam Hamill in 2012 that led her to co-found a group called “Haiga Adventure.”

Opposite

Frog Recites, 1987–88, collage and ink on paper, 20 × 16 inches. There are a couple of frog poems in the composition, including the well-known poem in spring / frogs sing / in summer / they bark by haiku poet Uejima Onitsura (1661–1738), a contemporary of Bashō. The other poem reads placing his hands on the ground / the frog respectfully recites / his poem by Yamazaki Sōkan (R. H. Blyth, trans.).

Persimmon and Frog: My Life and Art, a Kibei-Nisei's Story of Self-Discovery (Fumiko Kimura with David Berger)



Fascinating to think of the Japanese prefix “hai” as it relates to haiku, haibun and haiga. Haiga is said to have originated with Nonoguchi Ryūho (1595-1669). In our haibun exercise of a few years ago, Andrew Schelling so wisely advised: “play at the edge of narrative, don’t go into the center of it.” Tell it slant Emily suggested, not just because we don’t want to blind anybody with a huge bolt of truth, but because the poem’s meaning exists somewhere between the poet’s inner thoughts and the reader/listener. Too direct & you don’t leave room for their experience. Too obtuse & you’re lost. What’s the balance? Each poem will tell you if you listen carefully.

There are those, like me, who are much less experienced with painting, drawing, &c. It’s ok. You did it as a kid ALL THE TIME and there will be some rust. Remember you can write anything you want, as long as you don’t show anybody Allen reminded us. The same goes for drawing. Maybe do it in your pocket journal which should give you enough sense of security that it’s for you & no one else. No one’s ever forced to show or read their work in our workshops, but the more you expand your comfort zone, the bigger it gets. Want an easy way out? OK, take a photo with your cellphone & enhance the scene with some words.



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3-OCT-2022
11:55am, Casa del Colibrí



10.3.2022 — After loud spousal argument
the chair fares a bit better
than me.