

Judge's Comments

First Prize: I chose “snow in the treetops” for its uniqueness and significant emotional impact in referencing the nursery rhyme and lullaby “Rock-a-bye Baby.” Instead of a baby cradled in the treetops (new life), we have snow, a winter kigo. The woman who would be holding, rocking and singing to her infant, is holding something else—a terrible weight of foreboding or grief. She may have lost, or may be losing, a child. Or it could be the loss of someone in later life, who, after too many “wind blows,” is falling from the ‘tree of life.’

Second Prize: With “moon and star . . .” the poet has painted an expanse of mostly empty, darkening sky. The straying goose is masterfully conveyed by focusing on sound rather than visuals. That the stray goose becomes “an echo” implies the presence of the flock. The ‘becoming an echo’ tracks the physical separation as the honking of the flock is differentiated into call-and-response, or to our ears, an echo. Perhaps the poet can *only* hear the stray goose and disrupted flock, as they’ve already ‘disappeared’ in a Samuel Beckett-like near-void.

Third Prize: With one deft brushstroke this haiku conveys the gentle surrender to death that I hope to experience. The character at the centre of this haiku is ready, and death, in its ‘softness,’ is inviting. There’s an almost palpable sense of yielding.

Honourable Mentions: Here are some of the things that resonated with me across these eight well-crafted haiku: profound mystery, panic at being trapped by forces outside one’s self, classical beauty, the interconnection of a macro phenomenon with the small and delicate, complex grief, the sadness yet gift of a lingering spirit, a diurnal ‘Big Bang’ of sorts, and the exhilaration of stepping into a dynamic, charged landscape. Enjoy your own discoveries . . .

Vicki McCullough is the Haiku Canada regional coordinator for British Columbia and the Territories.

THE BETTY DREVNIOK AWARD

Held annually, the Betty Drevniok Award was established by Haiku Canada in memory of Betty Drevniok, Past President of the Society. Haiku must be unpublished and not under consideration elsewhere.

Please submit by email if possible.
claudiaradmore@gmail.com

Only if you have **NO** email address, send entries to:

The Betty Drevniok Award
c/o Claudia Coutu Radmore
49 McArthur Ave
Carleton Place, ON
K7C 2W1

Co-ordinator for 2015:
Claudia Coutu Radmore

**Brush painting by
Pamela A. Babusci
Rochester, NY**

The
Betty Drevniok
Awards

2014



Vicki McCullough, Judge

HAIKU CANADA SHEET, 2014

FIRST PRIZE**\$100**

snow in the treetops—
 a lullaby too heavy
 for her to sing

Darrell Lindsey
Nacogdoches, TX

SECOND PRIZE**\$50**

moon and star . . .
 a stray goose becomes
 an echo

Mark E. Brager
Columbia, MD

THIRD PRIZE**\$25**

so soft the snow no heroic measures

Roland Packer
Hamilton, ON

HONOURABLE MENTION

first light—
 the tree explodes
 with blackbirds

Kathy Lippard Cobb
Bradenton, FL

solar eclipse . . .
 folding, unfolding
 moth wings

Veronika Zora Novak
Toronto, ON

what was left
 by the riverside . . .
 deepening dusk

Mark E. Brager
Columbia, MD

first pond freeze
 a water beetle pushes
 against the ice

Harvey Jenkins
Nanaimo, BC

white peony tea—
 snow so fine the night
 has flowered

Marianne Paul
Kitchener, ON

white butterfly
 drifting through all
 she left behind

Kathy Lippard Cobb
Bradenton, FL

first autumn colour —
 taking the heirloom
 meant for my sister

Sandra Simpson
Tauranga, New Zealand

harvest moon
 walking through
 a Van Gogh

Carolyn Coit Dancy
Pittsford, NY