

ELEMENT



**GEERT VERBEKE
HAIKU & PHOTOS**

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Inspired by the CD 'Element' composed by Jovica Storer.

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Dedicated to :

My dear soulsister Jenny Ovaere.
My kids, friends & family.
My photo-teacher: Bing Maertens.
Tine Beeckmans & Susie Colman.
Visionar Panamarenko.
The Kuyu: Michael Baribeau, Adrie Beyens, Jan Bontje, Willy
Cuvelier, Ferre Denis, Piet van Mulkom & Henk Werkhoven.

In memoriam:

My parents Walter Verbeke & Jo Hiltrop;
Pietro Bares;
Claire Buysschaert (thanks for our children Hans & Saskia), Winand
Fadeux, Barbara Kluff, Luc Declerq, Erika Alleman & Nantes.

All the victims of blind fanaticism and terror: Basta ya!



Dear kuyu (haiku lover):

Do you follow your own haiku and photo path?
Is a haiku only a useless knickknack?
Do you mimic the style of others?

I wrote my first modest haiku in 1968. To my complete satisfaction haiku writing and photography are daily activities. Reading and writing in a close consideration with other kuyu learns that we all need the 'beginners' mind to develop modesty and the ability to put haiku rules in perspective...

Haiku are objective, image-centered and 'one-breath' poems, often brimming with childlike wonder. Originated in Japan, haiku is the briefest of all poetic forms. Traditionally, the haiku is a fixed poem of approximately seventeen 'onji' (sound-units) most often arranged in a 5-7-5 pattern, with an integrated seasonal-word called 'kigo'.

A haiku relies on brevity and simplicity to convey its poetical message, conveying a keenly perceived moment of heightened subjective awareness. Writing haiku can help to face the whole world. The haiku happens here and now.

A haiku poet masters the art of expressing much and suggesting more in the fewest possible words. Haiku focuses on nature, compressing maximum thought into minimum language. Less is beautiful. Haiku are made of mother-of-pearl and snow crystals. Haiku are dewdrops. Haiku, also called hokku, are the result of quiet

observations and loving care. A haiku is not just a small poem in three lines of 5-7-5 syllables each. Try to be a writer not an abacus! English syllables are not the same as Japanese onji, they vary in length. A typical haiku can be any length from a few to 17 syllables, and will carry a reference to nature, although some haiku focus almost exclusively on human behaviour, settings and sentiments.

Haiku are connected with music and the five elements...

In China, the first celebrated exponent of the five-element theory was Tsou Yen (350 - 270 BC).

1. WOOD
2. FIRE
3. EARTH
4. METAL
5. WATER.

The 5 energies are symbolized as wood, which as fuel gives rise to fire, which creates ash and gives rise to earth, which in its mines contains metal, which attracts dew and so gives rise to water, and this in turn nourishes wood.

When balanced these are the healthy relationships of the Five Elements: Water extinguishes Fire, Fire melts Metal, Metal cuts and shapes Wood, Wood can contain Earth, Earth absorbs Water.

**Geert Verbeke,
Lange Munte 2006.**

WOOD





Name	Ki
Energy	Dawn
Season	Springtime
Direction	East
Trigram	Zhen & Xu
Planet	Jupiter
Climatic Qi	Wind
Yang Organ	Gallbladder
Yin Organ	Liver
Sense Organ	Eyes
Body Tissue	Sinews
Color	Green
Emotion	Anger
Taste	Sour

Wood is the most human of the five elements. It is the element of spring; the creative urge to achieve. It is associated with the capacity to look forward, plan and make decisions. The energy of Wood is rising, expanding. Wood is the wonderful force of growth and flexibility. Wood represents all the activities of the body that are self regulating: digestion, respiration, heart beat and basic metabolism.



the begging monk
hear his string of beads
wooden pearls sing

on the grassland
a wooden painter's easel
landscape in landscape

gathering wood
in a vicious winter
playing music

a few wormholes
in the drying wood
our garden table



a bronze Buddha
surrounded by oil lamps
cool calm and collected

in the moonlight
a bowed wooden bridge
undulating motion

the wooden trunks
contain the past
until the move

towards the wind
made from apricot wood
a singing dukduk (*)

(*) *dukduk: a traditional Armenian flute.*



the hard winter
tell's her everything
about wood

stretch of woods
a babbling brook
is running free

sawmill in the sun
perfume of beech trees
and pine cones

on the beach (*)
driftwood and flotsam
not many footprints

(): remember the Tsunami in 2004.*



for the tea-party
a wood-burning stove
flirt with sleepiness

lacquer on wood
mother-of-pearl inlay
Bashō is roaring

wood blocks
under a layer of snow
mice survive

wooden carbon
the smell of sweet rice
cheering of children

FIRE





Name	Hi
Energy	Noon
Season	Mid summer
Colour	Red
Direction	South
Trigram	Li
Planet	Mars
Climatic Qi	Heat
Yang Organ	Sm.intestine
Yin Organ	Heart
Sense Organ	Tongue
Boddy Tissue	Blood Vessel
Emotion	Joy / Shock
Taste	Bitter

Fire is the element of heat, summer and enthusiasm; nature at its peak of growth, and warmth in human relationships full of love and compassion. Its motion is upward. Fire is the symbolic of combustion and this represents the functions of the body that have reached maximum activity; indicating that decline is then inevitable.



fire and brimstone
rumbling thunderstorm
one droplet twinkles

picture yourself
finding compassion
talking about fire

flowers and blossoms
quick touch of brushes
sketch in charcoal

midsummer madness
from new moon to new moon
dancing in the streets



high above Bagdad
a colourful display of fire
the stench of death

the old stairwell
prey to fire at night
no admittance

counting the stars
united around the campfire
silent wanderers

on the pavement
the click-clack of footsteps
sultry summernight



forest fire
a new sleepless night
empty bottles

crater-shaped
volcanic rocks on the fire
cold stream of lava

brushfire
a covey of partridges
alarming

Twin Towers
rumbling down
no revenge



a campfire
behind the black boulders -
the scent of broth

cremation place
the faces in mourning
now and then a nod

the open fire
piled up very high
for a nice cuddle

dazzling flash of light (*)
burns a shadow on the wall
mother where are you

() Received a honourable mention by Mr. Yasuhiko Shigemoto, in the haiku contest 'The 39th A-Bomb Memorial Day', Kyoto museum for world Peace, Japan July 2005.*

EARTH





Name	Tsuchi
Energy	Afternoon
Season	Indian Summer
Colour	Yellow
Direction	Centre
Trigram	Gen
Planet	Saturn
Climatic Qi	Damp
Yang Organ	Stomach
Yin Organ	Spleen
Sense Organ	Mouth
Body Tissue	Muscles
Emotion	Worry
Taste	Sweet

Earth is the element of harvest time, abundance, nourishment, fertility, and the mother to child relationship. This element is also regarded as central to balance and the place where energy becomes downward in movement. Earth is a pure symbol of stability and being properly anchored.



mother earth
hear the buzzing sound
a berimbau (*)

wielding paint brushes
as a tribute to the earth
feel the Zen-spirit

light pink petals
snowing on the earth
a gusty wind

your sweat dreams
in orbit round the earth
feel the music

() A Brazilian capoeira-percussion instrument originally from Angola, with one metal string (corda) connected to a wooden bow (5 feet in length). The string is attached to the bow and a half open gourd (cabaca).*



garden for walking
to the inner temple
step by step

ceremony
powdered green tea
earthly power

silver light
a subterranean vault
heavy bombardment

misty reefs
cloaked with mystery
until midmorning



the choppy wind
in caverns and canyons -
a shy lizzard

eroded rocks
the river cuts his way
day and night

limestone reefs
silhouetted by streams
the new world

young orchards
transform canyons
a big bouquet



autumn afternoon
a Hohokam flute player (*)
announces the rain

rumbling thunder
reverberate between hills
swallows shiver with cold

on a twisted branch
clusters of pink flowers
will you marry me

in his orchard
and his playful mind
a hurdy-gurdy (**)

() The Hohokam peoples occupied a wide area of south-central Arizona from roughly Flagstaff south to the Mexican border. They are thought to have originally migrated north out of Mexico around 300 BC.*

*(**) dedicated to Gilbert Isbin*

METAL





Name	Kane
Energy	Evening
Season	Autumn
Colour	White
Direction	West
Trigram	Dui
Planet	Venus
Climatic Qi	Dryness
Yan Organ	Lg.Intestine
Yin Organ	Lung
Sense Organ	Nose
Body Tissue	Skin
Emotion	Sadness
Taste	Spicy

Metal includes the idea of the element air. It is the force of gravity, the minerals within the earth, the patterns of the heavenly bodies and the powers of electrical conductivity and magnetism. Metal has structure, but it can also accept a new and flexible form when molten. The symbol of metal is one of a cutting and reforming action.



bronze sculptures
between light and shadow
songs and sacrifices

peaceful meadow
the cast-iron bathtub
rusty as an ox

his heart bigger
than a begging bowl
Panamarenko

the blacksmith
feels the landscape
in primary colours



a simply richness
paying attention to
the bells peal

morning bloom
smooth sledgehammer
and a bristly beard

moonlight caress
the singing steelworkers
a street dog barks

in the morning fog
the soft song of metal
a naked sadhu



metallic singing -
above the singing bowls
a butterfly

it sounds metallic -
in the soup kitchen
a singing lid

made of steel
the scorched summer
beating the gong

the tolling of bells
visiting Hiroshima
metallic rain



a singing bowl
ringing by a monk
humble cottage

take a walk
along the Seine
the Eiffeltower

tinkling and jingling
on her silk umbrella
a brass chain

on the scrapheap
the chirp of crickets
summer haze

WATER





Name	Mizu
Energy	Night
Season	Winter
Direction	North
Trigram	Kan & Qian
Planet	Mercury
Climatic Qi	Cold
Yang Organ	Bladder
Yin Organ	Kidney
Sense Organ	Ears
Body Tissue	Bone
Emotion	Fear
Color	Black
Taste	Salty

Water is the holy source of life and the fluids which nourish and maintain the health of every cell. Water corresponds to our vital fluids, i.e. blood, lymph, mucus, semen and fat. Water has the capacity to flow, infinitely yielding and powerful, ever changing and often dangerous with the capacity also to nourish and cleanse. Water is the ultimate yin. It has a waiting, silent, still quality.



tasting the taste
of the seven oceans
in one droplet

water winds his way
in a circle of oaks and ferns
gleeful being

children gazing
in a bucket with water
mirror images

strong energy
of Thai-Chi in the park
fish in a pond (*)

() dedicated to Tine Beeckmans, thanks for haiku workshops.*



frogs in chorus
for the empty sky
water as mirror

plain of forests
a murmuring water
course of the river

sweltering summer
his shadow plunges already
in the water

close together
villages and water
thank-you banks



circles of sand
a warm wind blows
nude swimming

mirror image
head in the clouds
a water lily

waterfall
roaring and seething
a cool place

heating bathwater
fragrance of lavender
your charming mother



highly flavoured
spice garden near the pond
sneezing is the rule

the sun bless the oceans
always and in all ways
a murmuring sea

in rippling lakes
drifting across the moon
a lilac water lily

clear watermirror
twinkling in depth of silence
hear the new born lamb

TANKA & HAIBUN

5 ELEMENTS



5 ELEMENTS:

1. WOOD - 2. FIRE - 3. EARTH - 4. METAL - 5. WATER.

HAIBUN: A haibun is a literary style, with a descriptive combination of prose and haiku. A mirror image of 'our' regular world, that focus on everyday experiences. Most often [but not necessarily] is written in the present tense with a multiplicity of ideas: from snake pits and hot birds to fairground attractions, tattoos and young bamboo shoots. A haibun is a meeting place, a melting pot and a treasure-house with many chambers! Love the glaring contrasts, without rigid rules and prescriptions. We're well rid of that. Haibun boundaries of style and format have changed a lot since master Bashō travelled the narrow road to Oku in 1689. Nowadays an author can arrange and intersperse the prose and haiku in whatever format suits the piece. There is no set length to a haibun and the haiku does not have to relate directly to the subject matter. The reader must only imagine...

TANKA: literally means Japanese poem. The term tanka itself has only a recent history. Japanese poet and critic Masaoka Shiki created this term for his statement that waka should be renewed and modernized. Until then, poems of this nature had been referred to as waka or simply uta ("song, poem"). Traditionally waka in general has had no concept of rhyme, or even of line. Instead of lines, waka has the unit and the phrase. (Units or phrases are often turned into lines when poetry is translated or transliterated into Western languages, however.) Tanka consists of five units (often treated as separate lines when Romanized or translated) usually with the following mora pattern: 5-7-5 / 7-7

WOOD



the wooden chappies (*)
are waiting on the work-bench -
the scent of sawdust
in a foggy fall-like day
with the first falling leaves

she sings a song
for the wooden hummingtop
my old mother
a real master improviser
when she tickles the ivories

(*) *created by barrel-maker Noël Ovaere, 1980.*

FIRE



a few fire fighters
smoke stings their eyes –
new blaring sirens
and blue flashing lights at night
please maintain distance

a catchy rhythm
starts out full of energy –
the wind blows sparks
above the flared campfire
a hum of voices in the night



A haibun is a literary style, with a descriptive combination of prose and haiku poetry. A mirror image of 'our' regular world, that focus on everyday experiences. Most often [but not necessarily] it is written in the present tense with a multiplicity of ideas: from snake pit and hot bird to fairground attraction, tattoo and young bamboo shoot. A haibun is a meeting place for passionated poetry lovers. The haibun is a melting pot, a treasure-house with many chambers. Love the glaring contrasts and a playful and modest mind with the ability to see things in their proper context, without rigid rules and prescriptions. We're well rid of that. Haibun boundaries of style a format have changed a lot since master Bashō travelled the narrow road to Oku in 1689. Nowadays an author can arrange and intersperse the prose and haiku in whatever format suits the piece. There is no set length to a haibun and the haiku does not have to relate directly to the subject matter. The reader must only imagine. For example, about one of the five elements: fire...

bombed out
bleeding on the street
the scent of fire

EARTH



when the sun breaks through
the earth seems like copper
like in her youth
the light on the tombstones
calls up many memories (*)

the news of mum's death
straightaway rewrites the silence
with pain and loss
at the edge of the water
question marks wash ashore

() dedicated to Jenny, my beloved soulsister.*



Earth becomes spirit. Pietro Bares (*), an Italian sculptor, works in his sundrenched workplace, as a hermit between long-drawn-out sculptures, waxwork, marble figures and casted statues. He molds a smiling Bhudda in black clay. The elegant statue grows daily between pedestals, paintings and waxwork. The statue has the shape of a sitting king's son in meditation. In the evening, Pietro reduces to silence, besides a small stove. He roasts chestnuts and burns incense of sandalwood. Moon gazing is restful. After a few weeks, the statue breaks, it's cracking. Only the smile remains... 'Viens voir mon fils,' says Pietro. One white mushroom shoots up in the back of the statue. Pietro smiles: 'When I remove the mushroom I will save the statue, but if I let him grow... Bhudda will come!'

on his windowsill
pottery with lavender
a pleasant smell

(* *Buddha created by Pietro Bares*



she walks so slowly
in a moonless summer night
on the iron bridge
giving me a flow of thoughts
as a sexy keepsake

on the footbridge
standing in the smoke –
a screaming train
he sounds awful metallic
almighty deafening loud

WATER



she walks on the beach
confused and somewhat nervous
clothes all mussed
rememberings are gone
mother talks with the water

she draws
a tiger with a long tail
on the wet window
he grins to the passengers
in the morning train



Guido Maertens, a soul mate and enthusiast jazz-poet drowned. I am standing in the cool of a funeral parlour for a fond farewell. The walls of the mortuary are olive green. One oil painting shows me a daub of white colour in a crisscross of grey lines: the sea! I breathe in the perfume of the sea air. I still remember our nocturnal walks on the beach at Ostend. The canvas on the wall is an oblique stroke between two acts: life and death. In my remembrance all the corpses have jaundice and freckled faces, but you my brother are smiling.

seaward storm
a salty wind is changing
the dune crossing

Writing haiku is learning how to move to and fro in the landscapes of my mind. My haiku for you will talk about colours of the starfishes. What is essential for my haiku? Three lines? A keyword? The haiku moment? Seventeen syllables? I hear your voice: ' a haiku must proceed from a concrete image, based on a deep emotion, in love with poetry.' I think I will miss you badly. I feel an irresistible desire to see the rise of the full moon riding on the waves. Moon gazing? Now!

() Published in Contemporary Haibun Online, Quarterly Journal of Contemporary English Language Haibun, USA. Fall Issue 2005.*



photo: Jenny Ovaere

GEERT VERBEKE is a contemporary haikuist and a real kuyu (haiku friend), born in Kortrijk, Flanders (Belgium in old Europe for peace) on 31 May 1948. Father of four children: Hans, Saskia, Merlijn & Jonas. Since 15 years the happy life partner of Jenny Ovaere (ex-teacher in special care education. Today a guide for Joker adventurous travelling). Geert began writing haiku in 1968 after his beloved mother, Jo Hiltrop, was offering him a small cahier: 'Zen-buddhism' with selected writings of D.T.Suzuki and references to: R.H..Blyth, H.G. Henderson and Alan Watts. The communication with the Italian sculptor Pietro Bares, casting bronze and sculpting marble buddha's was an other stimulation. The decisive factor to wrote and study haiku was the discovery of the wonderful Himalayan singing bowls and the travels with his exceptional wife and soulmate Jenny to: Kathmandu, the Sinai-desert, Istanbul, Tunisia, Djerba, France, Tanzania, Zanzibar and the Grand Canyon in Arizona, USA. Geert is a member of: Haiku Centre Flanders, l'Association Française de Haïku, the Australian Haiku Society Haiku Oz, the World Haiku Association (Japan) & World Tempos Journal (Japan).



JOVICA STORER

is a Flemish electronic music composer/producer who has been addicted to aural vibrations ever since his youth. He learned to play the piano as a child and started improvising his own creations as a teenager. After being a radio jockey for several years, he went DJ-ing in several pubs and parties. In his early twenties he bought his first synthesizer and a computer and started sequencing. Since that day in the summer of 1989, he has never ceased to explore new territory on the planet of electronic sound. His style can vary from distorted breakcore ballads to lush ambient drone trance and beyond.

The album "Element" is an aural interpretation of the five Japanese Elements: Wood - Fire - Earth - Metal - Water.

The production includes haiku by Geert Verbeke.



ABOUT THE PHOTOS: thank you Bing for your hints...

Cameras:

Analogue Pentax-K1000

Digital Pentax-ist DS

Objectives:

SMC Pentax-DA 18-55

SMC Pentax-F 70-210 / 35-80

Takumara-A 2x tele-converter

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