

## Report of “ Beloved Issa”, the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society’s 2015 Retreat

The Society’s 2015 Annual Retreat, Thursday November 12 thru Sunday 15, was held at the Asilomar State Beach and Conference Center on the Monterey Peninsula.

Thursday: For those who could attend early afternoon, a nature walk with readings from Rachel Carson’s works was led by Ranger Lisa Bradford through the grounds and dunes to the beach. Afternoon registration was hosted by Amy Ostenso and Phillip Kennedy. YTHS President Alison Woolpert led off the evening program with a acknowledgement of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society and its activities in celebration, and Betty Arnold, Retreat Chair, previewed the program of the Retreat events. The Retreat’s featured presenter, David Lanoe, presented an account of his long-term engagement with the masterful Japanese haiku poet Issa, including the translation of 10,000 of Issa’s haiku. Patricia Macmillar introduced the silent auction of books and objects that serves as a fundraiser for scholarships to the retreat. The evening concluded with a demonstration of brush painting by Patricia and Carolyn Fitz, in which they painted on fabric from behind so the audience saw the painting, *The Poet’s Journey*, magically take shape.

Friday: David Lanoe gave his keynote address, in which he presented *inter alia* the key characteristics in Issa’s haiku, tender compassion, perceptive openness, willingness to laugh, bold subjectivity, literature reference, free flowing imagination, and child’s consciousness. David urged the attending poets to observe these guidelines in writing haiku during the afternoon ginko. On reconvening after the ginko we shared the poems we had written with Issa’s characteristics in mind. At the end of the afternoon Patricia closed the silent auction and the winners collected their treasures.

In the evening the poets in attendance were provided a moving presentation of Issa’s poems, narrated and accompanied with rhythm instruments by David Sherertz, Patricia Macmillar, and Betty Arnold, with a dramatic accompaniment of interpretive dance by Ellen Brooks. Then honored guest from Japan, Emiko Miyashita, presented *Impressions of Dreams: World Children’s Haiku Volume 13*, an illustrated book featuring a collection curated by Emiko of haiku and drawings from children from around the world. Next, the Society’s 2015 anthology *The Plover and the Moonstone* edited by Patricia Macmillar and designed by Patrick Gallagher, was presented, and copies were distributed to the members in attendance. Subsequently Gregory Longenecker, Chair of the Society’s 2015 Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest, presented the results of the Contest. Many present were delighted to hear that their poems had been noted for merit by the judge, Marie Mariya. The evening was concluded by a presentation of spectacular photo haiga by Edward Grossmith.

Saturday: In the morning Carolyn Fitz led a workshop experience in simple sketching with brush. In the afternoon Emiko Miyashita led a *kukai* in the tradition of her Japanese haiku group, Ten’i. The afternoon concluded with an introduction to *renku* by Patricia Macmillar. After dinner the participants enjoyed a *renku* party until late hours.

Sunday: The *renku* from the previous evening were read by the verses’ authors. Then those who had done brush painting during the conference shared their haiga, and there was a round of haiku written at the conference. Betty Arnold and Alison Woolpert provided a summing up of the retreat and expressed appreciation for each of the presenters and organizers. Finally, Alison introduced Patrick Gallagher as the 2016 President of the Society, and Patrick closed the conference with thanks to Betty Arnold and all those involved with the conference.