

YTHS June 2016 Monthly Meeting

Haiga Garden Party, Carolyn Fitz's Garden, Scotts Valley

On a warm summer day we met in Carolyn Fitz's beautiful garden in Scotts Valley; a stunning bamboo haven amidst a redwood forest. A dozen members of YTHS shared an esthetic potluck meal with a rich serving of poems. Ed Grossmith began with definitions of Haiga, which he's listed on the YTHS website. He pointed out, "There are pictures in every poem and poems in every picture." Ed's wife, JoAnn Grossmith, shared a laptop collection of Ed's photos and haiku. Ed asked for feedback on his work, which led to a lively discussion.

Patrick Gallagher had seen a video called "Haiku Masters," where the title haiga was differentiated from haiku photographs. There was a discussion about the Japanese use of space. Large white areas or framing pictures and words are two choices for haiga. Judith Schallberger had prints made on a computer with haiku in frames. She told us the calligraphy font she used on Microsoft Word is Viner Hand. Patrick and Ed talked about the three measures included in Japanese enlightenment: Calligraphy, Painting and Poetry. Patrick showed us the process of enhancing a photograph on his iPad, which would allow for a haiku to be read left to right or right to left.

Patricia Machmiller helped us remember the scope of a haiga. It is one moment, one image that includes a kigo or season word. She crossed her fingers and quoted Yokiko: "never, never use two different seasons in one tiny haiku." In the same respect the kigo may be held in the image or the haiku when it is part of a haiga, but they do not need to be repeated. There is a mood from the image that can be captured in haiku.

Eleanor Carolan brought collages made the size of a business card with a haiku on the back. Betty Arnold liked the collage idea. It makes Haiga more accessible for her. Joan Zimmerman brought a book of Andy Goldsworthy's nature photography. She works from other people's pictures and recommends writing many haiku on the same theme. Alison Woolpert is learning to draw birds. She had a drawing with a haiku in a white frame on the page. Carole Steele found a way to do haiga through focusing on the flowers she uses for ikebana.

Carolyn finished the day by teaching us to fold an 8 1/2 X 11" piece of paper into a small booklet. She then encouraged us to let our parallel pens move freely over the pages, leaving abstract lines and designs. Dyana Basist's tiny book was filled with images ready for haiku. Carolyn recently found pictures in a forgotten drawer from her grandfather who is an aviation pioneer (1909-11). She reminded us that "sometimes when you're not looking for anything, something very special may appear." It was a wonderfully inspiring and most enjoyable gathering.



write-up and haiga by Eleanor Carolan