

A Year without Winter

Haiku attempts

Last Christmas brought me a lovely, hand-made note book. While thinking how to fill its pages, I got inspired by another gift – a haiku collection by Basho. Given that, similar to this poet, I am traveling rather frequently, I decided to try to capture the poetry of the places I visited last year. Due to my absolute lack of drawing skills was the choice of text form clear.

I realized quite early, that not only due to potentially difficult meteorological circumstances it is advantageous to capture the moment first on a camera, and then compose the verses offline.

In composition I try to stick to classical rules of Japanese haiku, i.e., 17 syllables divided 5-7-5, natural themes, struggle to capture the mood of the place including the season, euphony, contrast. It does not always succeed, but I hope the kind reader will appreciate even the attempt. If not, there are still the accompanying photos showing my sources of inspiration.

I intended originally this introduction as a commentary and explanation of individual pices; but then I realized I should not tie the reader so much, leaving instead more room for the imagination. Those who visited some of the described places with me can immerse into their own memories and compare how the situation influenced themselves...

Nevertheless, I feel at least the the title of this meagre collection deserves some explanation. Here I also admit inspiration by a Czech haiku collection, organized by the seasons. Due to several influences, there are virtually now winter motives. This is caused first by my limited travelling opportunities during the past winter, as well as the fact that I do not consider my early February attempts from New York worth publishing; and second, the weather (with a few exceptions) did not show much of winter. Not that I gave it enough time anyway, deciding to draw the line by Christmas (or more precisely, after the leaves fell) to get this collection to you... I hope that the potential second volume will make up for this deficiency.

Prague, January 3, 2014

David Sedmera

Stockholm, May 2014



Cries of the seagulls
are piercing the morning sky –
birds of iron(y)



Upper Vltava, 31st May 2014



Sounds of the river
Sun piercing through the tree tops
Pearl at the bottom

Kingfisher's blue wings
are stirring the chilly air –
little living gem



Malvern haiku triplet
13.6.2014



On the bare hilltop
Green grazed-out pasture with sheep
Where wind plays its tunes

Old Roman fortress
Walls disappeared – only ditch
Marks its former place

Ridge far, far away
Beyond which green Wales is found-
The clouds are so close!

Ponta de São Lorenzo, 4.7.2014

Multicoloured cliffs
are washed by white waves –
the spray
wind carries away



Thistle in desert
pierces the air by its thorns
Buzzing bumblebee

Quick-moving lizard
Stopped to sun on lava rock
Which, molten, once flowed



Monte, 5.7.2014



Amidst the white clouds
Green gardens – in
which are found
Flowers of all hues



Rich royal robe - but
Plain cross is all that's left past
The former glory



Whizzing wicker sleight
Above the city – in the air –
floating gondolas

Ribeiro Frío – Portela

7.7.2014

Oh, tumbling waters
Sucked from the clouds by forest
Emerald in fog



Hugging mountain sides
Flowing slowly to the sea
Except waterfalls



Pink blooms of orchids
Are emerging from the mist
Unique to island



Porto da Cruz, 8.7.2014



Origin:

Peak above the bay
reaches up high to the sky –
Volcanic shepherd



Conclusion:

A ledge on the rocks
surrounded by the flowers
leads down to the bay

The Path:

Along carved channel
continues to mountain pass
ending on the cliffs



Athens, 12.7.2014

Sea waves at the port
Are gently rocking the boats
White sails on the blue



Heat slowly abates
Moon over Acropolis
Illuminates night



Malvern, 18.7.2014

On shady hillside
Hide sheep – in “summer trim”
Not bothered by heat



Light breeze gently cools
Denuded spine of the hills
The Sun hides in haze



Encroaching green trees
Slowly climbing to the top-
Back where they belong!

Bayerische Wald, 7.8.2014

False source of river
Does not reveal how big it is
Below the hills!

Mountain flowers bloom
merrily around the brook
flowing through wetlands



Overgrown old path
Never *entirely* legal
Still tries to connect

Rabí Castle, 9.8.2014



White stones glow in sun
Long ago carved from hillside
Still standing erect

Vegetation tries
to pry its way into joints
To break them apart!



Down in the valley
Gold-bearing Otava flows
For millennia



The Jeseníky Mountains, 17.-23.8.2014



Juicy blueberries
on background of green mosses-
no more for the bears!

Mighty clouds all-round
As far as my eyes can see-
What will they bring us?



Wind blows fog away
On the bed of moist, green
moss
Sparkle white, cold pearls

Jeseníky, 17.-23.8.2014 (continued)

A chirping pipit
flying over the sea of
lichen-covered rocks



Rocky formations
hide within them old wisdom
of our ancestors

Below, under spruce,
mushrooms take chance to get
from the underground



Poissonville, 28.10.2014

Colours of autumn
are hiding under cover
of low-lying clouds



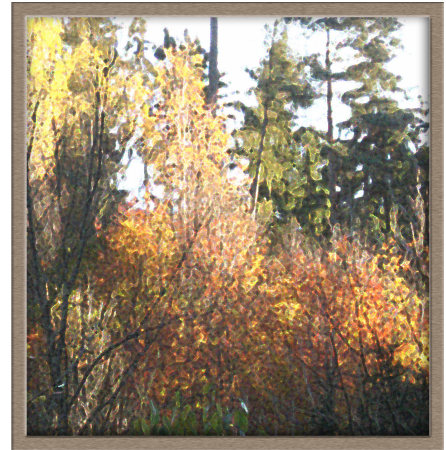
Smoke slowly rises
until it hits the blanket
then blends with the fog

White rocks are silent
clatter of iron no more
disturbs sleeping bull



Moravský kras - Punkva, 29.10.2014

Sunlight reflects from
Golden waterfall of leaves
Descending to ground



Waters disappeare
in darkness under white rock-
Where will they emerge?

Down in the shadows
Millenia-old wonders
Stone carved by water



Fall trees in parks, November 2014

Albertov - Charles Square - Krcz

Sakura tree leaves
slowly turn yellow - harvest
is by gravity



In the middle of
the park fog shrouds the golden
Ginkgo biloba

Unmoving trees rise
their branches to the heaven
Begging, or thanking?



Valley of Silence, November 15, 2014

Oak leaves form rustling
carpet on the forest floor
Feet in hiking boots

Sunny souther slopes
hide the last blooms of summer
that have still survived



Last rays of sunlight
light up the larch candles on
the forested slopes



Spindlermuehle – Upper Little Dishes

November 17, 2014

Long time forgotten
Old telephone road winds up
through the mixed forest

On either wayside
grow mushrooms, lichens and moss
On occasion, spring



Up above the clouds
opens a splendid view
far to the countryside

Freezing sleet

December 2, 2014

Gentle freezing rain
is falling down from the sky
blanketing the ground

Thin water layer
turned into glistening ice
is enrobing all:



Flowers and branches
turned into ice sculptures that
make all the life still

[illegible]

Fall falls to winter
Slipping on slippery slope
Covered by ice sheet