

MOSTLY SITTING HAIKU

Allen Ginsberg

Dec 5, 1978

MOSTLY SITTING HAIKU

for Harold Anderson —

I'll pass the exercises
on to Peter who's recovered
with Acupuncture —

I'll be at Naropa Institute
all summer - yes Creeley's the
man for poetry in Buffalo - Best
wishes on yr. study.

Allen Ginsberg

Allen Ginsberg

Copyright © 1978 Allen Ginsberg

First Edition

Some of the poems included here
first appeared in LOKA and in
MIND BREATHS (City Lights,
1977), for which thanks.

FROM HERE PRESS
box 2702
paterson
nj 07509

XTRAS #6
Member COSMEP
ISBN 0-89120-010-X

CONTENTS

MOSTLY SITTING HAIKU	3
CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA'S CRAZY WISDOM LECTURES	6
CABIN IN THE ROCKIES	12
PARK AVENUE PATERSON —2AM	16
"The withered purple roses"	17
LAND O' LAKES, WISC. SEMINARY	18
"Sitting"	22
FOR CREELEY'S EAR	23

MOSTLY SITTING HAIKU

Mountain wind slow as breath,
mist drifts over pines ~
What was I thinking of, China?

Meditation hall silent
bird slammed into window,
sat brooding half an hour
Saw Buddha then.

Fog rolling down
the mountain
the tram lift towers
above leafless aspen
Look at that tree all alone!

A mountain outside
a room inside
a skull above
Snow on the mountain
flowers in the room
thoughts in the skull

Snow mountain fields
seen thru transparent wings
of a fly on the windowpane.

Use breath as Manjusri
Sword instantly cutting
down thought after thought
heaviness of sleep dream
fantasy, breath after breath
outward

Graffiti in Teton Village

"If you voted for Nixon
You won't shit here
Cause your assholes in
Washington."

29 November 1973

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA'S
CRAZY WISDOM LECTURES

*(Quotes mixed or instant with
thoughts)*

"In the realm of Great Bliss"

Bark,

Bow Wow!

"No hope No fear"

Pens rustle on paper—

Steinbeck is coughing.

"Discipline, real Discipline"
Yellow carnations open
under floodlamps in the tent.

"Talk stand shit,
eat sleep—"
Flies walking on my nose.

"Good at the beginning . . ."
tears roll down
my palsied right cheek.

"You're not going to get your money back"
Everybody laughing—
"Any questions?"

"Willing to be Fool?"
Night moths
circle the tentpole.

Against brown grass
the hole in a black truck tire
swings slowly between trees.

"Emptiness, no need for policymaker"
Secretaries lean together
at the tent wall.

"What do we mean by Craziiness?"
Dogs bark to each other
across the meadow at night.

Sunlight mixed with dust
rises behind a truck
on the dirt road.

Rows of sitting heads—
blue windows, car
parked silent on grass.

August 26–28, 1975
Rocky Mountain Dharma Center

CABIN IN THE ROCKIES

Sitting on a stump with half cup of tea,
sun down behind mountains—
Nothing to do.

Not a word! Not a word!
Flies do all my talking for me—
and the wind says something else.

Fly on my nose,
I'm not the Buddha,
There's no enlightenment here.

Against red bark trunk
A fly's shadow
lights on the shadow of a pine bough.

White sun up behind pines,
a moth flutters past
the brown wood pile.

An hour after dawn
I haven't thought of Buddha once yet!
—walking back into the retreat house.

Walking into King Sooper
after Two-Week Retreat

A thin redfaced pimpled boy
stands alone minutes
looking down into the ice cream bin.

September 16, 1975
Boulder, Colorado

PARK AVENUE PATERSON—2AM

A red sweater

crumpled on lawn grass

under bright streetlights,

My father's dying.

February 1976

The withered purple roses droop
on their green dry-leafed stalk —
*Sitting there since he came home
from the hospital.*

2.

Buddha died and
left behind a
big emptiness.

3.

Candle light blue banners incense,
aching knee, hungry mouth—
any minute the gong—potatoes &
sour cream!

4.

Sunlight on the red zafu
clank of forks & plates,
hour after hour.

5.

Did you ever see yourself
a breathing skull
looking out the eyes?

October 1976

21]

Sitting

under wooden roof beams

listening to a hundred people

sit

sniffing, coughing, clearing throat

sneezing, sighing

breathing through nose

shifting on pillows in clothes

swallowing saliva,

listening.

November 11, 1976

FOR CREELEY'S EAR

The whole
weight of
every thing
too much

my heart in
the subway
pounding
subtly

head ache
from smoking
dizzy
a moment

riding
uptown to see
Karmapa
Buddha tonight.

December 13, 1976

Allen Ginsberg
MOSTLY SITTING HAIKU

\$1.50

This booklet further paves the intersection between the "mainstream" of contemporary writing and the haiku "movement" in North America.

Haiku aficionados here have often attacked the rest of Western writings as decadent and full of overbearing language, its writers unable to see the reality around them or avoid self-flattering hyperbole in speaking of it. Yet, as Ginsberg himself has demonstrated in his lectures, the main purpose of "modern" poetry has been to grasp and present specific realities, whether simple or complex. And to do this in the most direct language the poet can provide.

The short poems in this booklet range from purest haiku through wry senryu to several which are simply poems, outside any genre save that of Coleridge's "the best words in the best order." They are mostly about sitting, not in the studied attitude of a self-appointed adept, but as a person aware of the twitches and aches that tell him who he is. Perhaps through them we can learn more about who we are.

William J. Higginson