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# MANIFESTO OF HAIKU POETRY IN THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

#### **CASCINA MACONDO 2004**

# This Manifesto of Haiku Poetry in the Italian language

summarises the ideas and thoughts of Cascina Macondo on the art of writing Haiku. Other schools may have their own experiences and opinions which could differ from ours.

We therefore state that:

- 1) the Haiku **must** consist of 3 **verses**
- 2) the first verse **must** consist of **5 syllables**
- 3) the second verse must consist of 7 syllables
- 4) the third verse **must** consist of **5 syllables**

# 5) The Concept of hypermetre.

**A** hypermetre is a verse containing one more syllable than it should contain. The classic rule states that the first verse of a Haiku must contain 5 syllables.

A verse such as the following:

"vedendo morire"

has 6 syllables

$$ve - den - do - mo - ri - re$$
1 2 3 4 5 6

Relative to how the first verse of a Haiku should be, according to the classic rule of 5 syllables, this verse is a hypermetre. It has one extra syllable.

#### 6) The Concept of a hypometric verse

A hypometric verse is one which contains one syllable less than it should. The classic rule states that the second Haiku verse must contain 7 syllables.

A verse such as the following:

"lontana la sera"

has 6 syllables

$$lon - ta - na - la - se - ra$$
  
1 2 3 4 5 6

Relative to how the second verse of a Haiku should be, according to the classic rule of 7 syllables, this verse is a hypometre. It has one less syllable.

- 7) In counting the syllables we must distinguish between the actual number of syllables, counting according to *spelling* and counting according to *metre* (which takes into account truncated verses, verses where the accent falls on the third to last syllable, interversal sinaleph, crasis, hiatus etc.). We believe that in a Haiku composition the author should have the freedom to count the syllables as he or she wishes: by the spelling or by the metre. We feel the metric method is to be preferred. We feel that the possibility of counting by the spelling method could be useful in saving certain beautiful Haiku which would otherwise not come within the classic form for the want or addition of one syllable.
- 8) Where within a verse there is crasis, one less syllable can be counted. Syllables can be counted both by spelling and by metre (in both cases, reading aloud could give slightly different scanning and a slightly different rhythm). To clarify this concept let us take the following verse:

lasciami andare

If we count by the spelling, there are 6 syllables:

$$la - scia - mi - an - da - re$$
  
 $1$   $2$   $3$   $4$   $5$   $6$ 

If we count according to the metre, a CRASIS forms between the syllables *mi*^*an* (which becomes a single one) and the verse has 5 syllables.

$$la - scia - mi^an - da - re$$
1 2 3 4 5

9) **All truncated words found at the end of a verse** can be considered, by their metre, to consist of **one extra syllable.** This phenomenon arises from the fact that in the Latin origin of the Italian word there used to be an extra syllable ("verità" comes from the Latin *veritade*, "bontà" comes from the Latin *bontade*). But this can also be explained by the intrinisic phonetic nature of the accented syllable. It is as if that small explosion of accented sound leaves a sort of empty space, a coda, an echo, a reverberation within which an unstressed syllable (in fact absent) could be contained:

3 syllables counting by spelling but 4 syllables counting by metre (if the truncated word is at the end of the verse)
 4 syllables counting by spelling but 5 syllables counting by metre (if the truncated word is at the end of the verse)

10) All words with the accent on the third to last syllable found at the end of the verse can be considered, by metre, as if composed of one syllable less. This phenomenon arises from the fact that in the Latin origin of the Italian word there used to be one syllable less ("cèlere" comes from *cèler*). But another explanation is in the intrinsic phonetics of a sequence of three syllables of which the first is tonic and the other two unstressed. It is as if the two unstressed syllables, after the small explosion of sound of the tonic, came closer together so as to occupy the same moment in time.

*pè-ta-li* 3 syllables counting by spelling

but 2 syllables counting by metre

(only if the word with the accent on the third to last syllable is at the end

of the verse)

pa-rà-bo-la 4 syllables counting by spelling

but 3 syllables counting by metre

(only if the wordwith the accent on the third to last syllable is at the end

of the verse)

## 11) Anasinaleph (regressive interversal sinaleph).

The syllable with which the hypermetric verse begins gets absorbed, forming a crasis, by the final syllable of the preceding verse. In this case the verse which was hypermetric is no longer so.

Mille cose la sera ancora da fare

counting by spelling:

*mil-le-co-se-la-se-ra* 7 syllables *an-co-ra-da-fa-re* 6 syllables

if they were the last two verses of a Haiku we know that that of 7 syllables is correct.

The other, according to the rule, should be of 5 syllables. Counting the syllables

not by the spelling but by metre, we have the phenomenon of *anasinaleph* where the last syllable of the word "se-ra" forms a crasis with the first syllable of the next verse, (an-co-ra), and assimilates it within itself, removing it from the count of the last verse; bringing it back within the rule.

*mil-le-co-se-la-se-ra* ^*an* 7 syllables *co-ra-da-fa-re* 5 syllables

#### 12) Episinaleph (progressive interversal episinaleph)

The final syllable of a hypermetric verse merges with the first syllable of the following verse and is contained by it. The verse that was previously hypermetric will now be counted with one syllable less. Let's take these verses by Tartamella:

un canto qui mille farfalle piccole alzano al cielo

counting the syllables by spelling would give:

un-can-to-qui4 syllablesmil-le-far-fal-le-pic-co-le8 syllablesal-za-no-al-cie-lo6 syllables

It would therefore not be a classic Haiku. But if we count the syllables by metre we have:

*un-can-to-qui* 5 syllables (the final word of the verse is truncated and can therefore be counted as having one extra syllable)

*mil-le-far-fal-le-pic-co-le* 8 syllables

It would still not appear to be a classic Haiku because the second verse has 8 syllables. It only seems to be so. Because of the *episinaleph* in fact the final syllable "*le*" of the word of the second verse "pic-co-*le*" merges with the first syllable of "*al*" of the last verse (*al*-za-no) and is included by it. It is as if:

mil-le-far-fal-le-pic-co- 7 syllables le^al-za-no^al-cie-lo 5 syllables

It is a perfectly valid classic Haiku. In this Haiku, by ending the second verse with a word accented on the third to last syllable, we only had to remember that words accented on the third to last syllable at the end of a verse can be counted with one less syllable. The Haiku is within the classic form even without considering *episinaleph*. The *episinaleph* allows the moving of the syllable to the next verse *even if the word is not accented on the third to last syllable*. If Tartamella had written "mille piccole farfalle" (last word with accent on the penultimate syllable) it would have been possible to move the syllable "le" of the word "far-fal-le", to the next verse.

# 13) Compensation

This is a phenomenon of metre where the final syllable of a verse which finishes with a **trisyllabic word** can be counted as belonging to the next verse, *even if no crasis is formed*. Let's look at these verses:

Dei fulmini fragili restano cirri di porpora e d'oro

Dei-ful-mi-ni-fra-gi-li-re-sta-no 10 syllables cir-ri-di-por-po-ra^e-d'o-ro 8 syllablles

But because the first verse ends with a word accented on the third to last syllable, its last syllable can be counted as belonging to the following verse as if it were:

Dei-ful-mi-ni-fra-gi-li-re-sta-9 syllables no- Cir-ri-di-por-po-ra^e-d'o-ro9 syllables

the difference between *episinaleph* and *compensation is minimal*: both allow the transposition of a syllable to the following verse, but the *episinaleph* can act even in a verse which does not end with a word accented on the third to last syllable, as long as the next verse begins with a vowel, because it has to form a crasis. *Compensation* instead, allows the moving of the syllable only if the last word of the verse is accented on the third to last syllable, even if the first syllable of the second verse does not begin with a vowel.

#### 14) Echosyllable

Truncated words from a metric point of view, which are found at the end of a verse, can be considered as having an extra syllable. eg.

egli mi portò lontano lontano

*e-gli-mi-por-tò* 5 syllables when counting by spelling *lon-ta-no-lon-ta-no* 6 syllables when counting by spelling

but could also be:

*e-gli-mi-por-tò* 6 syllables when counting metre (because the last word is

truncated)

lon-ta-no-lon-ta-no 6 syllables when counting by spelling

but could also be:

*e-gli-mi-por-tò* 5 syllables when counting by spelling

(...)-lon-ta-no-lon-ta-no 7 syllables when counting by metre (because the invisible syllable which follows the truncated word can be considered as belonging to the next verse)

## 15) Consocrasis

if a verse ends with a word where the accent falls on the penultimate syllable it can draw to itself, from a point of view of metre and in when spoken, the first syllable of the following verse, (especially if this is monosyllabic and open finishing with a vowel: di, da, le, la, mi, te, ti, si, se, etc) as if the word with the accent on the final syllable were to have the accent on the third to last syllable, thereby omitting to count a syllable in the next verse.

Let us look at the following Haiku by Tartamella:

schizzo improvviso di birra dalla lattina teste all'indietro

schiz-zo^im-prov-vi-so 5 syllable with crasis. The verse ends with a word where

the accent falls on the penultimate syllable.

di-bir-ra-dal-la-lat-ti-na 8 syllables te-ste-al-l'in-die-tro 5 syllables

It is not a regular haiku. But the syllable of the preposition "di" at the beginning of the second verse moves to the verse above and by putting itself after the word "improvvìso", which has the accent on the penultimate syllable, transforms it in one with the accent on the third to last syllable, as if it were "improvvìsodi". We would therefore have:

schiz-zo^im-prov-vì-so-di 5 syllables with crasis and consocrasis

bir-ra-dal-la-lat-ti-na 7 syllables te-ste-al-l'in-die-tro 5 syllables

The haiku now appears regular with 5, 7, 5 syllables. The consocrasis is similar to the anasinaleph. The difference is that the anasinaleph moves the first syllable of the preceding verse forming a crasis between the vowels. The consocrasis displaces the first syllable from one verse to the preceding verse even if there is no crossing of vowels, because the word at the end of the preceding verse behaves as if accented on the penultimate syllable. In fact consocrasis is the inverse phenomenon to compensation.

# 16) Bilocation

The possessive adjective "mio" is composed of two syllables: "mi-o".

The spelling rule in the Italian language states that the meeting of a soft vowel (soft are The vowels "i" - "u") with a hard vowel (hard are the vowels "a" - "e" - "o") produces a **hiatus** (distinct syllables) if the soft vowel is tonic. In fact the tonic accent of the adjective "mio"

falls on the "i". If instead the tonic accent falls on the hard vowel a dipthong is produced (the two vowels remain together forming one syllable only ) as in the word "biò-lo-go". But in the

spoken medium, for example in the sequence "miopadre" the tonic accent is subject to a slight shift. It is as if we said: "miòpadre" which is slightly different from "mìopadre". A verse of this kind can therefore be considered to be composed of either 3 or 4 syllables.

The pronoun "lui" is composed of 2 syllables: "lù-i". The Italian rule of grammar states that The meeting of two soft vowels ("i" – "u") produces a hiatus (distinct syllables) if the first vowel is tonic. The adjective "flùido" is composed of 3 syllables : "flù-i-do". If instead the 2 soft vowels are both unaccented a dipthong is produced. The name "Luisella" is composed of three syllables "Lui-sèl-la". When spoken the limits are very blurred. The past historic of the verb to be: "fui", considered on its own , counts as 2 syllables "fu-i". But if I were to say "fuipreso" the sequence is as if it cam within the form "Lui-sel-la", and can be considered as having 3 syllables.

The pronoun "io" contains 2 syllables "ì-o". But the sequence "io dico" can also be considered trisyllabic: "iò-di-co" instead of quadrisyllabic: "ì-o-di-co".

What changes in the recitative and the spoken language is a slight difference in rhythm.

#### 17) Anacrusis

In metre *anacrusis* allows us to discount one or two initial arithmetic syllables of a verse.

It occurs when the next syllables of a verse are organised in a precise rhythmic cadence (trocheo, giambo, dàttilo, molòsso etc.).In this case the first or second syllables of the verse are not counted. This verse, for example:

Il sole risplende e i suoi raggi d'amore ti parlano

is a verse of 18 syllables, if we count by spelling.

If we count by metre instead, and consider the crasis formed between " $de^{\lambda}e^{\lambda}i$ ", it becomes a 16 syllable versee.

The syllables go down to 15, if we consider that the verse ends with a word accented on the third to last syllable.

From the point of view of the spoken word or "continuum parlato" (or even cantato e recitato) the syllables are organised according to a grouping of 3 syllables with the accent on the first syllable (words accented on the third to last syllable):

So as to be organised in this sequence the syllables need the exclusion of the first syllable made up of the article articolo "II". In this case, because of the *anacrusis* effect, that first syllable is not counted. The verse therefore has 14 syllables.

We feel that even if only rarely and in special cases, in the composition of Haiku you should be able to use *anacrusis*.

18) **Proper nouns** In Haiku we accept a verse which goes over the established syllables **only if it contains** a proper noun of person, thing, animal where mentioning it is essential.

# 19) A Haiku must be autonomous.

in the sense that the meaning must be understood in the three verses. It therefore hardly needs a title.

Many write Haiku where the meaning only becomes clear to us from the title.

We do not approve of this system. Cascina Macondo holds to the principle that

HAIKU MUST NOT HAVE A TITLE. We feel that the Haiku has to be a finished and complete poem whose meaning, beauty and understanding must transpire from the three verses which it consists of alone. Purely for the practical purposes of their management and classification may participants of the International Haiku Competition of Cascina Macondo send their compositions in with a title which must simply be THE FIRST VERSE OF THE HAIKU ITSELF.

- 20) A Haiku is not a definition
- 21) is not a moral lesson
- 22) **is not a** phylosophical thought
- 23) is not an abstract thought
- 24) **is not a** play on words
- 25) **is not a** rhyming game
- 26) is not a aphorism
- 27) is not a maxim
- 28) is not a sentence
- 29) is not a proverb
- 30) is not a thought
- 31) **is not an** *idea*
- 32) The purpose of Haiku is not to amaze with strange or ambitious metaphor.
- 33) The more *simple and clean* a Haiku is, the more beautiful it is. By "*clean*" I mean not having grammatical parts at the end of each verse (*articles, prepositions, conjunctions...*)
- 34) **Haiku is** concentration
- 35) **Haiku** is a real *poem* within 17 syllables
- 36) **Haiku** is a lyrical poem
- 37) **Haiku** is pure concreteness
- 38) **Haiku** is a poem of "things" of "facts". It is bare and simple reality
- 39) Haiku it is not a *means*, but the *end*. It is not part of the poem, it is the poem
- 40) Haiku photographs with its *simplicity and essentialness* a *detail*, actually experienced, lived, observed, of our life, of nature, of our experiences ...
- 41) The poet Basho, to explain to us what the Haiku is says:

The Haiku is simply that which is happening in this place, in this moment".

Let us not forget that the Haiku is a poem strictly related to Zen meditation. The perception, the flash of illumination of Zen is reflected on the Haiku.

#### 42) Turn around

Of course we must remember that the Haiku must include a "semantic turn around". The first verse introduces a situation, the next two verses contain a semantic turn around.

A third possibility is that there is a chain reaction, or rather that there is a growing (or decreasing) through the three verses, each resulting in a turning around of the other.

#### 43) **KIGO**

The classic rules of Haiku insist that within the 17 syllables "information" must be there which relates to a season. It can be a fruit, a festivity, an anniversary, a something which reminds us of, is evocative of, refers to a season. (chestnut, wheat, poppy, butterfly, fire-fly, snow, carnival, pomegranate in blossom, falling leaves...). Cascina Macondo has decided it is not necessary to introduce **Kigo**.

We do however share Basho's thought, (rarifying its application) when he says that a Haiku "captures in its essence that which simply is happening here and now.". The important elements for us are therefore the "here" e "now", a "place" and a "time".

# Both these pieces of information must be present.

It is in fact these two pieces of information on *time* and *place* so precise and detailed which make the Haiku *concrete*.

Probably **Kigo** had its origin in this intention, but its rigid application, referring only to the seasons risks limiting the Haiku too much.

## 44) LITTLE KIGO

We have seen that "Kigo" means "season". In the classic Haiku Kigo is obligatory. We have also seen that the rule of Kigo aims at reminding the poet that its composition must refer to a concrete reality, to the **here and now.** The Kigo is circular. The seasons in fact follow eachother beginning all over again into infinity. They contain the idea of *sabi*, of *wabi*, *haware*, of *yugen*. The seasons contain a lyrical idea.

Cascina Macondo simply calls **LITTLE KIGO** something which refers to the "day". In fact we see a plausible resemblance between the passing of days and the passing of the seasons. The days too, taken one by one, follow each other and start all over again to infinity, with circular motion, just like the seasons. But their duration is more ephemeral (dawn, sunrise, morning, midday, afternoon, sunset, dusk, evening, night, sunrise, dawn...). In Basho's teaching ("Haiku captures in its essence that which is simply happening here and now) we feel that what we understand to be truly important is the **here and now. LITTLE KIGO** is a concept that we feel to be acceptable and in no way contradicting Basho's teachings. For us a Haiku is therefore valid even if it does not contain Kigo. But it must contain **little kigo** (temporal reference to a part of the day) and at the same time a reference to a real place.

A Haiku such as the following by Gariele Saccavino:

Notte infame: nel frigo solo l'eco d'un uovo sodo.

(How dreadful this night: the fridge's only echo a hard-boiled egg.)

According to the classic criteria it should not be considered a Haiku, because it does not contain a season.

According to our decision it is a perfect Haiku. It contains the **here** 

(fridge = concrete place) and it contains the **time** (the little kigo, reference to a time, to a part of the day=night)

45) Originally the Haiku was a composition which spoke about nature. The use of *Kigo* was a rule. We accept the fact that Haiku can be about **any lyrical topic**, as long as a "*place*" and a "*time*" are mentioned.

#### **46 FOUR FUNDAMENTAL STATES OF MIND**

The reading, or rather, the *understanding* of a Haiku allows the unveiling of a state of mind. The Haiku itself is imbued with it. The state of mind is transmitted to the reader who finds themselves immersed in it as if in amniotic liquid. There are four main states of mind found in Haiku. They can be present at the same time or singly. There are many shades and the distinction between them is often impossible to perceive.

impercettibile.

#### 47 SABI - SILENCE:

is the feeling of great solitude, of great silence, peace, limitless calm; the feeling of detachment, of non-possession. But it is not sadness itself, just contemplation, solitude, so vast and all encompassing as to give the sensation that what is being contemplated and the contemplator are one and the same.

Il ladro ha lasciato la luna nella finestra (Ryôkan)

The thief
Has left the moon
In the window

## 48) WABI – THE UNEXPECTED, THE AWAKENING OF ATTENTION:

it is that of the state of mind produced by something which suddenly appears in our consciousness. It is the element which wakes us from sadness, from greyness, from those moments when life doesn't seem to have any meaning. Then, in the very moment this depression invades us, this melancholy feeling hits us, when nothing has significance and everything seems so ordinary and sad and absurdly far away... suddenly something *unexpected* appears which makes us *look* with fierce intensity. It attracts our attention. And we "recognise it" in its entirety and universality. That small event becomes large and luminous in front of our eyes. It brings us back to life.

Sotto i miei passi solo il fruscìo si sente di foglie secche. (Hisajo)

Under my footsteps only the crisp sound of dry leaves

# 49) AWARE – NOSTALGIA, THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF THINGS:

a Haiku can be permeated with feeling, the feeling of *aware*. The feeling of nostalgia, of regret, of time passing, the transcience of things, the futility of our worrying, the dispersing of the world, of things disappearing. But there is no suffering; it is not the feeling of irreperable loss. It is rather the understanding of transcience, the mature awareness of simply belonging to it. The universe resides in detail, in the particular, in the tiny event, apparently insignificant, as the container of the universe itself. One thing.

La voce del fagiano. Quanta nostalgia per mio padre e mia madre.

(Basho)

The cry of the pheasant How I miss My father and my mother

Se ne va la primavera, tremando, nell'erbe dei campi.

(Issa)

Springtime is leaving, trembling in the flowers of the fields

## 50) YUGEN -MYSTERY, THE INAFFERABLE:

is the feeling of mystery, of indeciphrable beauty which covers everything, even the smallest, it is the world's energy pulsing everywhere, it is the wonderful, the amazing, the splendour of things, it is the sensation of the universal, of the magic and complexity of life.

It is a bit like the "Great Spirit", the "Wakan-Tanka" (Great Mystery)" of the American Indians, present in every thing.

Fra le erbe un fiore bianco sboccia. Ignoto il suo nome.

(Shiki)

Among the grasses
A white flower blooms
Its name unknown

- 51) The poet Basho used to say: "Whoever writes five good Haiku in his life can consider himself a Haiku writer. If he can write ten, he is a master of Haiku. "It is a hyperbole of a thought, but we agree in substance. We don't trust those who write thousands of Haiku.
- 52) The Haiku picks out that which is asleep, that which is covered by a veil, surrounded by mist, by the day-to-day, by the ordinary, by repetition, and it awakens it.
- 53) To capture the essence of Haiku, and to be able to begin writing some nice ones, we have to be able to achieve *an empty mind*. To be able to abandon ourselves, remove all thoughts, ideas, pre-conceptions. *To be able to look at things for what they really are*.

(sonomama is the Japanese word for this concept). If there are no mental or ideological super-structures, if there is fluidity and simplicity, if we are in a state of "grace"... (which comes from emptying the mind), if we are really "listening"...only then can we see things in their essence. This state of grace produces a "great silence" around us. A mental and physical emptiness spreads. In that emptiness and in that extraordinary silence a deep perception of reality stands out with all its clarity, producing that "explosion of light" that is the ultimate aim

of Haiku. The moment in which the Haiku is "comprehended" a whole poem pours over us. In that precise moment we feel filled with a great clarity and a great awareness. A sense of *compassion* surrounds us.

- 54) We also feel that the reading aloud of Haiku has to be done by trying to create the same conditions of mental and physical emptiness. Ritual silence, scanning, slowness, to facilitate, permit, reach, through the Haiku, that *explosion of light*..
- 55) We think that in order to approach this type of composition, to commit ourselves to its understanding, to fully understand its, its value, the attitude of the mind needed to compose really beautiful ones, means to face a challenge, to undertake a real task of self-discipline. Above all it requires an extraordinary exercise in learning how to separate the essential from the superficial, the concrete from the useless and the superfluous. Reaching *simplicity* and stating the *substance* of an experience is that which characterises a Haiku. It is not only a literary value. For this reason every year we suggest an International Haiku Competition.

For this reason we invite anyone to undertake this literary *genre*. This is why we teach it in schools, to children, to adolescents. This is why we plan initiatives for its diffusion.

Pietro Tartamella translation by Lucy Sobrero

"Non seguire le orme degli antichi, ma quello che essi cercarono" (Matsuo Basho - 1644/1694)

"Do not follow the footprints of the ancients, but what they were seeking"

Agrippino Musso - Anna Maria Verrastro
Annette Seimer - Antonella Filippi
Antonio Ruggiero - Enrico Mario Lazzarin
Fabrizio Virgili - Franco Pariante
Gianni Borraccino - Giuseppe Risso
Gulli Pepe - Marco Morello
Michele Bertolotto - Paolo Luino
Pietro Tartamella - Reno Rascionato
Roberto Martinez - Silvia Sanlorenzo
Ugo Benvenuto - Umberto Cordier
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