

Chad Parenteau

HHH
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Freak Machine Press, 2012

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Foreword by Michael Monroe

One man; one night; one astounding victory – replete with drama, tears, laughter, facing one’s own mortality, more laughter (probably the insane, cackling kind), extra whipped cream on cocoa, hallucinations, danger, and finally triumph!

Chad Parenteau is a hero for our time. He's damn well a hero for me anyway. Writing 365 poems in a year is a difficult challenge in of itself, but to be mere hours from the deadline (with 265 poems logged in), and then to create *one hundred* haiku...just running the numbers here...that's one haiku every three minutes *for five straight hours* – why it's simply astonishing! Madness!

Pure gold.

At 11:56 p.m. on New Year’s Eve, Chad redefined victory, and in the most hilarious, unexpected, and heartwarming way possible. As I savored each piece, I was really touched by how the whole assemblage ended up a grand thematic sweep on goals, setbacks, discouragement, hope, politics, society, competition, love and perseverance, all delivered with Chad’s trademark self-effacing humor, and a full measure of sheer tenacity.

I “laughed out loud” (not virtually) several times, and was impacted by more than a few that really spoke universally. And of course, the good natured tête-à-tête with Dana Rowe, who was already well *over* the 365 mark, having barraged the blog with mostly short forms all year (cheers, Dana), was completely epic. The yin to Chad’s yang, a perfect foil and counterbalance – there was some sense that, for 2010, there could have been no Chad without Dana, no Dana without Chad .

And so commences one of the funniest, delightful collections of haiku I’ve read, written in the context of a truly daunting challenge, a tale of hilarity, victory, and inspiration to anyone – enjoy!

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The 365/365 Blog:

If you’re interested in the crazy fun of pushing your limits as a writer, the blog has various challenges you can plug into at any time of the year (there’s really something for everyone, it’s not a 365-or-fail proposition). Basically it’s a year-long community of poets who frequently comment on one another’s work as everyone stretches their own limits, whatever they may be, in order to experience something new that challenges and changes one’s writing process. It’s extremely rewarding, and also full of great stuff you won’t be able to read elsewhere from some of the best poets in the Boston area and beyond. If you’re curious, just email me.

Introduction

The setting is a place of mind, but there was a physical place for the beginning. After a national 30/30 challenge—30 poems in 30 days—was set up in April of 2008, participants in the Cantab's weekly poetry slam and open mike in Cambridge created a 365/365 challenge: write or at least average a poem a day for a year.

A private blog was created in 2009 and became successful enough for it to happen again in 2010, this time headed up by dark horse victor Michael Monroe, who didn't begin the original challenge until March yet somehow persevered to the end. There were carryovers from the year prior, plus newbies like Michael's wife, Lucie (who had not written previously much in the way of poetry but went on to complete the challenge ahead of schedule), and a "Love Boat"-sized cast of occasional guest stars like Jade Sylvan, Derek J.G. Williams, and Adam Stone as your outta sight bartender.

Then there was me, whose output from the past decade totaled about 135 poems. For years, I had participated in the 30/30 along with several bloggers from all around the country. Sometimes I'd make the deadline; sometimes I'd finish late. Track record be damned, I didn't want to fail this big challenge. The year had a lot more going on with it than just the writing challenge. Relationship issues, work issues, and workshops combined to topple my Jenga-like ego to bestow a feeling of failure worthy of a supporting character in "The Venture Brothers." With only 200 poems going into the end of December, the 365 seemed like just one more block in the woe-is-me wall I was starting to build around myself.

But then, I rallied. I cancelled plans to travel New Year's. I secured a computer in the wake of my busted one. Poems were added so that I would be up to 265 before the New Year's Eve festivities kicked in. The plan was one hundred haiku before midnight, to bring up my poem count to 365. Just past 7:00 PM, I took the borrowed laptop to the JP Licks ice cream/coffee shop near my apartment and got to work. Given that I wasn't even halfway done when 10:00 had passed, the sense of failure and struggle permeated not only throughout the year, but right up until the end of my hundred haiku writing spree at 11:56, finishing in the comfort of my apartment thanks to the Wi-Fi from Jamaicaaway Books & Gifts. It's a footnote to the year and a middle finger to it at the same time. Edits were only made to check spelling and add punctuation I had no time to mess with. Oh, I had to take an extra syllable out of one of the poems. And I had to rewrite one of two haikus that unintentionally near-identical. I only made each mistake once, I'm happy to admit.

Thanks have to go to Dana Robert Rowe, the haiku-as-nature traditionalist. We traded words on the blog through a good part of the year. He remains a worthy opponent. I hope he sees me as the same. Thanks also to the Out of The Blue Art Gallery for loaning the laptop, fellow bloggers for the cheerleading, longtime friend Bret Kerr for the cover, and of course Michael Monroe for continuing to make it all happen. As of this writing, I'm a few months behind the 365 challenge for 2012. I'm not worried.

—Chad Parenteau, May 2012

1.

Hard core non-drinkers
plead bartenders for a coke
and leave the bottle.

2.

Tired of failure.
Write hundred poems of failure
then fail. What happened?

3.

New Year's Eve cocoa.
Lameness labeled, barista
adds extra whipped cream.

4.

Teachers sip coffee,
strategize semester on
rented war table.

5.

Warning: Do not break
Emergency Haiku Glass
around Dana Rowe.

6.

Faraway table
If girl's date was more boring,
she'd know I'm staring.

7.

Writing so fast now,
I think that I almost used
the same idea twice.

8.

I'm writing so fast,
I think that I almost used
the same ide--wait...

9.

Best part of New Year,
War on Christmas has taken
a cease fire.

10.

New Year's goodbye like
office farewell, signing card
because we have to.

11.

There is no failing,
only trying and trying
very badly.

12.

A girl I knew kept
haiku sparse, lost syllables
like kept secrets.

13.

Megaroo is a
fiction made by Patrick S.,
but I still want one.

14.

Confronting my fear
of jumping in pit of spikes,
success upon death.

15.

My new assignment:
Stop treating everything like
it's an assignment.

16.

HHH stands for
hundred haiku handjob.
Thank you for asking.

17.

Mr. Dana Rowe,
The Sixty Senryu Suckoff
is not a good name.

18.

Drowning sorrows in
mediocre poems I'd write
better if I drank.

19.

First haikus about
nature, which of course doesn't
exist anymore.

20.

Haiku in Boston,
only trees are planted to
commemorate trees.

21.

If hundred haiku
and Monroes are on new blog,
does anyone count?

22.

At hundred haiku,
Chad will break the internet,
or at least this blog.

23.

Read her dispatches,
hold up a finger to screen
for Facebook poke.

24.

Year of the rabbit
means New Year's Eve headwear
looks slightly naughty.

25.

When I die, people
will publish all these haiku
to get even.

26.

I deface myself
since people always tell me
I never fight back.

27.

Writing haikus while
rest of poets have good time.
That'll show 'em.

28.

If syllable count
seventeen thousand,
are these still haiku?

29.

Fools become afraid
of being called a non-fool.
Dunce cap keeps head warm.

30.

Too many haiku
causes market to crumble,
owe Dana Rowe cash.

31.

Coffee house words like
Cost Rica Tarrazu
no inspiration.

32.

Did you know this blog
needs word verification
after 20 posts?

33.

Easy to forget
apartment of sloth and filth.
Always stay outdoors.

34.

Michael Monroe pleads
no gajillion haiku
one hundred okay?

35.

She's always saying
don't be scared to make mistakes,
including this one.

36.

I've heard it's better
to regret something you did
one hundred times.

37.

Grass patches upturned
ground shaking as poor Basho
spins in his grave.

38

Basho's grave upturned.
Not another zombie poem!
Now, but he does hurt.

39.

Poetry slams need
edge over video games.
Add fatalities.

40.

Bring me the head of
Dana Rowe's haiku teacher
so I can plant it.

41.

Some people have no
idea of what I'm doing
so I sympathize.

42.

Meet me on the T
Susan Savoy, so I can get
sixty more ideas.

43.

My college teacher
hears "Dick in ass" at Stone Soup
over and over.

44.

Remember, she says,
if everyone thinks it's bad,
then you're outvoted.

45.

Poetry teacher
says he's read lots of poems and
mine are some of them.

46.

My college teacher
says "fuck" in feature's first poem.
Shock poets in awe.

47.

In truth, I've waited
for over three hundred poems
to do my dishes.

48.

Have I succeeded
in isolating readers?
No? Then keep going.

49.

Here lies my ego,
laid beside my chapbooks
I just give away.

50.

Make choice: Pariah
or nonentity? You see?
Choices are simple.

51.

Next year: Adventures
of John Paper vs. the
unending haiku.

52.

Grew my first haiku,
no one bothered to read it,
lost in the thickets.

53.

Just the name haiku
evokes a lid of promise,
poet pocket gifts.

54.

Name senryu suggests
the rewrapping of presents,
Basho Yankee swap.

55.

Discard all attacks,
remember I hate myself
more than anything.

56.

Haiku purists call
for poems to be quiet plants,
easier to pave.

57.

Next HHH step:
Lee Litif and Chris Robbins
recite every one.

58.

Haiku purists love
nature symbols--recycling
at a McDonald's.

59.

Thinking second thoughts
Dana. Any chance for a
hot Tanka lap dance?

60.

Deforest land to
hold together internet.
All lose haiku war.

61.

Drafting a treaty
in seventeen syllables
or cease fire ends.

62.

Dana's treaty point:
still seventeen syllables
but call it senryu.

63.

Haiku treaty states
Chad must be relocated
to senryu Gaza.

64.

Haikus should not have
Israel/Palestine jokes.
I'm very sorry.

65.

Warring circles,
infighting open mike,
true poets party.

66.

Sending olive branch
stapled to an crumbling leaf
natural enough?

67.

Haiku War like War
of Roses, except one rose
is an e-card.

68.

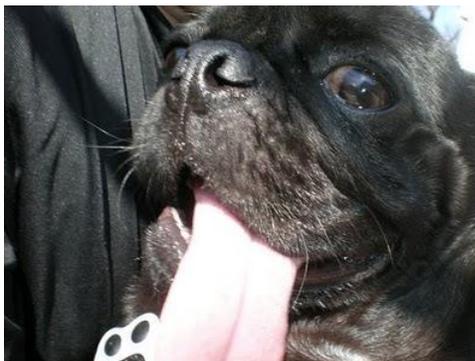
For War of Haiku
I bring a rubber chicken
into a gunfight.

69.

Number 69
will forego sex joke due to
my lack of girlfriend.

70.

I'll post this puppy →
after every fake haiku
to distract you all.



71.

Eleven-thirty,
HHH in overtime.
Forget the time outs.

72.

First note to myself:
By end of next year, only
be seventy short.

73.

First haiku war done.
the dust clears, and Chad has won
everyone's hatred.

74.

Twenty-eleven
Chad Parenteau will decide
to go with Tonka.

75.

Twenty-eleven
Dana Rowe will just contest
that Chad likes sankas.

76.

Seventy haiku
on display like ice sculpture
already melted.

77.

The difference between
these poems and masturbation?
Less guilt with latter.

78.

Last poems getting worse.
Next year write the last poems first
for better build up.

79.

Always try something
you're not sure you can to. It's
funnier to watch.

80.

Building spectacle
like Nick Cage in *Wicker Man*
but not as funny.

81.

Second note to self:
Write your next hundred haiku
before next New Year's.

82.

My failures are grand.
I dance on my grave before
anyone else can.

83.

If man is nature,
then every poem we write is
just longer haiku.

84.

New no-haiku rule.
Your penalty is having
to read all of mine.

85.

After all these poems,
at midnight, friends will call drunk,
and I'll sound like them.

86.

Your greatest struggles
are those no one cares about.
You need case in point?

87.

Mix seaweed, zombie
and robot babies, you get
Chad's stillborn haiku.

88.

Free Aaron Goldstein!
Sorry, only trying to
keep you all alert.

89.

Hundred haiku like
walking Boston Marathon.
No one waits at end.

90.

My urge to finish
something, even if badly,
began at childbirth.

91.

Over achiever
falling under. I sweat when
tying shoelaces.

92.

They tell me winning
doesn't matter, stop blocking
all of the spotlights.

93.

Our darkest secret:
Some of us bleed on page for
mediocrity.

94.

By morning, emails
will litter inbox saying
what the hell happened?

95.

By the morning time,
I will have regret, but it's
only one more thing.

96.

The end is the end.
Hopefully people forget
how you sweat and stank.

97.

End of a journey.
A map only you can read.
Sometimes that's enough.

98.

There is no gold ring.
and there are no haiku wars.
There is only me.

99.

I have to do this,
sometimes teaching myself how
to jump burnt bridges.

100.

You have now finished
the hundred haiku handjob.
Thank you for your time.