

SILENCE'S BELL

by Florentin Smarandache

(non-standard haiku poems, translated from Romanian by Stefan Benea, and refined by
the author)

THE SPRING

Time opens
the window of the moment
and watches me.

I am young
like a beginning
under the bell of the sunrise.

Tender snowdrops
draw up the spring
from under the snow.

Through deep ploughings
the field
opens its mouth.

Zephyr
is lightly taking us

on sharpened horns.

The border copse

grows

in sensibility.

Kind cranes bring

warmth

on the wing.

Acacias are bursting

into laughters

of buds.

The breeze blows

from the Eastern side

of my heart.

Maggots are buzzing

a lot

about a thought.

The road

is rashly running

in my steps.

Our morning dream

is slowly trickling
upon the face.

THE SUMMER

To touch with
the morning brow
the nightingale's song!

Among the lines
a voice
throws me flowers.

Do you see that bird?
Spring rises
out of its song.

Torpid under the sky,
the sun has frozen
and stares.

Are the birds somehow blinded
by the light?
Are the waves hitting the sea?

The metaphor
flutters its flag

like a rainbow.

Chthonian wasps' nests

of hollow wort...

Serpents of light.

The acacias got tired

under the liquid heat

of summer.

Diaphanous flavors

across the meadows

seek for their flowers.

The straight pines

throb up to the sky

from peaks' foreheads.

A child runs

losing his soul

through the ears.

On the edge

poplars carry roads

on their back.

On old hills

the rumour of cows
with soft udders.

In the light breeze
stet burst
the springs-of-universe.

Among sun-flakes
the toothless smile
of a child.

Music is
a dream
passing among the stars.

Dancers are passing
arm in arm
with a melody.

Under its wings, the royal eagle
is gathering the air
with unfolded feathers.

By saucy wavings
the Northern wind
lightly punches me.

The clouds hang
like foul chandeliers
and life is taking time.

The drops fall on the asphalt
like grenades.
It is raining at plus infinity...

Like a lubberly girl
evening falls on its knees
next to the window.

In the blue blood
of the sky
there are stars seething.

The alders bend
upon the field
their heads, heavy with sleep.

Like a boat
through the air, moon
fawns into waters...

I see peasants
in the sky's
long and big Bear.

An enlightened street lamp
hits the fence
with its light.

Sweet dreams
run
barefooted on the street.

THE AUTUMN

Autumn faintly paints
the cry of the
sleepy flowers.

On the bench near the lake
a kiss -
and the lovers nowhere.

Flowers closed
on the horizon's edge
one by one.

Through the lucid air
an evanescent wedding
of herons.

Corns

switch on lanterns

under their arms.

Eminent lime trees

in pale hemorrhages

of leaves.

The horn is weakly blowing

from the great bell

of silence.

In high spheres one can hear

the blue

of the violin playing.

The priggish flowers were closing

their windows

in an infinite desert.

The wind blows, blows,

and the trees

turn their backs to me.

A dragon fly

is stil strongly struggling

within a clock...

Our souls
sail, huddled
in saving boats.

Vinyard harvested
by the sun
and squeezed by lights.

The wine
drops memories
into the glasses.

I open a bottle
full
of gloomy longings.

Winds are stil passing
in a boat
of air.

It is raining so long
that moss and lichens just grow
upon the heart.

Listen to the storm
madly singing

in rages of wind!

Through deep puddles

the street

is limping.

Through the night's mud

stars are walking

with boots.

The sea tortures

its entrails

in the pier town.

Evening switches off the sky.

In things it's getting

late.

An ingenue sky

that only the twilight

raises it.

On top of clouds

the old moon

with dark rings of night.

A funeral march drives

the late drizzle...

and so much melancholy!

THE WINTER

King in the streets -

the North wing,

with empty pockets.

White statues

in the sifted lava

of time.

The violins pass

their strins

through our ears.

Lattice of tenebrousness.

The chimeras go

propped on crutches.

Like in coffins,

eyes are locked into the sockets.

Death will stay alive!

Gloomy noon

like a tin

of tainted fish.

But I'm running, running
to catch by its hand
the time.

Worries
start to teem on the street
with people in the mouth.

Irrational pains
slap
my unbeing.

In front of the mirror
like in front of
your own soul.

Gallant,
necktied poems
showed off on the stage.

In the window,
the light heavily hangs
from the lamp.

And the night is wonderfully

rising up on all fours

upon the moon.

The curtain falls

like a heavy night

of December.

I often go to sleep

on a sofa

of dreams.

- Do not wait for me,

I'll linger a little

among the stars.

Florentin Smarandache, a Poet with the Dot under the I

Postface by F. Vasiliu

The author of these lines is confronted with two assertions. The first one: who is Florentin Smarandache? The second: the poet has no biography; his poetry is his biography. But the latter assertion comes to eliminate the former and, the problem of choice is no longer a problem. However, when would a reader be interested in a poet's life? A passionate reader of poetry might answer: "never," while another, particularly impressed by the poet's work may feel the need to know some data about his life.

Poets impose themselves with difficulty on the world of readers. A volume of poetry has a circulation of 2-3000 copies even in good times. After ten titles written in 15-20 years, a poet is known only by those 30,000 readers, sometimes owning only a single title from the ten. If those who read him are ten times more than that, the poet in question may consider himself well placed in the conscience of his nation. These considerations may be applicable to those poets who have lived herein Romania - and have published book after book at the Romanian publishing houses. But this "happy regime" is not for Florentin Smarandache, who from 15 titles could see only two

books published at home, with more than 12 years between their issue. Meanwhile, he wasn't allowed to publish here so he took the way of the exile. And this is why today, opening this volume and learning for the first time about Florentin Smarandache - the reader of only these 80 haiku discovers a poetic genius and is entitled to wonder, who is this poet; what has he written and what is the echo of his other books?

Florentin Smarandache is still young for one to speak about his biography. At his return home from taking part in the delivery of his latest book, we decided together to publish this volume simultaneously in Romania and the U.S.A. I thought it was necessary to mention here his scientific and literary merits so that the Romanian readers in particular would not be found among the last people to learn of the activity of a compatriot so productive in some segments of culture.

Florentin Smarandache was born in 1954, in Bălcești-Vâlcea, and he graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics at the University of Craiova. He worked as a programmer/analyst at IUG Craiova (1979-1981), teacher at the College in Bălcești (1981-1982), professor at the "Sidi El Hassan Lyoussi" College in Sefrou Morocco (1982-1984), teacher in mathematics at the "Nicolae Bălcescu" College in Craiova (1984-1985) and then at the school in Drăgotesti-Dolj (1985-1986). Finally he lost his job, earning his living by preparing school-people and students (1986-1988). From this short sequence of didactic activities during the "golden days" is brought to light an ascendant trajectory followed by an undeserved collapse. One may guess the moment when, having been prevented from participating with specialty works at Congresses on mathematics in Canada and California, he openly manifested his discontent and his first sign of disagreement with the totalitarian regime, and as a result of this fact, he lost his job. He could not bear the situation and, in 1988 he managed to cross the border illegally and arrive in Turkey, where he taught French for a year and a half. In 1990 he reached the U.S.A. where he became professor, and passed the Master exams at the University of Tempe, Arizona, under the coordination of Professor Bremmer. He is working now as a research engineer at the Honeywell Computer Corporation in Phoenix, Arizona, where he lives with his family who joined him at the beginning of 1991.

Florentin Smarandache is not a refugee in literature because he has failed in his specialty. He's published four works on mathematics in Fès and Casablanca (Morocco) and Chicago (U.S.A.), over 40 articles in reviews of mathematics in Romania, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, U.S.A. and he has presented works at national and international seminars, colloquia, symposia and congresses in Craiova and Yassy (Romania 1978), Calgary (Canada 1986), Berkeley (1986), Los Angeles (1989), Las Cruces (Mexico 1989). He is the author of the Smarandache Function from the Number Theory [$n:Z^* - N$, $n(n)$ is the smallest integer m such that $m!$ is divisible by n], included- like other main works - in dictionaries, anthologies and encyclopedias of specialty in Great Britain, France, Spain, and the United States. He is member of the Mathematics Association in Romania (1990), and of the American Association on Mathematics (1983).

The literary debut of Florentin Smarandache took place in 1979 at the "Năzuinte" ("Aspirations"), Magazine, with the poem "Figures have started vibrating." He continues to publish poems here and there in different literary reviews. In 1980 together with a group of young writers he launched "The Paradoxist Movement". The editorial debut was made by the volume of poems "*Formule pentru spirit*" ("*Formulae for the Spirit*"), Bucharest, Editura "Litera" 1981. In 1983, the volume was translated into French by Chantal Signoret from the University of Provence and appeared in the same year at the "Expres" Printing House, for Fès,

Marocco. This was followed by *Culegere de exercitii poetice (Collection of Poetical Exercises)*, Fès, Marocco, 1982. *Legi de compozitie internă. Poeme cu...probleme (Laws of Internal Composition. Poems with...problems)*, Fès, Marocco, 1982, all in Romanian, and then, a series of volumes in French: *Le sens du non-sens*, Fès, Marocco, 1984, containing a non-conformist manifesto for "a new literary movement: the Paradoxism", *Antichambres et Antipoésies ou bizarreries*, Fès, Marocco, 1984, and *Le Paradoxisme: un nouveau mouvement littéraire*, Bergerac, France 1992. The same year also appeared *America, paradisul diavolului (America, the Paradise of the Devil)*, journal of an emigrant, edited by Editura "Aius" Craiova. The majority of his works were, fully or in part, translated into English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, some of them having a third edition in the U.S.A. The poet has collaborated in literary reviews in Romania, France, Belgium, Turkey, India, Japan, Germany, Canada, Australia, Morocco, and the United States.

He's also been awarded with literary prizes in Romania (1981, 1982) and in France (1990). He was elected as International Eminent Poet by the International Academy of Poets from Madras (India, 1991), and obtained the "Honorary Diploma in Fanciful Poetry" at the Contest of the Academy of Philology and Art, from Périgord (France 1992). His poetry was selected in nine literary anthologies and appeared in Craiova (1980), Caen, Puymeras, Paris, Bordeaux (1989, 1990, 1991), New York, Colorado (1991, 1992), and Seoul (1991). He also has two journals describing his emigration, with over 1000 pages and four plays, some of them written for children. One of these, *Out in the left Field (Străin de cauză)* has already been performed on the stage of a theatre in Phoenix (U.S.A.). Hundreds of other poems are on their way to printing houses or almost ready to meet their readers.

There is still time until it will be said about Florentin Smarandache that his work can't be studied without knowing his life, when it will be analyzed - to paraphrase Oscar Wilde - how much genius and how much talent were distributed and still can be found in his life and, in his creation. But from these few directions of his literary steps, one can distinguish three: the prose - comprising the journal and the plays - the paradoxist movement that he promoted, and the poetry.

His published prose in Romania consists only of the book *America, the Devil's Paradise* - a journal of emigration - covering the period between 23 March 1990, when he left Turkey, and 3 Sept. 1991, a period spent in the U.S.A. It is a severe and intransigent radiography of the space he's lived in, attentively observed by him after the experience gained within the totalitarian system. The journal reveals lived facts, a concrete reality, with quite a few elements of shock, all in a fluent language, with short sentences, written with nerve, reminding us of Hemingway's style. The university professor Ion Rotaru, referring to this work points out that it is "a book of great success, written with a lot of poetic talent and polemic verve, reflecting the bitterness and the out of the ordinary adventures of a young Romanian intellectual who escaped from the communist Romania". "He has the Romanian language, in all its expressivity, in the tip of his nib. The Oltean and the peasant from the bottom of his soul come out to light in a charming way among so many sarcasms and puzzles of the strangered, little, beginner, Panait Istrati" ("Romanian Reality, 1 Sept. 1990).

Concerning the paradoxism and the literary movement promoted by him - established in 1983 and definitely led by Florentin Smarandache - they have, as an ideational basis, concepts and theses identical or close to those promoted by the modern literary currents, running on the known ways of negation and of vanguard absurd. Having its roots in Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque's cubism. In the cult of creative inconsistency of the futurism of Marinetti, Hlebnicov and

G. Govani. In the negation of any link between thought and expression, theses sustained by the dadaists, such as Tristan Tzara, H. Ball and R. Huelsenbeck. In supearealism, perceived as modern nihilism and consistently practising "the psychical automatism and the order of thought in the absence of any control of the thought" (Jacques Gaucheron), come to the fore at the beginning of this century by André Breton. Through its manifestos rather than through its poetry - but with brilliant characters like R. Desnos, A. Artaud, L. Aragon, P. Eluard, giving birth to currents, schools and poets without some adhesion to a poetical catechism. In our country, Ilarie Voronca, C. Nisipeanu, M. R. Paraschivescu, and Ion Vinea had aligned with this current.

After World War II, the West was assaulted by the neovanguard, postmodernism, experimentalism, and all sorts of new schools, like Izidor Isou's lettrism, neodadaism, etc. "In comparison with the great centres in the world, Bucharest was after 1945, the most fertile center of artistical experiences and, dare I say, the most orthodox" (Aurel Dragos Munteanu; *Opera si destinul scriitorului, The Writers Work and Destiny*, Cartea Românească, Bucuresti 1972, pag. 132) here becoming famous poets like Gherasim Luca, Trost - the creator of oniromancy- Paul Păun, Ion Caraion, Virgil Teodorescu.

With regard to the paradoxism, the appearance of this movement - whose roots were fully watered by the absurd and saturated with contradictions, and paradoxes universe of the late system - is not just a name labeling a sort of literary scandal, destined to an ephemeral glory. The essence of paradoxism consists in negation, having on its literary frontispiece the emblem NON.

In the "Nonconformist Manifesto", published in the volume of poems *Le sens du non-sens* (1983) Florentin Smarandache displays some of the mechanism of paradoxism: excessive contradictory comparisons. Speaking about the literary paradoxist movement, the literary critic Constantin M. Popa reconfirms the possibility to enlarge the literature through negative concepts.

"Paradoxism does not intend to destroy literature. It is interested in finding a new writing practice, efficient and tensioned, preserving the energy resulting from the touch of opposite semantic fields. But the impact will be always unforeseeable (...). The paradigm of negation becomes literary object because everything (...) falls back in literature. It is an unavoidable paradox..."

Paradoxism is then "...the belief that into the space of the poem can enter everything (...) a literature «disappears» while it is still being written*(...) the paradoxists experimenting with lucidity the tragical consequences of the language discrimination" (The Literary Paradoxist Movement; Xiquan Publishing House, Phoenix-Chicago, 1992).

Florentin Smarandache launched the Literary Paradoxist Movement with more than a manifesto. He also brought in the patrimony of The Movement from its very beginning with three volumes of poetry, spread all over the world, creating a large echo. The literary Paradoxist Movement has representatives in the literatures from Romania, France, Belgium, Canada, U.S.A., U.K., Germany, Spain, Poland, Brazil, Morocco and Cameroon. Radiographing his volumes of poetry, suggestively entitled *Nonpoems*, *Formulae for the Spirit*, *The Sense of the non-sense*, and others, we discover a poem where contradictions, associations, contrasts, oxymorons and paradoxes are in the best company. "At the Birth of a Demise", "The Insolent Politeness", "At the Height of the Fall", "The Practice of the Theory", "Breakfast of Illusions", "Indigeste Poem of Digestion" are some titles of poems which surprise the lecturers; they not only leave the reader "perplexed, shocked, and undecided" but they also "make the brain vibrate" (Robert Chasseneuil - Member of "Art and Poetry of Touraine" - France). Here is an example of most "innocent" of his poems, called "Lesson of Philosophy", "It is raining and the Saints are rotting in churches/at the windows the thought/flap the wings//Let's then come to

philosophical/meditations - close the eyes and let's go/ Anyone is smaller than oneself//-To be, is it a projection into infinite?//We are of negligible size, but we want/ each, to be a bigger nothing//-The void is the emptiest emptiness//-I have an "I have not" of my own//the rain raps rythmically/like the blood/waters are running to the future."

The titles of the poems as well as the philosophical "thesis" from this poem are significant examples of the poet's propensity for bringing in light contradictions, antithesis, paradoxes; as well as mastering the skill of essentialized expressions, which makes him a potential poet of short poems, either for haiku or even for *poem in a single verse*. It was a joyous occasion when, in 1990, I received some of the Florentin Smarandache's haiku to be published in our Magazine HAIKU.

For the reader who is learning about the haiku for the first time, we consider it necessary to digress for a moment, in order to explain some background before the presentation of the poems.

The haiku micropoem, of Japanese origin, is a species of poetry with fixed form, which is characterized by three groups of rules: Prozodical, structural, and aesthetical ones. On the prozodic aspect, the haiku is a tristich with 17 syllables as a whole, distributed in three lines by the rule 5-7-5. Structurally, the tristich must comprise *kigo*, a word indicating the season of action of the topic and the answers to the triad of questions - *when?*, *what?*, *where?*; it must have *kireji*, that is a cesura after the first or the second line, indicated by a punctuation mark, (hyphen, colon, semicolon, full stop, etc.) and finally, it must end by a noun. In an aesthetic point of view, the haiku has plenty of rules which call for a thorough study (see the work *Interferente lirice - Constelatia haiku / Lyrical Interpenetrations - The Haiku Constellation* by Florin Vasiliu and Brândusa Steiciuc, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1989, and the HAIKU Magazine). We mention here some of the most important rules for the creation of haiku.

The fundamental rule which lays the basis of the haiku creation is that the topic of any haiku is nature. The haiku pulls out its sap from the phenomenology of nature. The haijin - the poet of haiku poems - is a subtle and skilled observer of the universe of events and facts to which he is a surprised witness of the whole surrounding phenomena, of those single moments that exclusively address the sensibility of a poet, a unique phenomenon that he transposes within poetical expression. As Otsuji, a theoretician of haiku poetry said, "the artist's own nature and the environment melt together in the haiku". One of the essential conditions of the haiku aesthetics consists in the fact that the micropoem is the result of an unique experience, expressed through "the image that speaks". By its shortness, the haiku enforces the rendering of "normal, unemotional things, linking flat intervals from among intense moments", from which results a poem, "a concentrated elixir of pure essence" (Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch).

A second rule of the haiku aesthetics, directly connected to the first, imposes the empirical reality that "should be immediately «caught» by the poet, in its dynamic impulse"...each event of the contact between creative subject - object, taking place once and for all and lasting only a moment, then "disappearing without any trace". Stanca Cionca - Romanian Nipponologist - states that "the haiku school is a science of image concentration within the detail, fragmentary":

*"How a trouble thing!
on the path of the mountain
a poor violet".
Matsuo Bashō(1644-1694)*

Emil Eugen Pop - another Romanian Nipponologist - considers the haiku as "...syllables that

give the measure of the step with which the haijin wanders through the world, namely through himself".

A third aesthetic rule of haiku sends us to the *mu-shin* concept, with the sense of "without spirit" originated in the daoist void considered as substance. Like the emptiness of a container that obliges the matter to take its inner form, or like the space between the spokes of a wheel, that makes the wheel and elbows its way ". ...the things put into evidence the empty place that they sustain as well as the few words of a haiku put in evidence the silence from which they took birth and to which they return" (Andrei Plesu: *Pitoresc si melancolie / Picturesque and melancholy*, Ed. Univers, 1980, p. 173). This aesthetic concept may be often found in haiku by the absence of the things covered and hidden in the atmosphere of mist, by the state of evanescence that dominates them, like in this haiku:

*"Waves are hummingly coming,
but neither a boat,
nor a seagull".*

Vasile Moldovan (The Romanian Haiku Society - Bucharest cercle).

The fourth important aesthetic rule is defined by the pair of terms *ryûkô-fueki*, meaning temporary / everlasting, ephemeral / eternal. They are contradictory concepts which must be present within the poem, balancing one part of the haiku, dominated by the phenomenal instability, with the other part, mastered by the non-phenomenal constancy, both equal but opposed as creative phenomenal articulations.

*"The old pond -
A frog plunged.
The sound of water."*

In this famous and often cited Bashô's poem, the first line evokes through the word *old*, the oldness, and through *pond*, the eternity while the frog's jump calls forth the ephemerality, and the *sound of the water*, opposed to the eternal quietness of the pond, presumes movement, life. These elements settle "...the sense of the poem and a part of its virtue to cling to the opposition between the adjective, old, and the noun, sound" (Etiemble, "Sur la traduction du «haiku»" / "About the translation of haiku", In *Cahiers roumains d'études littéraires*, 1/1976, p. 42). Another important aesthetic rule is based on the pair of terms *wabi/sabi*, with meaning close to loneliness, melancholy, dismay, concept used in connection with the beauty of daily life / solitude, time lapse, time patina, terms used with reference to the aesthetic aspect of literature.

*"Escaped from spinney -
in watery lily lives
in asceticism."
Matsuo Bashô*

This haiku appeared in the Nipponese literature in the 17th century. In Japan, there are currently over ten haiku associations, and over one million haiku have been published. There are annual organized contests where prizes are awarded. The micropoem entered Europe at the end of the last century and it was adopted by prestigious names in the world of literature: Ghiorgios

Seferis (The Nobel Prize in 1963), Octavio Paz (The Nobel Prize in 1991), Ezra Pound, Giuseppe Ungaretti, T.W. Home, Antonio Machado, F.S. Flint, Allen Ginsberg, W.S. Merwin, Kenneth Yasuda, Donald Eulert - who was, until 1974, lecturer of American Literature at The "A.L.I.Cuza" University from Yassy (Romania). In Romania, the haiku was introduced in the fourth decade of this century by the poets Al.T. Stamatiad and Traian Chelariu and it was cultivated by poets like Stefan Baci, Aurel George Stino, Nichita Stănescu, Stefan Augustin Doinas, Marin Sorescu, Aurel Rău, Gheorghe Tomozei, Veronica Porumbacu, Toma George Maiorescu, Gh. Grigurcu, Bazil Gruia, Vasile Igna, Gligor Sava, Vasile Smărândescu (with a book of haiku, *Carte Însingurată, Solitary Book*, in the Haiku Magazine Collection), Nicolae Alexandru Vest, Eugenia Bogdan, Virgil Bulat, Liliana Grădinaru and others.

During the preparation of the work *Interferente lirice - Constelația haiku / Lyrical Interpenetration - Haiku Constellation*, we discovered in Romanian literary reviews, new names from the period 1970-1989, a new wave of authors who signed haiku, many poets who were members of literary clubs, and many beginners. The political changes that took place in Romania at the fall of 1989 allowed Romanians to publish in the beginning of the year 1990. The HAIKU - Magazine of Cultural Romanian - Japanese Interpenetrations, that publishes hundreds of translated and genuine haiku in every issue. Many of the Romanian ones are also presented in English and French.

Florentin Smarandache is an authentic poet of haiku, whom we present also to the English and French speaking readers through the version of Miss Rodica Ștefănescu and the poet Ștefan Benea. This booklet, called *Clopotul tăcerii, The Silence's Bell* after a metaphor taken from a haiku, suggestive of the "noise" created by the big bell as figurative acceptance of the haiku, whose big-bang is rather silence than any toll, and even more, an echo of the silence consumed during the reading of the 17 syllables of the poem. The analysis of the poets' haiku, compared with the rules a haiku must follow, shortly expressed below, brings to light some findings that deserve to be mentioned: to determine clearly the position facing the haiku that Florentin Smarandache cultivates and the evolution of the Romanian haiku, generally speaking, as well as of the poet performing haiku.

The poet has written poems with the number of syllables distributed between 9 and 21. The number most commonly used was 15 syllables (12 haiku) followed by 17 syllables (12 haiku) and 16 syllables (10 haiku), totaling 50% of the volume. From the 12 haiku with 17 syllables, only two have lines with a length of 5 and 7 syllables, not in the order 5-7-5, but 7-5-5, which does not differ significantly from a haiku. According to these notations, we may conclude that the poet doesn't follow the "classical" current of the haiku with a prosodic fixed form, but one of the free forms, known under the Nipponese name of juyuritsu noka, widely used in Japan. From the whole prosodic structure, the poet observes only the rules of a tierce, the number of syllables being different among the haiku and the lines.

It is worth mentioning that the majority of the published haiku - 52 poems respectively or 64.2% - have less than 17 syllables, a fact rarely met by the poets of haiku, who usually exceed this norm a little for reasons easy to understand. This brings to light a clear characteristic of the poet - to whom eloquence and rhetoric are strange - of setting his poem under the sign of lapidary poetical expression, of direct confession. This also proves that the poet does not turn back to work his first formulated poetical expression. Unlike poetry with rhythm and rhyme, the poetry with fixed form, where there are supposed to be two moments, one of conception and one of execution, the application of the prosodic rules permits the perception of a distance between the initial poetical thought and its final expression. Making possible the distinction between "the

reality of the thought" and the reality of the effects" (Paul Valery). Florentin Smarandache sets his words into the line fixed with the mortar of expression, without any subsequent change in its structure. The poet does not defy the norms; total liberty is his norm. Therefore, he is allowed to compose haiku with nine and 21 syllables.

The poet's inclination toward a type of poem much shorter than a haiku made us determined to enter more deeply into the structure of his poems. This has led us to identify two types of poems in Florentin Smarandache's poetry. On the one hand is the genuine haiku, like the following example:

<i>Pe dealuri bătrâne zvon de vite cu ugere moi."</i>	<i>"Up on the old hills rumor of many cattle with tender udders."</i>
<i>"Stropi cad pe asfalt ca niste grenade. Plouă la plus infinit.</i>	<i>"Drops fall on asphalt Like certain little grenades. Rains at endless plus."</i>
<i>"Ca o fată lălaie seara cade în genunchi lângă geam."</i>	<i>"Like a ninny girl, the evening falls on its knees next to the window."</i>

On the other hand there is another type of poem, of which contents, spirit, and structure put it among the *one verse poems*, whose creator was Ion Pillat. It is a type of poem with 13 or 14 syllables, built on iambs, thus with compulsory metrics, full of beauty and grace. Generated by the moments of torture and feast of the creation, a poem very close to the European spirit. Pillat tells us that he noticed the one line poem in some of Victor Hugo's verses, which could be isolated and allowed to be independent of the context, but within the myriadic space, i.e. in the Romanian soul. Florentin Smarandache writes poetry in tristich, respectively haiku. He is unaware that sometimes he is not closer to but farther from the difficult spirit of the Nippon poetry and aesthetics. He is right on the native soil of the one-line poem, which was lacking in Romanian literature, from its appearance in 1936, when it appeared in the third volume of Ion Pillat's works, which also included his one-line poems. It is very possible that the poet, out of a job and struggling hard for a living, wouldn't have had the opportunity to find out about this.

Here there are some examples from his poems which are one-line poems rather than haiku:

<i>"Ne ia ușor zefirul pe ascuțite coarne."</i> "The zephyr takes us easily onto the quiet horns."
<i>"Izbucnesc salcâmi în hohote de muguri."</i> "The acacias burst into a guffaw of buds."
<i>"Blajini cocori aduc pe aripă căldura."</i> "Kindly cranes bring the warmth on their wings."
<i>"Arinii-si pleacă la pământ, capul greu de somn."</i> "The alders incline to ground their sleepy heavy heads."

It is an advantage for the poet to recognize the one-line poem, and if Florentin Smarandache, with his gift, cultivated this species, he could offer us very soon a bunch of precious flowers that may place him among Ion Pillat's worthy successors for this type of poem. Among names like Lucian Blaga, Virgil Teodorescu, Bazil Gruiă, Ion Brad, Grigore Bieru, Gheorghe Grigurcu, Ion Serebreanu, Nicolae Tatomir, Lazăr Cerescu, Valeriu Bucureșcu, Ion N. Daia and ...Geo Bogza, among others.

The topics tackled in the poems respect the fundamental rule of haiku, being extended on a large scale by the elements of nature in all its diversity. The poet awakened by the dawn goes out in his country yard (rarely do the street and the town appear) and then wanders the lanes of his village. There it...is where he acquires the subjects like; the sun, the field, the flowers - snowdrops and hollow worts - the path, the trees - acacias, pines, poplars, alders, limes - the blue sky, the birds- the nightingale, the cranes, the herons, the eagles - the peasants, the hills with cows, the corn, the bell, Alp horn, the vineyard, the wine, the heart, the thought, the violins, the music, the dance, the longing, the evening, the stars, the moon, the lovers, the clouds, the rain, the wind, the pain, the death - these are the poet's predilected topics. In these concentrated flowers is almost everything that we find in hundreds of haiku of the great classical Japanese poets of haiku. In all his haiku the poet is strongly anchored in reality, knowing the Nippon lesson that "without reality there is not haiku." He also respects and totally or partially applies the rule of "time - space - object":

*"Fragezi ghiociei
trag de sub zăpadă
primăvara."*

*WHAT?
WHERE?
WHEN?*

*"Fresh snowdrops
pull under the snow
the spring."*

*Blajini cocori aduc
Pe aripă
căldura"*

*WHEN?
WHERE?
WHAT?*

*The kindly cranes bring
on their wings
the warmth."*

In this haiku the spring and the cranes are not grammatical answers to the question WHAT?, but to WHEN?. The terms of the answer structurally define the season in which the action takes place and constitute the *kigo*.

Let's try to enter into the intimacy of the poems and the arsenal of Florentin Smarandache's poetic means. The 80 haiku are grouped in seasons: Spring with 12 haiku, Summer with 28, Autumn with 25 and Winter with 15. In this group of haiku, poems are on topics directly linked to nature, others have a reflective character, within which the author thinks through images of great expression.

The poet begins his book and the chapter about Springtime by discovering himself as if captured by time: a simple glance under the sign of observing or maybe his revelation of significance? We can't really know:

*"Timpul deschide
fereastra unei clipe
și se uită la mine."*

*"The Time opens
the window of an instant
under the dawn's bell."*

Seemingly in reply to the question mark put by time comes the answer in his own

introduction:

*"Tânăr sunt,
ca un Început
sub clopotul răsăritului."*

*"I am a young,
like a beginning
under the dawn's bell."*

The triad, young - beginning - dawn, represents the shout of an age that has to bring a message into the world, for which the dawn's bell also sounds.

Then the poet proudly enters the season, so it seems, that he wanted us to recognize at the beginning of the book - assisting in the birth process of nature. But he does not contemplate nature, he only discovers its secret processes, telling us *how* the spring comes and *how* the Zephyr wanders through the world, *how* the fields show their hunger, *how* the shoots grow, *how* the cranes come, and *how* the acacias laugh. Florentin Smarandache has under his glance the same spring time seen by Alecsandri, but in which the passing "from the things' heart to one's own heart" happened with a different code, specific for his lab of creation, with which he will operate the whole work. In the course of analysis, we'll try to decipher his code and if we succeed, we'll see also the difference of poetical sense between the classical, lyrical descriptive poem and the one cultivated by the poet.

Beginning with the 9th haiku, the poet starts to share with us some of his thoughts, but he doesn't do it with the terminology specific to the domain, but borrows concepts from the property of nature's stage. Because he isn't concerned with an idea, but himself:

*"Zbârnâie gărgăunii
multi
ai unui gând."*

*"Hornets are buzzing
many
thoughts."*

The summer is rich in poems proving how much poetry could be concentrated in these 17 syllables of a haiku:

*"S-atingi cu fruntea
diminetii
cântecul privighetorii."*

*"Touching with brow
in morning
the nightingale's song."*

*"Diafane mirosuri,
prin lunci
Își caută floarea."*

*"Diaphanous scents,
overspread through the meadows,
look for their flowers."*

*

*Zăresc târani
În carul cel lung si mare
al cerului."*

*"I catch sight of peasants
in the long and great cart
of the blackish sky."*

Onlookers are attracted by the mirage of hazard, by the miracle of changes, in whose texture is disclosed the accents that slip to the common eye; the poet sees how: *"the springs spout"* from the bird's song, how *"...torpid, ...the sun is frozen / and gazes immovable,"* he realizes the tiredness of the acacias *"within the liquid warmth of the summer,"* he hears a *"rumination of cows...on old hills,"* he feels how *"the stars seethe"* in the *"blue blood / from the sky,"* meanwhile, somewhere

in the village *"a burning street lamp / strikes with the light / the fence."*

Not lacking in aesthetic richness, the third season is looking:

*"Toamna pictează stins
strigătul florilor
adormite."*

*"The fall paints lusterless
the shout of the dried flowers
Like sleeping puppets."*

As we presume, living abroad for over five years, the poet composes his poems from remembrances, from reminiscences of usual things, from actual images, analogies of situations similar to those lived at home, offering himself the sensation of the continuity of his presence on the natal earth, proving to us his strong anchorage within the Romanian reality. A single empty bench, seen nowhere, permits him to build a scene in absence:

*"Pe o bancă lângă lac
un sărut -
si-ndrăgostitii nicăieri."*

*"On a bench near the lake,
a kiss -
lovers are absent."*

The poet is witness to the flowers' fading, to the birds' leaving; but, from us, he sees all the field of ripened corn in a different way: *" / light the lanterns / under their arms."* When in Arizona the lime trees turn to yellow, the poet writes about *"the Eminent limes / in pale hemorrhages / of leaves,"* and when *"...the wind blows / ...the trees / turn their backs to me."* He himself recognizes that *"The wine / drops in the glasses / remembrances,"* and sometimes, when *"Through the night's mud / the stars walk in boots,"* I again *"Open a bottle / full of morose / desires."*

The winter begins with a haiku of high day:

*"Rege pe străzi
Crivățul
Cu buzunarele goale."*

*"King in the streets,
The north wind
with empty pockets."*

The majority of the haiku from this season are situated in the area of personal reflections, confessions about things, where we may find out that *"The violins pass / the strings / through our ears",* or how *"At the window / the light hangs heavy / of the lamp,"* but there are also his memories. But this time it is tired. *"But I run / I run / to catch by hand / the time,"* a feeling that time took advantage of him; still more he feels how *"Fall the curtain / like a heavy night / of December."* But he ends the volume on an optimistic note:

*"Să nu mă așteptati,
voi întârzia puțin
printre stele."*

*"Don't wait for me,
I'll linger a little
among the stars."*

As if willing to remind us of the function of a passionate dreamer - explicitly underlined just in this haiku - and that returning from there he will offer us the next volume of haiku.

The reading of these haiku gave us the occasion to discover a poet who made the surrounding nature his faithful muse, his lyre being tuned to its shades and its vibration frequency. We notice

also how the poet is instrumenting the second fundamental law of the haiku, whereafter the reality is «captured» in its cruel instance, avoiding the inferior step of *description*, operating with the superior one, that of things' *nominalization*. And if this *nominalization* is made in metaphor, allegory, comparison, metonymy, there is no doubt that this is his primary language, of the "reality of thought" -above mentioned - where the flower of speech has its queen and where it occurs in poetical notation, with the ease of current utterance.

Here in the haiku, Florentin Smarandache employs a perceptive style, marked by the lyrical seal of the paradoxism - guffaws of buds, snakes of light, toothless smile, shout of flowers, silence of bells, the night's mud - somehow mitigated by the laws of the lyricism of this species of poetry, but not to the extent of forgetting the silver law of the micropoem - *fueki / ryûkô*= eternal / ephemeral - omnipresent in the majority of his poems: the time / myself, the clouds, the sea / the bird, the universe / breeze, infinite / rain, desert / flowers, stars / mud, etc.

In this volume are flowers full of images of a surprising freshness, with the origin in a reality caught in its pure nudity - by the look of a reporter having the touch of a sword of the sharpness and lucidity - transfigured into poetical expression through the grill of a rhapsody which penetrates the cosmos of words, masters the alchemy of the language-keeping apart from the oxides and the acids of the words used by Alecsandri and working with modern, cyclic complexes of the language, so coming without any difficulty to the essence of the poetics.

His haiku is still a successful test of this variety of Nippon poetry, within the Romanian creation, at the crossing point with the *one-line poem*, and Florentin Smarandache enters the circuit of the poets of haiku by the front door. This volume gives ground to the hope that the poet will raise the level of his own poem to his own benefit and to poetry in general. Editura Haiku (The Haiku Publishing House from Romania and the Xiquan Publishing House from U.S.A.) which prepared this volume to be printed, gave an extra chance, by making it accessible to readers in English and in French. The endeavor to render the poems and the foreword, from the Romanian version into both languages, as faithfully as possible, along with the responsibility for the faults belong to Mrs. Rodica Ștefănescu, editor of the Haiku Magazine, and Mr. Ștefan Benea, poet, member of Romanian Haiku Society.

Bucharest, 31st December 1992.