Adam T. Bogar (born 1984) is a Hungarian haiku poet, linguist and independent scholar living in Folkestone, UK. His haiku and other short form poetry (written in English as well as Hungarian) have been published in venues like *Frogpond*, *Bliteh Spirit*, *The Hundred Gourds*, contemporary *haibun* online, *The Asahi Shimbun*, *Akitsu Quarterly*, *Taj Mahal Review*, *Ardea* and *Naput*, and have been included in *Haiku: A Concise Anthology* (Cyberwit, 2018). He has also been publishing literary translations (in *Strange Horizons*, *harlequin creature*, *Fjords Review*, and *Versum*, among others) and scholarly articles (primarily on American literature, science fiction, haiku and comparative literature) both in Hungarian and English. He is a member of the British Haiku Society, the Kurt Vonnegut Society, the National Coalition of Independent Scholars and the Milton Society of America. He occasionally blogs and maintains a portfolio of his works at atbogar.wordpress.com.

*The Feynman Lectures on Haiku* is his first volume of poetry.
The Feynman Lectures in Haiku

40 Found Haiku

Adam T. Bogar
Preface

Adam T. Bogar

Every single word, phrase, and symbol used for the haiku in this book has been excerpted from the new Millennium Edition of *The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Vol. III: Quantum Mechanics* by Richard P. Feynman, Robert B. Leighton and Matthew Sands. Originally delivered at Caltech between 1961 and 1964, Feynman’s lectures on physics have been called “‘a transformational experience,’ ‘the experience of a lifetime,’ and ‘a high point in [the] undergraduate experience’” by former students, primarily due to “Feynman’s joy of discovery” (Feynman et al. vi). It is this “joy of discovery” that guided my parsing through the pages, waiting for words and phrases to jump out at me. (I’ve read the whole volume in the process; as a humanities graduate with no formal background in physics beyond high school, it certainly was a challenge, but I still managed to distill a basic understanding of quantum mechanics from it, thanks to Feynman’s pedagogical skills.)

Feynman never intended his lectures to be easy: “I thought to address them to the most intelligent in the class and to make sure, if possible, that even the most intelligent student was unable to completely encompass everything that was in the lectures—by putting in suggestions of applications of the ideas and concepts in various directions outside the main line of attack” (Feynman et al. 3–4). This somewhat Joycean principle of and commitment to flooding the reader, however, is coupled with a prose that is relatable as it is vivid.
These qualities of Feynman’s prose are among the main reasons for which I chose his book to provide the lexicon for my haiku. Another important reason is its being a technical (as opposed to literary) work: finding poetry in a technical book on physics involves a significant element of surprise, a prevalent, I might even say, key ingredient in great haiku.

In applying the found poetry technique usually called free-form excerpting to a classic book of prose, I have been inspired by Ian Marshall’s Walden by Haiku (2009) to a certain extent. Although his “threelfold” purpose “to offer a primer on haiku, to provide fresh insights into Walden, and to demonstrate the pertinence of haiku aesthetics as a theoretical basis for understanding the nature writing tradition in English” (Marshall xvi) goes beyond what I aim to accomplish here, which is simply an experiment in found haiku.

The question arises: whose haiku are these? Who’s the author: is it Feynman, Leighton and Sands? Is it me? The answer may lie in the cross-section of all these. The words I used are of course Feynman’s and his co-authors’; they provided “verbal triggers,” which however affected my “mindspace” (Kacian 59) so that it ‘generated’ the haiku in this volume. When discussing the concept of “mindspace,” Jim Kacian does so regarding the construction of meaning when reading haiku. I consider the writing of these found haiku something akin to reading. It is an active, productive reading, and as such, a ‘conceptual art’ of sorts: the idea of looking for haiku in the text became “a machine that makes the art” (LeWitt 80), that produced these haiku.

I’d like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the loving support and assistance I’ve received from my partner Rebeka Sara Szigethy in my haiku journey: thank you millions, I wouldn’t have gotten where I am without you. I’m also indebted to Professor Judit Vihar for first
introducing me to haiku back in 2007, and to Robin Anna Smith and the editorial team at *Human/Kind Journal* for giving me their kind permission to republish three of my haiku (“geiger counter,” “*interfering waves*,” and “*wavelengths*”) that first appeared in their journal.

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1 In a 1956 interview, James Joyce said that “I’ve put in so many enigmas and puzzles [into *Ulysses*] that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant…” (cited in Ellmann 1982, 521).
References


like clouds
or billiard balls
like neither
large objects on a small scale
the *only* mystery
two holes talk about probability
empty
the box
and the number of bullets caught
the effects with each hole open alone
water waves
the “intensity”
of reading
being carried by the wave—
or rather
wavelengths the distance to the other

1 Published in Human/Kind, vol. 1, no. 6, 2019.
the relationship between our present purposes interfering waves

2 Published in Human/Kind, vol. 1, no. 5, 2019.
geiger counter
trouble is easy to think about

3 Published in Human/Kind, vol. 1, no. 5, 2019.
perhaps better
the results that would be
very close together
our ear
counts the clicks
complicated paths
for the moment
look just the same
we find nearly the same clicks so-and-so-many clicks
flash of light
an electron
passes
probability
we pretend we never looked
disturbance
eye
of a redder color
our argument
the flash
of many values
passing the field we *should* have gone to
longer waves
with light of this color
he proposed
our “gentler” spots—
a way around
the uncertainty principle
tightrope
the rapid wiggles of the figure
probability
he leaves the gun
and nothing else happens
lost the machinery behind the law
“an event,” in general
the event
the odds!
two complex numbers enough to predict all the future
experiment
different positions
we must try
the same argument
the odds are fifty-fifty
the other way—
people appear
unsymmetric
absorbed
a box
with mirrors for walls
the same
mirrors
the same
blackbody
separated by the present
a standing wave
no way
to make up your mind
the future
walls receded
to infinity
dimensions
billions and billions
of other words
point of view—
the oscillations
of a stretched string
losses
to knock
a superfluid
Fermi particles
we would approach
each other
the picture they can get close to each other
a new language—
we take the case