

Judge's Comments

It's been 20 years since I last judged The Drevniok Award and not much has changed in that time except perhaps for the number of submissions. In my judge's comments in 2000, I bemoaned the fact that it was so difficult to select 11 winners from 200 submissions. This year, about 800 haiku were submitted. Narrowing these down to 40 finalists was agonizing. Every day for a week, I re-read them and tried to eliminate as many as I could. Yes, some choices were obvious, but many more were not quite so easy to cut from the final list.

As difficult as it was to reduce 800 haiku to 40, selecting the final 11 from these final haiku was almost impossible. I struggled for a second week trying to come up with the final 11. All 40 were worthy of making the final list, and every day my selection changed. If yours was not one of the haiku that I selected, it is very possible that it was one of the other 29.

Having said all that, selecting the three prize winners was a much easier task. From the first time that I read through the 800 haiku there were a few that I immediately thought were very likely to win.

Third prize: the brightest star

Like many people, I am drawn to haiku that lead us in one direction only to be turned around with the final few words. This haiku is a perfect example of that technique. What begins as an almost Disney-like moment of wishing upon a star, quickly turns into fear and hoping for the best.

Second prize: father's suit

Many of us have seen or even written a haiku about an article of clothing left behind by someone who has departed. Invariably, the scent of the person remains in the clothing triggering countless memories and emotions. The brilliance of this haiku is that it begins in that way, only to pull the rug out from under us in the last line. The father is gone, leaving behind nothing at all.

First prize: something blue

I've often felt that what the novelist does in several hundred pages, the haiku poet must do with just a few words. In this first place haiku, the middle pivot line is used brilliantly. Connected to the first line, "something blue, I tie the knot" a wedding is suggested. Connected to the third, "I tie the knot of your hospital gown" an entirely different scene is described. A life story told in just ten words.

Many thanks to Haiku Canada for keeping up this fine award over the years as part of its mandate of promoting excellence in haiku.

Our Judge for 2021: Marco Fraticelli

Marco Fraticelli has been writing haiku for almost 50 years. His latest book of haibun, *A Thousand Years* (catkin press) was a winner of the prestigious Bluger Award for 2020.

The Betty Drevniok Awards:

Held annually, the award was established by Haiku Canada in memory of Betty Drevniok, past President of the society.

Submission Guidelines: Haiku Canada Website:
<https://haikucanada.org/>



"something blue"

**THE
BETTY DREVNIOK
AWARD
2021**

Haiku Canada

FIRST PRIZE**\$100**

something blue
I tie the knot
of your hospital gown

Antoinette Cheung
Vancouver, BC

SECOND PRIZE**\$50**

father's suit
how he left it behind
without his smell

Dejan Pavlinovic
Pula, Croatia

THIRD PRIZE**\$25**

picking out
the brightest star
I ask Dad how he is

Gina
Tasmania, Australia

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

(in no particular order)

after deep snow
water trickling down
the drain spout

Meghan Elizabeth Jones
Calgary, AB

breath freezes
to my lashes—
just the sound of geese

Skylar Kay
Calgary, AB

fresh-picked tomato
the sun's warmth
still on its skin

Angela Leuck
Hatley, QC

lingerie drawer—
making room
for my mask collection

Pamela Cooper
Montreal, QC

lockdown
from pane to pane
the hunter's moon

Cezar Ciobica
Botosani, Romania

nursing home
in all the bird feeders
mounds of snow

Joanne Morcom
Calgary, AB

sunset
the butterfly's wing
on a trail of ants

Nikolay Grankin
Krasnodar, Russia

sudden thunder
the harmonica player
bends a note

Ron Moss
Tasmania, Australia