

HAIKU A DAY

End of the First Glorious Five Year Plan

Every day it's

Just seventeen syllables

But that is enough

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Five years ago I was sitting in my duplex in Ames, watching a printer I don't use any more spit out the first issue of Haiku a Day. It was my first real experiment with creating a zine, so there were plenty of false starts, the least of which came from a printer that didn't do duplex so I had to do the mental gymnastics to flip the paper around *just right* so it would print out properly.

It's much easier now, although once a year, on the anniversary, I try to do something special just to keep things interesting. I hope you enjoy this issue, and I look forward to making many more.

— Thomas

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Download this and previous HADs at the website, so you can print out your own (DIY, yeah!) or if you want me to send you one, send me your address, and maybe a stamp if you are feeling nice. Or send me something you've made — trades always appreciated, postcards are nice too.

1 July 2010

O Fair Canada
I yearn to return to you
Apart far too long

2 July 2010

The day, smoothly goes
Slams to a frustrating stop
A long weekend saves

3 July 2010

Beside the Huron
The Night of the Hunter plays
Screen glows in the night

The Story of Haiku a Day

The real start of Haiku a Day started 8-and-a-half years before the first issue every came out. The second semester of my freshman year of college I was introduced to the first of the large mailing lists my friends and I were on — a supremely wonderful explosion of madness and weirdness, designed to exquisitely waste large amounts of time before things like Facebook made that much more efficient to do — the follow-on of which I am still on today. It became our habit on occasion to have large conversations entirely in Haiku.

A pause here for purists: what we used, and what Haiku a Day has always limited itself to, is the rather narrow view of a haiku as something with the 5-7-5 syllable pattern. The traditional Japanese poetic form of the haiku has much more convention than that, and those who are good at it produce sublimely wonderful works of art. But for this, I am more intested simply in the challenge of trying to convey a thought just constrained to 5-7-5.

The pragmatic start of Haiku a Day was a trip I took to Pittsburgh in 2005. I had discovered Copacetic Comics — and if you ever find yourself in Squirrel Hill, do yourself a favor and find Copacetic, which is tiny and out of the way but has quite possibly the highest concentration of awesome I've ever encountered — and there I picked up one of the Snakepit anthologies. Ben Snakepit, for years, has documented every day of his life with a simple, three pane comic. I was stuck by this idea, and with the idea of haiku in my mind, resolved to do something like that. Seventeen syllables a day, every day. And thus it was born.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoy sending it out.

25 July 2010

Dare I venture out?
Will I become sticky goo?
Hey, it's nice outside

26 July 2010

Venture from the cave
A life, somewhat more normal
Eyes bleary, blinking

27 July 2010

Things that can be done
Stopped by the lack of magic
Bits drive me crazy

28 July 2010

Between two large fields
A slender slip dividing
Limiting movement

29 July 2010

What once appeared new
Fading over time, dulling,
Becomes sad, yet proud

30 July 2010

Glorious day off
Wandering around, lazy
My mind is relaxed

31 July 2010

Where does this come from?
I just cleaned this thing last week
It's dirty again

4 July 2010

Too hot to do much
I spend Independence Day
In where it is cool

5 July 2010

A day off is filled
Scrambling to finish errands
No rest here today

6 July 2010

A plan in my mind
Changes to one different
At the hardware store

7 July 2010

A bit of crafty
Producing a pleasant glow
Inside of my mind

8 July 2010

The printer now done
Can only mean one thing left
Staplepalooza!

9 July 2010

In these boxes lie
Everything you might need
Plus a bunch of tape

10 July 2010

Those hours standing
Thousands of people go by
Sitting well with me

11 July 2010

Why am I up now?
The lure of sleeping in strong
But not strong enough

12 July 2010

Like a waterfall
Just one that can catch fire
Fuel leak in my car

13 July 2010

It can be cool here
If you sit in the shade and
Don't move a muscle

14 July 2010

In an asphalt sea
An oasis of green lives
Against all reason

15 July 2010

The drone of a fan
A one-chord symphony plays
Eat your heart out, Cage

16 July 2010

A box holds a slot
The slot, taking envelopes,
Sends them on their way

17 July 2010

What we used to do
In keeping fire at bay
Fills a museum

18 July 2010

Busy bees buzzing
On flowers of all the hues
Grey skies sit above

19 July 2010

Once more 'round the Sun
Thirty-two times in my life
I'm getting dizzy

20 July 2010

Bluish-grey billows
Massing above a peach sky
Rain — but colorful

21 July 2010

Lazyness tonight
Chinese takeout tempting me
Spring roll's siren song

22 July 2010

Air cools, but dances
To the drum beats of thunder
Inside it grows dark

23 July 2010

It's balls ass hot outside
I breathe out and it feels cool
That's just not right, folks

24 July 2010

Long into the night
I wait for power's return
Generators sad