

The Hilltop Castle

A rengay by
Michael Dylan Welch and Ikuyo Yoshimura
19 October 2002, Gifu, Japan

autumn rain—
the blurred view
from the hilltop castle *Michael*

umbrellas sold out
a shower of cherry blossoms *Ikuyo*

distant siren . . .
an unexpected drizzle
mists my sunglasses *Michael*

thunderstorm—
a dog's black coat
steaming *Ikuyo*

cloudburst ends
the little girl's tantrum *Michael*

rainbow
over the meadow
where we used to picnic *Ikuyo*

dwindling fire—
our conversation shifts
to death

These poems have previously appeared in the following journals and books: *The Best of the Electronic Poetry Network* (Shreveport, Louisiana: Shreveport Regional Arts Council Literary Panel, 2000), *The Betty Drevniok Award 2003* (Haiku Canada, 2004), *Brussels Sprout*, *Dogwood Blossoms* (online), *Electronic Poetry Network* (Shreveport Memorial Library, Louisiana, and online), *Fig Newtons: Senryu to Go* (Foster City, California: Press Here, 1993), *Frogpond*, *The Haiku Anthology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), *Haiku World: An International Poetry Almanac* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996), *The Heron's Nest*, *Hummingbird*, *Mariposa*, *Mayfly*, *Mie Times* (Japan), *The New Haiku* (Liverpool, England: Snapshot Press, 2002), *Open Window* (Decatur, Illinois: Brooks Books; online), *Poetree* (Palo Alto, California: Canopy, 1998), *Presence*, *Raku Teapot Haiku* (Alton Bay, New Hampshire: Raku Teapot Press, 2003; book and compact disc), *Snapshots* (England), *South by Southeast*, and *Woodnotes*. In addition, "first star" won a "Special Award" and "scent of wisteria" won an "Award" in the Bashō 360th Anniversary Web Haiku Contest sponsored by *Mie Times* in 2004; "awaiting the test results" received a "Judge's Award" from Tsunehiko Hoshino in the 2004 Itoen Haiku Contest, and will appear on cans of Itoen tea; "the clackity-clack" won first honourable mention and "ringing phone" won sixth honourable mention in the 2003 Drevniok Haiku Contest sponsored by Haiku Canada; and "The Hilltop Castle" rengay (a six-verse thematic linked collaborative poem) won first place in the 2003 Haiku Poets of Northern California Rengay Contest. Also, "reading in bed" appeared on a bookmark published by the Washington Poets Association, Seattle, Washington, 2004.

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First Star

Michael Dylan Welch

一番星赤子の耳は貝の形

first star—
a seashell held
to my baby's ear

*For Thomas Taiyo Welch,
born 9 October 2003*

November afternoon—
blush
on the jogger's legs

awaiting the test results—
rings on the pond
from falling leaves

apples picked
and the casket chosen—
lingering sunset

the clackity-clack
of the last roller coaster—
a crescent moon

leaves turning—
the toboggan hanging
in the dark garage

first snow . . .
the children's hangers
clatter in the closet

ringing phone—
the bathroom scale
recenters itself

fresh snow on the mat—
the shape of welcome
still visible

drapes drawn—
just the edges done
on the daffodil puzzle

grocery shopping—
pushing my cart faster
through feminine protection

reading in bed
my pulse flickering
the lightly held bookmark

a crab apple
from the highest branch
rattles down the rain spout

scent of wisteria—
she finishes translating
the birth certificate