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**TWO
SPRING
RENGA**

By

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Introduction

In this chapbook, the authors wish to share with the reader two spring renga of thirty-six (kansens) verses.

The renga is an ancient form of Japanese poetry dating back to the seventh century. (Reichhold, Narrow Road to Renga, p.1)

The renga consists of alternating 'linked' verses of 5-7-5 (hokku) and 7-7 (waka) syllable parts. Traditionally the hokku will contain a word symbolizing one of the seasons. This word is often used as the title of the poem. The poem is composed by a group of poets. The honored poet usually writes the hokku. The next two lines are offered by the host of the group. Additional verses were offered from the members of the group. Renga are known to have as many as one thousand verses.

Jane Reichhold in Round Renga Round (p. *vii*) ,believes that, "two strangers doing a renga together takes the comic-tragic proportions of a blind date." We have been married for more than fifty years. Doing a renga together says there is still more to know about each other. Jerry believes that best metaphor for doing a renga is jazz jam session .(In the extreme writing a renga is similar to an old time jazz cutting contest). In a cutting contest, each musician matches wit with others in solo performance in terms of style and virtuosity. It reflects the best of call and response and improvisation to link the verses and resolution without a strict linear narrative. When only two people do a renga, it is called a Tan Renga.

Besides the syllabic form, there are other constraints on the writing of a renga. Particular are the restrictions against using a noun or a verb more than once. Furthermore, the use of the word "woman" is taboo. The word "insect" can be used only once. An insect's name is not forbidden, since the name is often a season word. The words "love" and "moon" must be used at certain points in the poem. The final verse is required to reflect the essence of the first verse. The most important rule is that a verse **MUST** be linked to the preceding verse. Other rules to the writing of the renga should be agreed to by the poets before the writing starts.

For our poems we have used the structure suggested by Jane Reichhold for a traditional spring Kasen (thirty-six verses) renga. (<http://www.ahapoetry.com/rengfmisp.htm>).

A selected bibliography is offered at the end of the chapbook for the use of anyone who wishes to take a look at the renga, the haiku or the tanka. All of these forms are closely related to renga. The first verse (first three lines) became known as a haiku when standing alone. The first five lines including the first three was known as the waka (now called a tanka). The renga is a series of linked tanka.



The illustration on the preceding page is a calligraphy of the name, "MARY". It was done by Fung Kwok Leung (Kenneth). It depicts a Phoenix for nobility, a butterfly for beauty, and a horse for energy.

MAY

sunny May morning
amid scents of grilling meat
bright skeins on display

naked mutton red with blood
cooked over charcoal briquettes

completely transformed
charred outside pink underneath
feast for sight and taste

clear eyes mean fresh fish today
a good meal of surf and turf

dining by moonlight
wine glasses and white linen
doggie bag for home

then time for relaxation
putting off the next work week

the fields to harvest
amassing stores for winter
the October fest

parade of ghosts and demons
love's power vanquishes fear

Satan's tricks bested
all the world loves a lover
even in the dark

walk with no destination
around the lake in the park

listen to water
crested on the sandy shore
producing white noise

fleeting moment of respite
next tide creates new aspect

pulling and tugging
gravitational effects
from a far distance

across a summer meadow
cool breezes promise relief

dancing bumble bees
the best flowers are that way
pollen laden legs

feelings too hard to express
a new language is needed

airborne messages
rose's attar and ox musk
carried on zephyrs

nature is the therapist
all tensions evaporate

all is in balance
light extends its daily stay
day and night equal

neap and high tides different
ever changing the shoreline

vision may discern
treasures found in the damp sand
menace to bare feet

food too for quick sandpipers
in the early morning mist

seeking warmth and calm
sit around the quilting frame
lamp glows steadily

on hand a supply of oil
no matter how long the night

throughout the dark hours
find comfort in our nearness
a shared day awaits

love the only torch needed
down the twisted right-of-way

steady glow within
strengthens faltering footsteps
walking side by side

the path now clear and easy
to a distant horizon

anticipation
of a bounteous harvest
when our tasks are done

with the raking of gold leaves
when children's frolicking stops

on our spacious lot
flora looks more like pale straw
before the first frost

each ending we encounter
signals a new beginning

at the county fair
success is a blue ribbon
it was a good age

each experience plants a seed
from which future triumphs grow

in the flower bed
there are the flax plant's blue leaves
ready tfor gleaning

in the dusky spring evening
fingers wind a ball of yarn



The illustration on the preceding page is a calligraphy of the name, "JEROME." It was done by Fung Kwok Leung (Kenneth). It depicts a phoenix for nobility, a bird for happiness, and a heart for love.

CROCUS

opening and closing
crocuses follow the sun
light brings out colors

**weary of winter wardrobes
teens now eye shorts and sandals**

talk of shades of tan
unforgivable exposure
no one wants cancer!

**waiting for the rest results
hope to see another spring**

exam by machine
replacing the human touch
no moon for vision

a halo of ice crystals
rain drops in the near future

**showers now over
both hands thrust deep in rich soil
union with life force**

omening a time of love
heralding togetherness

two can become one
marvel at the mystery
stronger than alone

a sum greater than its parts
new rules of mathematics

unexpected view
rational thought's clear judgment
which way to follow

see the moss on the tree trunk
take the path to the North Star

darkness of evening
sparkles with fireflies' brilliance
children in pursuit

sharp lightning goes on and off
the acrid smell of ozone

loud peals of thunder
the wind reveals leaves' whiteness
then the drenching rain

covers the high and the low
emerald green pets bare feet

rich with sun's own tint
dandelions form circles
fade and journey on

by way of late spring's breezes
in all compass directions

some are pressed for wine
the essence of Sol and Earth
released on the tongue

new generations savor
traditional recipes

our clan memories
family tree extensions
a growing root ball

slender branches attain strength
leaves provide welcome shelter

flashes of orange
tracks in a blanket of white
something is ahead

the builders of the snowman
disturb the comfort of home

mud stains on the rug
wet galoshes by the hearth
a broken vacuum

anger is replaced by love
all combine to clean the house

soap, a mop and broom
applying some elbow grease
wipes out discontent

while adults acquire patience
children demonstrate new skills

youth now traded-in
the promises of mid-life
New dreams for old ones

trees await their time of sleep
leafy blanket spread beneath

vision is improved
by unencumbered branches
picturesque vistas

**a painter's lavish landscape
large palette of vivid hues**

**rich shades of autumn
yield to icy winter white
cotton-tail bunny**

**robins strut along the path
no more woolen underwear**

**in the flower bed
awake the perennials
indestructible**

**winter's ice no barrier
to the tints pink, white, yellow**

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