

The 2020 HaikUff-da! Contest

1st place

2nd place

3rd place

Meet the judges

Munch

*Painting emotions,
Our deepest anxieties,
He touches us all.*

- Tom Lund
Roseville, Minn.

*Munch would be amazed
So much interest in him,
even Haiku poems*

- Judge Mary Jo Thorsheim, Ph.D.

*Pastels, oils, crayons:
Munch choice of vibrant colors:
Painful art explodes.*

- Lana Rankin
Caldwell, Idaho

*Many entrants sensitively picked up on
his personal problems, even seeming
to relate his anxieties to current fears
generated by the social and public
health issues of today.*

- Judge Mary Jo Thorsheim, Ph.D.

*Edvard Munch ate lunch
Lutefisk with Tabasco
Then screamed for ice cream*

- Ruth Younger
Chico, Calif.

*It's difficult to draw humor from Munch's
introspective and anxious themes.*

- Judge Mary Jo Thorsheim, Ph.D.



Judge Mary Jo Thorsheim, Ph.D., is a recognized authority on the art of Scandinavia, especially Norway's fine artists. Edvard Munch has been the subject of numerous programs she has presented. Along

with formal speaking and writing, she likes to participate in fun activities around art. Serving as a judge for this contest is another such opportunity. "Bring on the entries for the Edvard Munch category," says Mary Jo.



Judge Gary Legwold says that the honor of being asked to judge the HaikUff-Da Poetry Contest is ... well, it's the culmination of a career of writing books on lefse and lutefisk. He has judged lefse contests at

the top of the lefse world and sung his lefse song "Keep On Rollin'" on scores of grand stages. Legwold has also had the privilege of teaching hundreds of people to make lefse. But these triumphs are merely a prologue to judging the Christmas Traditions and Food Category, the highest of all categories in the HaikUff-Da Poetry Contest. He said, "Yes, tears are choking my words, so I lean on the lyrics of Cole Porter when I say it's the top, it's ... 'the tower of Pisa,' the 'smile on the Mona Lisa,' the most—it's the max!"

Christmas Traditions and Food

*Herring in the brine
Soda cracker waits alone
Twist open the jar*

- Doug Mattson
Albuquerque, N.M.

*I worked very hard not to favor lefse
and lutefisk ...*

- Judge Gary Legwold

*The senses open.
What is that heavenly scent?
Fresh lefse is served.*

- Elise Hickey
Lennox, S.D.

... but I am only human.

- Judge Gary Legwold

*Small town newspapers
bear church julefest calls to
love thy lutefisk.*

- Edith Thorstenson
St. Peter, Minn.

*Considering there were nearly 100
haikus, this was challenging, because
there were so dang many good ones.*

- Judge Gary Legwold

Ole and Lena

*"For crying out loud."
Ole yelled before car crash.
A true Saab story.*

- Dale Mattson
Bloomington, Minn.

*Lena said dat is a true story. Ole said
dere vas an accident, and dere vas a
little dent in da fender. She asked him
where da fender vas, and he said, "In
da trunk."*

- Judges Ann Berg and Bruce Danielson

*Lena takes a risk
In her kitchen all alone
Taking off her mask*

- Carol Hegre
Edina, Minn.

*Ole says, "Dat's for sure! Lena can
make two tings: Swedish meatballs
and lime jello. Only problem is ve can't
tell dem apart!"*

- Judges Ann Berg and Bruce Danielson

*Ole and Lena
Lena thinks it's about time
Lena and Ole*

- Jim Heskin
Duluth, Minn.

*Ole tinks it might be about dat time.
Lena's da only investment he's made
dat's doubled in size!*

- Judges Ann Berg and Bruce Danielson



Judges Ann Berg and Bruce Danielson have been "Ole and Lena" for almost 30 years. Playing these characters has taken them to places like

Minot, N.D., and Libby, Mont., where they have performed at the big Scandinavian festivals. "Ole and Lena" have given them the opportunity to publish three books and a CD. Ann and Bruce, both retired, were teachers in Cambridge-Isanti schools in Minnesota. Ann taught science at the middle school and Bruce taught math and speech at the high school. Ann and her husband, Larry, love to travel, spend time at their cabin in Wisconsin, and sail. Bruce and his wife, Judy, love to spend time with their two dogs, Toby and Murphy, and Bruce enjoys making stained glass and playing guitar, which he took up at the age of 60.

Nordics and Social Distancing

*The extroverted
Norwegian stared at my shoes.
I stared at them too*

- John Otstehage
Greenwood, Minn.

*I have been both the "storyteller" in this
haiku, as well as the "extroverted Nor-
wegian." This haiku brought me back to
my very first experiences of breaking into
social groups in Finland and showed me
how much of a Nordic-American experi-
ence this can be, as well.*

- Judge Max Stevenson

*Mountains now our friends
where trees cease to cloudberrries
we return to earth*

- Astri Doub
Owings Mills, Md.

*Highlights the importance of nature
and self-reflection—an integral part
of Nordic culture. The use of the word
"cloudberrries" in the haiku acts as the
Kigo—a seasonal word or phrase used
in more traditional forms of Japanese
haiku—depicting nature and a season.*

- Judge Max Stevenson

*Sven and Ole ja
Porch sitting twelve feet apart
Cuz ya never know*

- Eric Olson
New York, N.Y.

*The ending had me laughing with this
haiku. It wouldn't be Nordic without a
good Sven and Ole joke! I especially
enjoyed the good use of literary play
with "Nord-English."*

- Judge Max Stevenson



Judge Max Stevenson is the director of exhibitions and programming at Norway House in Minneapolis where he manages and installs exhibits highlighting aspects of Norwegian and Nordic-American culture.

Rooted in his interest from a young age in both his Finnish and Norwegian ancestry, Max grew up exposed to many aspects of his heritage before exploring Finland as an exchange student. Also, as a Finn, he was thrilled to judge the category of "Nordics and Social Distancing." As a veteran sauna enthusiast who has enjoyed spending many hours alone in solitude, in nature, deep in thought—he thought he might make a pretty 'OK' judge. :)

Midtsommer

*Under my pillow
Seven flowers picked at night
Midsummer dreaming*

- Rebecca Anspach
St. Paul, Minn.

*Rebecca took me into the romance of
Midsummer's Eve, from picking wild-
flowers on a meadow to a trance-like
sleep: dreamy!*

- Judge Lori Ann Reinhall

*Midsummer night fire
Brings out the dance in us all
Bewitching our souls.*

- Lana Christopher Rankin
Caldwell, Idaho

*Lana captures the medieval magic of
Sankt Hans—I want to dance my way
into summer!*

- Judge Lori Ann Reinhall

*Dance around and sing
a silly little frog song
celebrate the sun.*

- Hannah Sprague
Mounds View, Minn.

*Hannah nailed the fun of Midsummer.
When else do the young and young-at-
heart hop around a maypole like little
froggies and piglets?*

- Judge Lori Ann Reinhall



Judge Lori Ann Reinhall is the editor-in-chief of The Norwegian American. While she has never penned a HaikUff-Da, she holds three degrees in languages and literature. She loves poetry and song, so don't be surprised if you hear her singing these lyrical midsummer masterpieces!