

MARY KAY RUMMEL

HAIKU LADDER

"Haiku saves lives." Sonia Sanchez

It gets inside you
deep like the blues, and deeper,
a river rising.

I was a young nun.
My mind prowled through syllables
beast hungry for words.

I could buy one book.
My twentieth year Basho
fell like a ripe plum

into my desperate hands.
His poems mirrored my mind.
Simply alive with them

I grew Haiku eyes.
The short lines slipped from my hand
flew into the world.

May evening shower
petals from the wild rose bush
moon light on the ground.

My thrown rock, became
Basho's frog plopping lidless
into convent pond.

Rings of water churned
silver dancers leapt shoreward.
Inside and outside

green growing wood weeds
covered the eyes of the priests—
"Recall you are dust."

The winter white pine
gives ice a place to hang on.
So haiku saved me.