

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele

I dream of taking
A written test when I know
None of the answers.

While I lay talking,
The psychoanalyst hooked
His rug and listened.

Sundays after lunch
My parents would “take a nap”
In their locked bedroom.

A milk-glass cake stand
Holds a white-iced layer cake
Above the table.

Aunt Susan's live-in
Mexican was knifed to death
In a tavern fight.

We played in the creek.
Out, I saw black blobs attached
To my toes. Leeches!

I selectively
Read three newspapers a day.
It keeps my mind sharp.

Love neither obeys
A king nor respects the law.
Love has its own ways.

I was a high-strung
Little boy, and people laughed
Who had startled me.

“I’m a *Christian*,” she
Says proudly, as if that gives
Her great distinction.

Fresh apples are good,
But a well-made baked apple
Is Heaven on Earth.

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 2)

He sang old English
Ballads to a dulcimer,
Grandfather Curry.

My grandmother Steele
Was tossed by a bull. She got
About with a cane.

Wearing headgear while
Eating is not uncommon
In fast-food places.

My first job: busboy
In the Café Rouge, Boston,
The Hotel Statler.

My cousin Jo Ann
Found a twenty-dollar bill
On a county bus.

Two lesbians have
A child one bore. A gay friend
Supplied the semen.

Welcome relief: when
A long awaited taxi
Finally appears.

Aunt Bertha told me
Scary stories about ghosts,
Killers, and panthers.

The woods are now full,
They say, of dangerous ticks:
Nature perilous.

Those two lesbians:
One provided the egg for
What the other bore.

Barnabas Curry's
Tombstone: ruined on a ridge
Between two train tracks.

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 3)

My great-grandfather
Calvin Curry deserted
The Southern army.

A yellow cat came
To me for petting and food.
She purred in my arms.

Garbo and Dietrich
Were once lovers but became
Bitter enemies.

John Paul II
Believes in the power of
The Virgin Mary.

My adult sister
Kindly took me to movies
Produced for children.

I am one of the
Little people, a woman
Alone, feeling low.

Every Sunday he
Drove to see his wife in that
Mental hospital.

Stopping bleeding from
Shaving with toilet paper:
A neat remedy.

A monkey virus
In Haiti is thought to have
Been the source of AIDS.

Young women who wear
Ten rings at a time do not
Find favor with me.

My face: The right side
Grows thick and handsome whiskers;
The left side does not.

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 4)

I painted three walls
Yellow and one wall dead black.
It disturbed others.

Until I saw one
At work, I didn't know what
A box cutter was.

The Norway maple
We planted as a sapling
Has grown tall and full.

Out of need, I must
Take my rings to the pawnshop
For what they will bring.

I have always liked
The word *peninsula*. It
Calls to mind *penis*.

I knew Flannery
O'Connor by letter. She
Was smarter than me.

The ballet dancer,
Male, had dark, ugly sweat stains
Around his armpits.

I remember first
Reading about a new and
Puzzling illness. (AIDS)

The sly treats of drink,
Cigarettes, drugs, and gambling
Do not entice me.

It was hard for me
To feel love for my father.
He gave me little.

A male film star may
Have a body double do
Rear nude scenes: "butt shots."

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 5)

If no one is near,
I gently feel the privates
Of a marble man.

Hypersexual
Womanizer: the movie
Star Leslie Howard.

I might like to own
A Mexican hairless. It
Would not carry fleas.

My mother's biscuits
Did not rise high and fluffy:
They were low but light.

The sweet innocence
Of most children makes abuse
Of them outrageous.

In grade school I once
Colored the sky purple. That
Was not right, I learned.

The fragile ghosts of
Spring's bright dandelions are
Complex, unwanted.

Before wrestling, Greek
Boys were rubbed all over with
Dill-tanged olive oil.

Prank telephone calls
May have consequences of
A deadly nature.

Vultures in Tibet
Have it made: whole humans are
Left for their feasting.

A jeweled breastpin
On my mother's last dress, deep
Blue, worn to the grave.

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 6)

Men going upstairs
And men coming downstairs know
Why each one is there.

Elephants have poor
Eyesight but a wonderful,
Intense sense of smell.

The wounds of the mind
Are more secret than the frank
Wounds of the body.

The only tea I
Like is iced tea with lots of
Sugar and lemon.

First Lady Helen
Taft brought Japanese cherry
Trees to Washington.

Many men carry
An overhanging belly.
Most never lose theirs.

When a child I loved
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.
I shun Disney now.

Death is the payment
We must all make for having
Known our days of life.

Florida I once
Thought was beautiful, perfect,
A true paradise.

Gray lambswool sweater.
A gray silk scarf. Gray, I say,
Can be beautiful.

Box evergreen shrubs
Were much grown for trimmed hedges
In old Virginia.

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 7)

On a weed-grown hill
The chimney stands by itself,
Black against the dawn.

I have never seen
A shooting star. But, then, I
Do not watch the sky.

Mrs. Fightmaster,
A purported medium,
Gave me no info.

If you read a book
In Florida, a book mite
Crawls around an edge.

A man I would trust
With my life may well turn out
To be my killer.

The trumpet lilies
At Easter were not for me
But for my mother.

Religious orders
Attract fewer and fewer
Young people to train.

The habits of nuns
Perpetuate the dress of
Women in times past.

Faith has to do with
Pure hearts. A spotless habit
Does not make a nun.

Dead, a nun's body
Is taken below and left
In a basement tomb.

We have relatives
But we can choose our own friends.
(a Spanish proverb)

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 8)

He dotes on his young
Grandsons, spoiling them as he
Did not his own sons.

I sang in the choir
Of an Episcopal church.
The music: superb.

"A tomb is darker
Than granaries," said Harwa,
Keeper of the Stores.

Children found a skull,
Human, exposed in the woods.
Scared, they hurried home.

A five-year-old boy,
Apparently healthy, dies
In his sleep. Why? Why?

A "man of God" had
Two men kill his wife. The three
Men are in prison.

Women took off their
Rings before washing dishes:
Soap dulls diamonds.

Cute, dancing little
Clara Smithers, a rival
Of Shirley Temple.

Prognosticators
Groundhogs are not. Their sluggish
Role is archaic.

My parents and I
Looked at the new Capitol
With its golden dome.

Add Worcestershire sauce
And you taste Worcestershire sauce
Instead of the beef.

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 9)

I loved the drama
Of it when my brother was
Found to have TB.

In pornographic
Peepshows men leave their liquid
Offerings to sex.

He has a son, now
Fourteen years old, whom he is
Not allowed to see.

Much pain to one's foot
In a shoe can be caused by
Just a little stone!

Young men who study
In the school for barbers like
My generous tips.

Ego: not Freud's term.
He said *ich* ("I" in German).
It got Latinized.

The red carpet at
The front of The Greenbrier
Has darker red stains.

Science, I have read,
Does not know how cats produce
Their lovely purring.

It is low and sad
To be a chicken. You eat.
You end up eaten.

The elevator,
Mirrored, allowed me to see
My bald spot in back.

Miss Jeanette Sayre,
My piano teacher, did
Not much care for boys.

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 10)

My sister's pet dog,
Lulu, rose and licked her face
Just before it died.

I did honors work
In German and graduate
Study at Harvard.

A stray cat watches
Birds flutter about fire thorn
From under my car.

I could never stand
Richard Nixon. Everything
About him was crude.

He brought a strange man
To his apartment. The next
Day he was found dead.

The stolen valise
Held unique manuscripts of
Hemingway's writings.

Belle Starr's outlaw deeds
Are unsubstantiated,
Say historians.

He didn't know what
The word *scrotum* meant. He just
Called it his "ball bag."

Munchausen syndrome
By proxy: A parent harms
A child to get praise.

I no longer buy
Art objects. I give away
Many that I have.

The first man who tried
To pick me up frightened me.
I was quite disturbed.

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 11)

Antiques and later
Ceramics showed me beauty
Missing from my life.

In gay magazines,
Scrotums are shaved to better
Reveal their beauty.

Winking at a man
Would not be advisable
In most locations.

You tend to forget,
Until the water freezes,
How bad your shit stinks.

Pharmaceutical
Companies have attractive
Representatives.

I was becoming
Psycho. My final grade for
Every student: F

Heavy rain at night
On a lighted walkway in
St. Elizabeth's.

A year and a half
Spent in St. Elizabeth's
Hospital, mind sick.

In old photographs,
Some women hold an index
Finger to a cheek.

A psychiatrist
And a psychologist keep
My psyche stable.

I first had sex with
A man at twenty-seven.
Those chaste, lonely years!

Poems in the form of Haiku by Paul Curry Steele (page 12)

I think of asking
Panhandlers to come and have
Sex with me for pay.

I fear violence
And robbery from low-class
Sexual partners.

I am afraid of
Sexually transmitted
Diseases, unseen.

It is not safe, I
Think, to have sex with any
Man now, sad to say.

The men's changing room
Gave me erections, before
And after swimming.

I stole incense from
The ten-cent store but could not
Get it ignited.

Ejaculation
Is difficult for me with
Psychoactive drugs.

It is hard to make
A perfect custard pie, one
Firm, not watery.

I have a potsherd,
Incised, from a recent dig.
Indian. Quite old.

A potter keeps those
Works he cannot duplicate,
Supreme accidents.

He chose his last meal:
Steak, salad, rolls, apple pie,
Vanilla ice cream.