Haiku Economics, No. 2

Stephen T. Ziliak

Haiku is walking quietly with a big stick or swinging wildly with a quiet calm. Simplicity and speed are the strengths of haiku, courted by prudence. Haiku is about getting things done, sizing things up, getting thee on. Economics is by contrast, even in Marxian hands, the science of prudence—the socially legitimizing grammar of what’s low-cost, what’s efficient. “Haiku economics” may then serve a purpose. As if economics were so efficient.

Key Words: Haiku, Economics, Poetry

I.

Marxian Crisis:
reification of It’s around the corner.

II.

A futures market
on “The General Crisis”
sells short on the spot.

III.

Making Econ work
in seventeen syllables
ain’t your poet’s job.
(for Etheridge Knight)

IV.

Summers vows, modern:
“Africa, the vast wasteland,”
sings, “proof rock solid!”
V.
Neoclassical economic scientist:
old wine, new Skinner.

VI.
Globalization:
black unemployed lace Nikes,
at price you can’t beat.

VII.
The War on Terror takes blood from fresh orphan flesh,
no child left behind.

VIII.
_One Kind of Freedom:_
sharecropper moves to Midwest,
poorhouse gets a plow.

IX.
Mrs. Robinson didn’t carry a condom;
“future’s in plastics.”

X.
Richard Posner’s _Sex_ may be perfectly harmless outlet for limp dick.

XI.
Statistical fit: epistemological strangling, of _wit_!

XII.
One more asterisk to rest like eyes of dead fish:
_Rigor mortis_ stars.
XIII.
Publish my paper,
I’ll sell you my soul, perish,
my soul, you’ll waiver.

XIV.
Find Egyptian musk,
cool plantain and roasted jerk,
Life filled with allspice.
(for Suzette Brown)