

Dixie Cups: History and Haiku

~ afterword to *Mannequins Dressed for the Window: Haiku Secrets*

C. S. Lewis in his essay, "Historicism," says that the past flows by like a roaring cataract of billions and billions of moments.¹ Writing history is like getting drops of the past. So much is missed. Tracy McKenzie in commenting on Lewis's image says writing history is like standing under a waterfall catching a bit of it in a Dixie cup.² An apt image for the historian and especially for the writer of haiku—how little the cup contains but how important it is to the flow. The historian is trying to reconstruct the flow. The writer of a haiku is trying to recreate or capture a moment of that flow so that the reader experiences the significance of human life. So much is missed by the poet and the historian. So, the little becomes parts of a remembered past³ or a haiku.

1. C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), p 107. *Caution*: No matter which right side of history one adheres to this essay is a gut punch to that adherence.

2. Robert Tracy McKenzie, *A Little Book for New Historians: Why and How to Study History* (Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 2019), p. 13

3. John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness: The Remembered Past* (New York, Schocken Books, 1985).