

## **The Empty Bed**

**By Neal Whitman**

My parents did not want

to leave me alone.

So they left me

overnight next door with the Emersons.

Mr. and Mrs. Emerson did not have children.

Why not? They liked children.

They liked me.

Mrs. Emerson told me it was time

to get into my Jim-Jams.

I had never heard that word for my PJs

But right away I knew what she meant.

Bedtime

She tucked me in

kissed me on top of my head  
and gently closed the door, but not all the way.  
I looked at the ceiling.  
It looked just like my ceiling.  
I got out of bed -- in my jim-jams  
and went to the window. There  
I could see across the yard my window  
in the dark. An elm tree on their side  
of the yard stood in front of my window.  
I was looking at my window  
through the web of branches.

So, that's what my room looks like from here.  
I sleep in that room. But not tonight  
Tonight that bed is empty.

*Neal Whitman lives in Pacific Grove, California, with his wife, Elaine. Both are volunteer docents in nearby Carmel. Neal and Elaine both write haiku poetry, and in 2009 two of Neal's haiku were awarded honorable mention by haiku masters in Japan judging the Yuki Teikei Haiku Contest. Also, in 2009 his free verse won 1st prize in the James McIntyre poetry contest in Ontario, Canada, and in 2010 he won 3rd prize and honorable mention in the Common Ground Reader poetry contest sponsored by Western New England College.*