

Juliet Seer Pazera. *the dad project*. CreateSpace, 2015, 42 pp., perfect bound, 5.1 x 7.8 inches. ISBN 978-1515355984. US\$7 from www.amazon.com and wwwcreatespace.com.

Reviewed by Terri L. French

My father passed away on October 18, 2014. As I write this almost a year has gone by. A year of ups and downs, happy memories and also some sadness and regret. This week I received a book in the mail called *the dad project*, a haiku collection by Juliet Seer Pazera. In the book Juliet chronicles the moments and days just after her own father's death.

I found myself dog-earing the pages of poems that mirrored my own emotions and experiences after my father's death. After his funeral, my sister and I went downtown to his favorite local watering hole—affectionately referred to as “The Tavernacle”—and raised a glass (or two) in his memory. After reading this one line haiku, I think my father and Juliet's would have gotten along famously.

open bar dad would approve

Most of the deceased in my family lay to rest in two cemeteries not far from one another. As I live out of state, my mother, sister and aunt tend to the graves. Except during the very cold Michigan winter months when the plots are blanketed in snow, they are well-maintained. The large cement urns are filled with bright red geraniums.

snow covered
stillness
cemetery plot

old gravestone
we plant
fresh flowers

Food is always a comfort during bereavement. Comfort food, brought over by neighbors, or fellow church members. There is so much to take care of before and after a funeral and little time to prepare meals.

spicy vegetable stew
with warm bread
insurance forms

When we were younger, we thought our parents were immortal. I couldn't fathom not seeing them, sharing birthdays and holidays, calling to ask their advice. I never envisioned staring at my father's name etched in stone, or my mother's name next to his, her birth year followed by a dash and an empty space.

winter sunrise
mother stands
a widow

I recommend *the dad project* to anyone who has lost a parent. Juliet's thirty-three haiku are personal, yet universally relatable in their emotional honesty. It is a book I know I will reread throughout the years as I remember my father.

Terri L. French is a writer and licensed massage therapist living in Huntsville, Alabama. She has served as Regional Coordinator of the HSA and is the former editor of the senryu and kyoka journal, Prune Juice. Terri is currently working on a collection of haibun and a history of the textile mills in Huntsville.