

“By sharing her insights, she encourages us to discover for ourselves the gifts of haikai.”

Christopher Herold, founding editor of The Heron's Nest

Briefly Reviewed for Frogpond

by Randy Brooks

Echoes of Flight: Haiku & Senryu by Jane Williams (2018, Ginninderra Press, Port Adelaide, South Australia) 66 pages, 5” by 7¾”. Four-color card covers, saddle stitched. ISBN 978-1-76041-509-9. \$18.00 from ginninderrapress.com.au.

Echoes of Flight is Jane Williams’ first collection of haiku and senryu. The title poem, *low tide / in the gull's footprints / echoes of flight* (20), is a wonderful image of the temporary signs left behind in our journeys. This collection demonstrates her growing haiku sensibility as celebrated in *haiku walk / we have to slow down / to catch up* (42). Williams is especially good at slowing down enough to connect the outer and inner life, as in: *night bloomers / under the moon / we too open up* (11) and *her playful company of ducks / when no one's looking / I quack back* (41). Two of my favorites involve water: *morning swim once again water carries my weight* (18), in which we feel the water lifting her and her burdens. In another water haiku, *floating village / the neighbours move / closer* (29), Williams leaves it up to the reader to imagine whether the distance or growing nearness results in a positive or negative feeling. As a general optimist, I imagine this move closer to be a positive thing in the relationship. *Echoes of Light* invites readers to draw closer to the haiku life of Jane Williams.

Elsewhere: Around the World in Poetry, Haiku & Haibun by Maeve O’Sullivan (2018, Alba Publishing, Uxbridge, UK) 110 pages, 5¾” by 8¼”. Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-910185-77-3. \$15.00 from AlbaPublishing.com.

In this fourth collection by Maeve O’Sullivan, she chronicles a year of traveling through an effective mix of poetry, haiku and

haibun. The mix works well because of the consistency of her voice as well as the poetic content derived from the shifting locations. The book starts with poems from home, which include the loss of both parents and even more recent death of her sister. The book is organized into four sections: Home, West, East, and Envoi – Back Home. Here is a sample of haiku from each section starting with home: *limo from the graveyard... / I remove a pine needle / from her daughter's hair* (21). And a poem of new life: *an Irish lullaby / for the infant... / kicking throughout* (25). The travel haiku are less evocative, seldom rising above the tourist observation as in a haiku about this famous battle scene, *Ventas de Narón: / my friend with the Achilles heel / catches up* (41). Here's another observation: *San Diego Bay– / its deep blue darkened / by an aircraft carrier* (48). It was an impressive year of travel for O'Sullivan. However, it is her haiku from home that move me most: *graced / by a single yellow iris – / retreat garden* (29).

Three Blue Beans in a Blue Bladder: Another Year in Haiku by Hamish Ironside (2018, Iron Press, Northumberland, UK) 160 pages, 4" by 5¾". Four-color card covers, saddle stitched. ISBN 978-0-9954579-3-5. \$10.38 from Amazon.com.

As explained on the back cover, Hamish Ironside wrote his first collection of haiku, *Our Sweet Little Time*, after a year of writing one haiku a day in 2005. This second collection, *Three Blue Beans*, is the result of writing a haiku a day ten years later in 2015. All of the poems in this collection are previously unpublished, which perhaps explains the uneven quality of the collection. Ironside's haiku have an unvarnished feel of having been jotted down spontaneously, without editing. For example, here is a senryu from the January selections *once the favour / is over, the resentment / can begin* (6). Also in January we find a tanka-like haiku: *crescent moon– / all those things / she might not tell me* (9). The author is a freelance editor and typesetter, which is evident in this poem: *in a bookshop / I make myself find / the typo I missed* (12). In February we find an interesting observation: *crossing the cemetery / light sent by stars / before the dead were born* (18). Each month begins with an interesting linocut print by Mungo McCosh. For example, the print for June illustrates *dentist's garden– / among pebbles and wild flowers, / a discarded bra* (67). Overall, the collection often conveys an urban angst or cynical outlook. From April, the cruelest

month, he notes, *the waitress rhapsodizes / about living by the coast; / a dog shits on the decking* (38). I suppose his rawness and poetic spontaneity is all a matter of taste for readers. Here's a final example from December: *on her Boggle list, / KIND and LOVE; on mine, / LUST and ANAL* (141).

Inhaling: 2016 Seabeck Haiku Getaway Anthology edited by Barbara Snow and Ce Rosenow (2017, Haiku Northwest, Seattle, WA) 62 pages, 5½" by 8". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. No ISBN.

Each year haiku poets from the Northwest community gather at Seabeck, Washington for workshops, readings and writing haiku together. *Inhaling* is the resulting anthology featuring 35 poets who attended the 9th annual retreat. The theme for this retreat was the sense of smell, so several haiku emphasize that perception. The title poem comes from the special 2016 guest writer, Jay Friedenberg: *inhaling thunder / the weight / of heavy ozone* (9). Here are two of my favorite scent haiku: *worn headstones / the earthiness of / wet moss and pine* (13) by Marianne Dupré and *Day of the Dead / still in his jacket / a hint of tobacco* (16) by Ce Rosenow. In Barbara Snow's haiku, *a latecomer / to the breakfast table / a wake of shampoo* (39), I like the rippling double meanings of "wake". The collection also includes a few excellent color haiga from the retreat as well as the winning haiku from the annual kukai: *a pause in the rain – / she asks to see / my lifeline* (47) by Michael Dylan Welch.

Emptiness: A Digital Collection of Landscape Photography & Haiku by Gabriel Rosenstock and Ron Rosenstock with Japanese translations by Mariko Sumikura (2017, Long Exposure Press, Holden, MA) 42 pages. Digital book. No ISBN. \$6.99 online from ronrosenstock.com.

Emptiness is a creative collaboration featuring black and white infrared landscape photography by Ron Rosenstock and haiku (in Irish, English and Japanese) by Gabriel Rosenstock in response to the scenes. Ron writes "Through photography I have sought to explore the space between the finite and the

infinite. For me, infrared photography is on the borderline, the veil between the known and the unknown... a search for what is beyond the doorway of perception" (front flap). Several haiku allude to local sites with historic Irish cultural significance. For example, the opening haiku *pound us / until we are nothing once again – / the stones of Achill* (1) refers to a deserted village near a famous quarry. Several of the infrared photographs feel otherworldly with silver leaves and wispy clouds, and I especially like the corresponding magic in this haiku: *chorus of trees... / chanting the earth / into existence* (5). My favorite from this collection is a softened photograph of turbulent waves paired with the haiku *nothing to say / no decisions to be made... / incoming tide* (18). I will end with another water landscape that harkens to time before time: *before a human voice / spoke words in verse – / this rushing stream* (25).

Pagen Rites by John Dunphy (2018 bottle rockets press, Windsor, CT) mini-chapbook 4 1/8 by 2 3/4. Stapled, No ISBN \$4 includes mailing costs, from the author at The Second Reading Book Shop 16 East Broadway, Alton, IL. 62002

reviewed by Michael Ketchek

10 poems ranging from the poignant: *church ruins/ wildflowers scenting/ the sanctuary* to the outrageous: *genetically-modified forest/ a tree-hugger/ hugged back*. As always with Dunphy, poems that are thoughtful, funny and often both.