

extra innings by Mike Stinson. Edited by Stanford M. Forrester (sekiro). (2018, café nietzsche press, Windsor, CT). 32 pages, 5"x6.5". Contact Mike Stinson by email tigerstinson@yahoo.com or mail a check for \$12 (within US) or \$14 (outside US) to Mike Stinson/7817 No. 36th/Omaha, Nebraska 68112.

Reviewed by Deb Koen

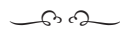
Mike Stinson's *extra innings* endearingly captures the language of baseball in his haiku of batting practice, baseball cards, the bench and beyond.

Supremely qualified, Stinson draws on his experience as a player, a fan, a Little League coach, and a dad. From pastures to sandlots to ball parks and grandstands, baseball memories flood the senses. His haiku transport the reader to precious moments in the communal experience of the once, and still contending, favorite pastime.

For me, the home run of the collection, representing quality haiku and baseball:

cicada evening
we toss the baseball
back and forth

Whether an occasional spectator or a diehard fan, the next time you find yourself in an extra inning, or even the 7th inning stretch, follow Stinson's lead and take a deep breath into the moment.



The Worksongs of the Worms by James Roderick Burns (2018, Cyberwit Publications, Allahabad, India) 94 pages, 5.5" by 8.5", Perfectbound ISBN 978-93-88125-02-4, \$15/£11 or order from cyberwit.net

Reviewed by Jay Friedenberg

James Roderick Burns received a Ph.D. in English at the State University of New York, then returned to the UK where he

graduated from Oxford's MSt in Creative Writing Program. He is the author of a tanka collection and a book of sedoka sequences.

James has a knack for noticing the unusual and the poetic in the commonplace. In this haiku he sees something most others might miss:

Rat-quick, slippery
a loose newspaper
nips at passenger' heels

Here the newspaper is a hidden actor, one operating in the lower-levels of our consciousness. The passengers are being nipped at the heels without realization. This suggests an unseen world of forces acting upon us, most beneath our awareness. It makes us wonder, what are the other unseen actors?

Another poem show James' gift for observing the microscopic:

Worlds of dew
until the wiper-blade
flaps in

The patterning of dew on the windshield is a universe unto itself. One can visualize the groupings and distributions of individual dots as a microcosm of society. Again this is something most of us might not notice, especially since it is so easily destroyed by the wiper-blade.

Not all of his imagery is visual:

Crackle of radios
in the gallery hush-
security talk

In this poem the sound of the radio and the speech of the security officers is amplified by the hush. The crowd is anticipating an important gallery opening and their own awareness for these sounds is therefore heightened. A very vivid acoustic image is generated here.

A number of James' poems concern the interfaces between things, where two objects or surfaces touch or are otherwise linked together. Examples include tide between sand and water, rain stitching together sky and path, and a cormorant skimming between sea and shore. There is not much in the way of senryu here or on observations of human nature. So those looking for this will find not find it. But James' excels at examining the connectivity and details of his surroundings. He is a skilled writer and haikai.



Greetings From by Alison Woolpert (2018, Colorvue Press, Santa Cruz, CA) 68 pages, 5" by 7", Perfectbound ISBN 978-0-692-14666-80, \$15.

Reviewed by Jay Friedenberg

Alison Woolpert is a long standing member of the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society. She is additionally a member of the Haiku Poets of Northern California and The Haiku Society of America. She was a judge for the 2016 Nicholas A. Virgilio Memorial Haiku Competition. Alison since an early age has been collecting postcards, a hobby known as deltiology. This book, in addition to some wonderful poetry, contains nine postcards from her collection with corresponding haiku. The book is worth purchasing for a look at the postcards alone. Some date from early in the 20th century and were chosen by the author for depicting unusual and interesting scenes.

There is a lot of seasonal haiku here. Alison frequently comments on the energy and imagery associated with the months and the passing of the year. The very first poem is a great example:

spring sky
one twirl before the girl
settles in line

Here we have a young girl who can't hold back from twirling her baton before getting back into parade formation. Spring is the most youthful of the seasons, a time when the world recovers from the death of the prior year and is born again. The explosive energy of youth mirrors this change. A great connection between the human and the wider forces around us.

Now on the other side we have a correspondingly sensitive haiku about winter:

winter sky
released doves circle once
then ... gone

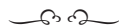
In winter we feel trapped and caged up, in some cases restricted from travel due to adverse weather. There is thus for many people a loss in our perceived freedom and a lethargy of action. This is echoed by the released doves, who hesitate at first but then sensing the wide open sky instantly fly away. There is great imagery here too. It is almost impossible not to imagine the dove's actions framed against a grey sky.

The ferocious heat of an autumn fire is reflected in this poem that matches a postcard showing a fire on the Mrs. J. Rank Farm dated November 3rd., 1916. It shows a house engulfed in flames and is colored an intense orange-pink. One can almost feel the heat emanating from the paper. The haiku is:

autumn diablos
up and over ridgelines
wind on fire

The flames and the angling smoke in the picture are extended here to a wildfire that one can imagine spreading and rapidly climbing the ridges, engulfing everything in its way. The use of "diablos" gives personification to the flames, they are alive and evil. Alison may have invented a new form of haiga here, linking haiku with postcards or other forms of pre-existing art.

This is a wonderful chapbook. Alison has been exposed to haiku since she was a little girl and has been reading and writing it for a very long while. She has a genuine sensitivity into the seasonal and human changes taking place around her. Many of the poems work at an imagistic, cognitive and emotional level. High quality all around.



The Color Blue by Alexis Rotella (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA) 71 pages, 6" by 9", Perfectbound ISBN 978-1-936848-98-0, \$20 or order from redmoonpress.com

Reviewed by Jay Friedenberg

Alexis Rotella has made major contributions to the English language haiku community. She has served as past President of the Haiku Society of America and as *Frogpond* editor. Her work has been anthologized many times and she has founded a number of journals, including *Brussels Sprout* and *Prune Juice*. She has additionally authored dozens of books. This latest collection is a delightful mixture of haiku, senryu, tanka, haibun, and haiga.

The first thing one notices upon reading is that many of the poems involve the projection or description of psychological states. For example:

Rain in the weatherman's voice

This is a nice observation whereby the meaning and the sound of the weatherman's speech both convey the same information. There is the implicit understanding of a social contract between the speaker and the audience. We don't like bad news but it has to be said.

A number of poems in this book are based on turns of phrase. Take for instance:

Butterfly winging it

As well as:

So busy
my watch could use
another hand

This last one works on multiple levels. Additional hands divide and subdivide time and more time units are needed the busier one is. The labor saving “device” of a helping hand links the human with the machine.

There are quite a few poems here that utilize anthropomorphizing. Some readers may object to ascribing intent to non-sentient objects, but a few here are quite subtle and effective. Take for instance:

The Garden
losing interest
in itself

This effectively shows the decay of vegetation at the end of season. One can visualize the browning, and wilting of the plants without any explicit description, simply by the use of a psychological attribute.

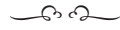
The book consists of mostly senryu but is occasionally interspersed with natural topics. One of my favorites is:

Everywhere
at once
the wind

This concisely and personally conveys the omnipresent and enveloping quality of moving air and its ever-changing direction and movement.

To sum up, this work is eclectic, both in terms of poetic forms and subject matter. It contains a variety of different topics covering everything from dating to parents to dinner guests. There is a lot to digest here. With such a large number of poems it is better to read it in stages and contemplate rather

than take it all in at once. Alexis is a poet operating at the top of her game and every single one of these shines with quality and insight.



emogi moon haiku and related text by John Stevenson (2018, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 72 pages, 5.25" x 7.5" perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1-947271-31-9. \$15.00

Reviewed by Michael Ketchek

emogi moon showcases the breadth of Stevenson's poetic vision. Haiku, senryu, haibun and tanka are featured in this book. In these different genres the poems range from the traditional:

canned peaches
the darkest corner
of the cellar

to the experimental:

the
of
winter

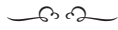
There are humorous poems that also hint at something deeper:

my cat
content to let me
do the talking

There are heartfelt poems that never become sentimental:

the soldiers drift in
a few at a time
Arlington

There are poems you will make you laugh, some that will give you insight into this life and some that will probably confuse you, but if you want a collection of poems that is never dull and always thought provoking, then *emogi moon* is right for you.



Stillness of Crows by Gabriel Rosenstock (2018, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform) 5.5" x 8.5" (13.97 x 21.59 cm) Color on White paper 102 pages ISBN 978-1-72491926-7. \$19.98

Reviewed by Michael Ketchek

The first word that comes to mind after seeing this book is beautiful. The artwork is by Japanese master print maker Ohara Koson (1877-1945). In this book there are 46 prints each with one haiku by Gabriel Rosenstock in English and Irish on the facing page. The prints are magnificent, mostly of birds though fish, insects and mammals do appear and I did spot one small human under an umbrella in one print that featured a temple in the rain.

The haiku mesh well with the prints, adding a touch of spice to the artwork. In one print of ducks under the moon, done in mostly shades of brown, the haiku reads:

somewhere on earth
war is being waged—
sleeping ducks

In a charming print of a sparrow feeding its young under a vine of yellow flowers in varying stages of bloom, the accompanying haiku adds an extra dimension with the words “first taste”

first taste
of dragon-fly—
young sparrow