

list of poets acknowledging their debt to Pauly as a mentor is as long as it speaks to the profound generosity and encouragement that he had for the art of haiku.

on Turtle Island	Foundry Bookstore—
the boy pulls up	all our lives
a stringer of bones	still in print □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JAMES SCHLETT

my hands full of light haiku by Gideon Young (Backbone Press, Durham, NC: 2021). 20 pages, 7" x 5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-7363467-1-6. \$10 from backbonepress.org.

This first collection by the North Carolina poet Gideon Young centers on the poetry of fatherhood. The haiku run from the birth of his daughter to the birth of a son. Family is a recurring theme, accounting for nearly a third of the 34 poems, though most of the poems cannot be categorized as senryu. The best come when nature interrupts or accentuates parenting: (1) *low thunder / our newborn asleep / on my chest*; (2) *26 weeks / smooth belly / in the sun*; and (3) *nose tickles / from a sprig of mint / in my daughter's hand*. Social justice is a minor theme: *summer sunset / silent fists / fill the sky*. Several nature-centered haiku are notable: (1) *valley fog / v of geese / gold in last light* and (2) *garden dirt crumbles / between my fingers / the sound of wind*. Congratulations are in order for the poetry and the growing family: *father of two / my hands full / of light*.

NEXUS haiku by Michael Dudley, Tomislav Maretić, and Dejan Pavlinović (Grafomark, Zagreb, Croatia: 2021). 120 pages, 5.5" x 8". Color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 97895359233-1-2. \$17 CAD + tax & \$6 shipping (approx.) from Michael Dudley to North America at <https://michaeldudley.com> or from Dejan Pavlinović to other continents at <https://www.facebook.com/NEXUShaiku/>

NEXUS haiku is a collection of cross-cultural, bilingual haiku and senryu by three poets—one Canadian (Michael Dudley in

the Southwestern Ontario city of Stratford) and two Croatian (Tomislav Maretić in the northern Croatian city of Čakovec and Dejan Pavlinović in the port city of Pula at the southern tip of Croatia's Istria peninsula). There are 85 stand-alone haiku, five sequences, and five renga, all of which were co-created over a three-year period beginning in 2018. *Co-creation* is the key word; hence the title of "NEXUS": "a central focal point of connection." *NEXUS*, which features both Croatian haiku and their English translations, is perhaps most remarkable for the enchanting grit of the poetry. The best haiku are those in urban settings that find the tenderness in concrete environments. The haiku are steeped in romanticism of old European cities. It is akin to the urban haiku of the New York City poet Bruce Kennedy, but with more ancientness: (1) *the only guitar / string remaining is broken / bell tower gongs*; (2) *laundry dangling / stiff across a courtyard / the shapes of cold*; and (3) *dim hallway corner / of rotted leaves . . . / the reek of urine*. One of the greatest disappointments, though, is the lack of attribution to the authorship of the individual haiku. While bylines may have been omitted in the spirit of co-creation, it is disorienting to not know if a given haiku is set in Canada or Croatia. In the end, the reader's imagination has the final say over where each haiku takes place. However, when a book is centered around an international nexus, the inability to gain any geographical bearing suggested by authorship leaves the reader feeling a little lost. This trio is talented, and it would be all the more nice to know which favorites belonged to each of the poets. While Croatia is famous for its Romanesque, Renaissance, and Baroque architecture, there is a gothic feel to many of these poems, especially the senryu. At times dark and gloomy, they shine in the momentary flash of a haiku: (1) *sensing it's time / to give her a kiss / he looks away*; (2) *shimmering heat— / the scent of wild mint / on her fingers*; and (3) *cats in the café / among high heels / a ballet*. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY LAURIE D. MORRISSEY

time haiku by Marcus Larsson (Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2021). 72 pages; 4.25" x 6.5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-78-4. \$15 from www.redmoonpress.com.

This is award-winning haiku poet Marcus Larsson's fourth collection with Red Moon Press. Like his previous books, *time* has an arresting cover. This one shows three pink and blue ovals that had me thoroughly puzzled until I read the inside cover note and dipped into research. The bold shapes represent NASA-developed datasets that help scientists understand the early cosmos by measuring cosmic microwave background radiation (a remnant of the Big Bang). The book's pages continue the temporal theme with 53 haiku in sections titled "spring," "summer," "autumn," "winter," and "again." Each seasonally titled section contains 13 haiku, one to a page. The final section is a single haiku. While grouped seasonally, all of these haiku share a focus on the human—whether as an individual, family, or crowd (*Holocaust museum / we can't stay / long enough*). Sometimes, the human presence is implied as in one of the possible interpretations of *Northern Lights / the darkness / when they're gone*. There are dozens of gems, beginning with the opening haiku: *leaving the store / in shoes I just bought / cherry blossoms*. In simple words, they reach right to the heart of human experience. As simple as the haiku may appear at first, each has a strong emotional impact. I find I can spend plenty of time with each one, and I enjoyed reading the book more than once. Here is one of my favorites: *confirmation ceremony / my daughter still smiles / as she sees me*.

Susurrus: Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members' Anthology 2021 edited by Elaine Whitman and Neal Whitman (*The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, San Jose, CA: 2021*). Card covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 987-1-7357235-2-5. \$15 from <https://yths.org/publications>.

The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society was founded in 1975 "to foster writing haiku in English along traditional Japanese guidelines." This members' anthology contains a pair of haiku from each of 131 contributing poets, mostly from California. The anthology takes its name from a haiku by Alison Woolpert (*golden hour . . . / susurruses of dowitchers / stitch the winter marsh*), and her photograph of these shorebirds graces the front and back covers. Besides this onomatopoeic haiku, Woolpert contributes *mackerel sky / a mourner's mass / gathers at the shoreline*. These are among

my favorite haiku in the book, which includes haiku from many well-known, award-winning poets. I also love Phillip Kennedy's lush *birdsong / the gleam / of a gold-rimmed teacup* and the humor of (YTHS president) Carolyn Fitz's *spring cleaning special: / "drop your pants off here" / dry clean sidewalk sign*. The first section of the book is haiku, with subsequent sections that foster community and conversation within the Society. The volume appears to serve as an annual report, but even as a non-member, I find it enjoyable. "Spring Reading at Home" recaps the annual (Zoom) spring reading, including four featured readers. The third section presents the results of the 2020 Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest, which requires entries to follow the 5-7-5 form and use a *kigo* from the year's list. After the contest section is a summary of the 45th anniversary retreat, followed by "Wasn't That a Mighty Storm!"—members' responses to the question of how haiku helped them cope during the pandemic. All poets can likely relate to these personal reflections and reminders of the many ways that haiku help us to, in the words of Kathy Goldbach, "look for the essence, discard the half-true, and so distill our lives into moments of discovery and acceptance."

A Hummingbird Still: Haiku & Senryu in the Spirit of J. Krishnamurti compiled by Robert Epstein (Middle Island Press, West Union, WV: 2021). 144 pages, 8" x 5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 9798483087229. \$15 from online booksellers.

Robert Epstein is the author or editor of an ever-growing number of haiku collections and anthologies, as well as three nonfiction books. Much of his writing and editing focuses on pain, illness, aging, and death awareness—subjects with which he is intimately familiar due to both personal experience and his career as a psychotherapist. Epstein's haiku writing and his interest in Zen Buddhism are paired perfectly in his fourth compilation, *A Hummingbird Still*. It is a collection and an homage rolled into one: 16 sections of outstanding haiku, each following an excerpt from the writings and talks of J. Krishnamurti. Readers familiar with J. Krishnamurti will be on board immediately, but I needed some time to make sense of the author's plan. I wondered, for example,

whether the section titles are Epstein's words or Krishnamurti's. Although Epstein's preface refers to Krishnamurti's "nonsectarian spiritual teachings," I needed to supplement the foreword and preface with some research and reread the front matter in order to feel grounded. (I also sought more complete identification of the foreword writer, Rodrigues, who is a professor at the University of Lethbridge in Canada). Epstein explains in the preface that he did not write the collected haiku self-consciously with Krishnamurti's teachings in mind; they came to him spontaneously (usually while out in nature), and he selected them afterward for their resonance with a particular teaching. In "Dying to the Past," we find haiku such as: (1) *rustling leaves / it's not that hard / to be born again* and (2) *cut grass / I too am ready / to start again*. In "No Method, No Guru, No Scripture," we read *under the redwoods / knowing I am not a buddhist / nor was Buddha*. "Truth is a Pathless Land" contains (1) *that yellow bird's back / how we end up / where we do* and (2) *gossamer / I could have gone / that way too*. The author calls the book's contents "Pictures, Poems & Passages." Contained along with the poems and 16 passages from Krishnamurti's writings and talks are more than 100 haiku and almost as many black-and-white photographs. The photos directly represent the subject matter of the nearby haiku, and for me, they are not necessary. For example: *winter morning— / what tenderness for those / worn out sneakers* is accompanied by a photo of worn-out sneakers, and *rolling up the bamboo mat / a tiny white flower / unbends* is accompanied by a photo of tiny white flowers. A three-page list of suggested further reading is the final section of the book.

Old Roads: Haiku & Photographs by Brett Taylor (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2021). 132 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-78-4. \$15 from www.redmoonpress.com.

Old Roads shows a deep appreciation for the sights, sounds, and culture of life in a rural area. Brett Taylor's home is East Tennessee, but many readers will identify with the author's enthusiasm. I found many vivid images in these 170-plus haiku, such as red sumac, falling walnut leaves, and an old hymnal with a split spine. Readers seeking straightforward glimpses of the countryside and villages of

Taylor's world will be rewarded. However, I seldom felt an invitation to linger, to wonder, or to dream. Examples from the collection: (1) *headlights / illuminate the deer / but not long*; (2) *hissing / where the water was thrown / onto the fire*; and (3) *darting minnow / keeps biting my toes / clear water*. My favorite haiku in the book shows a sense of humor and a fresh, original take on a familiar situation: *how fast / the water boils / when I'm not ready*. The collection is enhanced by nearly 30 black-and-white photographs taken by the author. It concludes with an essay about Taylor's poetic roots, his experience of getting published, and his affection for old roads. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY GARY HOTHAM

Kiyoshi's Walk by Mark Karlins, illustrated by Nicole Wong (Lee & Low, New York: 2021). 32 pages, 11.1" x 8.6". Hardcover picture book. ISBN: 978-1620149584. \$18.95 from <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/kiyoshi-s-walk>.

Some of you might have had your own children or grandchildren ask about your haiku writing habit. I don't recall my daughter ever asking, although she does like my work. My grandsons, who are now five and eight, have never asked either. I suspect they have no idea about my endeavor. One day in school, they might have that lesson: writing a nature poem with three lines of 5-7-5 syllables called a haiku. I know some of you teachers do a much better job. Not long ago, I picked up this children's book, *Kiyoshi's Walk*, and was surprised at what a delightful and insightful read it is. Kiyoshi sees his grandfather, Eto, write down a poem. Kiyoshi enjoys the poem and asks, "Where do poems come from?" His grandfather says, "Let's go for a walk," and off they go, with page after page of well-done illustrations. At various moments of the walk, Grandfather Eto writes a haiku. Kiyoshi learns that these haiku come from seeing, listening, and our imagination, feelings, and heart. This book is a fun and clever way to explain haiku to the children in your life and perhaps even those bewildered adults who wonder about your addiction to the genre! As you read the book, you can make additional comments about the things that make you write English-language haiku and even throw in some haiku of your own. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY PIPPA PHILLIPS

Home and Away haibun by Ruth Holzer (Dancing Girl Press & Studio, Chicago, IL: 2021). 38 pages, 5" x 8". Color card cover, side-stapled. No ISBN. \$7.50 available from <http://www.dancinggirlpress.com/> or the author at holzerruth@yakoo.com.

The haibun in Ruth Holzer's *Home and Away* move through time and place, building a picture of life as location. The poet finds herself in a series of "homes"—from crumbling tenements to sleek workplaces—her abodes at times cramped and claustrophobic, at other times outside or in transit. Often, she telescopes back and forth in time, punctuating her ruminations with sudden revelations. The result is a biography as a meandering tour of sharply sketched places. The collection serves as an urban and suburban pastoral, composed from a liminal place in between the inner landscape of memory and the external landscape of experience. The tension between location as an expression of the internal and the external is hinted at in the collection's title. Even the few haibun that aren't directly connected to a place—"Knuckles," "Summit," and "Bands"—contain poetic interludes that are. What is it to inhabit a home or city? To inhabit a moment before it passes? The scope of vision sometimes narrows unexpectedly. In "Teapot," for instance, the location is eponymous. It may be abstract, as in "the mind's eye" of "Dental Gold." In the last haibun, "The Name," the author recounts a biography of her written name as it moves from her jewelry and clothing to various documents. In its conclusion, identity is associated with location on the page—a final twist that throws all those previous haibun into metatextual relief: *three lines / on the back page— / that was you*. When haibun works best, it does something no other form can do—it creates a synergy in its step from prose to poetry, elevating the reader to epiphany. Several haibun in this volume, including the last piece, qualify as exemplars of the form. Holzer's collection is a worthy addition to a rapidly evolving genre. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY KRISTEN LINDQUIST

Wildflowers in a Vase haiku by Edward Cody Huddleston (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2021). 84 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-83-8. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Edward Cody Huddleston's name is so familiar to me from haiku journals that I was surprised to learn that this is his debut collection. Assured and consistent in tone, and strong throughout, it doesn't feel like a first book. Each of these 77 poems stands alone on a page, surrounded by white space, deserving of our undivided attention. The wildflowers of the title persist as a theme, with many "wildflower" and other flower ku cropping up throughout. This is no blithe tiptoe through the tulips, however. Flowers often have a beautiful, powerful effect, conflating the natural and human worlds: (1) *wildflowers in a vase / she tells me about / her twenties*; (2) *how fast / the wildflowers grow / child soldiers*; and (3) *orchids / yes to the question / I haven't asked*. On the whole, the familiarity and deceptive simplicity of Huddleston's natural images—flowers, sun, moon, fireflies—belie the depth of these poems, which touch upon such complex human topics as war, love, and loss. This accessible collection offers example after example of how a haiku can pack a punch without unusual syntax or wordplay, just a handful of ordinary words arranged in three short, clear lines: (1) *mayfly / the eulogy / writes itself*; (2) *a sunbeam / on my last name / memorial wall*; and (3) *the jeweler / explains her return policy / first frost*. I laughed aloud at his choice for the penultimate poem in the book: *mead moon / I can't sing / but I will*. We should all be glad that he did.

Invisible Dictionary haibun by Stuart Bartow (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 116 pages, 6" x 9". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-90-6. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

The 56 haibun in this luminous collection by Stuart Bartow shine like individual constellations amid the white-sky space of their pages, making it all the better to really appreciate each one. Bartow is a thoughtful, intelligent poet, and it's a pleasure to follow how his mind works in these quiet but far-reaching pieces. He grounds himself, literally, in the natural world—touching on moths, jellyfish, deer, birds, spiders, and marshes—yet his frame of reference is the entire universe. At least three pieces conflate fireflies with stars, and the metaphor is not a simple one. As he says of space in "All of It": "Whatever is out there, just like everything here, is related, distantly or not." This feeling of empathy, of deep connection

between “here” and “out there,” pervades his work, often leading to some truly creative connections, in turn, between the prose and haiku of the haibun itself. A discussion of leech sex, for example, concludes with a haiku about an unsigned valentine; a rumination on the poet John Donne as a possible Romanian vampire leads, delightfully, to a haiku about chickadees nesting in bluebird boxes. Grendel’s mother shows up, as does an Edward Gorey Christmas card. Aliens and ghosts are considered. “Migration,” about the death of his sister by overdose, takes your breath away with this haiku: *a wobbling V of geese / flying / in the wrong direction*. A meditation on a lost cat returned home after two years jumps, dreamily, to a world in which we are all strays: *deep winter sleep / we drift / between constellations*. There is so much to enjoy and appreciate here, as well as to learn.

Goldfish’s Sigh haiku by Naho Sugita, translated by Yasuhiro Kamimura (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2021). 180 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-73-9. \$15 from redmoonpress.com.

In her preface, Naho Sugita explains that the haiku in this book are English translations from the Japanese of 150 poems drawn from her first two collections: *Summer Hat* (2010), featuring haiku written from junior high through graduate school, and *The Glow of Sand* (2014), haiku written as a member of the Unga Haiku Association. This translation is divided into two chapters, one for each book, both arranged seasonally. Her translator notes that some of the haiku in this book were “untranslatable because they consist simply of rhythms.” Sugita adds, “So it is totally up to your appreciation whether the works presented here can be recognized as poems in English.” Some of these poems do feel awkward or prosaic in a way that seems due to the translation rather than her poetic abilities: (1) *swam at a hotel / that night after / presenting at a conference* and (2) *winter sunset / human beings are / still on the way of evolution*. Yet even so, the engaging freshness of Sugita’s voice makes it easy to ignore occasionally clunky phrasing and, instead, focus on the resonant sensory moments she offers: (1) *carp streamers / were warm / once gotten down* and (2) *my father has passed away— / flower heads of onion / in his field*. Other poems feel just right: (1)

on the writing desk / wondering where to place / a single plum flower;
 (2) *if you don't see / an insect case on the couch / I am out;* and (3) *a pomegranate— / the days when / romance was everything.*

Nick Virgilio Writers House Poetry: Haiku in Action, Volume 2, 2020: Poems from the Pandemic Year ed. by Warren C. Longmire and Sean Lynch (Upright Remington Press, Camden, NJ: 2021). 138 pages, 6" x 9". Matte four-color cover, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-8-483-30093-9. \$20 from nickvirgiliohaiku.org.

Haiku in Action, an ongoing social media project using current events as weekly haiku prompts, is an inspired way to encourage creative participation and build a sense of inclusive, shared community. Amid the challenges of the pandemic's first year, the series was clearly a welcome distraction for many, even if it didn't always elicit great haiku—or what one might call haiku at all. However, if one approaches these works as simply three-line responses to the state of the world in 2020—including short poems, telegraphic commentary, and a few haiku in the mix—it becomes easier to appreciate them. Some hidden gems among the more than 200 poems by 92 poets: (1) *left in the doorway / of the charity shop / a rough sleeper* (John Hawkhead) and (2) *homeschooled / in my kitchen / ants* (Roberta Beach Jacobson). Five introductions and a foreword is a bit much. Introductions 2–5 could have been appendices. Tom Painting's useful foreword, on how to write haiku, would have been better placed before the final section of the book, which showcases some great haiku: the 2020 and 2021 winners of the Haiku Society of America Nicholas A. Virgilio Memorial Student Haiku/Senryu Award. The students' poems are truly winning: (1) *harvest moon / corn whispers / the wind's path* (Gabby Short, Grade 7) and (2) *New Year's Eve / at midnight I kiss / my pillow* (Andrew Reveno, Grade 10). □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JEROME BERGLUND

Delta Notes haiku by Jianqing Zheng (Buttonhook Press, CA: 2022). 48 pages. Available to download for free at <https://ojarart.com/buttonhook-press2022-chapbook-seriespoetry-all-forms-styleshaikujianqing-zhengdelta-notes>.

Jianqing Zheng is a professor at Mississippi State University and currently edits the University's literary review, *Valley Voices*. In *Delta Notes*, Zheng sketches "the most southern place on earth" in different ways, from its rich culture—(1) *he shakes his head / out of a juke joint / this drowsy night* and (2) *delta tour / a cellphone's blues ring / in a tourist's purse*—to its distinctive topography and weather patterns—(1) *foggy river a ship follows its horn to shore* and (2) *flood season / the dead end sign / half underwater*). The final piece is also quite sincere and somber, and the headnote and subsequent blurb contextualizes it as a memorial for a martial tragedy which afflicted the author's Mississippi Delta region and that may or may not have an express bearing on whence the volume's title was derived. Containing over 70 haiku that have previously appeared in no less than 29 haiku specific journals, there is much to enjoy. There are some distinctly bluesy homages exercised here and there: (1) *Avalon blues / a damp trail / to John Hurt's grave* and (2) *Avalon blues / John Hurt's marker alone / in winter wind*. Altogether, *Delta Notes* is a glorious and socially important piece. My favorite haiku in the collection: *after tornado / rebuilding the fence / brick by brick*. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY TOM SACRAMONA

between falling leaves and their shadows haiku by James Knippen, Sierra Shellabarger, Anirudh Vyas, and Jamie Wimberly (Redheaded Press, Alpharetta, GA: 2021). 75 pages, 5.5" x 8.5". Color covers, perfect softbound. No ISBN. Available for free download at <https://www.jamiewimberlypoetry.com/book-1>.

The HSA mentorship program may very well be remembered as HSA's best idea. Along with Jay Friedenbergh and others, Jamie Wimberly was responsible for helping launch this first-of-a-kind program with the Society through a generous donation. This anthology serves as a spotlight for the wonderful haiku of Wimberly's students. Wimberly is an excellent mentor, and the poems quickly evidence all the poets' talents. It is another great idea to make the anthology widely available to readers as a free e-book. It presents a selection of each student's haiku with a preface consisting of their picture in black and white and a brief

bio. With a full-color haiga in each poet's section, the anthology is a beautiful showcase to the senses, and there are haiku that appeal to all five senses to be found: (1) touch: *first warm breeze— / snow on the jungle gym / loses its grip* by James Knippen; (2) sight: *heat lightning / the white eyelid / of a woodpecker* by Jamie Wimberly; (3) hearing: *spiced cranberries / through the gale / a loon cries out* by Sierra Shellabarger; (4) smell: *in my room / almost a year now / scent of rain* by Anirudh Vyas; and (5) taste: *learning / to speak Spanish / ripening tomatoes* by Wimberly. Each writer's section runs about 11 pages, or about 19 poems in total. Wimberly's first book of poetry, *Before I Forget Them*, was published in 2020: *carrying / the firewood inside / all those years*. James Knippen has an MFA and teaches in Central New York: (1) *meteor shower / our legs suspended / from the end of the pier* and (2) *recycling day— / shaking pill bugs / from a beer can*. Sierra Shellabarger is studying philosophy and German language at the University of South Florida: (1) *turning the compost / so much work! / for decay* and (2) *snowed in / the rings staining my teacup / darken*. Anirudh Vyas was born in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India, and has graduated as an engineer: (1) *winter moon / I wish to see / the warmth of my room* and (2) *year end / a swallow flies back / to the same branch*.

Stardust haiku by Janice Doppler (Phacops Publishing, Ontario, Canada: 2021). 80 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Matte cover, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-7770895-9-7. \$12 from online booksellers.

Stardust by Janice Doppler is "a fine first collection" where "each moment is keenly observed and lovingly recorded," as noted in the back cover blurbs by Terry Ann Carter and Brad Bennett. In this collection, Doppler records her first fourteen months on the haiku scene. It carries a dedication to northeast regional coordinator Wanda Cook ("for opening the door to the world of haiku") and an acknowledgment to Ignatius Fay ("my mentor in the Haiku Society of America Mentorship Program"). This collection is bookended by quotes about the cosmos, one by Carl Sagan, which connect these poems with a prevalent theme of an expansive consciousness available through compassionate attitudes, as in the title poem, *night sky / stardust vibrates / within*. In four sections, the haiku and senryu span the seasons. Doppler has made short

work of becoming a memorable poet: *flamingo flock— / the child holds her / arabesque* placed second in the 2021 Porad Award contest judged by Susan Antolin. The author's note shares that "Janice enjoys bird watching, carving realistic birds from wood, nature journaling, and studying Chinese philosophy." Elements of all of these passions find their way into the haiku: (1) *mammal tracks / in a snowy field / traces of night*; (2) *maple branch / the chickadee checks / each bud*; and (3) *darkening sky— / mallards settle a pond / one by one*.

The Drunken Honeybee: A Collection of Haiku & Senryu by Joan C. Fingon (buddha baby press, Windsor, CT: 2021). 67 pages, 5.5" x 8". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-7366037-3-4. \$15 from the author at jfingon@roadrunner.com.

Joan C. Fingon's first poetry book is best put in context by her mentor, Bruce H. Feingold, who says on the book's back cover: "*The Drunken Honeybee* leads us through her beloved garden with senryu and haiku attended to the changing seasons and an adept appreciation of the sounds, sights and scents of the natural world. Her haiku are vibrant as flowers, butterflies, birds." In *iridescent dragonfly / catches the bright sunlight / blinds me*, I appreciate how the third line abruptly interrupts the preceding and more lyrical first two lines, doing what the images of the poem do. Some poems are enlivened by the spirit of haiku's birthplace: (1) *on the buddha / a small heart-shaped stone / I leave* and (2) *walking in the pines / the sole of my geta catches / one needle*. Many track changes in the garden: (1) *in the birdbath / birds pecking ice / late spring*; (2) *spring again / jasmine in bloom / oh, the scent of it!*; (3) *over the garden railing / dandelion puffs float / white clouds rise*; and (4) *raindrops / stipple the water / mosaic birdbath*.

Checkout Time Is Noon: Death Awareness Haiku (Tenth Anniversary Edition) by Robert Epstein (Middle Island Press, West Union, VA: 2022). 105 pages, 5" x 8". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 979-8776542596. \$12 from online booksellers.

Checkout Time Is Noon is available as a tenth anniversary edition that includes a new preface by Robert Epstein, outlining his

death-related experiences since its first publication: the loss of his mother, the high death tolls from the pandemic, and the unfortunate health circumstance of cancer. The events brought him closer to what he sought to write in these pages: death awareness haiku. He questions himself about writing these poems all those years ago: “I am not sure I encountered the real prospect of dying in my very bones.” But he resolves that “they were written in a spirit of sincerity and earnestness which, I hope, is evident. That is why I stand by them and think them worthy of sharing, still.” The preface to the original 2012 addition follows, and in it, we find a definition of the term “death awareness haiku,” intriguing and worth mentioning for the context it provides these haiku: “Because I am alive and well, and not (yet) drawing my last breath, I have chosen to call the haiku contained in this collection death awareness haiku, to distinguish them from poems literally written on one’s death bed.” These death awareness haiku, in our opinion, had the greatest gravitas: (1) *on the same branch / a blooming and a dying rose / never touch*; (2) *that too / is what dandelions do / return* (after Stanford Forrester); (3) *indigo night / in the cricket’s song / no birth no death*; and (4) *death poem / not mine / not yours*.

Pathside Weeds in Rain haiku by Paul Russell Miller (Grandad Publishing, Painswick, Gloucestershire, UK: 2022) 159 pages, 5.75" x 8.875". Four-color card covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-9995931-6-2. \$15 plus postage ordered directly from the publisher by e-mail to: pr.miller@live.co.uk.

The Wild Beyond Echoing, Paul Russell Miller’s study of haiku poet James W. Hackett, was well reviewed in our autumn 2021 issue and recently at length in *Modern Haiku*. After this encouraging reception to his critical book-length study analyzing Hackett’s poetry, it is wonderful to have such a collection of Miller’s own poetry, which includes over 600 haiku. Examining *Pathside Weeds in Rain*, I am struck and charmed by how closely Miller adheres to Hackett’s way. As Alan Burns writes of Hackett in the anthology *Where the River Goes: The Nature Tradition in English-Language Haiku*: “Careful observation and a quality the Japanese term *sono mama* (‘as it is’) distinguish his best work.” These same attributes distinguish the best work in *Pathside*: (1) *The crow calls again— / and*

again the whole ash branch / bends in time to it; (2) Heat-haze on the path . . . / two small copper butterflies / flicker up from it; (3) The hill's quiet lane . . . / I'm overtaken at speed / by ripe horse chestnuts; and (4) Caught now, at midday, / in the full beams of the sun: / the lane's dead badger. However divergent it is with the mainstream, to miss this book would be to miss out on many poems incorporating *sono mama*, a rare transcendent quality in haiku: (1) *Stooping to admire / a June bug's sheen . . . I notice / I'm now part of it* and (2) *Inseparable now, / the lane's old contorted beech / and disused phone pole . . .*

Abandoned Farmhouse and Other Haiku (Second Edition) by Edward J. Rielly (Press Here, Sammamish, WA: 2021). 56 pages, 5" x 8". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-878798-41-1. \$10 from online booksellers.

Edward J. Rielly's last haiku collection was *Answers Instead: A Life in Haiku*, which won the HSA Merit Book Award in 2016. While *Abandoned Farmhouse and Other Haiku* was first published in 2000, also by Press Here, this second edition is expanded. Opening to the first page, we see an image of a farmhouse, clearly showing the extent of decay that the elements or neglect have caused. This section, titled "Abandoned Farmhouse," runs 26 pages, with one or two haiku per page, and all the haiku use "abandoned farmhouse" as their first line: (1) *abandoned farmhouse: / how cool the air / beyond the cellar door*; (2) *abandoned farmhouse: / linoleum patch indented still / where the freezer stood*; and (3) *abandoned farmhouse: / a moth flies out / of the water faucet*. The last one brings to mind Issa's well-known haiku (trans. by David G. Lanoue): *from the great bronze / Buddha's nose . . . / a swallow!* Rielly brings a humorous flourish to his subject, too: *abandoned farmhouse: / stairway to our bedrooms / creaking just a bit more*. Rielly grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin and was a student of Father Raymond Roseliep at Loras College. Here are two haiku where Rielly dials back time and gives us the ability to see with such youthful clarity: (1) *tornado funnel; / the child's pinwheel / faster and faster* and (2) *aquarium / boy grinning / at the shark's teeth*. The poems in "Other Haiku" are divided into the four seasons. Examples from each show their shared themes of loss or age—(1) *spring: ray of light— / dust motes break / against my hand*; (2)

summer: *summer sunset / rain in a broken bottle / turning to wine*; (3) fall: *one brown leaf / in the middle of the maple; / her first cancer pains*; and (4) winter: *January wind: / an old farmer hides his face / from the auctioneer*.

Wintermoon haiku by Robert MacLean (Isobar Press, Tokyo, Japan: 2022). 83 pages, 5.5" x 8.5". Glossy color cover, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-4-907359-29-3. \$15 from online booksellers or at <https://isobarpress.com/titles/wintermoon>.

In *Wintermoon*, the author chronicles his Zen practice and the 25 years he spent living in Japan. The book's glossary removes any doubt as to the learned Buddhist references. As a green tea drinker, I appreciated this tidbit on his poem "Bodhidharma" (*your green eyelids / taste bitter / still I nod off*): "Bodhidharma is the legendary First Patriarch of Chan, who transmitted the Dharma from India to China in the sixth century CE. Often depicted with huge eyes, pupils focused high. The story goes he gazed at the wall of a cave so intensely for nine years that his eyelids fell off . . . these became the first leaves of the green tea that Zen monks drink to help stay awake." Keenly perceived and quietly observed moments balance the collection and make up a quarter of the poems. Some recorded could take place anywhere outside Japan as the entire modern world is beset by similar changes: (1) *snake crushed on the road / each day smaller / blending in* and (2) *failer each autumn / the old man still hoes his patch / surrounded by high-rises*. Still, many poems could only come from the country of eight islands: (1) *typhoon on the way / salt from the Okinawa islands / on your skin* and (2) *above the tree— / line / Kyoto's neon*. Others sprinkled in ("pulse in the crèche of my wrists") stem from the poet's heart and do not need a gloss, and we could say are akin to the poems Jack Kerouac distinguished from his other haiku by calling them "Dharma Pops" because of their explicitly philosophical or intellectual portent: (1) *pulse in the crèche of my wrists / tapped by a miner / trapped underground*; (2) *erase the whiteboard / turn off the light / bow to the empty room*; (3) *somewhere / in my ice locked body / wings open and close*; and (4) *the bole / dreams / the bark*.