

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY LAURIE D. MORRISSEY

a box of feathers haiku by Brad Bennett (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 98 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-03-2. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

Even if Brad Bennett's name were not familiar to me, I'd reach for this book. The cover—a deep sky blue with puffs of cloud—grabbed my attention and promised an uplifting reading experience. Paired with the opening haiku—

summer sky
how could nothing
be so blue

—it sets the tone for a delightful collection. A strain of lightness and optimism runs through this book, Bennett's third published by Red Moon Press. (His second, *a drop of pond*, won a Touchstone Distinguished Book Award from the Haiku Foundation.) Readers who enjoyed his previous books will relish this one. Most of the haiku in this collection spring from the woods and wetlands of New England and reveal Bennett's deep appreciation of nature. Others bring us to the coast of Maine, where he served as an artist-in-residence at Acadia National Park. More than a few are drawn from Bennett's experience as a teacher (both inside the classroom and outdoors):

first grade recess	spelling quiz	bog trail
the future loam	she keeps twisting	a toddler tests
of falling leaves	a loose tooth	the floating dock

These simple, momentary observations hold insight, compassion, and a sense of promise. Bennett is sharply attuned to sensory details, offering instant connection to the moments that inspired him to write. A strong example:

winter sleet
a sheet pan buckles
in the oven

I hear the loud, sudden “bong” of the pan; I feel the warm kitchen; and I see and hear the sleet beyond the windowpane. Another vibrant example:

summer days
the green croquet ball clicks
against the blue

Bennett is also deft at creating rhythm and movement within a haiku:

the morning pulse
of lobster boats
of gull wings

Among Bennett’s dozen monoku, there is novel insight and originality, as in *wind uprivering ripples* and *birdsong every now*. He is a skilled and widely-published haiku poet, and his work has garnered many awards. Each haiku here has something to admire. □■

REVIEWED BY RENÉE OWEN

Shifting Light by Hannah Mahoney (Backbone Press, Durham, NC: 2022). 32 pages, 7" x 5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-7363467-6-1. \$10 from <https://backbonepress.org/category/haiku-collections>

Hannah Mahoney is clearly a poet who knows her craft. She makes the outdoors her church, creating prayer from a keen engagement with all she observes. Mahoney’s fresh choice of images, rich in details, build to an aural and visual rhythm which resounds with each reading.

Her work invites us to look not only at what’s around us, but also to the topography deep within ourselves, to examine the pathos of joy