

public” is also spectacularly captivating and advantageous. In-depth chronicling of haiku’s ever-shifting relationship to humans and industry demonstrates how humankind can help inform and improve technology, serve as a convincing proponent and steward, and provide formidable platforms for efforts towards conservation and initiatives to defend and preserve the planet. McMurray has been quoted in *The Economist*, bemoaning the adverse impacts of season creep on intangible cultural heritage in critical ways which promote our species’ cumulative interests.

The meticulous detailing McMurray provides recounting his personal experiences—collaborating with major hotel chains and tea manufacturers to incorporate poetry into deeply meaningful and prominent branding and design purposes in astonishingly visible applications supporting different commercial ventures—are quite gripping to behold and provide rousing testament to the continued relevance and lucrative potential writing may still have.

McMurray also includes phenomenally useful subsections with a discerning, insider’s perspective on haiku publishing, contest execution (including the etiquette of judging and critique), sharing via academic societies and worldwide ambassadorship, and teaching.

Encompassing decades of exciting, informative exercise and experiences from many surprising angles, this is a book whose merits cannot be overestimated. It is well worth adding to your personal collection. Its immaculate craftsmanship further makes it an ideal, invariably treasured gift for that haiku enthusiast in your life. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

Interchange haiku, prose & photos by Tom Clausen and Michael Dudley (Independently published: 2022). 89 pages, 5" x 8". Matte color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 9798831268720. \$12 from online booksellers.

For several years, Tom Clausen has managed the Mann Library Daily Haiku at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Originally featuring a daily haiku in the library’s elevator, this popular exhibit

moved to the web, where it continues today. For the month, January 2022, he collaborated with Michael Dudley to create a daily combination of photograph, haiku, and author's commentary. These are not haiga nor haibun. Clausen's photographs do not illustrate the haiku, but are chosen as facing page companions that match or link through intuitive connections. Dudley's commentaries provide "contextual details and insight into what had inspired each poem." I will describe one pair: on the left page is a photograph of a weed, like Queen Anne's lace, filled to the brim with fresh snow. On the right page is this haiku—*dressed as prospectors / my boys dig up Yukon Gold / potatoes.*—followed by Dudley's comment, "One of the joys following the planting and tending of various gardens when my children were young was the rewarding activity of harvest, in this playful moment enacted by my two sons, creatively dressed for their part, excitedly unearthing an aptly named natural wealth." The pure simplicity of this project, along with high-quality photographs and vivid haiku moments, makes this a very rewarding collection.

what the sky holds by Anthony Lusardi (buddha baby press, Windsor, CT: 2022). 12 pages, 3" x 4". Blue card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. \$4 from the author at lusardi133@gmail.com

This mini chapbook by Anthony Lusardi is a wonderful collection of 10 haiku, each with a unique answer to *what the sky holds*. With one haiku per page, the reader can take time to enjoy a moment of being in our Anthropocene nature: *orange contrail / fading with what's left of dusk / what's left of today*. Lusardi invites us to consider how we live in an age of broken-down machines and the entropy of things built long ago. Nature continues to rust our machines and invite us into greater depths of being. Consider how we find a trace of beauty in this haiku: *broken down backhoe / inside its rusting bucket / a butterfly wing*. I've always enjoyed small collections of haiku unified by a theme which shows both a spirit of exploration and depth of connection. Lusardi's mini chapbook is an excellent example of haiku that are grounded in the here and now but reach to the stars and possibilities of the future.

Tuning Up the Violins haiku anthology compiled and edited by Ludmila Balabanova (Scribens Publishing, Sophia, Bulgaria: 2022) 189 pages, 7" x 6.5". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 9-786197-467345. €10 from www.book.store.bg

This anthology by Ludmila Balabanova features 128 haiku by 52 Bulgarian authors. *Tuning Up the Violins* includes 14 sequences written “in dialogue with famous Western poems” by authors such as William Butler Yeats, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Eluard, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson. The haiku are presented in both Bulgarian and English, with most of the English translations by David Lanoue. I have always enjoyed reading and writing in response to Emily Dickinson, so I will share a couple of examples of Bulgarian haiku from that section of the book. Dickinson’s poem is #561: “I measure every Grief I meet / With narrow, probing, Eyes — / I wonder if It weighs like Mine — / Or has an Easier size.”—to which Tzetzka Ilieva writes this haiku: *did I tell you / more than you could bear? / winter hyacinth*. This haiku picks up on Dickinson’s tone and seriously playful questioning technique. Here is a response from Elisaveta Shapkareva that picks up on the size comparison in Dickinson’s poem: *abandoned house / among the ruins / a dollhouse*. And one more by Darina Deneva, written in a colloquial voice: *so easy to steal— / lilac / in the abandoned garden*. This is an interesting anthology of poetry talking to poetry across cultures, time, and imagination.

The Inevitable haibun by Dorothy Mahoney (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 120 pages, 6" x 9". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-05-6 \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

The Inevitable is a collection of 50 well-crafted haibun by Dorothy Mahoney. In the acknowledgements, the author explains that “the prose pieces began as daily 100-word flash fictions inspired by news events and created on Drabler,” a writing community that provides reader responses. Each haibun can be read as a self-contained literary work, complete with title and concluding leap to a haiku. Unlike lower-quality haibun that end with a haiku that reads like one more dribble of prose, Mahoney’s haiku shift away

from the story and provide a good haiku pop. For example, her haibun titled “leaper” about someone born on February 28th is followed by this haiku: *jumping over / the 9 on one foot / hopscotch*. On the back cover, Roberta Beary describes Mahoney’s collection as “a fascinating episodic novel narrated in hybrid forms.” As a retired professor, I read this collection in one sitting and found several connections between the episodic haibun. The narrator’s voice is consistent throughout. It is the voice of a traveler, sharing tales of journeys and the people encountered along the way. This traveler likes to learn the stories of people and how everyone seems to be searching for a little peace or magic in their lives. As Mahoney states in the opening: “My plane ticket is cancelled three times: once for surgery, once to extend the time before and then to extend it after. There are three seats and each time an aisle is requested. After all of this, I switch seats so that three friends sit together.” I recommend *The Inevitable* and encourage you to take a seat next to this haibun narrator to enjoy some tales of tragedy, adventure, and perhaps magic. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JAMES SCHLETT

a slice of apple haiku by Guy Nesom (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 116 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-947271-97-5. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

This is a quiet collection of haiku written by a scientist with a keen sense of observation. Guy Nesom’s haiku are grouped into six themed sections, such as “city streets,” “travels” and “thee, thee and me.” The world Nesom observes seems sparsely inhabited, with amusing haiku about squirrels, birds, turtles, and other animals outnumbering those with people: *two squirrels / spiraling up the tree / lifted by joy*. Nesom tends to observe the absence of someone more than their presence: *her house / always too warm for visitors / now a bidding war*. And when a person is present, they are a stranger, as is the case with the book’s title poem: *someone whistling a tune / from the symphony – /a slice of apple*. As with the squirrels spiraling up the tree, there is a tendency of attributing emotions to animals, which is more a matter of projection than observation: *turtles / sliding off the log / if they knew me*. The mood of this book is somber, a little lonely. It does not strive to join the

ranks of reclusive Zen poets, but it almost could, were it not for its restlessness: *if more to say / if more were needed / blue sky*.

Upwelling: haiku, tanka, and haibun by Lorraine A. Padden (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 110 pages, 6" x 9". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-06-3. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

Upwelling is a collection of haiku, senryu, tanka and haibun, that the poet, Lorraine A. Padden, says “emerged” from her ongoing relationship with Zen Peacemakers International, whose members and affiliates “mobilize peace-building, humanitarian, social, and civic action.” This collection makes clear that peace-building is different from peace. The haiku are designed to unsettle, and they are relentless at that: *black-eyed susan / the garden / she left behind*. This is a book of quiet but strident protest over unforgiving realities: *line at the foodbank / the distance / between meals*. There are several good examples of concrete haiku. There is not a sense of any peace being made, and maybe that is supposed to be a point., but a little more peace in these poems might have been a good counterbalance to help illustrate what the poet is attempting to make. Little is spared of a critical lens in these pages; even trees become tyrants and butterflies become revolutionaries: *uprising / a thousand monarchs / take over a tree*. The book is at its best when subtly pointing out the absurdities of the world in which we live: *tuition you said lap dance*.

Not Your Kids' Nursery Rhyme Haiku by Bona M. Santos and Susan Burch (Velvet Dusk Publishing, Sacramento, CA: 2022). 46 pages, 6" x 6". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 979-8846494053. \$8.99 from online booksellers.

This is a collection of classical nursery rhymes truncated into haiku and senryu. It is an effort by Bona M. Santos and Susan Burch to capture the essence of whatever the creators of the lyric stories wished to convey while adding a modern twist to them: *his fragile ego Humpty Dumpty*. In the end, it is a bit like getting the moral without the fable told by Aesop. And “moral” is used loosely here, because in this collection, the poems tend to oscillate between silly and dirty: *toe-curling orgasm this little piggy cried wee wee wee*. Nursery rhymes have

endured the ages for their paradoxical nature: conveying innocence while containing darkness. These haiku slough the innocence and often just seem jaded or cynical: *star light star bright Big Brother satellites*. Yes, not your kids' nursery rhymes. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY PIPPA PHILLIPS

god of the body by Ash Evan Lippert (Yavanika Press, Bangalore, India: 2022). 15 pages. No ISBN. \$2.50 eBook from <https://yavanikapress.wixsite.com/home/our-titles>.

Ash Evan Lippert's freshman debut, *god of the body*, explores the unity of the mythic and prosaic, large and small, and abstract and concrete. Running through the collection is a fully-formed poetic voice that is at once muscular and vulnerable. Lippert writes poems in the gendai tradition, using neologisms, unusual phrasings, and polysemy to create multiple parsings. Their poems, though immediately resonant, resist easy analysis. The predominant theme is one of confrontation and uneasy reconciliation—with God, with nature, and with oneself. Lippert takes us on an animistic pastoral, creating links between seasonal and ritualistic elements. The natural is thus rendered godlike. Through this lens, the poet creates a picture of faith as an act of self-creation. Lippert is drawn to the ecstatic, the plaintive, and the bloody—the extremities of the human spirit: *June clouds unform— / I can't even carry / my name*.

Names are the beginning of semantics, yoked by force of social ritual to one's identity. In a world in constant flux, perhaps the notion of a name is an impossibility—but in unforming, one can find better shapes for oneself: *unkempt passion I wear the rain on my sleeve*. The protagonist of this poem has just arrived indoors, and they bear the marks of the weather outside. They are disheveled in person and disposition; there is something of a small god or fairy about them. They are on the threshold of the door and the precipice of desire: *god am dead me I put out candles in my eyes*. Is the protagonist of this poem a fiery Oedipus or a witch conducting a ritual? The poet is reborn in the ashes waiting for their outside of the bounds of this poem. The broken syntax acts as an initial break, which the poet

forges back together with wax and fire. Lippert's *god of the body* is like reading a myth crystallized into micropoetry. One comes away from the collection with an impression of a poet decomposing their heart and transmogrifying the parts into poems. Somehow, the heart still beats.

Alone, I am Not by Vandana Parashar (Velvet Dusk Publishing, Sacramento, CA: 2022). 46 pages, 8.25" x 8.25". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 979-8446779215. \$10 from online booksellers.

Parashar's debut chapbook, *I Am*, was, in the poet's words, "a salute to the spirit of womanhood." In it, Parashar confronted the social and psychological limitations placed upon women and the way they transcend those boundaries through a personal, autobiographical lens. Her second collection, *Alone, I am Not* focuses on solidarity. Parashar dedicates this collection of poetry "to all those subjected to prejudice, harassment, injustice because of sex, race, or colour, ability, and sexual orientation." *Alone, I am Not* serves as an expression of multiple underrepresented viewpoints, confronting and surpassing the limitations society would seek to put on such voices, as well as the boundary between self and other. It is a work of radical vulnerability and empathy.

Parashar explores how to survive in a society that wounds you and how to live with the scars it leaves behind. Her poems tilt between observation and autobiography, taking as their topics queer identity, internalized misogyny, colorism, toxic relationships, and motherhood. Painful ruminations are occasionally leavened by the transcendent peeking through, waiting for the author like an afterlife: *new moon / for now, I keep aside / my wings*. When the moon is new, you cannot see it. Hope is something to store and ration, something that is never quite full-blooded. Parashar also finds it hard to be seen: *dark skinned / will the stars mistake me / for night*. Parashar's poem brings to mind Richard Wright's naturalistic meditation on race: *In the falling snow / A laughing boy holds out his palms / Until they are white*. Both poems negotiate race with the sky; and both elevate the struggle between self and race as cosmic or nearly so. The protagonist of the poem implicitly disavows the negative associations of darkness that

pervade so many cultures, identifying them as a mistake. She locates the source of that mistake in the pure, dream-like ideal of bright stars. Light can illuminate—but it can also blind.

Parashar’s exploration of gender is complex, alternating from rebuke to rumination to reckoning. Some land like a heavy blow: *oversewing / the ripped lotus— / husband stitch*. Is the lotus on a piece of fabric or has it been taken from its muddy foundations? Parashar plumbs the association between flowers and female genitalia, and her choice of flower is interesting. A lotus is a thing that overcomes, that brings beauty to places empty of it, it is hardy and perennial—but violence rips even such a flower from its roots—motherhood often divides mothers from their individual identities. A “correction” is offered, but it is just more violence. Other poems are more oblique: *consent / the distance between the hem / and my knee*. This poem is an argument ad absurdum—as if there were a magic length of skirt that dispels predatory attention. An argument can always be made, no matter how low the hemline goes. Take this poem: *grafted rose / slowly becoming / who they want me to be*. There is a casual violence to grafting that Parashar calls on here to express the feeling of being forced to conform, to fit into shapes and colors dictated by others. The poet is reluctant—she is becoming slowly. Slowness is the only defense the poet has; the change is inevitable. Parashar’s work is concerned with wrestling with inevitabilities, with an absence of justice. The poet searches less for hope than for grace. Minimalism in haiku often strikes a poem through with lightness. Although Parashar’s writing is spare, it is meaty and impactful. While haiku often reaches outwards, away from the self, Parashar’s poems reach for the soul.

String Theory: The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku edited by Jim Kacian & the Red Moon Editorial Staff (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 210 pages, 5.5" x 8.5". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-947271-93-7. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

It is interesting, on the closing of this year, to come across a collection of micropoetry and scholarship from the year before that. I found myself opening the book at random, letting several poems imprint themselves before I went backwards through the linked verse section, from renga to haibun. Editor Jim Kacian’s *String Theory: The Red*

Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku is a comprehensive survey of movement in the field of Japanese micropoetry for the year in question. The anthology opens with a segment that collects haiku and senryu without distinction, taken from journals of note throughout the year. Both established poets and newer names make an appearance, and the poetry runs the gamut from traditional to experimental. Some poems are fragile as glass: *evening / comes // the / snow / falling / quietly // into / the / unfinished / house* (John Barlow). Others find their art unique juxtapositions, such as in the monoku below: *winter silence the k at the end of a hawk* (Melissa Allen). There is a metatextual element to this poem, rendering its sound structure explicit. Although “k” has a sound, it is voiceless. It is the sound of air coming to an ending as short and crisp as a click. The sound conjures up a sharp kind of winter—one with snapped icicles and crunching snow. Some poems are expressionistic. In the following monoku, a feeling of wrong weather and a puzzle missing a piece are conjured up through a seasonal reference so oblique as to be obscure, as well as artful lexical ambiguity: *shortest day where a bird was a hole* (our thomas). While the haiku and senryu section is robust, the linked forms section is comparatively less developed. I’ve seen so much good haibun in, for instance, *Drifting Sands*, *Prune Juice*, and *Failed Haiku* over the years that I’d expect it to have an individual section, rather than under the umbrella of linked verse. The haibun on display is solid—Firdaus Parvez’s “Out of Breath” and Bryan Rickert’s “Unbound” are particular standouts—but they do not exemplify a particularly broad spectrum of what is possible with the form. Jim Kacian’s “deux ex machina” and several of his onebun from his interview with John Zheng are the only exceptions. The anthology contains some excellent articles on craft of haiku. Lee Gurga’s “Normative Haiku and Beyond” is particularly notable. In it, Gurga offers a general analysis of normative haiku to explore how its boundaries might be most fruitfully pushed. He then surveys and analyzes a number of modern haiku aesthetics more suited to its evolving form. John Zheng’s interview with Jim Kacian on the subject of monoku is likewise insightful. The Red Moon Anthology serves as a useful companion for the practicing haikuist, offering a solid array of micropoetry and scholarship. In this volume, one can see progress in the field, especially in rejecting limitations and traditions that still hold much sway in the community. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY LAURIE D. MORRISSEY

tap dancing in my socks haiku by Bill Kenney (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 102 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-09-4. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

Bill Kenney's fourth haiku collection is another tour de force, following his 2021 Touchstone Distinguished Book Award-winning *keep walking*. His *tap dancing in my socks* was published shortly before his death last year at nearly 90. Eighty haiku are gathered one-per-page in six sections: "between," "snap," "somewhere," "sugar," "ink," and "here." As I read a haiku collection, I usually jot down page numbers of poems that impress me. (In books without page numbers, I add them myself.) After noting more than a dozen of this book's gems, I stopped. I enjoy the wry humor, freshness, and spot on resonance in Kenney's haiku and senryu. Almost all are human-focused, and many brought an instant smile, such as (1) *original sin / trying to come up / with one* and (2) *getting older / the people / I call young*. In his 89 years, including decades as an English teacher, Kenney experienced or observed joys and challenges, which he encapsulates in these pages. True to form, he presents these intensely human, universal moments with a light touch, even while evoking a sense of melancholy, as in (1) *prognosis / no more / someday* and (2) *rainy autumn... / the last time we did it / a second time*. Often, the last line is nothing you would expect, as in *cleared for takeoff / the flight attendant adjusts / her bra strap*. Some of these haiku are deeply observant nature haiku, such as *mountain lake / sunrise / all the way down*. However, of those that capture a scene in nature, most are still connected to human experience, as in these: (1) *crow on a branch / staring at the Pacific / our silence* and (2) *departing geese / my promise / to a child*. Kenney's writing was widely admired, frequently anthologized, and recognized with awards. Even wearing socks, he made poems that resonate. This is a collection worth having.

Glide Path haiku by Peter Newton (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 132 pages, 5" x 7". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-00-1. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

Peter Newton's haiku are, to borrow R.H. Blyth's phrase, "a hand beckoning; a door half-opened." With few exceptions, his haiku lead

me somewhere beyond, beneath, or inside the moment of inspiration: to the ship's mast within the standing pine; to the childhood in the cozy window seat; to the past seasons of the turtle's life; and to the moment just before the hawk lands on a bird in the snow. In *Glide Path*, Newton collects more than 100 haiku, which are placed one per page. His poems appear regularly in haiku journals. Newton also writes and publishes haibun and tan renga, and he is co-editor of *tinywords*, a daily online journal of haiku and micropoetry. Although not divided into sections, *Glide Path* contains several excellent winter haiku in its last pages, such as (1) *wearing them / makes me younger... / snowflakes* and (2) the 2021 Touchstone Award-winning *middle age / I build the snowman / a son*. A few more of my favorites: (1) *sun stars / the lake gives back / its light*; (2) *all day rain / the window seat / where I grew up*; (3) *mountain view / still learning / its light*; and (4) *the direction / I was going anyway / cloud drift*.

Unplugged—Haiku & Tanka by Jacob D. Salzer (Lulu.com, No Place: 2021). 80 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Glossy color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-387-93717-2. \$9.99 from online booksellers.

Jacob D. Salzer is a Pacific Northwest poet and editor whose work has appeared in leading haiku journals. For the last two years, he has published a blog dedicated to interviewing haiku poets, an enjoyable site to visit: <https://haikupoetinterviews.wordpress.com>. A prolific writer of haiku, tanka, and haibun, Salzer has also edited several anthologies. In this collection, he brings us forest mist, redwoods, and the smell of moss, as well as a variety of people, in 42 haiku and eight tanka. The title haiku is one of four in the first section, which is titled "a digital sea." Salzer is adept at capturing unplugged moments and making connections between nature and human experience. One of my favorite haiku in these pages is *plum blossom... / before the baby / has a name*, which was published in *The Heron's Nest*. I also like (1) *distant thunder... / lifetimes echo / in the oak tree* and (2) *call of geese / on the Columbia River / the ebb and flow / of stars*.

This 80-page collection contains an unusual amount of front and back matter, starting with five pages of praise from six poets. His author bio is extensive, listing 15 hobbies and including his favorite color—which will interest some readers and seem excessive to

others. Non-poetry additions take up more than 20 pages of the volume and include quotations, dedication, table of contents, acknowledgments and thanks, publication credits, a list of other websites, and a list of previous collections and anthologies.

everything with an asterisk haiku by Bruce H. Feingold (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 82 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 9781947271999. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com.

Bruce H. Feingold's work is well known to haiku readers, appearing in journals, collections, and many a list of award winners. He serves on the board of directors of the Haiku Foundation, and he chairs the Touchstone Awards Program. This is his fifth collection published by Red Moon Press, following *arrhythmia* in 2020. With an attractive cover depicting the Mendocino, California, coast (his own photo), Feingold brings us more than 80 haiku arranged in five sections and laid out in three poems per page.

The title of this book is apt for a haiku collection if you consider the meaning of "asterisk," which indicates information that is important, yet not physically presented. Several of these haiku have a more-to-the-story feel, such as *laid off / the last bag of birdseed / in the cupboard*. What does the last bag represent to the speaker—perhaps a need to prioritize or to sacrifice some small comforts of our own in order to comfort others? I imagine many possibilities and feel curious about the speaker's situation.

The poems in *everything with an asterisk* were written during the Coronavirus pandemic, says the author in his dedication. Quite a few haiku and senryu reference the pandemic, and we all know that there's more to *that* story. Many refer to aging, illness, or death—universal experiences with which the seasoned psychologist is probably more familiar than most. In Feingold's nature-based poems, we slow down to observe the eye blink of a bullfrog and to hear the creak of a pine tree. These fine poems include (1) *dewdrops / on a lemon blossom / what might be* and (2) *the quiet / of a muskrat's wake / autumn dusk*. Feingold also features children in his haiku, as in *my children / with their lovers tonight / harvest moon*.

spring dawn by Anthony Lusardi (buddha baby press, Windsor, CT: 2022). 12 pages, 3" x 4". Red card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. \$4 from the author at lusardi133@gmail.com

This tiny red booklet is published by buddha baby press, an imprint of Stanford Forrester's bottle rockets press. 10 satisfying haiku by New Jersey poet Anthony Lusardi are gathered here, beginning with a spring dawn and ending with snowflakes. Each haiku contains a familiar image presented in clear, un-fussy language and infused with the poet's own insight—often with a wry twist. The mini-chapbook—Lusardi's third by buddha baby press—is an enjoyable read.

the way a poem emerges: a haiku trinity & beyond by George Swede (Lett Press, Toronto, Canada: 2022). 83 pages, 5" x 8". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-0-9881179-3-8. \$20 from online booksellers, \$10 eBook from Kindle.

Canadian poet George Swede has published many collections in his four decades writing haiku. In this book, he divides his poems into three separate categories: "Haiku about Nature," "Haiku about Us," and "Haiku about Nature & Us." Most were previously published in journals from the '90s to the present. A reader new to haiku will find this "tripartite scheme" helpful, while others may disregard the categorization and simply enjoy the poems. Swede recognizes in his foreword that haiku and senryu are often differentiated using "subjective elements that no one can agree upon." He places each of the three variants in its own section based entirely on content, with a 2–3-sentence introduction. In the first section, this haiku stands out for me: *begonia / a bee / being*. In section two, Swede discards the "baggage-laden term senryu" in favor of the section title, "Haiku about Us," described as haiku that "focus on human interaction and the artifacts humans have created." A fine example: *singles night / the loud chatter / of loneliness*. The category that Swede sees favored by the largest number of anthologized haikuists is the one that combines the first two categories, including imagery from both the natural and human worlds. Two fine examples: (1) *suicide bridge / a row of raindrops clings*

/ to the railing and (2) in an urn / if only she knew / its pear shape. Swede also includes a fourth section, called “Beyond,” containing poems that “do not fit neatly into the trinity.” The poems in this section intend to “test the limits of brevity and meaning.” It is not clear to me how they do so; I am happy enough with the first three sections.

earth from the moon haiku and senryu by Judith E.P. Johnson (Ginninderra Press, Port Adelaide, Australia: 2022). 62 pages, 5" x 7". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-76109-360-9. \$18 from <https://www.ginninderrapress.com.au>

Judith E.P. Johnson has published eight previous collections with the South Australian Ginninderra Press, which takes its name from an Aboriginal word that, according to the publisher, is said to mean “throwing out little rays of light.” Included in these 124 haiku are little rays of light such as *cold kitchen / the warm sound / of porridge*, offering an inviting image, a satisfying rhythm, and a pleasing juxtaposition. Reading it, I enter that warm room with my own memories and associations. Many of these haiku, however, feel more informational than suggestive. An example: *sunlit window / in a dressing table mirror / bird flying*. In these cases, it is often the final line that lets me down, deflating the potential of a strong opening image. Many of Johnson’s poems fondly touch on relationships, and some contain an ironic or melancholic observation, as in *busy street / everyone / in a dream world*. Like two of Johnson’s previous collections, this slender volume has a striking blue and white cover designed by Katherine Johnson.

Haiku, Other Arts, and Literary Disciplines edited by Toru Kiuchi and Yoshinobu Hakutani (Lexington Books, Lanham, MD: 2022). 334 pages, 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 9". \$120 hardcover, \$45 eBook from <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781793647214/Haiku-Other-Arts-and-Literary-Disciplines>

The 16 chapters in this scholarly volume are written by nine poets and academics who reflect on and analyze haiku from many different perspectives. Both editors have deep expertise: Toru Kiuchi is a professor of English at Nihon University in Japan, and Yoshinobu Hakutani is a professor and distinguished scholar at Kent State University. Among the chapters’ authors are poets whose names will

be familiar to haiku writers and readers, including Ce Rosenow and Bruce Ross. The goal of the editors is “to investigate the genesis and development of haiku in Japan and determine the relationships of haiku with other arts, such as essay, painting, and music, as well as the backgrounds of haiku, such as literary movements, philosophies, and religions that underlie haiku composition.”

There is a wide breadth of haiku-related topics here, including blues, jazz, Confucianism, the Beat Generation, and more. Bashō and other classic Japanese poets feature early in these pages, yet this book is not a historical treatise, but rather a genuine search for the underpinnings of contemporary haiku. The first essay, by Hakutani, focuses on the work of American abstract expressionist artist Cy Twombly, who created a series of large-scale works featuring peonies, an ancient symbol of Japanese aesthetic contemplation. One of these paintings is featured on the cover of the book and also within the text under the chapter heading on page 9. Incorporated within the painting of the five blossoms are four haiku-like verses attributed to Bashō and Kikaku, faintly inscribed on the peony images. This small image is the only one in a dense book. In my opinion, the book would be enhanced by inclusion of more graphic images.

This book demands concentration, as does any textbook. Most readers likely will dip in and out of it according to their interests, rather than read straight through. My interest was drawn to the following chapters: Tom Lynch’s “American Haiku and American Transcendentalism,” which discusses “a convergence of the tradition of the American transcendentalists, especially Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, with the Zen-influenced Japanese tradition of haiku composition;” Ce Rosenow’s “American Haiku in the New Millennium: The First Two Decades;” and Toru Kiuchi’s “Creating African American Haiku Form: Lenard D. Moore’s Poetic Artistry.” John Zheng’s essay, “Robert Spiess’s Haiku: Translating for Better Understanding,” allows me to imagine the challenges of translating haiku and to appreciate the depth of understanding that may be attained through the process of re-creating an original haiku for quality, accuracy, and poetic expression. Over the course of a poet’s development, these chapters may hold new attractions. Each chapter

includes an extensive “Works Cited” list. This book is a valuable resource to have on the shelf; an educational companion on the journey of a serious haiku poet. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY KRISTEN LINDQUIST

spirit level haiku by Benedict Grant (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 86 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-947271-98-2. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

As a first book, *spirit level* possesses a unexpected assuredness of voice that belies the difficult and personal subject matter. Taken as a whole, this collection evokes a strong narrative arc of generational domestic disruption through spare, sharp poems that pack a punch. The book’s first poem “Nocturne,” its only haibun, provides a powerful introduction to what follows. After opening a door on a bedtime scene fraught with the presence of an alcoholic, abusive parent, it concludes with *the shadow that comes / to kiss us goodnight / whisky sour*. This shadow falls across the rest of the book, from the first stand-alone haiku: *black and blue remembered hills to reaching the bottom of the bottle a death in the family*. The speaker struggles with his own issues: (1) *Halloween / a few more demons / to keep me company*; (2) *treading water / at the open bar . . . / infinity pool*; and (3) *an avalanche / in the ice box / eleventh step*. But unlike that parent in “Nocturne,” he ultimately finds hope and strength in the presence of his children: *life support / these little arms / around my neck*. The arc is thus a redemptive one, marked with haiku that illustrate well the high and low points along the way of childhood, the births of children, adultery, death, self-examination, and sobriety: (1) *not without a fight fall leaves*; (2) *in the background / over breakfast / the end of the world*; and (3) *i love me / i love me not / spirit level*. Grant has a knack for simple, evocative detail: (1) *waiting room / a layer of dust / on the grapes* and (2) *condensation / everybody draws / a heart*. One of my favorite haiku offers up a potent metaphor for the collection as a whole: *brow of the hill / the shape that a home takes / against the stars*. A notable debut. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY AGNES EVA SAVICH

Unsaddled haibun by Lynn Edge (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 108 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Four color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-947271-96-8. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

In *Unsaddled*, Lynn Edge takes readers on a haibun, haiku, and tanka journey through her decades of living in Texas, from childhood through motherhood and the golden years in the present. They are poems of comfort, rich in sensory details of sounds, flavors, and sensations. Traveling from farm life through the Gulf shores of Aransas, charming Fredericksburg, or the Davis Mountains, readers will be introduced to southern things like kolaches, loblolly pines, cypress, and chorizo. There is an emotional range from the joys of a rare snowfall and horseback riding to the sadness of losing pets or the aftermath of a hurricane. The haibun and poems weave together seamlessly in their storytelling; building on each other's narratives, jumping laterally and forward in time, so that readers feel like they're getting a bonus chapter of a haibun journey or the next haiku in life that happened following a given moment. Edge's published work in journals and contests always delivers a quiet grace and impact, and it's lovely to see them in this collection as part of a larger cohesive whole. The two closing haiku—familiar from the Peggy Willis Lyles contest podium and the pages of *Modern Haiku*—leave readers with a feeling of the preciousness of life following loss and living onward with hope: (1) *ash buds / my first spring / without him* and (2) *sliding door / I step / into summer*. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY TAOFEEK AYEYEMI

Night Jasmine by Goran Gatalica (Nakladnik Publishers, Stajer Graf, Croatia: 2022). 194 pages, 4.5" x 8". Hardcover. ISBN: 978-953-8105-27-2. €18. To order contact the author: gatalica.nightjasmine@gmail.com.

Compartmentalized into four sections called "Passing Cloud," "Searing Heat," "Wind Chimes," and "Scent of Snow"—representing the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter respectively—Goran Gatalica's *Night Jasmine* explores

flowers in its duality of imagery—often a symbol of emotion and affection, either as romance towards a lover or as forget-me-nots on a tombstone. However, night jasmine literally nourishes for me an atmosphere of melancholy (*wabi*), and the verses in this book endorse my observation. Prominent in this collection is the struggle of pilgrims and especially refugees who are victims of war and/or a pandemic. Read (1) *pilgrimage— / cherry petals fall/ on my mother’s sandals*; (2) *returning home / a group of winter finches / on the refugee’s tent*; and (3) *letter from the war— / a heavy morning frost / in our garden*. Of craft, Goran aesthetically observes the rules of “just-as-it-is” and “here and now” in his verses, shunning his own thought and displaying haiku’s exactitude quality: (1) *sunflowers in bloom— / we sing barefoot / on the back porch* and (2) *lighthouse signal— / a glint of the sardines/ above the reef*. The heaviness (*omomi*) of the shrouded corpse in line one of *mother’s death— / I fold the first autumn rain / in my handkerchief* is juxtaposed (*toriawase*) with the wet handkerchief, which is not only soaked by rain but also by the personam tears. Displaying how hard it was to hold his emotion, we match his subtle and piercing (*hosomi*) sobs with the drizzling rain. Gatalica masterfully displays events in his poems with effortless fulfillment of basic rules and technicalities. Almost ticking all the boxes for me, this book is one of the best I’ve read in recent times. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY EDWARD CODY HUDDLESTON

Long After by Jim Kacian (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). Free at redmoonpress.com/longafter/kacian

Literature is littered with experiments, some successful, most not. Only seldom does an experiment yield something sublime yet accessible, something deep enough to make you gasp when you come up for air without making you feel like you’re drowning. Jim Kacian’s *Long After* is a multimedia haiku project. The haiku are presented in sixteen languages, with each version appearing framed by a shape, such as a raindrop or a hexagon, and backdropped by beautiful closeups of nature photographs. Tonally appropriate music plays in the background. Some of the haiku are clickable,

revealing quotations about grief. Grief is the thread that weaves *Long After* into cohesion. The work is divided into three sections. The first is a sort of prelude. The second consists of five parts, corresponding to the stages of grief. The third section is what comes after acceptance—the true moving on, the part where, if not wiser, we’re at least older. The haiku in the collection are highlights from a long and epic career in English haiku. Canonical classics, including (1) *clouds / seen through clouds / seen through* and (2) *the river / the river makes / of the moon*, are seen alongside less iconic, but equally powerful, poems, such as (1) *twilight / me slowly pouring / into the not-me* and (2) *dead reckoning / the moment the tide / reverses*. It’s a labor of love. It’s a labor of loss. It’s a labor that’s born fruit, and we can only stand naked in the garden, forever altered for having consumed it. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY TOM SACRAMONA

Another Lost Boat poems by Glenn G. Coats (Pineola Publishing, Carolina Shores, NC: 2022). 111 pages, 6" x 9". Matte covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 979-8352054864. \$10 from online booksellers.

Glenn G. Coats’s other books from his self-publishing imprint Pineola Publishing include *Snow on the Lake: Haibun & Haiku* (2013), *Waiting for the Sky: Tales of the Durham Frog* (2014), *An Innocent Mission: More Reflections of a Reading Teacher* (2016), and *Where the Tide Meets the Stream* (2020), the last of which is about his father and conceived as a follow up to his Turtle Light Press Haiku Chapbook Competition-winning collection about his mother *Furrows of Snow* (2019). I have long followed Coats’s work and have taken a sustained interest in observing how skilled he is at a varying a subject matter which he so intensely explores—hardly repeating himself when nearly every poem included concerns people’s relationship with their worlds of water. I had so many favorite poems from *Another Lost Boat*, which includes four chapters of haiku. “Tarnished by Sea”: (1) *twilit dock / the shrimp boat’s name / tarnished by sea* and (2) *ocean spray / the pulse of a school / beneath the hull*. “The Creak of a Reel”: (1) *fingers of clouds / another lost boat / nudges the shore* and (2) *fishing turns / from sight to sound*

/ owl light. "Boat Shadows": (1) sea breeze / in and out of cord grass / a marsh wren's song and (2) no voices to rock them winter boats). The last chapter, "Footprints Still," contains free verse, haibun, and journal entries. These poems are centered around Coats's memories of small discoveries learning to fish in New Jersey.

Core & All by Barbara Sabol (Bird Dog Publishing, Huron, OH: 2022). 110 pages, 5.5" x 8.5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1947504363. \$16 from online booksellers.

Barbara Sabol's *core & all* is her fifth book, but her first of haiku, and it is divided into five sections. "biscuits & jam": (1) *biscuits & jam / her sticky hand / in mine* and (2) *blood moon / the rabbit's ear / pinker*. "aces in the spokes": *appalachia / the abandoned quarry / our riveria*. "smoke screen": *doll house / where my real family / still lives*. "silk reeling": (1) *night-blooming cereus . . . / I whisper my secrets / while you sleep* and (2) *simple life / the vase content / without flowers*. "immense heaven": (1) *cemetery walk / I lift my face / to the rain* and (2) *dad's map / of the European theater / tissue-thin*. The acknowledgements section notes that Sabol is a speech therapist who "was raised in Pennsylvania coal and steel country, a place that has strongly inspired her writing."

Shaping Water: Erotic Haiku and Tanka edited by Lithica Ann (Moth Orchid Press, Ohio, USA: 2022). 102 pages, 6" x 9". ISBN: 9781387665396. \$13.50 from *Lulu.com*.

This collection was put together by Lithica Ann, editor and publisher of *#FemkuMag*, *ubu.*, Moth Orchid Press, and *Otoroshi Journal*. It is available from most online booksellers and marked "Explicit Content 18+." In the introduction, Ann says the idea for this collection stems from receiving overwhelming praise for their own erotic collection *Recycled Virgin*, aptly concluding with: "Sexuality is a spectrum. We all have different experiences and preferences, and the poems in this anthology encompass far more diversity than I could ever fantasize." The opening poem in the anthology by Genie Nakano—*tenderly / he takes me in his arms / spring waterfall*—is a great decision, tying into the title and setting

off the haiku anthology with a spring reference. The waterfall theme surfaces in other haiku like LeRoy Gorman's *river / over the falls / she lets down her hair*, and the title itself comes from Jeff Hoagland's poem *waterfall / her body / shaping water*. I think all of these are fine examples of balancing pleasure with art: (1) *love motel / two empty cars / share the moonlight* (Rp Verlaine); (2) *cuffing season / his warm hands / on the small of my back* (Mary Stevens); (3) *trainwreck / the stud in your tongue / catching mine* (Tracy Davidson); (4) *skinny dipping / the pull of the moon / in your voice* (Elliot Nicely); (5) *fly on the wall / she prefers to make love / under the covers* (Jeff Hoagland); and (6) *the tickle of bristles / I cover-up / my hickey* (Yvette Nicole Kolodji). Things even get funnily spacey with the inclusion of these two by Joshua Gage: (1) *ebb tide / she slips her tentacle / into my hand* and (2) *Mars at opposition / she writes to ask / if I miss her*. There is something for everyone in this seductive anthology.

Rip-Roaring haiku edited by Corine Timmer (*Bicadeideaias*, Faro, Portugal: 2022). 46 pages, 5.25" x 8". Glossy cover, perfect softbound. Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-989-99760-6-1. €13 from <https://bicadeideias.com>

In the introduction to *Rip-Roaring*, editor Corine Timmer categorically explains, “those born during a tiger year are said to possess some of the qualities of the animal itself, including courage, leadership, and determination. Even though tiger people may appear calm, there is often a hidden aggressiveness. Anyone who lives with or studies cats will know this. Yet they are able to control their shadow side. These unique characteristics enable them to bring about change.” So many lovely poems that I could catalog them all. If you know Corine Timmer from her four other collections revolving around the Chinese Zodiac, you already know you are in for a treat! (1) *snow melting— / the cat's prints / bigger and bigger* (Ion Codrescu); (2) *new day / the tiger's darkest streak / brightens* (R.C. Thomas); (3) *through the ficus / the tiger in / my cat's eyes* (Bryan Rickert); (4) *tiger's roar / the safety glass / suddenly thinner* (Edward Cody Huddleston); (5) *zooming in / the cage disappears . . . / tigers* (Jim Kacian); (6) *late summer / year after year / tiger lily* (Corine Timmer); and (7) *thinking it would / make a difference / year of the tiger* (Seren Fargo).

Summer Music Festival at Natural Chimneys Park by Dave Russo (No Place: 2022). 7 pages, 3" x 3". Limited Edition Letterpress printing. No ISBN. The book is available from davewrussopoet.com for \$10 including shipping to anywhere in the U.S. Use the "Contact" form on the author's website to inquire about other payment methods or orders shipped outside the U.S.

This small, handmade book includes Dave Russo's poem that was published in *MacQueen's Quinterly*, Issue 10, October 2021, along with sketches that suggest the sound, motion, and feeling of the Red Wing Roots Music Festival in Mount Solon, Virginia. The illustrations, book design, and production are by Nicolette Ross. *Summer Music Festival at Natural Chimneys Park* is a memorable limited edition of 200 copies: (1) *outcrop of sky / ocean scent from limestone / after rain* and (2) *a jug band / rattles teeth in a jawbone*.

Genesis haibun by Jonathan McKeown (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 224 pages, 6" x 9". Four color covers, perfect softbound. Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-947271-91-3. \$20 from www.redmoonpress.com

This is a herculean haibun book clocking in at over 200 pages and, as the title suggests, is heavy with biblical imagery or allusion, in addition to vis-à-vis Greek and Roman mythology, too. There are 90 haibun, and 58 of them begin with an epigraph from the bible's book of Genesis, the others beginning with quotes by Seamus Heaney, Aldo Leopold, Rilke, Thomas Merton, Kierkegaard, Sappho, and William Blake. Many haibun have more than one haiku, adding and mixing to the narrative. Here is a sampling of haibun titles with a haiku from it: "Minotaur" (*white sails / the rubble-footed prow / the land shows the sea*); "Thing-in-itself" (*fungus society / the year's last / outing*); "Darwin" (*a plover's cry / following the course / of the night river*); "Confinium" (*still nothing / in the fisherman's bucket / the face of a man*); and "The Street View Gallery" (*little briar rose / waking again from the dream / within a dream*).

Coming Home In Viet Nam poems by Edward Tick (T'ia Chucha Press, San Fernando, CA: 2021). 180 pages, 6" x 9". Matte cover, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1882688609. \$19.95 from online booksellers.

This book is from Tía Churcha Press, an imprint affiliated with Tía Churcha's Centro Cultural & Bookstore (Sylmar, California). *Coming Home In Viet Nam* is distributed by Northwestern University Press and mostly contains regular lyric poetry. The author, Edward Tick, is a poet and psychotherapist "recognized for his forty years of pioneering work healing the invisible wounds of war and violent trauma." Tick is also co-founder of Soldier's Heart, Inc. and subject matter expert on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Moral Injury for the U.S. military." He has authored *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* and *Warrior's Return: Restoring the Soul After War*, along with two previous books of poetry. Overall, *Coming Home In Viet Nam* contains very few haiku or senryu. Here is one titled "At Cu Chi": *In the dank tunnel / our nurse leans her crutches / on their operating table.*

It's About Time edited by Elaine Whitman and Neal Whitman (The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, San Jose, CA: 2022). 93 pages, 6" x 9". Matte cover, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1735-723532. To order send a check or money order payable to "YTHS" for \$15 plus shipping (\$4.95 in the U.S., \$11.95 in Canada and Mexico, and \$13.95 for all other countries. Mail to Jeannie Rueter, Publications, P.O. Box 412, Monterey, CA 93942.

Elaine and Neal Whitman make the following introduction for the annual Yuki Teikei Haiku Society (YTHS) members' anthology: "Your two co-editors found that working on the 2021 Members' Anthology was a spirit-lifting experience and antidote as we, like you, had been navigating through the difficult terrain of the pandemic. So we were delighted to be asked to co-edit the 2022 edition. Our collaboration is a labor of love." So it is: YTHS President Carolyn Fitz provided the cover art of a large pocket watch, and Linda Papanicolaou provided the design and typography. The poems Elaine and Neal curated are sequenced alphabetically. Some favorites: (1) *spring morning walk / inside two long strides / six little steps* (Mimi Ahern); (2) *creekbed crack / out one leg at a time / tarantula* (Chuck Brickley); and (3) *the snow drift / blankets the log cabin / steaming cocoa* (Bruce H. Feingold).

The YTHS, for the third year, had its spring haiku reading at home on Zoom. Four poets were invited to read: Bona M. Santos, Helen

Ogden, Marilyn Gehant, and Mark Hollingsworth. The signature YTHS event is usually held in the Japanese Friendship Garden Teahouse in San Jose. There are other materials like this, including reports by Alison Woolpert and Christine Stern about the YTHS Zoom Retreat's featured speaker, Robert Hass. *It's About Time* includes the results of the 2021 Tokutomi Memorial Haiku Contest, coordinated by Kath Abela Wilson: *dad's flattened penny / key chained to a rabbit's foot / Perseids shower* (Marilyn Ashbaugh).

Other favorite poems in *It's About Time*: (1) *Mount Diablo / stretches ... stretches ... / above the clouds* (Johnnie Johnson Hafernik); (2) *spring night / the comings and goings / of rain* (John J. Han); (3) *first snow / as much the silence / as anything* (Michael Henry Lee); (4) *warmest afternoon— / the arborist shifts / on concrete bench* (Lenard D. Moore); (5) *snowball fight / a hat on a stick / surrenders* (Richard L. Matta); (6) *wood violets— / I pretend this path / goes somewhere else* (Linda Papanicolaou); (7) *meadowsweet / the deer leave me / one bloom* (Debbie Strange); (8) *two rose petals / linger on the boardwalk / second honeymoon* (Elaine Whitman); (9) *a word / you should know— / susurrus* (Neal Whitman); and (10) *winter galaxy— / the man with a computer voice / predicts its end* (Patricia J. Machmiller). ◻■