

Northwest's 15th annual Seabeck Haiku Getaway in Seabeck, Washington in late October 2022. One nice touch, fitting for that year's theme of "crossing borders": the top-placing kukai winners have been translated into Spanish by the event's featured speaker, Cristina Rascón. The results of the kukai make up the first section of the anthology, followed by "the light within," "fog lifting," "turning the corner," and the aforementioned section of dedication poems, "endless circle." As with previous Seabeck anthologies, the nature of the place itself—its fog, fall foliage, woods, and waters—is captured well by the attendees' haiku, in addition to the act of writing itself: *final day / of the haiku getaway / rain-soaked leaves* (Margaret Chula); *woody path – / a young buck bounds / into my haiku* (Carole MacRury); *autumn leaves the hues of haiku* (Victor Ortiz).

Some personal favorites, one from each section: *rolling mist / a dash of cinnamon / in my hot chocolate* (Antoinette Cheung, tied for third place in the kukai); *chosen family – / the oak tree / woven with crows* (Aidan Castle); *glassy lagoon – / a dogfish glides / among the cedars* (Tanya McDonald); *melting borders / the way everything reaches / for the sun* (John S. Green); and *at the ofrenda / I leave a Milky Way / for a departed poet* (rich schnell, for vince tripi). A lovely little book that makes me wish I had been there. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

One Day: Thirty Years of Little Poems by Tom Clausen (Stark Mountain Press, Ithaca, NY: 2023). 82 pages. 5" x 8". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-8-8537798-5-3. \$6 from amazon.com.

Drawing on haiku written over the last 30 years, Tom Clausen has gathered some of his best work arranged within the familiar passing of one day. As he explains in the introduction, the collection "begins in pre-dawn dark and moves through daybreak and morning and continues on through the afternoon and into the evening and night." The day opens with a senryū: *waking me / to let*

me know / she can't sleep. And from there on throughout this day, we are invited to be the narrator's companion. We meet some of his little friends along the way: *daybreak / the spider centered / in its web* and *just oatmeal / the waitress / says 'enjoy'*. We join the narrator on a walk past a school: *well-worn / the lowest branch / at school* and end up at one of the author's favorite places, the library, where he discovers: *so many books / I can't find / one.* Towards the end of the day, everyone is headed home from work: *late afternoon / pigeons bank back / to the building.* The last few pages are about trying to settle down for the evening: *full moon / we move the furniture / all around.* In the afterword, Clausen writes that "there is a day for everything and our gift of being is to recognize the gift that no matter where we are there is beauty and compelling nuances in nature to observe and celebrate." In this book, we can join him in his celebration of everyday life. □■

A House meant only for Summer by Cherie Hunter Day (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 80 pages. 6" x 9". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-34-6. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Cherie Hunter Day has gathered 57 of her best haibun and tanka prose previously published in a wide range of journals. She has organized these into three sections: (1) bits of eraser, (2) at flight's end, and (3) the parentheses of night. These section titles are derived from a piece in that section. The first section takes us back in time to childhood memories and perspectives. The title comes from a haibun "Today's Math" in which the narrator recalls a child bullied on the playground, which is contrasted with the wait for lunchtime back in class after recess. The concluding haiku is *pop quiz / bits of eraser swept / onto the floor.* The second section "at flight's end" includes several works that explore journeys and home. The title comes from the haiku in her haibun "Soft Landings" in which the narrator starts with an observation of the soft landings of jays on the wooden deck. The prose then morphs into a meditation on how we receive and process news about "the latest lab results and paperwork for two new clinical trails" related to cancer. The word artist seeks words for these things that lack

clarity. The haibun ends with this haiku: *thistledown / a fugitive / at flight's end*. Here is the title haibun for the last section in its entirety:

Our Bodies Stave Off Darkness

Fireworks in the harbor seem like a destination but your inner voice doesn't make it beyond the broken windowpane.

raindrops sheening the parentheses of night

Day's last section features explorations of dreams and art as a means of seeking that which is beyond immediate, logical reach. This is an outstanding collection of haibun and tanka prose. The prose is thoughtful and carefully paced to move from observation to emotion and back. The haiku and tanka are crisp and add to the prose. These are exemplary haiku and tanka prose, well organized for several days of reading. ◻■

Barking at the Coming Rain by Réka Nyitrai and Alan Peat (Alba Publishing: Uxbridge, UK: 2023). 74 pages. 5.75" x 8.25". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1-912773-57-2. \$15 from amazon.com or from alanpeat@icloud.com.

This is a collection of ekphrastic haibun written in collaboration by the authors. Réka Nyitrai started each collaboration by writing an imaginative prose poem in response to well-known surrealist art by various female artists. Alan Peat then added a concluding haiku and title in response to Réka's prose poem. Both edited the resulting haibun. While the corresponding initial surrealist artwork and artist is identified in the appendix, the haibun do not require looking at the original artwork in order to be read, imagined, and appreciated as literary works of art. One of my favorites was "The falsity of eyelashes" in which "This girl is gagged. Someone put a flutter of butterflies in her mouth. This girl is caged. Someone told her that freedom is a commodity, like sweet bread or bacon . . ." The haibun ends with this haiku: *godless /*

a sparrow baptizes / itself. Because the authors take their initial inspiration from surrealist artwork, it is not surprising that the haibun take fantastic leaps and bounds of imagination and perspective. Like fan-fiction, these haibun often “give voice” to visions or characters portrayed by the previous artist. Clearly, these are imaginative works that can move us beyond notions of the author’s own experiences or perspectives. They are works of dream, fantasy, fairytale, myth, and the collective subconscious. I recommend reading these on their own, without limiting your reading to the original surrealistic artwork from which they were spawned. Congratulations to the authors on a well-crafted adventure into our imaginations! □■

Ancient History: Haibun and Tanka Prose by Adelaide B. Shaw
(*Cyberwit: Allahabad, India: 2023*). 82 pages. 5.5” x 8.5”. Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-81-19228-46-1. \$15 from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or *Cyberwit*.

This collection is an autobiographical memoir about growing up in New Haven, Connecticut in the 1940s. Shaw’s haibun and tanka prose share memories of family “and a small neighborhood of Italian, Irish, Polish, and Portuguese families.” Written in present tense, we travel back in time with her to her first day of kindergarten and Uncle Jimmie being drafted and sent overseas to war. In one of the last haibun we go to a sock hop which ends with this haiku: *scrunching leaves / the rhythm I keep / on the walk home*. Adelaide B. Shaw has been writing haiku for over fifty years and brings that experience to sharing well-written memories in this collection. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

What Weathers What Returns: An Anthology of the Broadmoor Haiku Collective edited by Kristen Lindquist (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 120 pages. 5" x 7". Paperback, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-24-7. \$20 from redmoonpress.com

This is an anthology of 90 haiku by well-known and accomplished poets in the English-language haiku community: Brad Bennett, Alan S. Bridges, Judson Evans, Kristen Lindquist, Hannah Mahoney, Jeannie Martin, paul m., Tom Sacramona, and Mary Stevens. Almost all the haiku were first published in well-respected journals, such as *Presence*, *Kingfisher*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Acorn*, *Hedgerow*, and *The Heron's Nest*, among many others. Here are my favorite haiku by each poet: (1) *solstice bash / in bed with the bonfire / still in my hair* (Lindquist), (2) *roots and twigs / on the forest floor / a longing to belong* (Bennett), (3) *everywhere / but we miss it / the language of trees* (Martin), (4) *motel tryst / under neon the grind / of the ice machine* (Evans), (5) *what weathers / what returns / Monhegan* (Stevens), (6) *tangled woods . . . / the sparrow's song / four drafts ago* (paul m.), (7) *October sky / the ratio of copper to tin / in the old church bell* (Bridges), (8) *dawn snowfall / wanting to tell her / everything* (Mahoney), and (9) *you can't go in / fingerprints on / our snow globe* (Sacramona). This anthology is modest in size and its dedication speaks to the authors' connection with Nature: "We dedicate this anthology to the Massachusetts Audubon Society, whose stewardship of special places like Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary in Natick preserves for all time wildlands for everyone to experience, explore, and enjoy." I appreciated getting acquainted with each poet's voice and style in this book. I felt like a fellow traveler in this group with each turn of the page. In turn, Kristen Lindquist did a great job editing this book with a clear and professional layout. I recommend it. □■

REVIEWED BY LISA GERLITS

Haibun: A Writer's Guide by Roberta Beary, Lew Watts, and Rich Youmans (*Ad Hoc Fiction*, United Kingdom: 2023). 120 pages. 6" x 9". Paperback. ISBN: 978-1915247407. \$16.99 from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or \$13.99 GBP from [adhocfiction.com](https://www.adhocfiction.com).

If you've been waiting for a comprehensive guide on how to write haibun, this book is for you. It has everything you need to know to get started or deepen your haibun journey. The three authors' combined insights yield seven seamless chapters with a cohesive voice—sparse, informative, and graceful. Those new to the form may want to focus on the first four chapters, which discuss what makes a good haibun and how to read and write haibun, along with a brief history of the form in English. I especially appreciated the diagrams in chapter 3, which help us visualize the sparks we are hoping for as both readers and writers.

Those with haibun experience will be drawn to chapter 5: Variations in Haibun, which gives examples of the wide range of possibilities, including haibun with multiple voices, braided haibun, concrete haibun, and more. To gain a deeper understanding of the haibun form, there is also a section in chapter 4 that details how the number and placement of haiku can serve different purposes: to introduce, to clarify or conclude, to amplify or deepen, to leap, and open new narratives. This gives us a framework for evaluating our own work and the sparks we're trying to achieve.

A key principle emphasized in this book is: "The writer's job is to surface just enough of the story, with details that propel the narrative and hint at the iceberg below without giving everything away." In addition, the authors recommend writing the three main parts of haibun (the title, the prose, and the haiku) without overtly repeating information. This allows for new associations that can add depth and dimension to our work.

In the last two chapters, the authors share favorite haibun (their own and from others) and examine what is compelling about each, leading easily to the last chapter, which explores why we write haibun. When the authors speak individually, they do so with refreshing candor, sharing opinions, methods, and deeply personal motivations. This creates intimacy and strengthens the message that the haibun form is ripe for innovation, and each writer must develop their own vision and approach.

The guide ends with an extensive resources section so that readers can continue their haibun journey beyond the pages of the book. This section includes links to key essays, journals open to haibun, anthologies, book publishers, and contests. There is also a delightful “Prompts and Exercises” appendix that will keep this reader busy for months.

Throughout the book, our trusted author-guides resist pinning down the form to a single definition or formula. Like good teachers, they show us what has been done and what is possible. Then they stand back to let us take our own leaps, creating new sparks as we go. ◻■

REVIEWED BY CE ROSENOW

Luminaries: Celebrating the Dōjin of Yuki Teikei Haiku Society edited by Christine Lamb Stern (Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, San Jose, CA: 2023). 72 pages. 8.5” x 8.5”. Glossy cover, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-7357235-5-6. \$20 plus shipping (\$4.95 U.S., \$11.95 Canada/Mexico, \$13.95 elsewhere). Send check or money order payable to YTHS to: Jeannie Rueter Publications, P.O. Box 412, Monterey, CA 93942.

Luminaries: Celebrating the Dōjin of Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, continues the society’s work to preserve and honor its history, a history that is integral to the development of contemporary English-language haiku in the United States. The book celebrates the society’s *dōjin*, people the editor Christine Lamb Stern describes as “teachers and resources for a group.” Stern’s introduction frames the project,

explaining the importance of a dōjin's role. She emphasizes that these leaders are active, generous members of the community. They write and publish frequently, have usually received awards for their poems, provide volunteer service to Yuki Teikei Haiku Society (YTHS), and mentor new poets.

The book then moves to an overview of the organization's founders, Kiyoshi and Kiyoko Tokutomi. In addition to presenting their backgrounds, it offers a short bibliography for readers who would like more information and a selection of their haiku translated by Fay Aoyagi and Patricia J. Machmiller.

After describing the YTHS dōjin selection process, Stern organizes the book into three sections: early dōjin, double dōjin (those who are also dōjin in Japanese haiku societies), and new dōjin. Each person's entry includes one of their quotations, a photograph and bio, and fifteen of their haiku. These entries are a wonderful way to get a sense of the person, their background and contributions, and their outstanding poetry, making it very clear why each one was chosen for such an important role. Jeannie Rueter's design and production further emphasizes that these special YTHS members are "stars," "guiding lights," and "luminaries" for the rest of the membership. In addition to the title and an opening poem about the milky way, the book includes dramatic, full color images by astrophotographer Nico Carver that visually reinforce this concept. *Luminaries* is a beautiful celebration well worth reading for the literary history and the excellent haiku. ◻■

REVIEWED BY JEROME BERGLUND

Electric Cat City: a Poesy by Anna Cates (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 98 pages. 4.25" x 6.5". Perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-19-3. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Upon entering *Electric Cat City*, one gets an immediate sense of its oddity, promptly encountering archetypal Greek gods, divination,

and Shakespearean intertextuality, refreshingly dissimilar to (and defying expectations of) what a micropoem or its accompanying prose can (and I believe should, in theory) contain. About one-third of the book contains solitary works, short sequences, and strings. The larger remaining part consists of prosimetric composite arrangements. A compelling counterargument readers may deduce in the equal success and cohesiveness of such fantastic flights are the more conservative stanzas, paired in the same space, side by side:

sometimes a wish / becomes a butterfly / becomes a dragon

Tight, punchy chronicles and *yūgen*-drenched verse deftly interweave *kidai* with mythic rogues' galleries and bestiaries, interspersed with pressing modern history in unexpected fusions, and include innovative experiments with rhyme. The way *haibun* and *tanka* stories function (thematic linking/shifting from the text) is particularly interesting and laudable. More delicate spectators can expect to find portions rather haunting.

This *Poesy* may be interpreted as a beacon of possibility, and a consequential case study of a *haikai* that is not necessarily better, but certainly no worse and too often neglected or misunderstood, which I hope shall be taken seriously and be widely studied by the international community. This book will be especially appreciated by enthusiasts of the magical realism in Studio Ghibli or Neil Gaiman graphic novels and is also highly recommended to fans of Salvador Dali and M.C. Escher. The piece discussing how cod liver oil was discovered through grotesque serendipity was my personal favorite mixture. I also relish the following infernal monostich, which could as plausibly invoke Alighieri, Pound, or Puccini:

a robin sings from a dead elm canto five ◻■

A Million Shadows at Noon by Lenard D. Moore (Cuttlefish Books, Lakewood, OH: 2023). 68 pages. 4" x 6". Perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-7350257-6-6. \$14 from <https://cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com/home/poetry-series>

Lenard D. Moore's latest collection *A Million Shadows at Noon* carries the torch and continues worthy missions of Richard Wright and beat counterculture, harnessing the brevity and ability to evoke strong feelings, shift paradigms, and move hearts and minds that *haikai* is especially suited for:

two-lane street— / one by one the men keep coming / into fall light

The impressive physic for treating society's ills could not find more capable hands at realizing its ameliorative potential than this former HSA president. Through a sleek arrangement of around fifty poems in the handsome classical three-line short/long/short format (forming a treatise of sorts), the poet sets his sights on examining (with dexterous range and incredible clarity) the 1995 Million Man March. We encounter charged intersections of caste and country that this author previously investigated thought-provokingly in his book focused on the events of *Desert Storm*. Correlated concerns and subtexts explored here also inform and reveal the complexities embedded across life, motivating each individual actor and spicing these precise vignettes' symbolic language when tableaus are thoughtfully unpacked:

slow sunrise— / where the fallen leaves end / the man's wheelchair gleams

The elegantly encoded cover design is reminiscent of screen printed t-shirts or high contrast protest posters, but also harkens very interestingly to the traditional minimalist ink paintings, which often accompanied classical Japanese poetry. Notions of positive and negative, and black and white space in a *sumi-e* composition across rice paper makes for captivating parallels, stimulating much food for contemplation in regard to marginalization and the outliers: opposite dots in each yin-yang teardrop. Moore envisions the cumulative picture which comes together from this

monumental mosaic – and the source material from which it derives – to “*resonate like a blues song heard for the first time.*” He hopes, as Issa did, that the results will serve as a meaningful, didactic illumination for readers. The preface and afterword included are highly enlightening and useful for understanding and contextualizing the content and value of this volume. As a wonderful introduction to Moore’s work and depth, these insights will be equally treasured by new readers and longtime fans. The *haijin*’s mobilizing of many eclectic narrators, perspectives, and peculiar viewpoints to confront a similar subject through specific, richly varying lenses also brings to mind the oeuvre and techniques of Akiko Yosano. As a retrospective, alongside the documented setting’s stirring mood of optimism in the immediate chronological window depicted, there is often a conflicting sense of uneasiness and ambiguity apparent, insinuating loose ends, lack of closure, and the incomplete...

darkening sky / a row of folding chairs / left in the plaza

Recent domestic protest suggests these feelings are anything but confined to the past and remain of the most imperative urgency. Polling indicates that by 2020, as many as 26 million Americans had actively participated in demonstrations associated with the burgeoning contemporary initiatives promoting social justice and civil rights, which have been described as the biggest, most pivotal continuing movement in American history. These fundamental ambitions for equity, inclusivity, and restitution are by no means matters settled; they still loom ever vital in our national discourse weighing heavily on the collective conscience, galvanizing dreams and spurring the noblest actions of our and each succeeding generation:

sun plaza: / one million shadows darken / foot by foot

May activists and conscientious humanitarians of the future discover this significant opus, learn from its contents, and apply Moore’s commendable strategies toward their own righteous literary and altruistic pursuits! □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY AIDAN CASTLE

Overpacked for the afterlife: haiku by David M. Boyer (Mo & Min Publishing: 2023). 117 pages. 6" x 9". Paperback. ISBN: 978-1732508774. \$6.99 from amazon.com.

This is a strong collection of 171 poems. The poet's range is truly impressive, in that understated poems like "under an inch of snow / the outline of a ladder" coexist with the beautifully experimental "charcoal sky in a jar the factory's baby teeth." Surrealistic poems shine, among them "when I close my eyes swallow a wide sea." If we insert a line break after "close," the poem becomes surreal in that the eyes are "swallow[ing]" a sea. A break after "eyes" yields a more traditional construction at first, but "swallow a wide sea" feels avant-garde. We get a sense of swallowing that sea, but also of a swallow against a backdrop of sea. The latter reading creates a novel three fragments: "when I close my eyes / swallow / a wide sea."

Another poem of note is the gorgeously abstract "never healed from white spiders posing riddles." Boyer is an expert at one-liners, creating a range of meanings with potential line breaks after every word in this poem:

never / healed from white spiders posing riddles
never healed / from white spiders posing riddles
never healed from / white spiders posing riddles
never healed from white / spiders posing riddles
never healed from white spiders / posing riddles
never healed from white spiders posing / riddles

It is poems like this that cause the less refined ones to stand out, but never to the detriment of the whole. In a future collection, increased selectivity might yield an even more potent volume. If this reviewer had to choose one favorite, it would be "blueberries because he dies on every page," a poem that combines tradition and innovation brilliantly. This collection invites savoring. It is guaranteed to provoke deep thought and inspire novel connections. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

Two Haiku Poets by Annie Bachini and Helen Buckingham (Iron Press, United Kingdom: 2023). 60 pages. 4.125" x 5.8125". Paperback. ISBN: 9781-838344-4-1-2. £7 from ironpress.co.uk/index.html.

This book features two well-known haiku poets from the UK (Annie Bachini and Helen Buckingham) with 74 haiku by Bachini and 74 haiku by Buckingham totaling 148 poems. Most of the haiku were previously published. Three favorites by Bachini: (1) *grey city river / carrying its history / here and there*, (2) *mountain snow / together perhaps / for the last time*, and (3) *brush strokes the rhythm of rippling corn*. Three favorites by Buckingham: (1) *at the foot / of the fire escape / bluebells tremble*, (2) *sparkling spring water / ... a washed-up label*, and (3) *snowbound / the ghost train / ploughs on*. It was enjoyable to see (and hear) the different voices and styles of these two poets side by side. There are also some monoku sprinkled alongside visual and more experimental haiku. An interesting book. □■

the gossamer: poems by Aidan Castle (Independently published: 2023). 96 pages. 5" x 8". Paperback. ISBN: 979-8-3933-6161-7. \$8.99 from amazon.com (searching "the gossamer aidan castle" in Books).

A gossamer is defined as "a fine film of cobwebs that is often seen floating in the air or on bushes or grass." (thefreedictionary.com) However, a gossamer is also defined as "something that is light, delicate, or sheer, such as fabric." (thefreedictionary.com) This book, indeed, is a web of moments linked in mysterious ways. Some poems are surreal, while others focus more on Nature or mental health. Here are five haiku that stood out to me: (1) *mark as unread / owl tracks / in snow*, (2) *home loan / the ease of our laughter / on these stolen lands*, (3) *dawn light / the hospice nurse / closing his eyes*, (4) *femur deep in the forest dysphoria*, and (5) *predawn hush / the detective stirs in / three sugars*. The majority of the poems are previously published in well-respected journals such as *Presence*, *bottle rockets*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Kingfisher*, and *Acorn*, among many

others. I appreciate Castle's raw and creative approach to writing haiku. Some haiku in this book are deep and introspective, while others are haunting and experimental. Readers will be surprised with fresh content at each turn of the page. □■

the bird in my hand edited by Carolyn Hall (Two Autumns Press, California: 2023). No ISBN. 5.25" x 7". Saddle-stapled. \$10. To purchase, email Jim Chessing at jchessing@hotmail.com with the subject line "HPNC Books."

This is a chapbook of quality haiku featuring four haiku poets in the Haiku Poets of Northern California (HPNC) group: Stephanie Baker, John Barlow, Terri L. French, and Dan Schwerin. The impressive list of publication credits features reputable journals such as *The Heron's Nest*, *Mayfly*, and *Acorn*, among many others. Here are haiku that stood out to me by each poet: (1) *oyster hearts / still beating in the half-shell / winter sea* (Baker), (2) *their ancestors our ancestors deep tree shade* (Baker), (3) *the piano hammers / barely moving . . . / night snow* (Barlow), (4) *new snow . . . / the shape of a grandchild / beneath the quilt* (French), (5) *dreamsicles / the childhood I choose / to remember* (French), (6) *lilac scent / the eulogy / he wanted* (Schwerin), and (7) *water striders / the memories I wanted / for my child* (Schwerin). Carolyn Hall did an excellent job editing this chapbook. I recommend it. □■

After Curfew by Julie Bloss Kelsey (Cuttlefish Books, 2023). 52 pages. 4" x 6". ISBN: 978-1-7350257-5-9. \$5 from <https://cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com/home/poetry-series>

This collection of 35 haiku/ senryū transports readers into teenage years and the emotions and challenges that come along with it. Ranging from innocent moments, such as: *roller rink birthday— / my friends pay a boy / to skate with me*, to challenging scenes such as: *crammed into / some teen's car / a bottle of whiskey*, to young romance: *just hold me, he says / riding without / a helmet*, reading Kelsey's poems is like stepping back into a time machine. The last poem

also shows how appearances can be deceiving: *goody two-shoes / no one suspects / a thing*. With courage, Kelsey explores the chasm between society and her internal landscape (and between rules and taking risks) during this critical time of young adolescence. Readers will be transported into teenage nostalgia. ◻■

Light Speed by Tom Sacramona (bottle rockets press, Windsor, CT: 2023) 12 pages. 3" x 4". Saddle-stapled. No ISBN. \$5 from www.bottlerocketspress.com (Price includes postage within the USA). Free astronaut included with each purchase.

This micro-chapbook of ten haiku (scifaiku) will have readers re-thinking what it means to be human in a seemingly alien-like world. Have some of us succumbed to feeling alienated? Perhaps we feel more human and connected when we imagine other worlds. Each page has a transparent star on a bottom corner, but the last star on the last page is filled with ink. Sacramona's first haiku stood out to me: *an alien world / black-and-white photographs / in the evening post*. The cover drawing is of a pristine rocket on the moon. Are we the aliens? After reading, I'm still in the rocket in this chapbook, dreaming of other worlds. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

Postcards from Texas by Allyson Whipple (Cuttlefish Books, Lakewood, OH: 2023). 70 pages, 4.25"x6.5". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1-7350257-7-3. \$5 from cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com.

Allyson Whipple is well-known for her blog, *The Culinary Saijiki*, where she is a very direct, out-spoken cook who celebrates poetry, especially the haikai arts. *Postcards from Texas* is her first collection of poetry “devoted exclusively” to haiku which “represents the shift in my creative focus since 2020.” While most of the haiku were written during 2021-2022, they draw on her experiences from living in Texas for several years. She moved to St. Louis in 2022, so these are her “postcards” that

address the joys of hiking and camping but also “the changing political and physical landscape of a place I lived in, and deeply loved, for 15 years.” She describes this chapbook as a means of addressing “the grief for a place I still adore with all my heart, a place I thought I’d live until I died” and for the grief of losing her grandfather as well. As she explains on her blog, “Putting this book together was a way to continue writing postcards that could no longer go to their intended recipients.” Here are a few of her haiku postcards: *cigarette drag / last gasp of wildflowers / in November wind*; *first bluebonnets / gunshot trauma kit / in my schoolbag*; *rainy season / comes and goes— / unfulfilled promises*; *olive sapling / extends its first branch / ignored phone calls*; and this last one about leaving Texas: *century blossoms / tangled in power lines . . . / moving day*. This is an evocative collection that explores connections and distances with our pasts and ancestors. As a haiku writer who explored my own heritage by writing haiku about western Kansas, these haiku struck a chord with my own sense of loss and celebrations of being at home on the prairie. Well done, Allyson! ◻■

Children & Bubbles: Haiku on Fatherhood by James Schlett (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023) 112 pages, 4.25” x 6.5”. Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-26-1. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Children & Bubbles is dedicated to the author’s daughter, Rory. A year after she was born, James Schlett wrote a short essay “Constellations: A Life in Haiku” which was published in *bottle rockets*. He explains that this essay “contains the lessons on life I hope to impart to my daughter” and the haiku in this collection “hold what she has taught me about living as well. I could not be more grateful for what she has taught me about family, wonder, innocence, and play—the themes of this book’s sections.” Arranged in chronological order, the collection reads as a journal of growing into fatherhood. Here’s a few favorite haiku from each section. Let’s start with an early one: *unraked leaves /*

coziness of flannel and / a sleeping baby. Sometimes we want to give so much to our children: *November woods / I talk to my two year old / about peace*. This next haiku shows how parents get to revisit their own childhoods: *old sledding hill / the same / squeals*. Here is one from his section on wonder: *Vermont backroads / the girl stops asking how long / and just looks*. Let's close with the title poem: *withered field / children and bubbles / bring it back to life*. This is a wonderful collection of haiku and would be an excellent gift for new parents. ◻■

Ukulele Drift: Poems from a Small Island by Matthew Caretti (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 118 pages, 4.25"x6.5". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-27-8. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Matthew Caretti lives in “a little shack near the sea” at Pago Pago, American Samoa, where he is a high school English teacher. The haiku in this collection come from his island life experiences. In the acknowledgements he writes that “The people of American Samoa have shown me many kindnesses since I arrived on Tutuila in 2021. Despite the island’s diminutive scale, not a day passes without a smiled greeting from a new face and an accompanying shaka, the ever-present reminder to slow down, take it easy.” The book opens with: *this little island / the length of a rainbow / ukulele song*. This one: *summer storm / just a bit of thatch / gone missing*, reminds me of Bashō’s leaky roof haiku. I like the efficiency and humbleness of this small business: *island store / just a little bit / of everything*. Another haiku evokes a famous painting that expands with a personalized sense of yugen: *starry night / fitting myself / into the sky*. The last section celebrates the ocean: *pacific wind / kingfisher wings / gather it in*. The collection closes with the title poem: *call and refrain / of bonfire songs / ukulele drift*, which invites us to slow down and take it easy with this collection of small island poems. ◻■

All Ears: Haiku edited by Corine Timmer (Bicadeideias Publishing: Estoi, Portugal: 2023). 52 pages. 5.25" x 8.25". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-989-99760-7-8. €17 from bicadeideias.com/shop-1

All Ears is the sixth collection of haiku in the Chinese zodiac series edited by Corine Timmer. Each year she invites authors to submit and solicits well-known haiku related to that year's zodiac animal. 2023 was the Year of the Rabbit, so this anthology features 74 haiku about rabbits by 64 poets. As she explains in the introduction, "After the yang energy of the tiger, the yin energy of the rabbit can help us slow down and reflect. The moon also represents yin energy, and each of us can tap into it. Just step outside when the moon is in the sky and face toward it. Take deep, slow breaths, inhaling the moon energy. If you study the full moon, you may even see the outline of a rabbit!" Illustrated with Timmer's whimsical seashell rabbit sculptures, this year's collection is playful and fun as we have come to expect from this series. Here are some sample rabbit haiku starting with Carole MacRury's *overnight snow . . . / I follow the rabbit's tracks / into the New Year*. John Pappas gives us this minimal haiku: *as if she / had a question / cottontail*. Susan Beth Furst contributes a vertical one-liner we have to read one word at a time from the bottom up: *Peter / in / trouble / up / to / his / ears*. The original has a bit of a visual or concrete suggestion of a rabbit standing up. The editor provided the title poem: *gunshot / a freeze of bunnies / all ears*. This coming year, I understand that it will be the Year of the Dragon. Send your title suggestions to Corine. Back to yang energy! ■

raindrops from yesterday: selected haiku & senryu by Anthony Lusardi (buddha baby press / bottle rockets press, Windsor, CT: 2023) 52 pages. 4.52" x 5". No ISBN. Four-color card covers, perfect bound. For ordering information, contact the poet by email at: lusardi133@gmail.com

Lusardi's *raindrop from yesterday* is the fourth chapbook published by buddha baby press. The title comes from this haiku: *echeveria / holding raindrops / from yesterday*. I admit I had to look up what "echeveria" is but was glad to be rewarded with photos of these

star-clustered succulents. I can easily imagine the plant holding “yesterday’s rain” and the suggestion of such an economy of saving a precious commodity for a desert plant. The 28 haiku in this collection appear with one poem on each page, which provides an easy reading space for each poem. With “yesterday” in the title, it is not surprising that some of the haiku move back in time: *green hills / once like green mountains / when we were kids*. Sticking with the present, Lusardi’s haiku connect back and accept the inevitable future: *dear john letter — / the river flowing on / and on*. Sometimes things don’t work out, and we just have to leave our imprint where we can: *no more chemo . . . / lying in the snow / to make a new angel*. This is an enjoyable chapbook of haiku. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY LISA GERLITS

enough light by Mary Stevens (Red Moon Press, Winchester VA: 2023). 96 pages. 4.25” x 6.5”. B&W glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-21-6. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

In this collection of 72 poems, Mary Stevens delivers a bouquet of moments, crafted with precision of language and thought. She has a keen eye, and ear, for pinpointing the details of sensory experience and then zooming out to illuminate social issues or larger truths as in these poems: (1) *heft of my keychain / the doors that were opened / for me*; (2) *half moon / the way she tells it / could be true too*. Throughout the collection, Stevens draws connections between inner and outer, personal and universal: *herd of deer / my road through / their togetherness*. The cumulative effect of these small, delicately rendered moments is an unflinching look at the world and the self that somehow finds enough light: *one by one / the house lights follow me / to bed*. By the end of the book, I am finding enough light too. Highly recommended. ◻■

the empty field: haiku 1982-2022 by Matthew M. Cariello (Red Moon Press, Winchester VA: 2022). 126 pages. 4.25" x 6.5". Color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-08-7. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

I always know a good poetry collection by how quickly I reach for a notebook to scribble my own thoughts. Matthew M. Cariello's *The Empty Field* is such a collection. As the title informs us, the poems span a period of 40 years, although they don't appear to be arranged chronologically. Instead, they are presented, one poem per page, in four sections named after the elements *air*, *water*, *fire*, and *earth*. These groupings call to mind the circular nature of existence, not only in reference to physical transformation but also intangibles, such as time and memory. Cariello explores past and present, relationships and solitude with deeply felt simplicity: *first snow / the path ahead bends / the path behind*. The sequencing unfolds slowly, deliberately, taking time to build without the reader being aware that we are slowly being lead uphill. Our breath quickens, our muscles engage. The immersive experience deepens with the realization that there are no page numbers, which creates a sort of timeless dimension where poet and reader can commune in the moment. And Cariello gives us many moments, including these two monoku: *in the coffee cup on my knee heart beats* and *red leaf on the windshield not calling home*. He also repeats particular images or phrases to create resonance, a sense of continuity, and sometimes humor. After a poem about beard stubble, Cariello lobs this one: *winter solstice / a potato sprouts / in the cupboard*. It is not until the final poem that we understand the spacing and design of the title on the cover—an invitation to return to the beginning and read again. This I highly encourage. ◻■

REVIEWED BY MYKEL BOARD

Splashes by Cor van den Heuvel (House of Haiku Books, North Carolina: 2023). 5.06" x 7.81". 118 pages. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0962604058. \$16 from amazon.com

Splashes brings together Cor's haibun, and some haiga—a few in color with his own minimalist illustrations—from 1972 to some undated time in the recent past. It's the haibun, though, that make this book. It's Cor's eye for the chip in the fancy plate.

Humans rarely appear in these haibun. When they do, they are usually name-dropped beat writers or jazz musicians. We don't *see* them: *Lionel Hampton at Carnegie Hall*, *Zoot Sims at Avery Fischer Hall* are mentioned, but not described. The names are a background for something. When Cor writes about the Whitehorse Tavern (that famous Village bar where Dylan Thomas drank himself to death), he writes:

*at the Whitehorse
raising a glass to Dylan Thomas
and the autumn moon*

A fellow-poet is not enough for a toast. It needs that moon to make it Cor. Even when the person is a poet... or *the* poet... that is, Cor himself, the victory belongs to non-human nature, or to things... not to people:

*after the rain
a few drops fall from the tree
into the poet's notebook*

In one of Cor's haibun, he explains his writing philosophy:

(In painting,) One has to move back and let the paint create its magic. In the same way, a few "blobs" of words, if expertly chosen and placed, can also work a similar magic if the mind's ear steps back and lets the words work their wonder.

It's the non-human sensual that fascinates Cor. His ears are as quick to notice sound as his eyes are to see color:

From his notebook/diary, October 7, 1987: *katydid singing, but voice not as loud as in the past... I can only hear it now from my apartment if I open the window –did not open it last night, so couldn't hear him if he was singing as faintly then as he is now.*

In New York City... a katydid singing! Sirens, people yelling from a sports bar, and honking horns... Yes! Yes! Yes!... NO! It's the almost silent katydid, maybe missed the night before, that matters.

My favorite piece, *Stepping Up To The Bar*, is filled with a topic near and dear to my liver. I've certainly spent more time in bars than in church (synagogue). But it's neither the booze nor the barflies that catch Cor's attention. It is the bar itself. Not the neon or the history, but the foot railings and the bar stools. With a verbal close-up, the poet passes judgment on the furniture:

if the seat is not padded, at least let it be concave to fit that curve most of us sit with.

It's not only the seat that catches the poet's eye, but the things surrounding it.

A generous overhang on the patrons' side is an important element for any bar. Without it, when you sit on the barstool, you will find your knees bumping the front of the bar.

It's something drinkers all know... have seen... felt... heard the thump of... but the rest of us have never had the non-human focus to put it into words.

Many Cor-lovers know that one of his passions, besides bars, is baseball. He co-edited an anthology of baseball haiku, and often writes about the game. In the haiku section of haiga, Cor shows

his passion for baseball using no batters, hitters, catchers, or shortstops. There are no people at all:

*late February
stuck to the tree, a snowball
in the strike zone*

In the haibun, *The Last Streetlight*, Cor talks about his discovery of haiku through famous San Francisco poets like Gary Snyder and Robert Duncan. But even here, the focus is not these poets, but the streetlights outside... on the street... on slender poles or thick hooks. What do the poets look like? How do their voices sound? What's important is that *the streetlights took on a soulful, distant wail of a saxophone look, and made your shadow on the sidewalk, as you headed home from the just-closed bar, seem like the last lost inhabitant of the world.*

The final section of the book is called *Haibun for Basho's Frog*. The haibun are not for that famous poet, but for that frog that every junior high school student knows jumped into an old pond. Here's a haiku from that section:

*a breeze off the lake
the stepped-on dandelion
pushes itself back up*

The triumph of a tiny piece of nature or some *thing* amazes the reader. It is so simple that it seems very few people can see it.

A glittering light caught my eye. It was a drop of water in the curl of a leaf...

That drop is worth a dozen sightings of some guy with a mustache, wearing a tuxedo, who wouldn't even notice that he stepped on the leaf. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY PIPPA PHILLIPS

Bookmarks: Haiku and Senryu by Kelly Sargent (*Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023*). 66 pages. 4.25" x 6.5". Perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-32-2. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Kelly Sargent's *Bookmarks* is like a cup of tea—warm, occasionally bitter, and a warm companion for rumination. The poems straddle the line between haiku and senryū—although deeply humanistic, Sargent consistently uses seasonal elements as a framework for the experiences she expresses. Themes of familial relationships, motherhood, and domesticity predominate. A few poems seem to wear their emotions a bit too much on their sleeve, but the experiences Sargent mines are universal and relatable. Some poems transcend the rest, as in *first kick / in the womb / squash blossom*, or *backyard stargazing... / still a stranger / to the owl*. A deeply felt collection. ◻■

This Once: haiku by John Stevenson (*Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023*). 94 pages. 4.25" x 6.5". Perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-23-0. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

His first collection since the Touchstone-winning *My Red*, John Stevenson's *This Once* is a dependably satisfying collection of poems from a master of the form. The collection opens with a rush of water and words, appropriately enough in spring. From there, Stevenson cycles through a full spectrum of seasons and themes.

The offerings are at turns philosophical, as in *never the same river city*, while others are gently humorous or pointedly ironic: *a flag / as large as a / one-bedroom house*. There is space for the transcendental, which often lurks in the unexpected space the author creates. Stevenson is particularly apt at choosing *just so* details, resulting in impressionistic *shasei* pieces such as the standout: *winter night / a flashlight falling / down the stairs*.

Above all, Stevenson is a humanist—despite his light touch, his

poems have a depth of meaning, often ambiguous and capable of multiple parsings. Though it is possible to read the volume in a sitting, you will be sated by its end. If haiku is the poetic form that takes the moment as its subject, Stevenson shows we can paint that moment in an array of colors. □■

crows at dusk: haiku by James Roderick Burns (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 112 pages. 4.25" x 6.5". Perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-22-3. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

James Roderick Burns pulls as much from a Western sensibility as from Japanese aesthetic traditions (such as *wabi sabi*) in his latest haiku collection, *crows at dusk*. The poems found here have Burns' distinctive fingerprints, where figurative techniques and writerly exclamations create a sense of subjectivity. At their best, Burns' poems have complex and unique imagery, compelling phrasings, and a sense of rankling energy: *Night storm— / parked in a river / of crab apples*. Others are homey and simple, verging on a *shasei* sensibility. Not all poems struck a chord, however. A few poems seem overly defined or fragmented. In a future collection, more restraint may result in an even more powerful collection. Overall, *crows at dusk* is a comfortable read on a rainy day. I recommend it. □■

into the stillness: split sequences by Peter Jastermsky (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 108 pages. 4.25" x 6.5". Perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-31-5. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Peter Jastermsky characterizes a solo split sequence as 'solitaire'—it's an interesting conception of poetry as a way of playing a game with yourself. One makes a Jastermsky-style split sequence by starting with a *seed haiku*—and then interrupting each of its lines with other haiku. The artfulness is the manner in which the sprouts interact with the seed, and subsequently with one another.

It is a different kind of entanglement than a *rengay*—there is a two-ness to a *rengay*, a definite alternation between one writer