

BRIEFLY NOTED

Turkey Heaven: Animal Rights Haiku (West Union, W.V.: Middle Island Press, 2016). 138 pages; 5" x 8". Glossy four color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-535070-82-9. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers

The author introduces the current volume with twenty-three quotes from notable figures against the cruelty and un-necessity of animal consumption. The poems that follow advocate a respect for animals and often a vegan lifestyle. While many of the poems make their point in clever and heartfelt ways, an equal amount are lectures or broad moral statements and can't really be considered haiku. Collected into a single volume, the effect is bit of a downer. Consumers of meat (including this reader) will be unconvinced and a bit put-off by the moralizing. Vegans and vegetarians will most likely be onboard. *empty cattle car / how many ranchers / does it take to fill*

Bug-Eyed & Bird-Brained, by Rick Clark (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2016). 102 pages; 4¼" x 6½". Glossy four color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936-848-65-2. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

A book equally divided into bird and bug haiku, with a few related short sequences at the end. There is a nice range of styles, from well-cut haiku to sentence-like structures. In many of the poems, Clark's study of Zen pays off, and he is able to capture pure moments of nature; however at times he can't quite detach himself from his human perspective—and the results are a bit anthropomorphic. Yet like the works of Issa, there is a gentle humor to them (nature-senryu, perhaps), with a large measure of joy! His enthusiasm and love for the small is infectious. The poems are nicely complemented by the brush paintings of Fumiko Kimura. *what a load of lint / you haul across the oak floor / tiny sow bug*

Kap Krvi Slap Života (Croatia: The Croatian Institute for Transfusion Medicine, 2016). 94 pages; 5" x 7". Red and white matte card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-953-98890-3-4. Inquire of the publishers

In 2015 the publishers held a haiku conference on the theme of blood donation to mark World Blood Donation Day. Over 170 haiku from the contest are included in the volume. An interesting idea, and as would be expected, yielded mixed results. Some poems tie the act of blood donation to a larger personal moment, while others stay closer to home. All poems in English and Croatian. The winner: *blood donor— / an unclenched fist / full of sunlight* – Rosie Roumeliotis

Getting On, by Ernest J. Berry (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2016). 72 pages; 4¼" x 6½". Glossy four color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-61-9. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Berry's name will be familiar to anyone who has entered a haiku contest. All eighty-seven haiku in *Getting On* have won or placed in an international contest during the decade 1995–2005. He plans a second volume for the winners/placers of the next decade. But why wait? Doing the math that's nearly nine winning poems per year—quite an accomplishment and testament to Berry's skill as a poet. His poems are rarely wordy, finding the heart of a moment through just the right images; and they are often poignant and funny. Sometimes both. A fine addition to any haiku library. *summer / one button / undone*

Haiku 2016, ed. by Lee Gurga and Scott Metz (Lincoln, Il.: Modern Haiku Press, 2016). 110 pages; 5½" x 4¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 0-9741894-8-0. Price: \$8.00 from www.modern-haiku.org

Third in an annual series from editors Gurga and Metz on what they consider to be the 100 notable haiku of 2015. The volume surveys a wide

range of domestic and international journals, finding an equally wide range of styles and voices, from classically-themed haiku to modernist works. This anthology proves that there are more than a few ways to write a haiku—at least a hundred in fact. Some poems will settle into your bones and others you may want to keep at a distance—although in all cases they are unforgettable. A hard choice to find a favorite example: *fallen leaves me with my grudges* – Francine Banwarth

The Fingertips of a Glassblower, by Bill Cooper (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2016). 76 pages; 4¼" x 6½". Glossy four color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936-848-62-1. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Cooper continues to mature in this, his third collection in three years, from RMP. He has a knack for finding the right words and the right angles of perception, sometimes surprisingly so. There is a similar gentleness to poems about family and the environment, and it is clear he strongly values both. In a few of the poems, the distance between the parts seems arbitrary, and it is hard to make a complete scene; but these poems are in the minority. *light rain the rising scent of an oyster shell trail*

Playing with Emptiness: Collected Haiku, by Ernest Sherman (New York: Lion Autumn Music Publishing, 2016). 106 pages; 5½" x 8½". Glossy black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-532728-23-5. Price: \$14.99 from online booksellers

The book presents one haiku per page and is divided into sections; although with a few exceptions they are loose sections. The poems are more senryu than haiku with a gentle focus on mankind's ironies and foibles. Sherman is a good observer and in the majority of cases lets the moments in question speak for themselves. A few of the haiku are darker, dealing with war, incarceration, and death. A nice outing. *sentencing day / the judge's black gown / sways on its hanger*

Horizon, by Anatoly Kudryavitsky (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2016). 80 pages; 5" x 7½". Glossy four color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936-848-66-9. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Most haikuists know Kudryavitsky as founder of the Irish Haiku Society (separate from Haiku Ireland) and editor of their online magazine *Shamrock Haiku Journal*. His haiku are much quieter than his longer form poetry, which take on politics and questions of identity. Yet, for a seasoned poet and as involved as he is in haiku, a number of poems in the collection lean a bit too heavily on anthropomorphism at the risk of giving the moment away, and a number fall flat and should have been left out; others, however, are poignant observations that have a classical feel to them. The haiku are often shasei in the best use of the word and some are quite beautiful. *puddle touched / by moonbeams / the first to freeze*

Let's Forget, by John Martone (No place [Charleston, Ill.]: Samuddo / Ocean, 2016). 47 pages; 4¼" x 6". Black and white card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$5.00 from the author at johnmartone@gmail.com

In keeping with its title, the subject of Martone's book is a bit vague—despite all the details his poems provide. A transformation seems to be taking place that involves both a new house and the poet's weakening body, as if the gain of one is at the expense of the other. Yet despite the chores, Martone finds great joy in the work. *redwing blackbird / a small mark this backyard / on the prairie*

Pompeian Figures, by John Martone (No place [Charleston, Ill.]: Samuddo / Ocean, 2016). 78 pages; 4¼" x 7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-365-08784-4. Price: \$8.00. *A Lost World's Weather*, by John Martone (No place [Charleston, Ill.]: Samuddo / Ocean, 2016). 68 pages; 6" x 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-365-08777-6. Price: \$5.72. Both from online booksellers

In *PF* Martone travels halfway across the world to Pompei. The first poems on the destroyed landscape and town find Martone using a more abstract poetry than we are used to from his work. Later poems find him more observer than actor—a detour from his usual tactile engagement—and one senses a struggle there. It fits nicely within the idea of visitor. *you've lain on your side / curled-up like him / in the ash*. *ALWW* is another collection from the prolific Martone—and why not, when every action, even the slightest, contains meaning. A continuing journey in his rural domesticity. A few feel too personal to share, but he hits often. *light filters through deep / snow into your solitude / dormant azalea*

Winnows, by Maxianne Berger (Canada: Imago Press, 2016). 5½" x 8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-920489-48-2. Price: \$22.00 from imagorediron@gmail.com

Described as “Plunderverse,” Berger finds haiku in Melville’s classic *Moby Dick*. Her edits/cuts are more extensive than in normal “found” poetry in that she combines letters from adjacent words and removes letters of existing words (“applies” → “apples”); but *Moby Dick* proves to be fertile soil. People looking for the novel’s narrative in poetry will be disappointed—but taken as a well-spring of language, the results are often fascinating. Like any found poetry some fall flat. An interesting exercise worth checking out. One poem per each of the novel’s 136 chapters. *you and wind / allies / carrying dead leaves*

Undercurrents, by Amanda Bell (Ireland: Alba Publishing, 2016). 72 pages; 6" x 8¼". Blue and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-910185-35-3. Price: \$14.00 from www.albapublishing.com

Part memoir, part speculation, part history lesson, and part musings on the interconnectedness of our lives and rivers; all these elements come together in *Undercurrents*. The book is a collection of sixteen haibun, linked by short haiku sequences that revisit or expand images and themes from the prose. While some of the facts mentioned in the haibun prose

feel tacked on, many images resonate strongly: for example, a brief recollection of the poet as a child bringing home minnows in jars is followed by the here and now fact of a young cousin's cremated remains—"interred in the cemetery a little further upstream." Worth checking out.

The Winter Garden, by Jack Barry (Ashfield, Mass.: Spruce Corner Press, 2016). 73 pages; 5½" x 8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-945473-01-2. Price: inquire of the author at swampcandles@gmail.com

Barry has always been an interesting character, a quiet, unassuming man who has lived a rather hermetic life in the woods of Massachusetts. The current volume is his fourth collection of haiku, and we see him branching out a bit from his normative focus on nature to more interactions with a larger community. We also find him writing more vertical poems which succeed nicely. A sequence on the poet's first Vipassana retreat is the weakest section of the book; many of the haiku feel forced. Those aside, the book is enjoyable. Barry is a good haikuist and he has the knack of finding the hidden commonalities in life. *cancer again the page corners folded in the seed catalogue*

The Earth Pushes Back, by Bill Kenney (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2016). 72 pages; 4¼" x 6½". Glossy four color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936-848-63-8. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

The book is broken into seasonal sections. The haiku feel natural, the connections, observations, and word choices, just right. Kenney's work reveals changing perceptions—his own included. Kenney came to haiku late and his work treasures each moment it finds, and I suspect, weighs them more carefully than many. This reviewer was drawn to the several haiku about butterflies, and we wondered if they were a totem to the poet. Their absence in the final section was deeply felt. A solid first collection. *butterfly / how long will you / remember me*

Marcel Malone, by Lew Watts (Santa Fe, N.M.: Red Mountain Press, 2016). 282 pages. Four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-997310-22-1. Price: \$24.95 from online booksellers

A novel about a therapist and her patient, and an exploration of what poetry can mean to each. Watts is a well-known haikuist whose haiku and haibun have been widely-published, so the quality of the prose was not surprising. Haiku are introduced midway through the book as an extension of poetry as a therapeutic tool, for both doctor and patient. The novel's focus seemingly shifts in spots, yet the moves are natural, and the reader comes to realize that what they thought was the novel's focus was wider than they might have suspected—or perhaps deeper. These shifts are leaps as in the best poems. An engaging read that suspensefully carried this reader along. *child lock: / still trapped inside / my father*

A Circle of Breath, by Jeannie Martin (Windsor, Conn.: Baby Buddha Press, 2016). 42 pages; 4¼" X 5¾". Glossy blue and white card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$7.00 from www.bottlerocketspress.com

This slim volume of haiku from veteran haikuist Martin is just the right size to carry with you for those moments when life threatens to overwhelm. She dedicates it to caregivers and people in pain to help them see how they are connected to a larger world. Despite her years as a social worker these are poems of her engagement with nature. And through them she shows how nature can open up to all people. Martin is not afraid to pause to find comfort in just being. These are poems of connection, new-found and remembered—some across the centuries—and they have compassion for everything they meet. *never seen / a bald eagle— / today's sky*

Inside His Time Machine, by John McManus (United Kingdom: Iron Press, 2016). 61 pages; 4½" X 7". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-993-12455-6. Price: £6.00 from www.ironpress.co.uk

In his “Introduction” to the current volume McManus cites Fay Aoyagi’s comment that she didn’t “write haiku to report the weather.” She wrote to tell her stories. McManus’ poems tread similar ground, albeit in a more realistic vein than Aoyagi. Yet the effects can be just as powerful. His poems inhabit his various roles as husband, father, son, friend, etc... and find the meaningful connections that tie each role to everything else. McManus is a keen observer, and his poems are at once uplifting, poignant, and heartbreaking; all the things it means to be alive. We are a big fan of his. *starless sky / we dismantle / the unused crib*

Murmuration, by Michelle Tennison (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2016). 82 pages; 4¼" X 6½". Glossy four color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936-848-67-6. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Tennison stands in the middle of a world we all know and take for granted. But at the corner of our eye we are aware of another world—one both familiar and unfamiliar. Tennison’s haiku inhabit that world and they are a joy! Sometimes unexpected images inhabit that other plane, while at times it is just language that is unexpected. Yet through all the poems we find a true and honest heart. Her work feels very modern, yet nothing is forced merely for effect. She is perhaps a step ahead of us in linguistic time. Check this out! *still searching for the god of mourning the sea*