

little against the collection's tenor, and a few have erotic intent, such as:

night of crickets —
 the memory of kissing her breasts
 repeats itself

Swist's collection borders *ut pictura poesis* (as is painting so is poetry) in its representation. For him, also, the senses, particularly sound, extend poetic phrasing, and perhaps his Zen practice make his deftly focused use of natural imagery in the already compressed form of haiku a vehicle for a quietness of vision enveloping natural and human activity. For someone writing haiku in English, Swist has extended the boundaries of how, in that language, haiku can become more poetic.

The Chrysanthemum and the Scissors: Haiku, Zen, and Traditional Japanese Verse by Jon LaCure (No place: Independently published, 2017). 171 pages, 6" × 9". Four-color glossy covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-520290-67-6. Price: \$6.99 from online booksellers

Reviewed by David Burleigh

In some ways this book of essays is quite timely, coming as it does in the year that marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of both Masaoka Shiki and Natsume Sōseki, the first a major figure in modern haiku, the second an important modern novelist and a haiku poet too. The title amusingly conflates the name of a famous book on Japanese culture with a verse by Sōseki, illustrated on the cover with a haiga by the gifted Ion Codrescu:

Over the white chrysanthemum —
 for a moment they pause,
 the garden shears

The twelve essays deal with different aspects of the subjects mentioned in the title, and a little over the half of the contents are reprinted from this journal.

T.S. Eliot once described the innovative Ezra Pound as “the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time,” and LaCure suitably includes as epigraph to his Introduction even earlier remarks by Oscar Wilde, about Japan being “a pure invention.” There are some interesting and worthwhile points in the book about the recasting of Japanese culture, especially in the post-war period, for the Western market, though the reconfiguration of Zen Buddhism appears to have begun long before that, according to one of the references here (27). It was taken up with great enthusiasm after the war, first in the United States, then gradually in other countries. Much of this has centered on the revered and mysterious figure of the poet Bashō.

LaCure conducts some examination by following certain tropes, as in the first essay, where he traces the use and meaning of a phrase from classical verse, through its altered resonance in the seventeenth-century. He does the same by following a certain well-known verse from Bashō’s journal, about a horse eating a flower, in the work of different translators, as well as reflecting on the classical references (or lack of them) to the plant in question. This is all quite illuminating, and fits his general theme of the “decontextualisation” of haiku in the West. It is followed by a look at the ways different translators have rendered Japanese haiku into English, and presented them. It is perhaps no longer of much value taking the very first translators, like W.G. Aston and Basil Hall Chamberlain, to task, since they started when the language was unknown. Later versions have slanted the work in different ways that are explained.

LaCure has unusual things to say on, for example, the economy of haiku, such as the often-overlooked fact that Bashō depended on the hospitality of “rich merchants and farmers ... willing to pay handsomely for an evening or two of elegant entertainment from the capital” (13). Even today the flourishing of haiku in Japan operates on a large pyramid of societies and membership subscriptions, but the remarkable thing is that so many still support it. The most interesting parts of the book to me, however, were the two chapters (both from this journal) on Sōseki’s haiku on the death of his friend Shiki, when the news reached him in faraway

London, and again on Sōseki's haiku in response to plays by Shakespeare, interleaved with quotations from them.

There is much else besides, on the wandering poet Santōka, and his place in the tradition, on two popular younger women poets, and on the presence of haiku in manga, and hence in ordinary life. LaCure does not appear to have updated the material much, since Cid Corman, described as having “lived in Japan for many years” (45) died in 2004. W.G. Aston is referred to with the initials “W.H.” throughout, and the poet Sam Hamill as “Mark Hamill” in the essay that deals with him. There are numerous misprints, and some errors. Shiki did not spend “the last decade of his life” in Matsuyama (135), but in Tokyo, and nor did Sōseki stay there until he went to London (105), but moved to Kumamoto instead. The newest thing to me was a fascinating chapter on a disciple of Bashō called Rōka, with engaging descriptions of Inami in Tōyama, where he lived.

Four Seasons, by Satoru Kanematsu (Japan: Gakhōsha, 2017). 73 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-4-990732-01-4. Price: inquire of the author

Reviewed by Paul Miller

A third collection, the second in English (*Hazy Moon*, 2013), from the author. Kanematsu is an editorial assistant at *Ko* haiku journal whose work will be well-known to readers of David McMurray's Asahi Haikuist Network where he is published often. The collection is organized by season and Kanematsu almost always includes a strong kigo in each haiku. These are traditional haiku, and at three per page, there are a good number of poems to enjoy.

Many of the haiku are cinematic, starting with a larger subject, often a time of year, such as Children's Day, Hiroshima, Culture Day, or autumn wind, which is then paired with a telling detail. In the case of items specific to Japanese culture, he gives a short note. These are solid haiku with strong associations or juxtapositions.