

*ATTOTFW* also includes haiku from his haibun memoir *A Boy's Season* (1993) and *Play Ball* (1999), a collection of haiku on baseball. One from each.

summer afternoon	cold day
the coolness of the newspaper	the traded catcher's
from the grocery bag	empty locker

These and later poems in many ways continue to mine a sense of nostalgia that has always permeated his work, including the title poem below. Yet, they are very much poems of the here and now.

alone  
at the top of the ferris wheel  
the moon

Van den Heuvel was one of English-language haiku's first voices. In learning of the genre in isolation from any concept of a latter-day community, he managed to avoid the trap of imitating Japanese haiku and their subjects, and has always written in a very American voice on what might be termed Americana. We are grateful to the Haiku Foundation for publishing this important selected works; and grateful to van den Heuvel for his trailblazing. Recommended.

*Utopia: She Hurries On*, haiku and illustrations by Patricia J. Machmiller (No place [San Jose, Calif.]: Swamp Press, 2017). 55 pages; 5" x 7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1-64008-048-5. Price: \$15.00 from the author at [patriciajmachmiller@msn.com](mailto:patriciajmachmiller@msn.com)

*Reviewed by Deborah P Kolodji*

When I contemplate the idea of utopia, I imagine an idyllic pastoral setting filled with cherry blossoms and the music of frogs, crickets, birds, and running water, embodying a stereotype of what some

consider a haiku—a poem about the beauty of nature. The opening haiku in Patricia Machmiller’s new book, *Utopia: She Hurries On*, hints that perhaps there’s something beyond our limited vision of perfection:

forest solitude —  
 in budding tree leaves  
 the world’s expectation

The next several haiku in the opening of the book are scenes from nature juxtaposed with human interaction, whether landing in clover from an airplane, feeling a “giddy wanderlust” from wildflowers, or trying to learn “the mountain’s secret” on a misty morning. Then, Machmiller playfully hints at more serious themes to come with a bit of humor:

with cherry blossoms  
 on their heads the koi swim  
 seriously

And the tone of the book rapidly shifts darker and more deeply contemplative:

artichoke hearts —  
 no one understands that you  
 have given everything

The opening section of nine haiku is set off by one of Machmiller’s brush paintings of a cherry tree, which could also be a tree in the Garden of Eden. An abstract painting in greens and blues provides a separation as the tenth haiku brings us to the question at the heart of the book:

hydrangea —  
 over tea mulling the idea  
 of utopia

The rest of the forty six haiku in this book echo themes of unraveling, death, grief, loneliness, struggle, and aging, as if the author wanted to hurry us on past any utopian thoughts in order to embrace the truths of our everyday lives, that “hurry” in the title, and the flow of poems, captured by the second to the last haiku in the book:

she hurries on  
without a backward glance —  
fragrance of peonies

Machmiller is an accomplished brush painter, and in addition to the seven color illustrations, the front and back covers of the book are also taken from “details” from prints of her paintings. The images of the haiku in this collection are also vivid with details captured by her painter’s eye.

squash blossoms  
the ribbon on her dress  
unraveling

October light  
the archivist unfolds the letter  
with gloved hands

In addition to strong imagery, Machmiller carefully crafts her poems, using the musicality of language, so that if read aloud, each poem sounds pleasing to the ear through the use of meter, assonance, and alliteration. Her “squash blossoms” haiku is filled with a symphony of “s” sounds and “r” sounds. In “October light,” there are long “i” sounds, “l” sounds, “o” sounds, and soft “e” sounds.

The collection ends as Machmiller embraces her age, “in solidarity with/the autumn wind.” Although, on a first read, I might have selected “she hurries on” as an ending haiku, which would have beautifully wrapped up the “pondering utopia and moving past it” theme, I do appreciate this ending because not only has the author moved past the idea of utopia as an ideal to strive for, she has embraced her place in the universe, feeling strong in her “seventh decade,” with no need to pretend to be younger or anyone different. This nicely juxtaposes with “the world’s expectation” in the opening poem, making the book even more powerful and moving, and one I definitely recommend.