

BRIEFLY NOTED

Along the Way: A Search for the Spirit of the World, by Gilles Fabre (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2020). 179 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy back and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-30-5. Price: €12.00 from www.albapublishing.com

Reading is a kind of voyage, doubly so with Fabre's second collection of haiku. Born in France, yet longtime resident of Ireland, Fabre wrote his first haiku in 1994 on a journey around the world. Some thirty years, thirty-five countries, and six continents later, he gifts us with *along the way*: part inspirational reader, part travelogue, part haiku journal that "catches and brings to life the spirit of place." The book is divided into sections by continent, each section opening with a page of epigraphs on wonder, on awareness of the moment, on the spiritual task of uprooting ourselves from the familiar in search of strange and fresh perspectives. Travel accomplishes this task bodily, sensually; haiku mentally and artistically. Like the oft-maligned slide show of travel photos, a book of this sort runs the risk of boring its friends. Unless one has been to Valparaíso or Abidjan, the pregnant associations of funiculars or baobab trees may be lost. Fabre, however, is an intelligent guide, offering explanatory asides often enough to create context and keep interest from flagging. The *ku* naturally vary, not only in particularized content, but in form—anything from simple scene sketches to pointed musings to more considered revelations of place. Readers can compare what they remember of New Delhi or Hiroshima or towns closer to home with Fabre's impressions, even as they travel his text in search of insights deeper and more rare. The journey will not disappoint. At Mount Baur, Bali: *tying my shoelaces / I look up / the top of the volcano*; in Copenhagen, Denmark: *perfectly lined pine trees — / statistically I have lived / two thirds of my life*; in Hiroshima, Japan: *in the sunset light / the exposed dome's metal framework / like a crown of thorns.* – mrb

Arrhythmia, by Bruce Feingold (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 66 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-52-4. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Arrhythmia, Bruce Feingold's fourth collection of haiku, is all about paths, the paths we forge for ourselves, the paths foisted upon us. Braiding together journeys of body and mind, one to the Andean Sun Gate, one through heart attack and recovery, and yet a third across the current political landscape, the poet seeks to explain himself to himself (as Pablo Neruda once remarked)—and to explain to us what it means to live in community, in these times. If anxiety and insomnia are fellow-travelers, humor and hope are also along for the ride. Feingold leaves a trail that beckons. *f(ailing)s; arrhythmia the unraveling of the republic; emerald hills / how little rain it takes / for hope to grow.* – mrb

The Space We Open To, by Peter Newton (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 102 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-55-5. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

It's rare to read a chapbook where every turn of the page just about stops you short, but see if that isn't the case when you pick up Peter Newton's newest collection. As the epigraph from Robert Duncan's poem, "Often I Am Permitted to Return to a Meadow," would suggest, Newton mulls over the many passages of life: halcyon days of childhood, years of aging in place, seasons of vicissitude and sorrow. Very much a glass-half-full kind of guy, he suffuses his haiku—many of them tanka-like in their emotional and expressive tenor—with the grace of empathy, acceptance, gratitude and what joy there is. The "meadow," in Newton's rendering, is (to cite Duncan's poem) "a made place, created by light." Highly recommended. *assuming / a scrub pine posture / survivors; growing old together / the river / and the rain; impossibly the orchid pulling off its blue.* – mrb

... *This Fly*, by Jeannie Martin (Windsor, Conn.: Buddha Baby Press, 2020). 16 pages; 4" × 2¾". Matte blue card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: inquire of the author at jeanniejeanne@gmail.com

Twelve haiku riff on the companionship of flies. That's a big job for such a small "collection," given the long shadow of Issa, who seems to have written as many ku about swatting flies away as welcoming them into his life. With a sense of compassion and a light heart, Martin does the same. *crowded café / this fly / seems to know me.* – mrb

For Now, by James Richardson (Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon Press, 2020). 110 pages; 6" × 9". Matte four-colored card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-556595-79-0. Price: \$16.00 from online booksellers.

James Richardson is a well-regarded poet in the American mainstream. Counting pages, not quite a quarter of his new collection of long poems, aphorisms, and "ten-second essays" is dedicated to fifty or so haiku. Richardson would rather call them "three-line microlyrics" that are "haiku-like." Some surely make greater use of Western poetic technique than current aesthetic practice in haiku—think punctuation or language that is abstract and ideational. Others just as surely eschew the ingenuous painting of natural scenes and jump straight to their metaphoric implications. And yet, most of these "haiku-like" poems are surely haiku, in as much as they create and sustain interest by means of unexpected perceptual surprises and multiple expressive readings. Richardson comes to the genre through the Blyth and Hass translations of Japanese masters and is not loath to offer over a dozen of his haiku-like ku in the manner of Issa and nearly two dozen after Bashō. As honkadōri, the results may be mixed. Nevertheless, those microlyrics that work as haiku work excellently well—and expand the modern canon by creating common ground between poetic communities. Recommended. *Crows / settling among crows— / autumn evening. Coming in late / from the garden, / dark on my hands. Moon still out— / dew / on a cold shovel.* – mrb

Forsythia, by Robin Anna Smith (Arlington, Va.: Turtle Light Press, 2020). 23 pages; ebook. Available for free download from www.turtlelightpress.com

Robin Anna Smith packs an emotional punch in *Forsythia*, second place winner in the Turtlelight Press 2019 Haiku Chapbook contest. Sixteen exquisitely wrenching haiku focus on her cancer diagnosis and treatment. The interior design of the book, in which each ku appears above the same image of forsythia blossoms covered in snow, brilliantly supports the poetry. Well worth a few clicks to add to your haiku library. *spring rain / the ache of bones / in full bloom.* – mrb

Stirring Ashes, by Alan S. Bridges (Arlington, Va: Turtle Light Press, 2020). 22 pages; ebook. Available for free download from www.turtlelightpress.com

Stirring Ashes, third place winner of the Turtle Light Press Haiku Chapbook Contest for 2019, reads like a mood poem in sixteen ku wending its way through varying shades of sadness, from the blues of “as if this sky / weren’t sky enough / indigo bunting” through cold grilled cheese sandwiches in a cold hospital room to death days remembered and healing gardens. Bridges’ feel for the poignant image and the apt juxtaposition are excellent, as judge Susan Antolin ably points out in her commentary on the TLP website. One only wonders why four of the haiku she chooses to discuss do not appear in the echapbook itself—their omission would seem to result in a less expansive sequence here than originally conceived. *heartland / the world winnowed down / to wheat.* – mrb

The Signature Haiku Anthology, ed. Robert Epstein (West Union, W.V.: Middle Island Press, 2020). 253 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7341254-5-0. Price: \$20.00 from online booksellers.

Epstein begins this anthology of signature haiku with quite an interesting discussion of what a “signature” poem might be. In his hands it is, firstly, self-chosen and, secondly, representative of personal value, social reception, or both. A poet’s signature haiku is thus not necessarily their best haiku—as determined by the aesthetic evaluations of a wider community—though it is, as Christopher Herold remarks, “closest to my heart.” Given that Epstein holds “a democratic view of haiku poetry ... and declined to impose my own standards as criteria for inclusion,” what we have here is an eclectic mix of favorite haiku from over 250 poets (those who responded to Epstein’s call for poems through email and social media). Some are newcomers, just published; many are seasoned haijin and well-published. Most, but not all, include a short commentary on their choice and/or a list of credits, adding an autobiographical dimension to the whole. Pick up this volume to check out your favorite poets’ favorite poems and the reasons why. More than one “yes!” guaranteed when the signature poem matches your estimation of a signature voice. *for no reason / other than joy / hummingbird* (Susan Rogers); *eggs in a shirt / to be here / so lightly* (Dan Schwerin); *foghorns — / we lower a kayak / into the sound* (Christopher Herold). – mrb

Wild Strawberries, by Colin Oliver (Great Britain: Snapshot Press, 2020). 28 pages; ebook. Available for free download from www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks.htm

As a result of its yearly eChapbook Awards, Snapshot Press has quite a stellar list of well-conceived digital offerings, this one from the 2019 contest. Colin Oliver intersperses three short prose poems on walks far from the madding crowd with some eighteen haiku very much in the style of nature sketch. More than one resonates, too, with mortal reckonings and the comforts we take in the here and now of not yet. A “friend returns in a curlew’s lilt,” breath is “attuned to the night sky,” rain blurs the names on graveside wreaths. These are layered first, last, and in between, with images of hands and “finger touch.” *blossom light / all day falling / magnolia*. – mrb

Waistdeep in Moonlight, by Dave Fairhurst (Alpharetta, Ga.: Redheaded Press, 2020). 68 pages; 5½" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-578-66619-8. Price: £10, from <https://haikugravy.wordpress.com/book-release/>. Also available as an ebook for free download at <https://www.redheadedpress.com/free-e-books>

This is the second offering from Redheaded Press, a new publisher of haiku and other micropoetry founded in January 2020 by Jamie Wimberley. (The press's first publication, Wimberley's own *Before I Forget Them*, is reviewed at length in this issue.) *Waistdeep in Moonlight* collects sixty haiku organized around the seasons, with a fifth and final section revolving around the interpenetrations of dark and light: shadows, twilights, night skies, moons. Five concrete haiku, one for each section, are less accomplished. Still, Fairhurst's is altogether a refreshing voice. *stifling / a yawn half / the moon*; *BETWEEN writing SPOONS OF haiku SOUP*; *water / for a brilliant moment / a snowflake*. – mrb

Unraveling: The Redthread Haiku Sangha Anthology 1997 – 2019, by Redthread Haiku Sangha members (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2019). 76 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-29-9. Price: £12.00 from www.albapublishing.com

In a commendable tribute to community, the Redthread Sangha, a Buddhist meditation group that has met once a year in Wales since 1997, compiles here a collection that speaks to longstanding commitment to *haiku-no-michi*, the spiritual practice of haiku. Seventeen poets explore inner and outer paths in a page of haiku each and, often, an accompanying haibun. Four short appendices touch on the sangha's beginnings, on workshop guidelines, haiku and zen, and exemplary moments of awakening. From the three founding members, one of whom—Ken Jones—is deceased: *Small noise in the empty house / something shifting / to how it needs to be* (Ken Jones); *through mountain snow / filling the valley / a temple bell* (Sean O'Connor); *Cloud-wrapped / in utter stillness / the foghorn lows* (Jim Norton). – mrb

Under the Chestnut Tree, by Bob Redmond (Great Britain: Snapshot Press, 2020). 32 pages; ebook. Available for free download from www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks.htm

One of four winners of the Snapshot Press eChapbook Awards 2019, *Under the Chestnut Tree* is a harrowing record of cancer's course. Out of twenty-three haiku, four evoke the chestnut tree as a totem of fortitude and survival. Redmond infuses his precise imagery—a crimson rose turning in a bowl of water, rain pelting the window, peaches dripping with juice—with unforgettably raw emotion and grace. *saying goodbye / under the chestnut tree / pink petals in the breeze.* – mrb

The Walk Home, by Susan Lee Kerr (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2020). 60 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-34-3. Price: \$15.00 from the author at www.susan-leekerr.com

Susan Lee Kerr, long active in the British Haiku Society, winnows an output of thirty years to some ninety haiku, give or take a few tanka. Expanding on her “credo” in a foreword, she traces her search for an “awareness gate” or “mental pre-focus” that might facilitate heightened sensitivity to experience. And, indeed, her most successful ku suggest an empathic readiness for the accidental, given moment. Kerr organizes her poems chronologically, with aesthetic shifts along the way; readers may consider when and how she peaks. We were especially taken with her crafting of two-line haiku. *out there, the old moon / a single cricket chirping; frost-rimed sock / by the railroad track — / the paths walked to get here; ruins / but still / I kneel to pray.* – mrb

Tiny Windows on Great Lives: A Book of Haiku Biographies, by Jonathan A. Finch (No place [United Kingdom]: Privately printed, no date). 57 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-652913-6-49. Price: £8.99 (£7.99 Kindle version) from www.amazon.co.uk

Brief biographies of historical and cultural personages, accompanied by haiku written in 5-7-5. The haiku on author J.K. Rowling says it all: *Head start for long train / Steam gathering, magic made / A wizard for all* – pm

Hoinar Prin Lume – Fotohaiku / Roaming the World – Photo Haiku, edited by Cornelia Atanasiu (Romania: Editura Societății Scriitorilor Români, 2019). 189 pages; 5½" × 7¾". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-606-8412-68-9. Price: inquire of Mrs. Cornelia Atanasiu at atanasiu_co@yahoo.com

The volume contains the photo-haiga of thirteen Romanian poets. The text of the book is in Romanian, however each haiku is also translated into English, so English speakers can enjoy the combination of picture and poem. Some of the translations need work, but their meaning is understandable. The poems themselves are often narrative (a difference from U.S. haiku), and many adhere to the black and white photographs closely, but many strike a good balance. It is always rewarding to see how the haiku form is used in other countries. – pm

Sci-Ku: Explorations into the Poetry of Science, by Jay Friedenber (No place [New York]: Privately printed, 2020). 96 pages; 4¼" × 6¾". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 5-800136-560813. Price: \$22.30 from www.lulu.com

Haiku are usually about the seasons, so Friedenber is to be applauded for this collection of haiku that often contains scientific terms instead. The reader will find concepts like Fibonacci spirals, neutrinos, pyroclastic flow, state phase diagram, etc. But don't be alarmed; there is a glossary. However, when dealing with abstract ideas, problems can creep in. Some poems straddle a line between "one thing is like another" statements and true haiku. Compare, for example: *coronal mass ejection / a spark shoots out / from the campfire flames* and *subduction zone / she tells me / it's all my fault*. In the first, while mass ejected from the sun is comparable to a spark

from a campfire, the scientific phrase doesn't come with any context, so we can't create an independent image for it. The poem leaves the reader with what appears to be a simile. In contrast with the second poem, I can stand on a subduction zone (where two geological plates come together), touch its ground, smell its earth, and imagine myself at the scene. This is a nice haiku; and the addition of 'fault' is a nice pun. In *Sci-Ku*, far more poems land on the relatable side of the line than not, and these include both human-centric haiku as well as humorous senryu. A few are remarkable: *counting the dead / what is it that makes / a number irrational?* Worth checking out. – pm

Urmele Pașilor Tai / The Traces of Your Footsteps, by Dan Doman, trans. by Vasile Moldovan (Romania: Editura Societății Scriitorilor Români, 20120). 194 pages; 5¾" × 8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-606-8412-74-0. Price: inquire of the author at dan_doman24@yahoo.com

Another volume of Romanian photo-haiku, with a few photo-tanka and photo-linked-verse included, translated into English. The color photographs are small, not quite a third of the page. In most haiku Doman uses something from the image as a leaping off point, and the poems range from questionings, to imaginative statements, to juxtaposed images. The volume concludes with an afterward on Doman's work by Dumitru Radu. As might be expected, some rough English translations. – pm

Trails, Streams and Old Rails of Southeast Pennsylvania, by T.M. Shorewick (No place: Privately printed, 2020). 132 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$36.99 softcover; \$4.99 Kindle version from online booksellers.

The book pairs photographs of streams and rivers, taken through trees and over stones, with haiku. A later smaller section is on railways. The poems themselves are more statement or epigram than juxtaposed images.

At times, this reader was unable to understand the leap, as in the second example: *Portray a reptile / Leaf looking like a turtle / Swamp's mind is fertile; Duality is chimeric / Requiring a view / Seeking exclusion.* – pm

Thunderheads, by Joseph Fulkerson (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 80 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-57-9. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

The haiku in *Thunderheads* are quiet, nicely satisfying poems. Most of the haiku concern the outdoors, and in these times of isolation, it is refreshing to be reminded of its wonder. Fulkerson immerses himself to find moments of consequence. Notice the deft use of sound in the following haiku: *meteor shower / the click-clack / of a passing train.* Other poems open themselves up to interesting interpretations, as in: *campfire embers my hands stargazing.* An enjoyable outing. – pm

Basho's Cocaine: A Haiku Detective Novel, by Michael Ketchek (No place [Rochester, New York]: Free Food Press, 2020). 164 pages; 5½" × 8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$15.00 from www.mketchek.wixsite.com/mysite

Francis Swift is a haiku-writing private detective in Ketchek's modern noir. I won't give too much away, except to note that the case involves an illegal substance that purports to inspire haikuists to write poems worthy of the master's name, and that the twist-and-turn case involves kidnapping and a lot of snappy dialogue. A fun romp. *hiding Basho / from a client / under a gun magazine.* – pm

Sticky Notes Haiku: This Life, by Robert Epstein (West Union, W.V.: Middle Island Press, 2020). 112 pages; 5" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7341254-8-1. Price: \$10.00 from on-line booksellers.

A second haiku collection by Epstein this year, on top of his work as prolific anthology editor. As might be expected of such output, some of the poems are more passing thought than keenly perceived moment, e.g. *still a mystery / how they work / post-it notes* or *tossing celery / into the soup pot / are you ready to die?* We've all had these thoughts, but rather ho-hum to be included as a poem in a collection. Epstein is a talented poet, and he is capable of writing evocative haiku, such as the delightful: *fresh blueberries— / the small stain / on his writing pad*. There are others of quality. A final note: the clever formatting of the haiku in a script typeface onto illustrated post-it notes is a bit distracting, and at times hard to discern.

– pm

Small Hadron Divider, by David J. Kelly (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 96 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-54-8. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Kelly's latest collection is divided into the six flavors of quarks (up, down, strange, charm, top, bottom), plus one section for gluons; each section starts with a haibun thematically related to the flavor, and the haiku within each section are flavored as well. It is a nice strategy and suits the variety of Kelly's work. He likes to play with language, and the expectations created from it, e.g. *arriving late / through the arch / of your eyebrow*. And there are a fair number of puns: *baptism of fire / the gingerbread men / meet their baker*. Some of the poems are fairly narrative, but there is usually some twist in the journey. Overall, an enjoyable collection.

– pm

Wind Flowers: The Red Moon Anthology of English-language Haiku 2019, eds. Jim Kacian and the Red Moon Editorial Staff (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 190 pages; 5½" × 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-49-4. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Wind Flowers is the annual best-of from all online and print journals, collections, contests, and more; as voted upon by the Red Moon editorial staff. As would be expected, the variety of the anthology reflects the variety of the editors, and the current crop does a nice job sampling the current temperature of English-language haiku. Because the goal of each editor is to nominate any work that “s/he feels is of exceptional skill,” the anthology collects what is best at this point in time, but is not necessarily indicative of where haiku is going in the future—or where it is testing the limits of haiku. That said, this annual belongs on the bookshelf of every serious reader of haiku. Also contains the essays “A Short Biography of Tomita Moppo” by Masaya Saito (*Modern Haiku*), Sandra Simpson’s “The Edo Years: from Tosei to Basho” (*Haiku NewZ*), Charles Trumbull’s “Mendicants” (*Frogpond*), and Michael Dylan’s Welch’s “Questioning Haiku: A Shiki Manifesto” (*Haiku Canada Review*). Always recommended. – pm

Blossom Moon: Waukesha Haiku Group, ed. Lee Gurga and Kelly Sauvage Angel (Champaign, Ill.: Modern Haiku Press, 2020). 72 pages; 5½" × 4¼". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9600855-2-1. Price: \$10.00 from www.modernhaiku.org

Members’ anthology from Wisconsin’s Waukesha Haiku Group. English-language haiku has deep roots in Wisconsin, and the ten-member Waukesha Group is a nice addition. A short introduction by Lee Gurga introduces the group, and tells of two questions leader Dan Schwerin asks about each workshopped poem: “What do you like about it?” and “What would you do to improve it, if anything?” These questions allow a great latitude among poetic styles, and at the same time show a seriousness about their art. Haiku groups are the heart of the haiku community. It is good to see one that beats so openly and consistently. *you are in my dream / or in the feminine / singular, a song* (Schwerin); *uterine dream coming back for my wings* (McKee); *female cardinal / my closet / of earth tones* (Warther). – pm

The Turbulent Mountains, by Mohammad Azim Khan (Arlington, Va.: Turtle Light Press, 2020). 22 pages; ebook. No ISBN. Price: free download from www.turtlelightpress.com

This collection received an honorable mention in Turtle Light Press' 2019 chapbook contest. Khan is a retired U.N. official who has overseen relief and disaster operations. The ebook contains sixteen haiku that often juxtapose the horrors of war with the mundane details of daily life. Place, when specified, points to Afghanistan, but otherwise the terrain is anywhere—anywhere one finds wildflowers crushed in the chain tracks of tanks or kites flying above a refugee camp. As might be expected, Khan occasionally falls into narrative, as in *almond blossoms— / how many more seasons / without peace*. Yet when he allows the moment to fully speak for itself, the haiku can be powerful. *fallen soldier— / in his haversack, / chewing gum*. – pm & mrb

The Ohio Haiku Anthology, ed. Joshua Gage (No place: Cuttlefish Books, 2020). 164 pages; 4½" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7350257-0-4. Price: \$10.00 from <https://pottygok.wixsite.com/cuttlefishbooks/books>

In this charming anthology's introduction, editor Gage laments his attempts to galvanize Ohioans to write haiku, yet a quick look at the 'acknowledgements' section of the book shows that Ohioans have been writing haiku all along. The book contains the work of thirty-eight haikuists, past and present. Local groups, in which people get together to share their poetry, are the backbone of the haiku community; such collections are to be treasured. A sample: *one street / connects to another— / cherry blossoms* (Tish Davis); *deployment— / that tree had leaves / this morning* (Jennifer Hambrick); *broken fence / sunlight enters / on a fawn* (Susan Mallernee); *Voyager 1 / probes interstellar space / our divorce finalized* (Dan Smith). – pm

De-a-ndoaselea / Backwards, by Vasile Moldovan (Romania: Editura UZP, 2020). 93 pages; 5½" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-606-9654-25-5. Price: inquire of the author at vasilemoldovan1949@gmail.com

A collection of senryu from a past president of the Romanian Haiku Society. Sadly, many of the poems suffer from poor English translations and there are many typos. That aside, there is a gentle humor to the poems. *At the rendezvous / he forgot his walk stick / she the glasses; Grandma is up to date / with the latest fashion ... / from the last century.* Includes a few pandemic-related poems, such as: *Even under the mask / you are so beautiful ... / in my memory.* – pm

The Journey, by Anna Cates (Eugene, Or.: Resource Publications, 2020). 116 pages; 6" × 9". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7252-5991-1. Price: \$12.00 from online booksellers.

In the introduction, Cates tells the reader that the collection is the result of a challenge she gave herself to write on each chapter of a world religions text. Free verse forms represent the majority of the poems, although her haibun are well represented; all the poems in this collection have been published. The book moves through time, from pre-Christian religions to the present. Through all periods, Cates looks at religion from a multitude of angles, and while her reach is wide-ranging and engaging, she seems happier to leave the reader with questions rather than conclusions. Yet she often finds beauty among the light and darkness, and a much-needed humanity that makes it all worthwhile. – pm

Northern Lights, by Marcus Larsson (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 86 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-51-7. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Despite its naturalistic title, it is people that are the focus of Larsson's newest collection. The poems detail a multitude of tensions that arise in interpersonal relationships, from the humorous *summer night / his sister and I / suddenly alone*, to the poignant *in love... / my son / plays my old records*. This evaluation of the ever-changing distances between us is handled deftly; Larsson is a skilled poet. Throughout the collection there is a narrative thread of loss, as the poet loses both his parents; one powerful poem: *another doctor / enters the room / autumn snow*. Recommended. – pm

Haiku 2020, ed. Lee Gurga and Scott Metz (Champaign, IL: Modern Haiku Press, 2020). 109 pages; 5½" × 4¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9600855-1-4. Price: \$13.00 from www.modernhaiku.org

The latest iteration of editor Gurga and Metz's annual "100 notable ku" is introduced with a brief essay by Richard Gilbert. In his essay, Gilbert points out the inherent connections between poems placed closely to each other. It is an interesting and worthwhile read. As would be expected, the contents of *Haiku 2020* skew in favor of the editor's preferences. For example, a large percentage (19%) come from Metz's own *is/let* blog. This isn't to say that the more mainstream journals aren't well represented, but when they are the poems often favor more language-centered or modernist work, such as this from Modern Haiku: *tearing the scab off winter doldrums* (Carolyn Hall). If time and the postal service had permitted, it would have been interesting to review *Haiku 2020* and the latest Red Moon Anthology together. *Haiku 2020* collects more than other anthologies of what might be called the "new haiku," a usage that is less nature-oriented and moment-centered. This is an exciting place to explore and a good widening of the haiku corpus. A few other examples from this diverse collection: *starlight / through my body / of metaphors* (Michelle Tennison); *snow / be / it* (Christopher Patchel); *all about the universe / the child's / one page report* (Pat Davis). Recommended. – pm