

between each wave
my children
disappear

Marco Fraticelli

first snow
the children's hangers
clatter in the closet

Michael Dylan Welch

wild roses
the way she ties back
her hair

Terry Ann Carter

*une dent en or
en sortant de chez le dentiste
les feuilles tombent*

a gold tooth
leaving the dentist
the leaves fall

André Dubaïme

aster than the speed of light

LeRoy Gorman

wild pears —
yellow jackets push
under their skins

Carole MacRury

surrounding
the quiet bungalow
yellow crime scene tape

Joanne Morcom

after the rain
my daughter jumps into
each piece of sky

Jacqueline Pearce

Gratitude in the Time of Covid-19: The Haiku Hecameron, ed. Scott Mason (Chappaqua, New York: Girasole Press, 2020). 234 pages; 5" × 7¼". Matte four-color cover; hardcover. ISBN 978-1-64970-619-4. Price: \$24.95 from www.thewondercode.com

Reviewed by Joyce Clement

It seems appropriate to begin writing this review of *Gratitude in the Time of COVID-19, The Haiku Hecameron*, edited by Scott Mason, in the midst of a crushing COVID-19 second wave on what is, in the U.S.,

Thanksgiving Day. The synchronicity seems to mirror what is at the heart of this anthology. As explained in Mason's introduction, the *Haiku Hecameron* is loosely modeled on Giovanni Boccaccio's mid-14th century *The Decameron* (a term derived from "ten days"), a collection of stories written over ten days by ten young men and women who had escaped to the Tuscan countryside to avoid the plague in Florence. Mason's intent for the *The Haiku Hecameron* is to offer a volume of work "comprised by one hundred haiku poets worldwide and created not in the spirit of retreat or escapism but of *return to and re-connection with* the everyday wonders that continue to surround us." The result is an exceptional, thoughtfully crafted collection of haiku and related forms that attend to the present moment of an isolating yet global pandemic, as well as to the ever-present moments of the daily and seasonal world that we inhabit.

staying apart together Paschal moon

Julie Warther

despite your mask
i can't help but catch
your smile

Jim Kacian, from it is possible, haibun

For those hungry for new haiku, an instinctive first pass would be to consume this book page by page experiencing each piece as a self-contained entity. Doing so produces a satisfying result, and gems can be found. But it would be a disservice, to both the reader and the book, to end there. *Haiku Hecameron* is uniquely structured. It contains an intermingling of over 140 haiku, forty-eight haibun, seventeen haiku sequences, and eight haiga. These are arranged in 100 numbered day sections (Hecameron = "100 days"), each day consisting of two pages. By design every turn of the page is a new day, and it is here where the art of the poet best meets the art of the editor. Each day offers a varied combination of writings. Much like connections and juxtapositions that occur within all haiku-related forms, Mason's skillful selection and sequencing of each element within a day create multi-level relationships that vibrate across the pages. Taking

the time to savor each day as a whole, to notice and consider these relationships, elevates and creates a deeply affecting reading experience.

DAY SIXTY-EIGHT

sunbeams...
 a seam of cinnamon
 in my morning roll
Brad Bennett

midnight breeze —
 the sound of a can
 rolling intermittently
Anthony Itopa Obaro

Day by day the book moves through time, and over time seems to subtly shift in focus—a shift that may echo one’s own changing perspective while living through this time of COVID. In the first forty-eight days much of the writing directly addresses the pandemic and is set in the season of the initial spread.

lockdown —
 the fuchsia’s first bud
 opens for business
Tanya McDonald, from Spring and All, haibun

disneyland closed
 a pink moon fills
 the giant tea cup
Roberta Beary

looking up from the news
 each blade of grass
 a different green
Valerie Broadhurst Woerdehoff, from Quarantine, sequence

At the book’s center, a bloom of full-color haiga appears and seems to invoke a change. The last forty-eight days still touch on the pandemic but less often, less directly, almost as if it is becoming normalized. It is a shift that somehow echoes reality as communities and countries settle into fatigue and new routines.

doom and gloom toddler loves the rhyme

George Swede

a hint of jasmine

the rest

is moonlight

Caroline Skanne

Through a complex layering of connectivity, the book builds a rich resonance. Singular moments reside within singular poems, poems reside within a singular days, days within a time line, a time line within a specific pandemic, a pandemic within a world, a world within its own history, and a title that reaches back and touches a not so different distant past. Infused throughout is the sense of gratitude wherever the poetic attention turns.

pale blue dot

our baby

opens one eye

Dietmar Tauchner

As a bit of a postscript: The anthology's primary unit of measure and organizing structure is days. It abandons page numbering all together which leaves an interesting, somewhat uneasy open-endedness. The submission deadline for the book was mid-April 2020. At that point the COVID-19 virus was around 100 days old, and we were perhaps optimistic in thinking an end was in sight. We are now well over 300 days into the pandemic and still counting. I can't help but wonder what might be different in a *Haiku Tri-Hecameron*.