

BRIEFLY NOTED

Invisible Dictionary, by Stuart Bartow (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 122 pages; 4¼"×6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-90-6. Price: \$20.00 from www.red-moonpress.com

In this spellbinding collection of fifty-six haibun, Stuart Bartow probes the valleys of his imagination and wanders the reader through his philosophical musings on the realities and mysteries of being. Through brief encounters human, terrestrial, and celestial, he explores earth-bound destinations and destinies and poses questions, "So what's to grasp beyond now?" In fables and stories, someone or something invisible is infused with a quality of magic. It can disappear and not be seen by the human eye. So what is an "invisible dictionary"? Can something have meaning if it can't be seen or doesn't have a name? That question and so many others cannot be answered by the analytical mind, but perhaps some interpretation can be "understood" through an imagination that never grows old. Bartow suddenly realizes in the opening haibun, "Shooting Stars": "... even had I been born nine years ago, I'd still be that kid wandering outside in the clouds and stars." Notice he doesn't say "under" the clouds and stars, but "in" them. Throughout the collection, Bartow maintains a fine balance between compaction/expansion or sometimes expansion/compaction with the prose and haiku. For example, in the haibun "Translation," carpenter ants nesting in the walls at night sound like the rustle of "aluminum foil being crumpled." From the inner confines of the nest, the haiku transports the reader to radio waves unscrambling songs sent into space. In "True North," the prose's "symphonic wind" out past Pluto is juxtaposed with the haiku's wind heard "whistling" inside a dark shed. And on every page, poetry: the imagination is "an ocean," its own "infinite universe"; in the here and now a "constellation of fireflies" and "blizzard of white moths"; in dimensions unknown ghosts, avatars, and aliens. Wonder-filled and mesmerizing, *Invisible Dictionary* is a haibun collection you won't want to miss. —fb (Francine Banwarth)

Time, by Marcus Larsson (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 72 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-84-5. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Time confirms our existence and the events that occur from past through present. As we move through time, it moves through us. While we attempt to define and quantify it (buy and spend it, lose and be lost in it), time defines us and our relationships to family, friends, and sometimes, strangers. These themes prove to be timeless in Marcus Larsson's fourth collection published by Red Moon Press since 2018. The cover is intriguing. Three global maps recorded by the spacecraft Explorer 66 depict cosmic background radiation from as far back in time as is possible to "see." With one haiku per page, four sections are divided by season, beginning with spring. Each section features thirteen haiku that juxtapose the universal theme of time and its degrees of personal intimacy from the first stages through the end stages of life. A final one-haiku section titled "again" suggests the poet's latest peek at the past while he affirms the present with an eye toward the future. Larsson weathers the passage of time, either by naming the season or suggesting it with *kigo*. We can "feel" the essence of a season as he interweaves his life-filled human moments with palpable sentiment that never gives way to sentimentality. This is where we allow the poems to speak for themselves. A favorite from each section beginning with spring: *spring sun / the waitress has news / about herself; dad's dog / keeps getting in the way / summer wind; all passengers / remain on the bus / autumn deepens; winter evening / our boy's / thin shoulders.* —fb

Rounded by the Sea, by Bill Cooper (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 104 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-88-3. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

The title and cover art for Bill Cooper's eighth collection published by Red Moon Press suggest that sharp angles and edges can be worn away, rounded, by earth elements and the forces of nature. Water, a source of

possibility; land, a "pillow of grass"; and air, breath of the universe, are imaged in no less than forty-seven varieties of fish, bird, wildlife, and plant life. Nothing seems to slip by Cooper's powers of observation as he "tunes into" the everyday life teeming around him. In these 120 haiku and senryu, he also addresses the human landscape throughout, beginning with the first section, "child." For many of us, haiku have provided a respite during the last two years as a way of rounding and softening the harsh realities of Covid. Cooper expresses gratitude to the editors of journals who, during these pandemic times, "have provided a welcome stream of counsel and good cheer." Some of the poems deal with the pandemic through the eyes of adults or children in surprising imagery: *biolab buzz about furin cleavage; preschool / each superhero / masked*. Others are delightful in the terminology they bring to the accumulation of stress, as in this monoku: *deadline approaching a dish of bangers and mash*. There are intimate moments of refuge: *cold night snuggle inside a harp cover*; and moments of discovery as with this delicate splash of color in a rainy bog: *steady rain / bits of cranberry flower / slide down the turtle shell*. Some revisit the harsh realities of the past: *dog tags / the teen asks why / there are two*. In a life of accrued and incremental losses, this collection reminds us to keep the edges rounded. —fb

A Hummingbird Still: Haiku & Senryu in the Spirit of J. Krishnamurti, by Robert Epstein (West Union, W.V.: Middle Island Press, 2021). 144 pages; 5" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8483087-22-9. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

Many haiku practitioners are familiar with Robert Epstein. In addition to works of nonfiction, he is the author of eighteen published haiku collections and the editor of eleven haiku anthologies. His latest collection is best described by its subtitle: *Haiku & Senryu in the Spirit of J. Krishnamurti*, whose spiritual teachings Epstein has studied since the late 1970s. A wish to express his gratitude for the teachings of Krishnamurti and to share something of what he has learned inspired the idea for this endeavor. The book is divided into sixteen chapters. Each chapter

begins with one of Krishnamurti's teachings, which is paired with photos and previously composed haiku or senryu that Epstein selected because they resonate with that particular teaching. For example, the teaching that opens the collection, "Truth is a Pathless Land," is paired with four nature photographs and five poems. A photograph of a burst milkweed pod is set with the haiku: *gossamer / I could have gone / that way too*. The sixteen teachings are paired with 122 haiku/senryu and ninety-three photographs from the world of nature and/or human life. One aspect that I most appreciate about this collection is an introductory quote by Krishnamurti, which resonates so well with the haiku arts that we practice: "Nature is the meadows, the groves, the rivers, all the marvelous earth, the trees and the beauty of the earth. If we have no relationship with that, we shall have no relationship with each other." Throughout *A Hummingbird Still* Epstein bears witness to that truth. *in case / I had any questions / cicada shells; no need to call it / a hummingbird / hovering iridescence; departing between / blue sky and birdsong... / thin air.* —fb

Wind Rose, by Michele Root-Bernstein (United Kingdom: Snapshot Press, 2021). 40 pages; ebook. No ISBN. Free download at www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks.htm

Wind Rose, Michele Root-Bernstein's first published chapbook, is one of three winning collections in the 2021 Snapshot Press eChapbook Awards series. Twenty-four published and unpublished haiku are divided evenly into sections named for the four cardinal winds—south, north, west, and east. The juxtaposition of title and cover art (a bronze wind spirit) led to a Google search for the definition of "wind rose": a diagram showing how wind speed and direction are distributed at a location as well as the frequency of winds blowing from particular directions. Before magnetic compasses the wind rose served as a guide on mariners' charts to show the directions of the winds. It serves aptly here as an extended metaphor for the poems on these pages. In a voice uniquely reflective and innovative, Root-Bernstein tugs at loose threads in the tapestry of her life the way the wind tugs at a leaf. She is a patient observer and allows the natural world

to reveal itself, which opens the window to self-revelation. She softens the boundaries that sometimes keep the art of haiku practice confined, experiments with form and function, turns phrases, and plays with verbs. In a poem that begins with "cottonwood" words and word fragments cascade down the page as if blown by the wind and leave the imagery dangling in the open air around a last preposition. Root-Bernstein is centered in her universe like the calm in the eye of a storm, where she imagines what it might be like to "live simply," to have "the good enough life" in places she is "belonging for." Join her here for these twenty-four poems and be inspired to explore creativity in your haiku practice. *petal fall / the life I imagine / longs for me; mapping myself a garden somewhere south of old lady; trembling / at the speed of dark— / heart-leaved bindweed.* —fb

Home and Away, by Ruth Holzer (Chicago, Ill.: Dancing Girl Press, 2021). 39 pages; 5¼" × 7¾". Matte four-colored card covers; side-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$7.00 plus shipping from www.dancinggirlpress.com

An engaging autobiography in thirty-two haibun, all centered on place or, to be more exact, homes and other spaces the poet has known, from the tenement of a hardscrabble childhood to dorm rooms, duplexes, seaside cottages, city apartments and the occasional bower that nature provides. Not for Holzer the halcyon days of youth or the sentimental reminiscence. Hers is a clear-eyed view of childhood games shot through with menace, adult independence marred by the inevitable mistaken choices, and late middle age confrontations with illness and death. Picking her way through the "broken bottles and globs of tar" on the beach by her aunt's house on "Messervy Street," the child finds what beauty and solace there is: "blue and pearl mussel shells, periwinkles" and more "strewn on the sand." To this memory, the adult adds her coda: *endless summer— / outliving / all my family*. Which is a curse, perhaps, as well as a gift. In "Art in Monclair," the adult scours an art fair for a birthday present, an amber necklace, for her mother: *autumn sunlight / shining through / the trapped insect*. In "A Safe Place," the care-taker wakes to a

blizzard, anxiety for an elderly father slowly dissipating as she remembers “he’s not anywhere anymore.” *day break ... wherever you are / I will take you home*. Read *Home and Away* for a masterly exploration of place as the ground that prepares us to experience, remember, and accept. Read Holzer for a brilliant, modern take on the wabi-sabi of the human spirit. —mrb (Michele Root-Bernstein)

Africa, Buddha, by Matthew Caretti (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 126 pages; 4¼"×6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-89-0. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

In *Africa, Buddha*, Matthew Caretti compiles some fifty-one haibun that chronicle his experiences as a teacher in orphanage schools in Malawi and Lesotho. Having lately left his vocation as a Buddhist monk, Caretti is in search of “a new tribe,” another sacred path. Written in a signature style of short, choppy phrases, his deft observations of the exotic locale, mixed with anxious self-scrutiny, make for a compelling read. Perhaps unexpectedly, he finds himself drawn into the needs of the children under his care: “Are we here to save or to serve?” he asks, turning towards the latter: *winter solstice / through the cracks in my life / a sudden wind*. “Half monk. Half father,” as he describes himself, he weighs what may be accomplished in this life, and what may not: *on a faraway ridge / still no closer / to the moon*. —mrb

Angelic Flights, haiku by Gabriel Rosenstock, photographs by Kon Markogiannis (New York, N.Y.: Cross Cultural Communications, 2021). 122 pages; 5½"×8½". Glossy black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-89304-709-2. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

Presented side by side with artistically manipulated photographs, what might be ekphrastic haiku might reflect the poet riffing off certain elements in the imagery or working his way into the artist’s mind or into his own. There’s a theme to this book by Rosenstock and Markogiannis:

the duality of collaboration and beyond that, of human nature, part angelic yearning, part crass hunger and despair. The imagery veers between the ethereal and the pornographic (in a broad sense of the term); the haiku between sense-based intuitions and word-based intellections—and in four languages: English, Irish, Greek and Japanese. Photo and ku speak to each other in myriad ways: descriptively, impressionistically, philosophically. Mixed in with less compelling pairings, some of stunning, provocative effect. Next to a color photo of what looks to be a mourning portrait surrounded with flowers and candles: *the smiling dead... / trying to remember / who we are*. Beneath a photo of old-fashioned daguerreotype portraits adorned with leaves and seeds: *fill it / fill it to the mouth with memories... / freshly dug grave*. Opposite a distressed photograph of a male nude crouching in some kind of flophouse, with some kind of handwriting on the wall: *when the mind splits / does a god escape... / where does he go*. —mrb

Between Falling Leaves and Their Shadows, by James Knippen, Sierra Shellabarger, Anirudh Vyas, and Jamie Wimberly (Alpharetta, Ga.: Red-headed Press, 2021). 75 pages; ebook. ISBN 978-0-578-32797-6. Available as a free e-book from www.redheadedpress.com or www.jamiewimberlypoetry.com

A lovely tribute to the “40 under 40” program launched by the Haiku Society of America with the generous help and advocacy of haiku poet Jamie Wimberly. The program aims to increase the number of young poets writing haiku by means of hands-on mentoring. Wimberly himself has been working with James Knippen, Sierra Shellabarger, and Anirudh Vyas for more than a year. This anthology reflects the fruits of their association. Each poet presents eighteen haiku and one haiga that give voice to a wealth of talent, a diversity of emerging styles, and developing concerns. More than a few haiku shine. *gooseberry twang of his banjo* (Knippen); *sunday paper / soaking up the rain / yellow daffodils* (Shellabarger); *dusk at the door / stars in spaces / between leaves* (Vyas); *penny in a puddle why her* (Wimberly). —mrb

Mała planeta / *A Little Planet, A Book for Writing*, by Lidia Rozmus, in Polish and English (Poland: Austeria Publishing, 2021). 156 pages; 5½"×8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-83-7866-500-7. Price: \$17.66 from Amazon.com (search words: mala planeta and Rozmus).

A Little Planet is the second writing journal that Lidia Rozmus, art editor for *Modern Haiku*, has produced for Austeria Publishing out of Krakow, Poland. The first, *The Republic of Mole Hill* (2017), sprinkled the blank pages of a “book for writing” with photographs, sumi-e drawings, and short haibun giving substance to the poet’s imaginary world as viewed from the balcony of her apartment. In *A Little Planet*, the theme of place is carried forward in much the same way, with longer ruminations (what Rozmus calls haibunga, haibun combined with image) and photographs of buildings, landscapes, and wildlife that have inspired her travels to Kauai, Santa Fe, Kyoto, Perugia, Krakow and beyond. In this volume, somewhat less than half the pages are left blank for the dreams and doodles of the poet’s fellow pilgrims, whether they travel in person or not, whether they describe what happened or “the events that we would prefer to forget about.” Fill this unique journal, if you will, in conversation with a gentle, intuitive soul, versed in haikai arts and their often ironic visions. With a table of contents left blank at the end. *as a souvenir / I hide a ginkgo leaf / and millions of years.* —mrb

Nexus Haiku, by Michael Dudley, Tomislav Maretić, and Dejan Pavlinović (Croatia: privately-published, 2021). 118 pages; 5½"×8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-953-59233-1-2. Price: inquire of Michael Dudley at www.michaeljdudley.com

In this book, two Croatian haiku poets join a haijin from Canada to compose ensemble—or, as they put it, to co-create—eighty-five haiku, five haiku sequences, and five rengay, arranged seasonally. What this means is that each poem carries three “fourth lines” instead of one and the poetic voice is an amalgam of cultural influences, life experiences,

artistic sensitivities and, of course, expressive languages (everything in the book is presented in Croatian and English). Surely the process of co-creation, the meeting of diverse minds in intense conversation, must be rewarding in and of itself—and is certainly a paean in praise of the global haiku community. Yet the final test of any close, intimate collaboration is that it allows individuals to achieve together what they would not be able to produce by themselves, an outcome that hinges on the co-creators willingness to hone ideas against the hard and heated surfaces of each other’s minds. Absent this critical tempering, the results may be less than what the individual working alone might achieve. Despite the heady process, the product may be no more than haiku by committee, so to speak. Where the mostly descriptive haiku of *Nexus Haiku* fall between these two poles, this reader welcomes other readers to co-decide.

wall of graffiti / I read the newspaper / found on a bus seat; raising the roller blinds / eyelids halt a new day / of aftershocks; scent of soup — / entering the attic darkness / head first. —mrb

Wildflowers in a Vase, by Edward Cody Huddleston (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 88 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-83-8. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

In an impressive debut collection, Edward Cody Huddleston ably traverses the terrain of contemporary haiku, proving himself equally adept with natural imagery, poetic allusion, unexpected metaphor, and conceptual-perceptual blends. As Terri L. French puts it in her introduction, the eighty or so haiku gathered here touch on “an array of life-experiences—war, physical and mental illness, loss, death, grief but also childlike innocence and the thrill of new love.” Indeed, Huddleston’s is a vision that takes in the light and the dark at one glance, no more effectively than in the war haiku at the center of book: *how fast / the wildflowers grow / child soldiers*. A couple more favorites: *fireflies / I stroll between / galaxies; low winter sun / an urge / to be Icarus*. —mrb

Through the Magnolias, by Jon Hare (Windsor, Conn.: Buddha Baby Press, 2021). 43 pages; 4¼"×6". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7366037-2-7. Price: \$10.00 from the author; inquire at jhare.magnolia@gmail.com

When the first wave of COVID 19 hit the U.S. in the spring of 2020, a stay-at-home order in Massachusetts led Jon Hare to retreat from work to home for a month of self-reflection, nature watching, and haiku response. The result is a first collection of fifty-two poems arranged day by day, one or two at a time. Some refer to socio-political events; most describe—shasei-like—a more personal journey in place. As Hare notes in an afterword, writing haiku can be a grounding experience that lessens the trauma of uncertainty. And that it is in this haiku book of days. *self-quarantine / the beginning of spring / loses its color; the news keeping us up at night / spring peepers; darkness / of the pre-dawn sky / robin's song.* —mrb

Goldfish's Sigh, by Naho Sugita, trans. Yasuhiro Kamimura (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 180 pages; 4¼"×6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-73-9. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Haiku from the author's first two Japanese collections, *Summer Hat* (2010) and *The Glow of Sand* (2014), translated into English. She is a member of Kazuo Ibaraki's "Canal" group. She mentions in her slight introduction that the translator noted "that some pieces are untranslatable because they consist simply of rhythms," which may explain why a few fall flat; although that may be expected in such a long collection. Her work feels like that of a young poet, in the best sense of the word, which is strictly true about some poems in *Summer Hat*. She is a curious and observant poet, and her poems often open beyond their sometimes-simple scenes and few words. *my mother's / spring parasol / and my spring parasol; talked until / morning, wearing / a thin robe; the whole story / until squashing / a cockroach.* An engaging collection. —pm (Paul Miller)

It Always Comes Back, by Kristen Lindquist (United Kingdom: Snapshot Press, 2021). 32 pages; ebook. No ISBN. Free download at www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks.htm

The first poem of twenty-four (*sap moon / stepping in moose tracks / to stay on the trail*) sets our expectations for the collection, as the poet immerses herself into and leans upon nature. Lindquist is a naturalist and her poems are of her Maine: with its moose, beavers, rocky islands, and other glacial debris—of which perhaps she is one (*glacial erratic / of all the places / we could be*). As an avid birder, a third of the poems are not surprisingly on birds. Editor John Barlow seems to take the same care with these small ebooks that he does with his press' larger print collections; not only are the poems beautifully sequenced, but there is good variety of style, which leaves each poem so much stronger and more vibrant on its own. Easy to recommend. *my long sweater / the color of forsythia / winter rain; North Star / it always comes back / to this.* —pm

A Synonym for Gone, by Glenn G. Coats (United Kingdom: Snapshot Press, 2021). 38 pages; ebook. No ISBN. Free download at www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks.htm

Twenty-four haibun, broken into three sections. Coats is a fine storyteller, teasing out the apt details in his prose, and then pairing them with a haiku that is well-matched but not too jarring. Several themes reoccur: the idea of boundaries, family tales, a progressively ill spouse, and of course fishing—which is a natural metaphor for his musings. Ultimately, we come away with a sense of what it means to be of a place and people—and the compromises we often make. The thread of the sick wife concludes the collection, with the haibun, “Come to Life.” “My wife is in a yellow gown. We both remember a two-piece bathing suit that was much the same color, a small sailboat gliding across the reservoir...” The capping verse: *life of a mayfly / the breath it takes / to say I love you.* —pm

Susurrus: Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members' Anthology 2021, eds. Elaine & Neal Whitman (San Jose, Calif.: The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, 2021). 80 pages; 6"×9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7357235-2-5. Price: \$15.00 from www.yths.org

The annual Yuki Teikei Members' Anthology is a good reminder of the benefits to be had as a YTHS member. The first section is an anthology of poems from seventy-five members, two per person. A few favorites: *winter creek / the sinuous song / of a hermit thrush* (Dyana Basist); *old horse / old me / the winter woods* (Joan Iversen Goswell); *greening of street trees— / a lab tech at the bus stop / still wearing her scrubs* (Linda Papanicolaou). These are followed by seven poems each by the featured readers of the annual Spring Reading, this year via Zoom: Charles Trumbull, Joan Iversen Goswell, Michael Henry Lee, and Michele Root-Bernstein. Then a report on the 2021 Asilomar retreat, also held via Zoom, which details the presentations and discussions held. Of interest was the keynote talk by Emiko Miyashita on her haiku journey. The volume ends with several prose submissions by members on the way haiku helped them deal with COVID. The annual anthology is a bumper crop of haiku and more. Clearly the YTHS is an active group! —pm

Shaded Pergola, by Eleni Traganas (Woodside, N.Y.: Tropæum Press, 2021). 95 pages; 5½"×8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-578-31198-2. Price: \$14.99 from online booksellers.

There is a reason most haiku eschew poetic devices such as personification and overt metaphor; in a short poem, where focus is of utmost importance, these devices distract us away from what is really going on—which should be enough for us. The haiku in *Shaded Pergola* are often adorned with such distractions. Title aside ("The Return"), the haiku *Sharp scissors clip the / sky into V-shaped doilies— / tree swallows are back!* focuses on the imagined craftwork at the expense of the swallows. The 5-7-5 pattern (which if used well we have no problem with) doesn't help its first line breaking it where it does. The collection contains many interesting

ideas and images, and there are some enjoyable poems (*Late lethargic June— / a red strawberry lounges / on the tablecloth*), but they too often get lost among the devises or padded constructions. The book is beautifully produced, with complementary illustrations. “Season’s Delights”: *Glass candy dish filled / with orange toffee comfits— / falling autumn leaves.* —pm

Old Roads, by Brett Taylor (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 132 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-78-4. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Taylor is a Tennessee resident whose work primarily describes his encounters with nature, presumably in his home state. Most of the poems describe some small event or detail—often interesting—which moved the poet. However, too often the resultant poems leave little room for the reader. *all the playfulness / belongs to the young ones / the calves running; from the corner / the strange tapping sound again: moth.* Such poems nicely reveal the personality of the poet. That said, there are a few poems that rise above observation. *famous old road / traveled by two presidents / almost gone.* At over a hundred-sixty haiku the book could have benefited from some pruning. —pm

Spring Dawn, by Anthony Lusardi (Windsor, Conn.: Buddha Baby Press: 2022). 12 pages; 3" × 4". Red card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$4.00 from the author at lusardi133@gmail.com

A mini-chapbook containing ten poems. We like these brief snapshots of a poet’s work, in this case structured as a quick jaunt through the seasons. Lusardi is sensitive to the ebbs and flows that makes up this progression. All the poems take place outside and in most instances could be in the same neighborhood. An enjoyable outing: *spring dawn... / dew drops / from impatiens; beach breeze— / readjusting the umbrella / in my cocktail.* —pm

Edge of Suburbia, by Christopher Bays (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 92 pages; 6"×9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-82-1. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Bays' first collection of haibun and haiku. Judging from the biography on the last page, Bays' poetry (especially his haibun) feel autobiographical, with the middle section emphasizing his time in a military family, both overseas and in the States. As a military brat, Bays knows the often broken and bruised people he populates his haibun with, their sense of dislocation often like his own. Indeed, Bays has a strong empathy for his characters, yet he paints them with unflinchingly honesty. A favorite haibun describing the sale of Berlin Wall pieces, "that some professor paid a king's ransom for a brick to hold down a pile of term papers..." The capping haiku *dust-filled desert ... / howls of a coyote / by the watchtower* shifts to the American desert and our own internment camp history; it is a powerful move. Individual haiku separate some of the haibun, many with the same themes. *twilight / the caged silverback / peels a pumpkin; clipping tags / from luggage... / summer's end; babies strapped to backs / barbed-wire sun.* —pm

Checkout Time is Noon: Death Awareness Haiku, by Robert Epstein (West Union, W.V.: Middle Island Press, 2022). 80 Pages; 5"×8". Four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-776542-59-6. Price: \$12.00 from online booksellers.

A second edition of Epstein's 2012 collection in which he "lean[ed] into the well of impermanence." At the time of its publication, Epstein was in fine health. In the years since, as he informs the reader in an additional preface: he has lost the last of his parents, discovered a compromised immune system, and battled cancer. So it is perhaps fitting that he revisits this collection. Some of the poems are a little more narrative than we would like: *in my dream / a bridge collapses / is that birth or death.* But others hit soundly: *death lays its head down too; it won't last / I won't last / blue moon.* —pm

Abandoned Farmhouse, by Edward J. Rielly (Sammamish, Wash.: Press Here, 2021). 55 pages; 5"×8". Four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-878798-41-1. Price: \$10.00 from online booksellers.

A new edition of Rielly's 2000 collection, expanded with the addition of a few new poems. The book's titular section contains seventeen haiku on the poet's family farm, now sold, but abandoned between his parent's death and the sale; all haiku contain the same first line. Rielly's haiku have always had a nostalgic flavor to them, and here each farmhouse object brings back memories of what was and what could have been. *abandoned farmhouse: / my daughter snaps a picture / of the sagging front porch*. The rest of the book contains seasonally-arranged haiku, of which many also relate to the poet's Wisconsin farming background. *climate change ... / my old globe / gathering dust; in a dried hoof print / on the cow path / a violet blooming; January wind: / an old farmer hides his face / from the auctioneer*. An enjoyable book to revisit. —pm