

BRIEFLY NOTED

Upwelling: Haiku, Senryu, Tanka and Haibun, by Lorraine A. Padden (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 110 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-06-3. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

In the author's note Lorraine Padden explains that: "This collection emerged from my ongoing relationship with Zen Peacemakers International, a global organization whose members and affiliates mobilize peace-building, humanitarian, social, and civic action. ... I offer these poems as an act of bearing witness." The title is an apt description of the building up of emotion and strength to address the injustice, bigotry, racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression in contemporary society. Padden's haiku, senryu, and tanka bear witness to the cruelty, pain, and frustration evident in our daily lives. At first, the poem may appear to be a simple scene, but then she asks us to look below the surface. Consider this haiku: *black-eyed susan / the garden / she left behind*. On the surface we see a garden, with black-eyed susan flowers, a perennial that comes up by itself each year. But considering a black eye in another context, this haiku is about domestic violence. It is about the "black-eyed susan" (singular), who is no longer with us. We knew her as a survivor, but now she is no longer around. Has she died? What has she left behind? A garden, where she tried to nurture plants to health and beauty. Sometimes she addresses internal psychological issues such as eating disorders as we see in this senryu: *the anorexic's / last resort / chemical peel*. At times, Padden employs typographical layout to emphasize her point, as in this poem:

a
 few swallows
 a
 knee
 a
 neck

The accumulation of “a” adds weight to the final “knee” which, of course, we visualize as George Floyd’s tragic death. At first, the swallows just seem to be birds flying over the street. But then it sinks in that the swallows could be attempts to catch one’s breath. A few of the haiku are published across two pages using the book’s gutter as a haiku cut. When I was first reading the collection, I thought these “half haiku” were just trying to be extremely vague, cryptic monoku. Then I concluded that you had to continue reading across the gutter to the second page for the other half of the haiku. For example, on the left page, we get “schoolyard bully” then, on the next page, comes “a chocolate milk mustache.” I went back and re-read several of these to make sure I hadn’t misunderstood any of them. They were effective haiku. However, I’m still not sold on using the gutter as a means of indicating the haiku cut. Padden’s *Upwelling* is an outstanding collection of haiku, senryu, tanka, and haibun that asks all of us to bear witness to the wrongs of our contemporary world. —rb (Randy M. Brooks)

Glide Path, by Peter Newton (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 132 pages; 5" × 7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-00-1. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Dedicated to his good “friend, poet, mentor” Vincent Tripi, *Glide Path* is another outstanding collection of haiku by Peter Newton. His title haiku starts the book with: *in the right light a slug’s glide path*, which serves as an emblem of Newton’s approach to haiku. His haiku are simple, clear, moments of perception with depth about seeing things “in the right light,” and what does he see? Movement. Nature. A record of one’s passing. His voice is authentic, honest, spontaneous, and confident, as we can see in this haiku: *raspberry sherbet sunrise / first thought / best thought*. Where does he find significance in haiku? Just by being: *we take turns / standing in its spotlight / forest sunbeam*. And yet, there is the hint of word magic, the poetic spell of speaking or not speaking, as we discover in this one: *not speaking / the language / of waterfalls*. Newton does not shy away from society but embraces friendships and family. I feel the shared loss

implicitly conveyed in this haiku: *we call each other / to talk about her / mother's day*. Who can't help but smile with this middle age non-crisis: *middle age / I build the snowman / a son*. Newton achieves depth and poignancy without odd syntax, linguistic tricks, cryptic half-haiku, or typographical extravagances. Consider the simple complexity of being inside outdoors in this haiku: *bus stop / a room inside / the rain*. His collection offers page after page of perception, insight, and poetic spell through understated everyday language. The book concludes with his "ars poetica" haiku: *sitting on a rock / feeling how it feels / haiku poet*. —rb

Tap Dancing in My Socks, by Bill Kenney (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 102 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-09-4. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Tap Dancing in My Socks is Bill Kenney's fourth, and unfortunately, last collection of haiku since he died this year. If a haiku collection could be considered as an extended "death poem" this collection would be an excellent example. Bill Kenney gracefully embraced his own mortality with a humorous, playful resignation that is evident throughout this book. He writes about growing old, wrestling with cancer, love, and losses and yet throughout these perceptions, he continually celebrates being alive. The closing haiku could be viewed as his death poem: *day's end ... / slow dancing / with myself*. Kenney wrote about getting *older / the people / I call old* and sometimes takes us back into memories: *my childhood / the dragonfly / knows the way*. He faced his own health challenges: *chemo ... / midtown traffic / stop and go* and was there for the funerals of friends: *graveside / the sun / on my back*. He wrote about romance: *rom-com / sharing the armrest / with a stranger* and less than fulfilling relationships: *singles bar / she tells him she always / picks losers*. He knew time was short: *prognosis terminal / his favorite ice cream / melts in the cup*. Toward the end of the book he goes *back home / all the reasons / I left* but understands that he is going back home to die. This collection is Bill's haiku legacy. I'll close with his writer's perspective: *winter passes / a few minor revisions / to my death poem*. —rb

All the Stars I Can Swallow, by Laurie D. Morrissey (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 104 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-01-8. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

All the Stars I Can Swallow is Laurie D. Morrissey's second collection of haiku. The opening haiku introduces the pervasive spirit of recognizing the blessings of being outdoors. *Perseid night — / my generous patch / of sky*. She excels at haiku written with gratitude and consolation as the gifts of interacting with natural companions. For example: *solo kayak / a winter raft / of sea ducks* and this one: *deep winter — / the sigh of a log / that needed more October*. Of course, sometimes she finds inspiration indoors: *overnight snow / the low hum / of kitchen voices*. A few haiku are written from an introspective look: *belly down / staring into the stream / of consciousness*. But her best work celebrates connections of the human and natural experiences as in this haiku: *third trimester ... / snow-mounded stones / step through the river*. The book ends with: *thoughts of a journey — / distant islands / of clouds*. Morrissey's collection invites readers to join her on a haiku pilgrimage worth joining! —rb

Bone Moon, by John Hawkhead (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2022). 116 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy blue card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-51-0. Price \$15.00 from www.albapublishing.com

John Hawkhead is a well-known haiku writer so readers will be glad to know that Alba Publishing has come out with his second collection, *Bone Moon*. As he explains in the opening, "The 'Bone Moon' represents our passage through life, with all its colours and shadows, up to and beyond the point where we leave it behind. Above us sails the 'bone moon', a reminder that all things share this journey of transition, and all will come to the same inevitable conclusion. *bone moon / a magpie entranced / by a pebble*." Hawkhead excels at haiku, like the title poem, that celebrate the tiny moment but connects it to the grand scheme. Consider the double consciousness of this haiku: *digging potatoes / the entire universe / on a*

gardener's thumb. I love the light touch in this one liner: *wren song the weight of a soul*. Of course, some moments are simply down to earth facts: *silent / as a mouse / the trap*, unless we consider the weight of that silence. Maybe there's a bit of mortality or danger to contend with in that silence? Often, we get two levels of significance in Hawkhead's haiku, as in this case: *refugee drowning / mother slips in and out / of her accent*. At first we imagine the horror of an actual drowning, then we see that it is someone's mother. She "slips in and out" of the water, of danger, of her effort to find safety, a new home, a new sustaining life. She is "drowning" in and out of a dual identity represented by keeping and losing her accent, her mother tongue. I appreciate this metaphoric haiku: *onion skin / peeling back the layers / of her words*. It has nothing to do with actual onions but clearly conveys a psychological process of looking beneath the surface appearance of her words. Things get real with a couple of haiku near the end of the collection. He writes: *blackbird song / outside her window / she refuses drugs* which implies a hospice scene. The blackbirds can be heard. Life goes on. It's out there on the other side of the window. However, she refuses drugs that will dull her senses, take away the pain, but also steal the blackbird's song. Not long after that poem, we get an inner voice haiku that simply states, *sixty one / the realisation / I'm an orphan*. This is a collection of heartfelt haiku that ask us to consider how the bone moon is always overhead, sharing our universal journey of transition. —rb

Another Lost Boat, by Glenn G. Coats (Carolina Shores, N.C.: Pineola Publishing, 2022). 111 pages; 6" x 9". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-352054-86-4. Price: \$10.00 from online booksellers.

Glenn Coats lives in Carolina Shores, North Carolina, where he and his wife, Joan, enjoy exploring the nearby waterways. His adventures began with a lost boat he and his grandfather restored over sixty years ago. The haiku, poems, and haibun in this collection are a literary exploration of his life on the river, bay, and backwaters of the Intercoastal Waterway. Perhaps this literary adventure began with the naming of the restored

boat “Moby after the famous whale.” Coats invites us to come aboard with haiku such as this: *ocean spray / the pulse of a school / beneath the hull*. This vibrant haiku lets us imagine the fresh spray and to feel and hear the “pulse” of this school, which is, of course, fish, but also another kind of education. Coats invites us to consider the society of fishermen: *wharf lights / old men linger around / today’s catch*. He reveals spiritual undertones in this haiku: *submerged rowboat / the forgiveness part / of prayer*. Sometimes there is no catch to bring home: *winter drift / an empty bucket / for the keepers*. I found this haiku—*boat shadows / he asks the nurse / if this is home*—to confront our own mortality. It is not the boat that is lost in this haiku, but the seeker waking up in the boat shadows. This is an outstanding collection of exploration, discoveries, and a lifetime of being at home on a lost boat. —rb

Spirit Level, by Benedict Grant (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 86 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-98-2. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

In this first collection, Benedict Grant writes about the challenges, joys, and ultimate significance of childhood, parenting, and family relationships. Read from front to back, the entire collection reads as a chronology of the narrator’s life story from childhood, through young parenthood, struggling marriage, loss, and finally facing one’s own demons. The opening short haibun starts with a mixed blessing: *the shadow that comes / to kiss us goodnight / whisky sour*. In another haiku, we get a glimpse of an old-fashioned, but familiar, parenting philosophy: *just do / as I say / master bedroom*. But there are consolations such as music: *family upright / learning to play around / the sticky c*. As the story progresses, our haiku narrator becomes a parent: *firstborn / cutting the cord / of an old life*. And although this next haiku seems ominous at first, it turns out to be a simple frustration: *but when we untied the knots / they were dead / Christmas lights*. More serious demons come along over the years, and eventually there is a story of this discordant music: *wedding anniversary / the sharps and flats / of our song*. At one point they have reached *low tide / we need / to talk*. After much introspection, the narrator provides the title poem:

i love me / i love me not / spirit level. With deaths and losses come darkness: *reaching the bottom / of the bottle / a death in the family.* The book ends with an understated (possibly sardonic?) miracle: *turns out / he's doing okay / snowball in hell.* This is a well-written collection that reads like a narrative. Some of the haiku might be too brief to stand on their own, but within the sequence they each contribute to the progress of the life story. —rb

A Slice of Apple, by Guy Nesom (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 116 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-94727-97-5. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Guy Nesom is a botanist “who enjoys finding patterns in nature.” He also edits an online scientific journal, *Phytoneuron*, which publishes reports of new species of plants. His haiku examine the environment—both nature and cityscapes—as observations of life. He knows more of the names of plants than most of us and sees *histories / surrounding me — / names of weeds.* His haiku find connections and observations beyond the scientific perspective. Sometimes we value a plant’s fruit, as in this haiku: *a bowl of persimmons / for granddad’s dessert ... / unnumbered road.* The unnumbered road suggests that finding these persimmons was serendipity. It may be hard to return for more next year. Sometimes our plantings do more than we asked for: *planted for shade / the sidewalk / buckled and broken.* The haiku in the collection actually range in topics far beyond his interest in plants. Here is one that provides an interesting contrast between child’s play and nature’s geologic molding of a canyon over eons of time: *laughing children / dam the creek / that cuts the canyon below.* That last word, “below,” helps position our perspective as up in the mountains. The title poem features a spontaneous artistry: *someone whistling a tune / from the symphony — / a slice of apple.* This is an enjoyable collection of nature and human nature haiku. —rb

a portion of a Western poem, such as Yeats' "Among School Children," Rimbaud's "The Sideboard," Tyutchev's "Thunderstorm in Spring," etc... It is enjoyable to see how the poets respond, often in surprising ways. Of Miriam Van hee's "Picking Blackberries," for example, of which the anthology includes the following lines—*and leave what seems untouchable / where it is, because everything has a price: / you may scratch your skin / on the thorns, you may wake / a snake from sleep, you may drop / your basket*—poet Zdravko Karakehayov writes *the next crack / for the climber's hand / a seagull's shadow*; Dessislava Morosova, *noisy night / the baker's wife pinching her hair / with pins*; while Petar Tchouhov takes it in another direction entirely with *no man's land / the air is cold / and clear*. Of course, the haiku can be enjoyed simply on their own. A fine way to explore haiku in Bulgaria. Recommended. —pm (Paul Miller)

Interchange, by Tom Clausen & Michael Dudley (No place: Self-published, 2022). 89 pages; 5" × 8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-831265-72-0. Price: \$12.00 from online booksellers.

Since 1989, Tom Clausen has posted haiku inside an elevator, on a dictionary stand, and eventually on the website of the Albert R. Mann Library at Cornell University. Starting in 2006, with the move of the poems to the library's website, he has featured a single poet for the month. Additionally, he has posted these daily haiku on his personal Facebook page—upon which he often posts photographs he has taken. The thirty-one poems in *Interchange* are by Michael Dudley, from his featured month in January 2022, and each includes a brief paragraph describing the backstory for that poem. Dudley has then paired these haiku / prose combinations with Clausen's more abstract Facebook photographs. The result is an interesting journey, in which the reader creates their own meaning from each poem, adds to that Dudley's backstory, and then merges that with a photograph. Three haiku from the collection: *no one home / her note on the table / under a plum; planting it deep / as my wrist, an iris bulb / the shape of a heart; slow February snow ... / the last of my resolutions / quietly buried*. —pm

Eggplants & Teardrops: A Haiku Collection, by Aaron Barry (No place: privately printed, 2022). 117 pages; 5½" × 7½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7386339-0-6. Price: \$10.00 from on-line bookseller.

And now for something a little different. I suppose the best analogy for old-timers would be that Barry Aaron's collection, *Eggplants & Teardrops*, is a Monty Python's Flying Circus of contemporary haiku. Let's just try some adjectives. Irreverent. Zany. Surprising. Rude. Satirical. Goofy. Self-deprecating. Silly. Seriously playful. Get out your Urban Dictionary (it's on the web) and enjoy this first collection of haiku (well, mostly senryu) or whatever. Have you checked your horoscope lately? Here's two related haiku: *mercury in retrograde / she brings the car home / with new dents*; and *cold snap / plus the other joys / of dating a gemini*. If only Issa had known about Tinder, he could have appreciated this one: *two new matches / on Tinder! / harvest moon*. Some of Aaron's experiments are too cryptic for me to appreciate. Perhaps a younger reader will understand *iCloudy* or *opening (your) clam* as complete poems? Was that second one a sexual reference? Some of his poems, like this one, *weed / to put it / bluntly*, are just punny. However, most of his poems are refreshing, and I appreciate this new, young, playful, snarky voice. I'll end with a seasonal favorite: *Indian summer— / I ask / for a to-go bag*. —rb

Unsaddled, by Lynn Edge (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 108 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-96-8. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Thirty-four haibun, with a few solo haiku and a sequence tucked between, on the author's life in a small town in South Texas. The haibun cover her childhood, marriage, a favorite dog, and the eventual death of her husband. Through it all, the haibun use a matter-of-fact tone, not unlike the ranchers and cowboys of that part of the state. The poems nicely complement the prose, often revealing emotional movement. In a piece on a visit to the Fort Davis Historical site, Edge weaves a historical fron-

tier bride into her visit's narrative. The interspersed and capping haiku could be of both times: *an odor / of horses lingers / woolen blanket; a lace covered table / in the sitting room / her diary open*. It isn't often a reader gets a good sense of a writer; by hewing a personal narrative the reader gets one here. —pm

The View Arcade, ed. by Nathanel Tico (Calif.: Two Autumns Press, 2022). 42 pages; 9" × 6". Glossy black and white card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$10.00 made payable to "HPNC" from Jim Chessing, 2886 Calais Drive, San Ramon, CA 94583.

The latest anthology from the Haiku Poets of Northern California celebrates their thirty-second (!!!) annual Two Autumns reading. The anthology contains twelve poems from each of the 2022 readers: James Chessing, Kristen Lindquist, Scott Mason, and Julie Schwerin. As expected, it is a strong volume. The collection is designed to complement the annual reading, which can be viewed at their website: <https://www.hpnc.org/32nd-two-autumns-reading-2022> —pm

String Theory: Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2021, eds. Jim Kacian and the Red Moon Editorial Staff (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 210 pages; 5½" × 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947274-93-7. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

We always look forward to the latest annual from Red Moon Press in which the editorial team comb through over three thousand haiku and related works from over two thousand poets. The current volume contains 161 haiku and senryu, plus seventeen haibun, and five essays, deemed the "finest" from 2021. Of the essays, Brad Bennett's "Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia" and Lee Gurga's "Normative Haiku and Beyond" were published in *Modern Haiku* 52.1 and 52.2 respectively. But also included is Dan Schwerin's "Haiku and Christian Practice," Charles

Trumbull's "Waterfalls," and John Zheng's interview with editor Jim Kacian on "What is Monoku?" The anthology is a good gauge of current haiku practice in English-language. Always worth checking out. —pm

What the Sky Holds, by Anthony Lusardi (Windsor, Conn.: Buddha Baby Press, 2022). 12 pages; 4" × 2¾". Blue card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: Inquire of the author at lusardi133@gmail.com

Latest mini-chapbook from Lusardi. The small collection contains ten poems, several related to the sky in the collection's title. There doesn't seem to be a larger theme among the poems, but there is a nice cohesiveness of voice. Lusardi allows the moments of the poems to reveal their own importance, in which small things often, and surprisingly, mean much more than first appear. Two favorites of the ten: *broken down backhoe / inside its rustling bucket / a butterfly wing; orange contrail / fading with what's left of dusk / what's left of today*. —pm

Echo Ridge, by Charles Dowling Williams (No place: Self-published, 2022). 129 pages; 6" × 9". Matte tan card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: Inquire of kytrefarm@yahoo.com

Five years of haiku composition ordered into a single year, presumably from the author's residence on a tree farm. Williams has a good eye and is observant of the seasonal changes around him, but the poems struggle for a lack of understanding of how haiku work. Too often a third line explains the previous two lines, as in: *crows stroll through the yard— / hummingbirds dart at feeders— / feathered miracles*. Readers will also note the two cuts in the above haiku (a trait often found in Williams' work) which dilutes the poem's focus. While we don't doubt the author's sincere poetic reactions, it is hard to recommend this volume as one of haiku. Two others: *the music of spring rain / falling from quicksilver skies— / this sleepy thunder; streams of silver dew / orange lilies burst open / butterflies waiting*. —pm

Rip-Roaring, ed. Corine Timmer (Portugal: Bicaideideias, 2022) 46 pages; 5¼" × 8". Glossy four-color cover; perfectbound. ISBN 978-989-99760-6-1. Price: €6.00 from www.bicaideideias.com

Another year, another anthology from Timmer to do good in the world. Where previous anthologies supported a variety of animal and farm charities, *Rip-Roaring*, with its feline theme, supports the Wildcats Conservation Alliance. This year's anthology contains sixty haiku by fifty-four haikuists. While many of the haiku, in the spirit of the year-of-the-tiger, are tiger-related, other felines, or those identifying as feline, seem to be the main topic. It is fun to see how the various poets approach the topic: from light-hearted to deadly serious. As in previous anthologies, Timmer's creative artwork is greatly enjoyable. A worthwhile book. *a Bengal tiger / pads the rainforest / my solitary life* (Deborah P Kolodji); *ROAR! / the tiger that leaped / into bath time* (Erin Castaldi); *the cat's claws / deeper into the sofa— / divorce pending* (Michael Dylan Welch). —pm

The Way a Poem Emerges: A Haiku Trinity & Beyond, by George Swede (Canada: Lett Press, 2022). 83 pages; 5" × 8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-98811179-3-8. Price: \$20.00 from the author at 70 London St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6G 1N3

In 1992 George Swede wrote an article for *Modern Haiku*, "Elite Haiku: Hybrids of Nature and Human Content," that looked to better define haiku as separate from senryu. He examined other definitions that ultimately seemed lacking, and came up with three-categories of his own: haiku about nature, haiku about us (senryu), and haiku about nature and us. The current volume illustrates these categories using haiku and senryu of his own. Examples of the three categories from the book: *roses at dawn / carrying away a dewdrop / the bumblebee; retired ... / gazing at a pile / of used tires; dry riverbed / the son who thought he had / found his way*. The last section of the volume includes poems that ask where haiku end and the short poem begins. Of late we have been seeing a lot of these and have been asking the same question. A favorite: *what's left of the storm in the closed notebook*. Swede is always an enjoyable read. —pm

It's About Time: The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members' Anthology 2022, eds. Elaine Whitman and Neal Whitman (San Jose, Calif.: Yuki Teikei haiku Society, 2022). 93 pages; 6" × 9". Black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-735723-55-2. Price: \$15.00. Checks payable to "YTHS" mailed to Jeannie Rueter, Publications, PO Box 412, Monterey, CA 93942.

The latest annual anthology from the Yuki Teikei Society. The first section contains members' haiku: two haiku each from twenty-seven poets. A few favorites: *thin mist / a herd of tule elk / crest the horizon* (Dyana Basist); *first snow / as much the silence / as anything* (Michael Henry Lee); *winter hyacinths / a deeper blue / since you've been gone* (Kath Abela Wilson). The majority of the volume revisits the Society's calendar. It recaps the Spring Zoom Reading whose featured readers were Bona M. Santos, Helen Ogden, Marilyn Gehant, and Mark Hollingsworth; with seven poems from each. It revisits the winners of the Tokutomi Memorial Contest (Marilyn Ashbaugh was the winner with: *dad's flattened penny / key chained to a rabbit's foot / Perseids shower*). It gives a nice description of the annual four-day Zoom Retreat, which featured, among other things, a haiku talk by Robert Haas. The volume also gives a nice section of "response" poems to some of the contest winners. If it sounds like the volume includes a lot of information as well as poetry, it does. Check it out. —pm

One Hundred Visions of War, by Julien Vocance, trans. Alfred Nicol (Menomonee Falls, Wis.: Wiseblood Books, 2022). 105 pages; 5" × 8". Black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-951319-37-3. Price: \$12.00 from online booksellers.

A much-needed English translation of Vocance's famous haiku sequence, written from the trenches of WWI. In his introduction, Nicol states that he chose to count syllables, "adhering to the traditional 5-7-5 pattern, as Vocance himself did not, to ensure that these short poems are recognizable ... as the haiku [Vocance] clearly intended them to be." A problem

with this approach is that it forces Nicol to occasionally edit the poems. Using the first poem in the sequence as an example (which appears as the last poem in his translation), Nicol translates it as: *Two rows of trenches, / Two lines of barbed-wire fences: / Civilization*; however, the last line in the original French is *Deux civilisations*, or Two civilizations. A much different poem. Additionally, Nicol sometimes has to move words from one line to the next to make his overall count work; in the haiku *Yesterday whistling / in my ears. Today, my cap. / Tomorrow, my head*, about the bullets flying past him, *oreilles* or ears, is in the first line of the original. Nicol doesn't include the original French versions so readers can't check these kinds of variances themselves. That said, despite his comment to the contrary, Nichol doesn't always adhere to his 5-7-5 format, so the translations ultimately are a bit of a mixed bag. But these are minor issues when you consider the overall power of the sequence which Nicol does a fine job of relaying—and nits aside, seems to be a fairly faithful translation otherwise. The haiku, with its narrow focus, is the perfect vehicle for portraying the horrors of war. It places the reader into the trenches with *Vocance* and forces them to make sense of the senseless scene. We are delighted that Nicol has chosen to translate it in its entirety. Two more: *A wriggling beetle, upside down on the slick slope, pinned by his pack's weight; Men full of shrapnel / tied to their beds and collared — / like they might run off!* Recommended. —pm

Hazy Crescent Moon, by Hifsa Ashraf (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2022). 66 pages; 5" × 7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN SBN 978-1-912773-52-7. Price: £12.00 from www.albapublishing.com

A collection of haiku and senryu about islamophobia. As might be expected of such a heavily-themed book, the reader's interactions with the poems vary depending upon how intrusive the theme is. Some, such as the first poem, *snowflakes since my origin surfaced*, leaves a lot of room for consideration. The plural implies a piling on of whiteness, of weight, yet each snowflake is highly individual and resists such grouping. These

are the more enjoyable poems, in which the theme sits on the sideline, hinting itself, but we as readers are allowed to make our own way. Other poems rely on an awareness of the book's theme to see how they fit. Without it, a poem such as *fading out / the muezzin's call — / torrential rain*, might be read as a nod to an inattentive god or nature. And again, the poem's openness invites other rewarding angles. The least effective are the senryu that close upon reading, such as *airport security / probing into / his prostration mark* or the statement-like *right / wing // fanning // the / flames / of / doubts*. These make their points well, but as senryu often do, don't linger beyond the idea. Islamophobia is a real and serious subject, and hard to convey without sounding like an imam or preacher; Ashraf has done a good job raising our awareness. —pm

The Zen of Power Tools: My Favorite Rejected Haiku, by Michael Ketchek (Rochester, N.Y.: Free Food Press, 2022). 16 pages; 4¼" × 5½". Black and white card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$1.00 from the author at 125 High Street, Rochester, NY 14609.

What a fun little chapbook from Free Food Press. As Michael Ketchek states in his introduction, "These are not my best haiku" but they still "appeal to my sense of aesthetics or sense of humor" so he has gathered them into this one-dollar chapbook. For a dollar, surely you will be able to find one or two haiku that tickle your fancy as well. Here's a few I enjoyed. (1) How about a nature poem? *small sun warmed pool / the wiggle wiggle dance / of mosquito larvae*. (2) Or a traveler on an American pilgrimage? *lonesome traveler / the sign says Red Roof Inn / 49 HD channels*. (3) Maybe you'd like a more literary haiku? *park bench / waiting for Godot / still no breeze*. (4) Or a senryu about spiritual hypocrisy? *after church / the children pretend / to pray*. (5) Or a senryu that combines nature, pilgrimage, literary allusion, and spiritual wisdom into a humble display of Zen-like poetic madness: *deep woods / taking the path less traveled / finding out why*. I didn't quote his title poem because it's a little too foul for my tastes, so readers will have to pay a buck to read that one. Thanks for saving these rejected haiku, Michael! —rb

An Open Parenthesis, by Philip Rowland (Japan: Isobar Press, 2022). 126 pages; 5½" × 8½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-4-907359-40-9. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

Rowland's poems are full of empty spaces, unidentifiable instruments, and things hard to grasp. His work is nicely approximated in the humorous, but telling, one-line poem "Magnum Opus" which simply reads: *I and Though*. He has a haiku sensibility and some of the pieces could be haiku. Of the haiku, there is often a tension between the objective and the abstract; Rowland seems to believe in more than is easily apparent, yet he can't quite find it. Two one-liners: *in the hush before the storm blindnesses flocking* and *pausing to listen where the picture used to be*. In both we get the sense of important things just out of sight (or hearing). Yet he will also embed more recognizable haiku in larger poems, such as these from "Scattered Tokyo Poems": *sun on the rails / glossing her lips / on the station platform* and *twilight — / ballerinas afloat in the glow / of a fourth floor window*. These are more down to earth. A favorite isn't lineated as a haiku, but easily could be considered one, double spaced and staggered on the page: *called home // in the dusk // the space // between // trees // known by heart*. Are the trees known by heart, or is it the undefinable space? Rowland is not always an easy read, but is always enjoyable. It is nice to see haiku outside of its community and among other poetry. —pm

Raised in the World of Everyday Poets, by Darlene O'Dell (India: Yavanika Press, 2022). 22 pages; ebook. No ISBN. \$2.50 for download from www.yavanikapress.wixsite.com

Eleven haibun on the author's parents. The prose moves nicely from the present into memory, as if the author was discovering herself how she had gotten to her time. It is a family in which poetry and other writings are important, and seem to link the family together. As the pieces progress we learn more and more about the parents' relationship. O'Dell's prose is light and studded with everyday objects that are grounding. The

capping haiku serve as O'Dell's responses to her memories of her parents, sometimes questions, at other times acknowledgements. In the haibun, "she developed a slight brogue," O'Dell's elder father struggles to have Siri play a song. His is a world of noise: trains, harmonicas, and as we learned in previous pieces, of repeated poetry. The prose ends with the haiku: *waning moon / the thump of a cane / across the porch*. An enjoyable collection. —pm

The Inevitable, by Dorothy Mahoney (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 116 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-05-6. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

An experimental novel composed of fifty haibun. The haibun are bracketed by two brief narratives, and it is only when the reader works their way through the haibun between that themes and images begin to repeat, albeit in very different forms—as if the narrator is imagining different scenarios in the hope of understanding a single tragedy. Some of the haibun are vague hints at story, but all work toward an overarching feeling. There are many dark moments but also bits of humor as the narrator explores what seems to be the element of chance in our lives. We hesitate to give too much away. It is a striking, highly-original read. Recommended. —pm

Night Jasmine, by Goran Gatalica (Croatia: Laknadlik, 2022). 198 pages; 4½" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-953-8105-27-2. Price: \$18.00 from the author at gatalica.nightjasmine@gmail.com

A book of haiku and senryu, each poem translated into English, French, Italian, Czech, Hindi, Japanese, from the author's original Croatian. In the main these are nature poems, broken into four seasonal sections. The author doesn't seek jarring juxtapositions, but rather pairings that are both logical and emotionally satisfying. In the introduction by Jim

Kacian, he appropriately uses the phrase “pastoral” to describe many of the poems. Nature, to Gatalica, is a balm; a missing part of our modern lives. Not surprisingly, a few follow the European tradition of occasionally telling rather than showing, and the collection’s English translations would have benefited from a native speaker. Overall, an enjoyable and worthwhile collection. *spring cloud ... / a pilgrim is disappearing / among the higher cliffs; summer drought — / in a snapping dog’s teeth / moonlight; scent of snow — / reinforced with cardboard / the refugee’s boots.* —pm

Blessed, by Andrew Riutta (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 164 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-07-0. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Seventy-nine haibun. The pieces are brief, often character studies— anecdotes, we suspect, from the poet’s life. Several are dedicated to actual people, presumably ones in the prose. The characters are often rudderless people, and the stories often about things that went wrong or got away, or that the poet hopes to right someday. The narrator’s voice in these pieces seems consistent across the collection: it is tired, regretful, but reflective. The haiku that cap the prose are more hopeful, and at times seem to come from another version of the poet: a wiser one who has learned some kind of lesson. Enjoyable. —pm

A Kiss, by Gerry McDonnell (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2022). 56 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-50-3. Price: £12.00 from www.albapublishing.com.

A collection of thirty-five haibun with nine pages of haiku at the close. The majority of haibun use Dublin as its setting, and as might be expected of a city with so much history, weaves writers and visitors into the mix of its narrow streets. Many of the haibun have an anecdotal feel to them, as if they were part of a larger biographical narrative. They don’t make shocking detours, but rather rest warmly like a comfortable chair.

This isn't a bad thing; we get a feel for the town and its characters. The haiku act likewise: as capping verses they complement the prose. In a haibun about a new neighbor who is also a recently released convict, the capping haiku reiterates the close quarters of neighbors: *awaking from a nightmare / nobody — / just the peeping moon*. A few of the standalone haiku: *summer in the city — / sipping coffee / in bus fumes; the only movement now / a fluttering moth / at her night light*. —pm

The Angel's Wound, by George Marsh (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2022). 72 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-69-7. Price: \$15.00 from www.alba-publishing.com.

A collection of haibun and haiku sequences. In the introduction, Marsh refers to a rambling quality of his prose, what we think is more train of thought, as his mind moves from, say, memory to idea, to question, to conclusion, to further question, etc... The pieces seem autobiographical. The prose often acts as a frame, full of questions or flights of fancy, while the haiku are grounding; they are here and now. For example, in "There is no memory," the poet is brought back from death by doctors, which leads to a muse on why we need a word for death? He recalls an inscribed archway in Hong Kong, which he has pondered for years. The prose is capped with the haiku: *for all past beings / for all those that shall come / this spring breeze with gulls*. The haiku sequences are likewise framed by prose, and in truth, feel the same. A few poems from a sequence on a ruined church: *entering by the arch / a Cabbage White searches / for what it needs; pecking together / a chaffinch couple graze / on ancient stones*. —pm

Genesis, by Jonathan McKeown (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 224 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-91-3. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

A collection of ninety haibun with haiku interspersed. Most of the haibun are prefaced with a quote, sometimes from other writers, but most often from the biblical book of Genesis. Like the titular book, the haibun in McKeown's *Genesis* are biographical narratives on what have come to define him: stories of family, past and present, work, and dreams. We get the sense that, even in poems of his later life, these moments too are beginnings. The standalone haiku nicely complement the narrative, and it is enjoyable to have them where they are, working with resonance, rather than tacked on at the end or in unincorporated sections. Unsurprising in a biographical narrative, themes repeat, and at times individual haibun can feel bogged down by the weight of too many details; yet this occasional narrative flooding feels appropriate when one considers the larger story, as his life has been a full one. A few of the standalone haiku: *evening star wobbling in the waterhen's wake; living long enough to feel the need for stone; spring winds / the jacaranda / in tatters*. Recommended.
—pm

Unplugged: Haiku & Tanka, by Jacob D. Salzer (No place: Self-published, 2022). 59 pages; 4¼" × 6¾". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-387-93717-2. Price: \$9.99 from www.lulu.com

Unplugged is Jacob Salzer's second collection of haiku. First associated with playing musical instruments without electronic amplification, the term "unplugged" now has been extended to any situation in which one is disconnected from the world of electronic things. The first haiku is: *lost / in my digital footprint . . . / the weight of snow*; and the second haiku is: *unheard rainstorm / drowning within / a digital sea*. We lose touch, we lose sounds, and by the fourth haiku we get the title poem: *unplugged — / I walk into the forest / without a sound*. Titling his collection *Unplugged* is a declaration to, quoting Bashō at the opening of his book, "Follow nature and return to nature." He is not alone in the forest, as we see in this haiku: *smell of moss / on our ancestor's headstone / my father's shadow*. He has been here before and finds *an acquaintance . . . / the bridge disappears / in evening mist*. The family is gathered, perhaps at a campsite,

in this haiku: *family game night / the lantern's hum / gathering moths*. And yes, he does have an acoustic guitar that can be played anywhere: *past lives / from my acoustic guitar / the scent of spruce*. Without videos or tablets, friends tell stories: *sign language / the stories of a farm / in her hands*. This is an outstanding collection of haiku with the invitation to join him in the adventures of going unplugged. —rb

Summer Music Festival at Natural Chimneys Park, by Dave Russo (Sparta, N.C.: Privately printed, 2022). 14 pages; 3" × 3". Light blue card covers; accordion folded. No ISBN. Price: \$10.00 from www.davewrussopoet.com

A charming hand-made collection of ten poems written by Russo on his experiences at the Red Wing Roots Music Festival. The pages open out into one long page, and include simple illustrations by Nicolette Ross. The poems detail his enjoyment of the event, select members of the crowd, and a singer. Just two: *outcrop of sky / ocean scent from limestone / after rain; a jug band / rattles teeth in a jawbone*. —pm