

## BRIEFLY NOTED

*Haiku Highway*, by Marian M. Poe (No place [Plano, Texas]: Dameistermedia, 2024). 117 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-8704401-1-8. Price: \$14.34 from online booksellers.

The current volume is a travelogue of Poe's poetic journey, starting in 1966 with her first attempts at haiku. Because many of the "teachers" at the time were still working out what haiku was and could be, some of these starts in hindsight are not what we'd call haiku today. Poe recognizes this, and as her travelogue moves along she provides timely commentary. The volume contains other poetic forms, but it is the haiku, and the list of small journals, organizations, and haiku-friends that propels the friendly narrative. Part biography; part collection. A delightfully original work! *another winter— / his empty boots by the door / full of memories; after the move / your sand dollar / unbroken.*

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*Baggage Claim*, by Surashree Joshi; 42 pages. *Main Street*, by Darlene O'Dell; 26 pages. *Roundhouse Clock*, by Ronald Scully; 24 pages. *Within Our Somehows*, by Shloka Shankar; 68 pages. All ebooks (India: Yavanika Press, 2025). Price: \$3.00 each from <https://payhip.com/YavanikaPress>

Thanks to the press for these small, enjoyable offerings. And you have to love the price. Joshi examines himself through his work, and it isn't clear whether he is entirely happy with what he finds; his poems often contain surprising pairings. *my je ne sais quoi / baggage claim*. In O'Dell's collection, thirteen haibun, tanka prose, and prose poems examine the hidden lives of the citizens of Main Street, exposing their stories and most importantly—their dreams. O'Dell reveals the juxtapositions between our public and private selves. Not all of Scully's poems are haiku, and several operate in a private universe the reader just gets hints of, but all relate to time. *then the sound / of the last piece / snaps into place*. Shankar's poems also feel personal, and often deliver emotion through interesting language instead of concrete images. While some are head-scratching,

others open up wondrous philosophical arenas. *unaware of our presence. The silhouettes of language clouds.*

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*Spinning Pinwheels*, by K. Ramesh (India: Red River, 2025). 230 pages; 7" × 8¼". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-268771-56-5. Price: \$14.99 from online booksellers.

Collecting lots of new work as well as work that has been collected in three previous collections, *Spinning Pinwheels* showcases twenty-five years of Ramesh's haiku. He writes deeply of place, in moments inhabited then and there, and what they mean to him—usually a sense of grace. At two poems per page, the volume offers a wealth to enjoy. We're delighted to add this to our library. A few favorites from the new poems: *tinkering shed / the sunbird flies in again / with a piece of straw; sunshine after rain ... / the old books vendor / opens the tarpaulin again; summer vacation ... / bubbles rise up / from the bicycle tube.*

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*Vertical in the Sun*, by Mykel Board (New York: Tsuridōrō Press, 2025). 63 pages; 5½" × 8½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-9907972-1-5. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

This senryu collection begins with an introduction by Alan Pizzarelli, which is fitting considering the debt Board owes to him. Board's poems are in turn ironic, pun-filled, and sarcastic—what one expects from modern senryu. An enjoyable outing. *safe for a while / around the haiku poets / the fly; movie poster— / slasher film / rated R for nudity.*

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*Oh No Not Another Haiku (And Other Poems) for Hippies*, by Michael Ketchek ([Rochester, New York]: Free Food Press, 2025). 12 pages; 5½" × 8½". Matte four-color card covers; string-bound. No ISBN. Price: \$5.00 from [mketchek.wixsite.com/mysite](http://mketchek.wixsite.com/mysite)

Latest counter culture poetry collection from Ketchek. Among short lyric poems ("The Day They Legalized Marijuana," "For Janis," etc...) are

several senryu. After decades of kicking against Empire, his work always brings a smile. *Grateful Dead song / just listening I can smell / you know what; a campfire / a guitar, a song / holding back the night.*

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*Something Left: Towpath Anthology 2025*, eds. Jack Blocker, Matt Snyder, and Linda Weir (Washington D.C.: Blocker Book Press, 2025). 73 pages; 4" × 5". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-9904949-1-6. Price: \$11.99 from [towpathhaikupoets@gmail.com](mailto:towpathhaikupoets@gmail.com)

An anthology of work from twenty-one poets of our capital region's haiku group. A few favorites: *inside / the mountain cloud / wild blackberries!* (Li); *robinsong all day the unmade bed* (Beary); and one for departed members: *one by one / they leave the Towpath / their tracks remain* (Sette).

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*Best of Geppo 1978 - 2024*, by Yuki Teikei Haiku Society (Calif.: Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, 2025). 126 pages; 7" × 10". Glossy black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-300-49401-0. Price: \$17.00 from [www.yths.org](http://www.yths.org)

Celebrating the group's fiftieth anniversary, the volume collects 331 haiku by 136 poets. The haiku were voted best haiku from the group's members' journal. From the first wining poem in 1978: *During the short night / spiders are busy ... busy ... / weaving the door shut* (Murphy) to issue 49:4's *ebbing tide / late summer slides / into the sea* (Sheffield), a wonderful look at the group's work. As a bonus, you can find most issues of Geppo on the group's website.

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*Glass Noodles*, by Anthony Lusardi (Farmingham, Mass.: Baby Buddha Press, 2025). 12 pages; 4" × 2¾". Pink card covers; saddle-stapld. No ISBN. Price: \$4.00 from the author at [lusardi133@gmail.com](mailto:lusardi133@gmail.com)

Lusardi has a love for these small, ten poem, chapbooks. Always enjoyable. *glass noodles what's clear on our first date; cherry picking / we talk about / who's dating who.*

*The Smell of Leaves*, by James A. Paulson (Windsor, Conn.: Baby Buddha Press, 2025). 38 pages; 4¼" × 5". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-9892491-2-1. Price: \$5.00 from the author at paulsonja1955@gmail.com

Thirty-six haiku and a few tanka from a long haiku practice. When Paulson hits, the poems expand into well-noticed spaces, universal rhythms ... and importantly his part in the bigger picture. A few favorites: *deep breath of spring / the empty space inside / the Big Dipper; the clack of her flip-flops / on the boardwalk ... / butterflies.*

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*Home*, by Karen Robbie (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2025). 78 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy four-card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-76-3. Price: £12.00 from karenscottish@yahoo.co.uk

A first collection of haiku and haibun. In her brief introduction, Robbie mentions that her poetry is part of her Zen practice. This is easy to see as her poems feel like brief, satisfying-in-themselves engagements. She isn't trying to shock, but to look closely and honestly. Favorites: *after the retreat / still eating porridge / in silence; next year's / dandelions / in the wind.*

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*Pulling the Yarn*, by Carolyn Hall (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 132 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-75-9. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

A new collection by Hall is something to celebrate. This isn't quite one, though. After an insightful introduction by Beverly Acuff Momoi, the first two-thirds of the book contain haiku that have won or placed in various awards over the last twenty-five years. These have also been collected in one of her eight previous collections; just that number of award-winning poems ought to alert the reader to the power of Hall's poetry. The rest of the book contains "uncollected" work. Hall is a sensitive writer of everyday things, yet there is nothing everyday about her observations. Some favorites from the "uncollected": *petty squabble— / a finch shakes yesterday's rain / out of the elm; with such loud voices photos of the dead.*

*Blood Rodeo*, by Robbie Coburn (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 88 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-69-8. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

As a first collection from the Australian haikuist, it contains most of his to-date published haiku, which, despite their oft quality, makes it as a whole a bit out balance thematically. Many of the poems relate to rodeo or other horse-related activities, and these are the strongest. Two favorites: *fallen branches / the horse bones / after the fire; running dry / creek beds I have dug / into my arms.*

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*Double Horizon: An International Haiku Anthology*, eds. Jean Antonini and Gilles Fabre (France: The Fishing Cat Press, 2025). 315 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-10-93318-25-7. Price: €20.00 from [www.haikuspirit.org/doublehorizon.html](http://www.haikuspirit.org/doublehorizon.html)

The anthology collects the work of 139 haikuists from eighteen countries, with six haiku apiece, working in French and English. This joining of two communities is a welcome one, as their practitioners often don't cross the language barrier. All poems are presented in both the original language plus a translation into the other. Lots of big and new names. A bonus is a paragraph written by each poet on what haiku means to them. Strongly recommended.

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*Learning to Leave*, by Susan Lee Kerr (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2025). 76 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy four-card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-73-2. Price: £12.00 from [susanleekerr.com](http://susanleekerr.com)

The poems in this second collection from Kerr hint at upheaval, words like 'hospital bed' and 'packing boxes' casually dropped without any larger context, until a page at the end about the author reveals the life changes she has gone through. The poems are often quiet moments, more filled with undirected emotion, than complete stories. Two favorites: *on the pavement / a fallen stock of hollyhock / how no one steps on it; shaving his chin / I find myself / stretching mine.*

*A Dream of Owls*, by Laurie D. Morrissey (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 100 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-71-1. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Third collection from Morrissey. She has a good feel for the seasons and their important moments as they intersect her life. She is sensitive to the world, approaching it with wonder, and she writes with a natural rhythm. An enjoyable outing. Favorites: *a clothesline / of fresh starts— / bluebird day; snow day / the drying rack / fills and empties.*

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*A Handful of Huckleberries*, by Rick Tarquinio (Bridgeton, N.J.: Odd Duck Press, 2025). 100 pages; 4¼" × 6". Glossy four-colored card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$20.00 from the author at [sounding-place@gmail.com](mailto:sounding-place@gmail.com)

Poems from a year's exploration of New Jersey's Parvin State Park. Tarquinio is one of our favorite haikuists, and his current collection reaffirms that. He has not only a sensitive eye, but a sensitive heart to everything he encounters. Recommended. Two favorites: *not in the guide book / this tiny purple flower's / scent; wavering heat / the swan still turning / addled eggs.*

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*Slow Boat to Samoa*, by Matthew Caretti (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 128 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-68-1. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Eighty haibun on the author's love affair with the South Pacific. Because the author has his residence there, the haibun are filled with place names and local terms, which nicely ground the prose, but also many which the reader will need to look up. The poems work at the edge of the prose, sometimes explaining unsaid themes, at other times moving the reader forward. But at all time enjoyable.

*So Many Dandelions*, by Agnes Eva Savich (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 92 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-77-3. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Many of her poems describe things becoming, or alternatively, fading. She seems taken with these moments of transformation, and the resulting poems have a keen edge to them. A good variety of styles, with some surprising twists. A strong collection. Favorites: *a train fades / the sound of women / talking in rain; daisy petals / the quantum state / of our union*.

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*Hexagon*, ed. by Corine Timmer (Portugal: Bicaideideias, 2025). 60 pages; 5¼" × 8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-989-99760-9-2. Price: €7.00 from [www.bicaideideias.com](http://www.bicaideideias.com)

The latest of her annual anthologies, this one celebrating the Year of the Snake. The subject is viewed from many different angles, some surprising; the current volume illustrated by R.C. Thomas. Favorites: *itself for a scepter kingsnake* (Huddleston); *halves of a snake / railroad tracks / gleam in the setting sun* (Welch).

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*In Full Bloom*, by Jeannie Martin (Windsor, Conn.: Baby Buddha Press, 2025). 51 pages; 5" × 7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$12.00 from the author at [jeanniejeanne@gmail.com](mailto:jeanniejeanne@gmail.com)

A companion to her 2024 volume, *The Length of One Breath*. Both books are of a similar size and tone that introduce haiku to beginners in a welcoming way—although both volumes have something to teach long-time writers as well. Where *The Length of One Breath* focused on finding haiku through everyday items, focusing on our senses, *In Full Bloom*, after a short introduction to the genre, introduces a series of prompts (“Do you have a favorite stone or rock, perhaps from a collection in your home?”) followed by a sample haiku to use as a model or inspiration (*cools my hand / as I warm it / stone*), followed by plenty of blank space for the writer to work. The final parts of the book include tips for haiku group leaders. A

priority of both books is getting people to reacquaint themselves with nature, and Martin's work with senior groups brings that goal into practice. A very enjoyable outing. A few favorites: *starfish— / 72% of me / is water; what the maple tree / knows— / first red leaf.*

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*Mapping the Borderlands*, by Barbara Sabol (Russell, Ky.: Sheila-Ng-Gig Editions, 2025). 43 pages; 6½" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-962405-15-7. Price: \$14.00 from [www.sheilanagigblog.com](http://www.sheilanagigblog.com)

Twenty-seven haibun and tanka prose in which the author dips into the animal kingdom's wildness, in thought, experience, and dream. The collection concludes with a brief essay on her conception of wildness, in which she asks good questions of us all and herself: what is wildness these days? How much can we know of it? This collection does a good job of exploring those questions. An enjoyable outing.

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*The Soundless Sound*, by Grant Caldwell (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 140 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-74-2. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

At two poems per page, that's a lot of haiku, and a few could have been left out. Caldwell finds haiku moments everywhere, from domestic scenes to empty football pitches. His are quiet poems, noting quiet, everyday importance, but occasionally they roar. Favorites: *a line of ants / across the doorstep— / doormat askew; a pain / in my molar / no longer there.*

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*The Last Oak Leaf*, by Caroline Giles Banks (Minneapolis, Minn.: Wellington-Giles Press, 2025). 67 pages; 6" × 9". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-218-72196-8. Price: \$12.00 (\$4.99 ebook) from online booksellers.

A collection of haiku, senryu, and haibun, broken into four sections: the first memorializing indigenous and African-American experiences, the

second global conflicts, the third on the risks to language and expression, and the fourth on the experiences of women. There is no doubting which side of the political divide Banks resides on. Most of the poems (including the ones in the twenty-five haibun) are senryu, and as such they close for easy understanding, often coming close to the “billboards” Ruth Yarrow warned political haiku about. *eagle feathers / pleated in braids / real REAL IDs; Super Blue Moon / cataract surgery / makes it so.*

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*A Lantern on the Bridge*, by Glenn G. Coats (Carolina Shores, N.C.: Pineola Publishing, 2025). 99 pages; 6" × 9". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-268668-43-8. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

Poems from two years in which the author spent time at a childhood river, while tending to his ailing mother. Half of the book contains individual haiku, while the other half contains free-verse haibun. All the poems are very much of place, with details important to someone who lives there, or has returned. Like the river, the past is also revisited, perhaps seen with new eyes. An enjoyable collection. Some favorites from the haiku: *December sea / she lets the gray / grow back; father's tackle box / all the spaces / he once filled.*

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*Moonglow*, by Dian Duchin Reed (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 112 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-72-8. Price: \$25.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

The first half of the collection contains thirty-eight haibun which are followed by haiku in the second half; twenty-nine haiga, that appear to be digitally edited photographs, are tucked between the haibun and haiku. The haibun and haiku are enjoyable, just enough space for the reader to get a grounding and then move toward some discovery, yet it is in the haiga that Reed shines the most. There the juxtapositions are greater, yet none of the elements feel forced. Some favorite haiku: *Thanksgiving dinner / such a diversity / of chairs; endless blue / the anchor / of a day moon.*

*Upward Spiral*, by Tim Murphy (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 76 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-73-5. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Haiku poets sometimes talk about beginner's or child's mind as a way of haiku. The comparison seems apt here, for in Murphy's new collection, at least a third of the poems reflect his time in his adopted city of Madrid. He has the same focus on the surprising, hidden, the oft-overlooked, and on relationships between disparate things. Other poems play with language, idioms; Murphy is an inventive poet. The collection an enjoyable one. Favorites: *midnight / the blade cuts the pill / in two*; *dead plant / listening to a language / I used to know*.

## THE ROBERT SPIESS MEMORIAL HAIKU AWARDS COMPETITION FOR 2026

Modern Haiku is pleased to announce the Robert Spiess Memorial Haiku Awards Competition for 2026. The purpose of this competition is to honor the life and work of Bob Spiess, editor of *Modern Haiku* from 1978 to his death on March 13, 2002.

**Deadline:** In hand no later than March 13, 2026.

Please see full rules and guidelines on our website:

<https://modernhaiku.org/spiesscontest/spiesscontest2026.html>