

rack / my winter hat // on its way north” (pages 53 and 53). And in the final section, dwelling on the father’s death, we read “The coffin departs // tire tracks / in the snow,” and “In mourning // letting the icicles / grow,” and “Winter mirror // how quickly / my face grows old” (pages 62–64).

Masaya Saito’s *Snow Bones* offers readers a challenging structure, one that will reward multiple readings. It also offers a challenging subject, swimming in grief and loss—yet not drowning. The book provides redemption and acceptance, even if not cleanly, for no profound grief is ever mended. An original voice is at work here.

In the snow country
 my parents gone

 a pendulum swinging

The Windbreak Pine: New and Uncollected Haiku 1985-2015, by Wally Swist (United Kingdom: Snapshot Press, 2016). 96 pages; 7¾" × 5". Semigloss black and green card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-903543-42-9. Price: \$25.00 from www.snapshotpress.co.uk.

Reviewed by Bruce Ross

Wally Swist was for what seemed a long time the in-house haiku poet of *Modern Haiku* under Bob Spiess. I was impressed by his fidelity to woodland flora and fauna as they existed, especially their sounds, highlighting this haiku in my book *Haiku Moment*:

deep bend of the brook
 the kingfisher’s chatter
 after the dive

In his new haiku collection, the first since *The Silence Between Us: Selected Haiku of Wally Swist* (2005), he has maintained his precise focus on the woodland environment (the second line of "first morning of summer" (p.34) represents a goldfinch song: "it's sweet, it's sweet, it's sweet" and "stars after the rain —" (p.47) is almost mellifluous with alliteration in lines 2–3: "rows of squash flowering / in a field of fireflies").

When I first read his haiku years ago I noticed a poetic phrasing and unusual structure for the time. Earlier I had seen similar qualities in the Canadian haiku poet Anne McKay to whose memory he dedicates a haiku:

the woodsmoke
of her voice ...
cinnamon-scented leaves

I wasn't sure what to make of the separated long-lines and poetically phrased qualities in her haiku. As such the issue seemed to be acceptable if the poetic phrasing worked in haiku and if it was not too sentimental. Swist, an award-winning poet, suggests in this volume that a haiku could form the nexus of a poem for him. He also notes that the 5–7–5 structure of haiku didn't interest him when he began writing haiku but Ippekiro's "free verse" haiku did. The haiku in this collection follow these interests as in this 5–5–5 haiku:

the cold night long —
from the barn's rafters
a squeaking of bats

and this 6–6–4:

shadow after shadow
of migrating snow geese
passing through us

and this 8–5–3 referring to a plant :

swaying throughout the snowy marsh
 ... horsetails infused
 with twilight

Swist's phrasing of representational imagery is exhibited in a response to William Carlos Williams' "Red Wheelbarrow" upon which "so much depends":

beside the weaving shed —
 the green spades of the lilac leaves
 wet with rain

That representational imagery is often "poeticized," as in this haiku, by figurative expression, here in line 2, and in the above woodsmoke/voice connection. This figurative approach is especially successful in the above "passing through us" (line 3) and justifies its use in such haiku.

Is representational imagery itself a good approach to haiku particularly with the current predominance of photo-haiku? Probably it is justified if it has some engaging or deeper undercurrent within the imagery. Haiku is not painting though it shares aspects of painting. It is a literary form that incorporates the sound and conceptual/visual elements of language. In traditionally-oriented haiku seasonally related images open the haiku up with associative feeling and section breaks open up the emotional values. Swist's haiku have understated aspects of these in much of his haiku (he elaborates one aspect of the season by creating an "atmosphere" for that aspect as well as naming a month or holiday and frequently uses punctuation like a kireji to separate and "open up" the emotional depth of the two parts of a haiku). That Swist has practiced Zen meditation may explain why his seemingly simply-imagined haiku has a consistent quietness, even depth, underlying natural reality "just as it is, "as Zen would have it.

This understatedly phrased collection has deftly chosen verbal imagery, with handsome cover photos of the woodland area and dwelling he lived in. A handful of haiku consider small town activity, perhaps working a

little against the collection's tenor, and a few have erotic intent, such as:

night of crickets —
 the memory of kissing her breasts
 repeats itself

Swist's collection borders *ut pictura poesis* (as is painting so is poetry) in its representation. For him, also, the senses, particularly sound, extend poetic phrasing, and perhaps his Zen practice make his deftly focused use of natural imagery in the already compressed form of haiku a vehicle for a quietness of vision enveloping natural and human activity. For someone writing haiku in English, Swist has extended the boundaries of how, in that language, haiku can become more poetic.

The Chrysanthemum and the Scissors: Haiku, Zen, and Traditional Japanese Verse by Jon LaCure (No place: Independently published, 2017). 171 pages, 6" × 9". Four-color glossy covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-520290-67-6. Price: \$6.99 from online booksellers

Reviewed by David Burleigh

In some ways this book of essays is quite timely, coming as it does in the year that marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of both Masaoka Shiki and Natsume Sōseki, the first a major figure in modern haiku, the second an important modern novelist and a haiku poet too. The title amusingly conflates the name of a famous book on Japanese culture with a verse by Sōseki, illustrated on the cover with a haiga by the gifted Ion Codrescu:

Over the white chrysanthemum —
 for a moment they pause,
 the garden shears