

similar theme, such as a bird theme or a religious theme—all of which surprisingly enhances the reading experience. One is able, for instance, to observe how the same kigo operates in different contexts. This and Dhugal Lindsay's commentary make this book unique.

In organizing this book, the author may have intended that it be used as a teaching tool, for the author's comments lead the reader through the moments before the inspiration comes, the Lindsay comments give insight into some of the haiku, and the groups of haiku are studies in how particular kigo work. I can see it being used as a text for discussion in teaching higher grades or in adult workshops.

I asked some haiku friends from Japan about whether this manner of publishing haiku with commentary is ever used there and learned that it can be one of the forms used to publish one's own haiku collection. The style is called 自句自解 jikujikai (my haiku my interpretation) or 自註 jichu (my own comments).

I leave you with this from Juanito Escareal:

winter thoughts ...
the skyscraper's glass façade
fills with clouds

... On a winter workday, a blue sky with floating clouds is a welcome sight amid the doldrums of everyday routine.—jle

Poetry as Consciousness: Haiku Forests, Space of Mind, and an Ethics of Freedom, by Richard Gilbert, illustrated by Sabine Miller (Japan: Keibunsha, 2018). 294 pages; 6" × 8½". Cloth cover hardback; sewn spine. ISBN 978-4-86330-189-4. Price: \$38.00 USD; contact poetry.as.consciousnessATgmail.com.

Reviewed by Mike Spikes

The multifaceted richness of Richard Gilbert's impressive book makes it a difficult one to review. As the title suggests, its central subject is cognitive poetics, the role that mind plays in both the

production and reception of poetry. Gilbert's study is divided into three principal sections. The first is devoted to the workings of consciousness with respect to poetry in general, while the second focuses on those operations relative to haiku in particular. In both these major portions of his book Gilbert develops detailed and elaborate categories of analysis that are so varied, numerous, and complex it is impossible to even begin to do them full justice here, though it is possible to identify and outline some of his most prominent and striking themes. The third, relatively short, closing section consists of a pair of appendices—"36 Qualities of Thoughtspace" and "Disjunction in Haiku – Strong and Weak"—that supplement and bolster the first two.

Just how varied and numerous are the categories of analysis that Gilbert offers can be seen in the multiplicity of taxonomies he develops in the second section on haiku. Specifically, he posits "36 Qualities of Thoughtspace Derived from 7 Properties." To cite but a few of these, there is the quality of conceptual blending connected with the property of language, the quality of fantasy imagery as an expression of the property of metaphors, and the quality of desire and passion listed under the property of soul. As the very names of these properties and their qualities, as well as their implied connections, suggest, nothing here is self-evident. Each quality, property, and connection is nuanced and intricate, and demands close and careful scrutiny. For instance, one must carefully study the densely argued two pages Gilbert devotes to spatial thermoclines in order to fully grasp this poetic quality, which in its barest outlines is an aspect of a poem that engenders in the reader a *mélange* of "thought, feeling, and landscape" that yields sensations such as "gentleness, sadness, longing."

One of Gilbert's repeated themes, in both major sections of his book, is that the good poem, whether it be a haiku or a traditional lyric, frees us. It frees us in the sense that it expands our consciousnesses, allows us to see things in new and fresh ways, to think novel thoughts and experience unaccustomed emotions. To put it in the language of the Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky, the true poem defamiliarizes our realities. Or as Gilbert himself puts it, early in *Poetry as Consciousness*, the best poems, the ones we praise, free our souls "for a brief time" to experience

“novel orientations of landscape, to adopt new shapes and forms of imaginal space through novel surprises, discontinuities and sonorities.” Just how central this theme is to Gilbert’s thought can be seen in the fact that “An Ethics of Freedom” is the heading of the final section of the book’s conclusion, as well as in the book’s subtitle.

Gilbert also stresses throughout his study that the relationship between the reader and the poem is transactional. “*Being* in imagination,” he writes, “is not only perceiving something ‘out there’—we are also perceived to be there in the first place, by what is other to us.” That is to say, we do not only receive insights from the poem but the poem also gives us insights into ourselves, much as an intimate relationship with another person provides us with something we aren’t and can also uncover in us what we already are. And what the best poems—haiku especially—both give to and discover in us is often not merely abstract, rational knowledge but “a feeling of connection to something ineffable and numinous.” It is not infrequently the case, as Gilbert suggests in his discussion of philopoetic volition, that a particular poem’s “meaning isn’t possible to nail down—as sense may only be found in the inseparable weave between image, rhythm and story.” Poems, he concludes, “may arise as forms of *eros*.” The reader often connects with them in powerfully emotional, inarticulable ways.

Poetry as Consciousness is not an easy book to read. Gilbert’s ideas, only a very few of which I have superficially touched on here, are legion and elaborate. He draws on a vast array of sources, from linguistics to psychology to literary theory to philosophy, that are frequently complex and difficult. And his text contains challenging passages, as some of those cited above reflect, passages whose wording can sometimes be elusive. In fact, the language of his commentaries on the nature of poems frequently borders on the poetic itself. But far from being detriments, these potential obstacles to understanding are the book’s strengths. They constitute and communicate Gilbert’s profound, original, and multiple insights into how poems, haiku in particular, work.

The reader who submits to the demands this study makes on him or her will be richly rewarded. I can personally attest to this fact. Gilbert’s book has, among other things, reinforced and validated a feeling I have

frequently had about my own poems, namely that they do not always have to express some clear, rationally articulable meaning in order to be potentially valuable. His arguments have bolstered my sense that I need not be afraid to create work whose images and narratives feel right to me even though I can't say exactly what they add up to thematically. Gilbert gives me reason to hope that at least some of my poems may constitute "forms of *eros*" that move the reader, to some degree defamiliarize his or her reality, in "ineffable and numinous" ways.

Tsugigami Gathering the Pieces, by Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff and Connie R. Meester (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2018). 80 pages; 5¼" × 7¾". Glossy four-color-card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-30-2. Price \$25.00 from www.redmoonpress.com.

Reviewed by John Thompson

Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff and Connie R. Meester have collaborated on renga and other forms of linked verse for twenty-four years, as well as tsugigami collages that evoke and visually underscore the themes and experiences explored in their poetry. In *Tsugigami Gathering the Pieces* these two accomplished poets beautifully interweave their voices with haiku and senryu calls and responses of great subtlety and power.

The first three verses of "Pink Moon" present different ways of letting go:

abandoning a past
to the thrift store
spring cleaning

old journals
kindle a cozy fire

deciding what to bring
on this journey
pink moon