

BRIEFLY NOTED

Aporia, by Rebecca Lilly (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 96 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-70-8. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Rebecca Lilly's fifth chapbook from Red Moon Press opens with images of fog, mist, and formless anxieties; explores the heaviness of age, of "monkey-mind," of personhood; and settles on extended ruminations of depression, despair, and death. These are somber themes, indeed, but Lilly handles them with an adroit artistry that persuades the reader onward. At her best, the concrete and the abstract seamlessly commingle. Interspersing three-line with one-line haiku, she lays out the latter in a reclining s shape, described by Peter Newton on the back cover as half of an infinity symbol. Stylistically, this is in keeping with the philosophical underpinnings of the collection. "Aporia," after all, refers to irresolvable contradictions in a text or argument, to states of doubt or perplexment, and by extension, to the poet at a loss for inspiration, for words, for purpose. Yet Lilly rides the wave of conscious nothingness to its logical/illogical conclusion, which is affirmation, however ephemeral, of this life. Recommended. *Ice-heavy junipers / unmoved by the wind — / tired of being human; a stopover somewhere in my heart's pulse persistent sparrow song; Cloudless blue sky / and wild columbine — / no desire yet to die.*
—mrb

Breaking My Journey, by Gregory Piko (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 88 pages; 5¼" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-61-6. Price: A\$30.00 from www.gregorypiko.com

Herein Gregory Piko presents some one hundred haiku that radiate with sensual appreciation for the prime in life. There are joys here, as well as shadows, and still so much remains to be fully lived. With Piko as our guide we feel again how imperative it is to "learn again to be a child," "warm to a stranger," "straighten the Southern Cross," make love, make

poems, dwell. Piko breaks the journey into five parts or resting points, all but the last ending with a longer haikai form—a haibun, a solo rengay, or what he calls a “haiku shuffle,” an intriguing recombination of haiku fragments and phrases into a longer contemporary poem. (For more on the shuffle, visit www.gregorypiko.com.) Each resting point has us pondering poetic allusion, human communion, aging, dreaming—all themes that carry through the chapbook. Each finely observed moment has us remembering our own “butterfly, still safe / under his steel pin”. A few favorites: *sundial / time pauses / for a cloud*; *summer’s end / I take another plum / from the fridge*; and, from the haiku shuffle, *the milky way / so many things / need doing*. —mrb

Pilgrimage, by Keith Polette (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 94 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-69-2. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Keith Polette’s *Pilgrimage*, a chapbook of some forty-two haibun ranging across family memoir, nature immersion, and personal introspections about self and others, mostly fascinates, occasionally frustrates. The prose is jaw-dropping in its imaginative gush of metaphor, in its narrative verve. At times, that intensity threatens to overwhelm the capping haiku and rob them of their own poetic spell. Too, the juxtaposition of prose and poem is not always easy to fathom. That said, the sheer beauty of the prose and the solid craft of the haiku inspires confidence in the poet’s art. And when the stars align, the effect is more than satisfying. In “Alaskan Nights,” for example, winter light is “an old man climbing the stairs,” running “out of breath a quarter of the way up,” finishing his cup of “lukewarm coffee” seated on the steps. The capping haiku evokes the long night coming: *dark side of the moon / the unexplored places / where we live*. Another favorite, “Invitation” (the last haibun in the collection), advises the poet and reader both “to let go of the parts of you that you no longer need;” like the rocks, the arroyos, and the cactus wren, to “allow the long days of wind and breath to gradually wear you away.” *river blossom / the blue heron / on one leg*. —mrb

Zigzag of the Dragonfly: Writing the Haiku Way, by Patricia J. Machmiller (Calif.: Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, 2020). 98 pages; 8½" × 8½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7357235-1-8. Price: \$18.00 from www.yths.org

Two things guaranteed to renew poetic inspiration—reflections on writing by other, admired poets and an occasional return to the basics of craft and process, either as learner or teacher. In *Zigzag of the Dragonfly*, you get it all. Patricia Machmiller uses her own experiences learning to master haiku as a means of engaging others, primarily beginners, in taking first steps towards serious play with this special form of poetry. Tellingly, she adopts the role of guide, rather than expert or sage. In three stages, from writing process to craft to critique, she offers a series of exercises that “advance [the novice] from the basics to the more complex aspects of writing,” and follows up with a discussion that trusts the budding poet to “be in charge of your own learning.” Readers of *Geppo*, the bi-monthly work-study journal of the Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, will recognize the book as a compilation of articles recapping Machmiller’s workshop teaching in that haiku community. Others farther afield will recognize the great good sense and wisdom of her approach, especially for beginners, but not exclusively so. Sprinkled throughout, model haiku by Machmiller and many others illustrate her insightful points about finding images, using kigo, arranging juxtapositions, shaping sound values, and more. Recommended. by indirection / find direction—*flight of / the dragonfly* (Patricia Machmiller). —mrb

Carol’s Chronicles, by Carol Pearce-Worthington (No place: privately printed, 2021). 119 pages; 5½" × 8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-55497-341-3. Price: \$12.99 from www.amazon.com

In this collection haibun and haiku interleave with personal essays, prose poems, and free verse in a fragmented portrait of a marriage. Pearce-Worthington gives expression to the confusion, anger, and grief mixed with inconstant joy she feels when her husband is sent to prison for a five-

year term—and after three years, released. The emotions alone make for compelling reading, as does the poet’s impressionistic prose. At their best the haiku, either simply descriptive or tanka-like, lend breathing space to the whole. In “First Visit,” Pearce-Worthington learns that her husband is being transferred to a “destination unknown.” She rushes to catch a glimpse of him. “Behind the mesh-covered bus windows, shadows occasionally move or bend. Is he one of them? Exhaust from the bus spirals upward. Disappears.” *hunger / for his / arms tears / the heaviness / of snow.* —mrb

Tending Gumbo, by Bill Cooper (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 100 Pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-58-6. \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Bill Cooper has lately been producing a new collection about once a year with no discernible flagging in haiku energy. Here he offers up an impressive exploration of wide-ranging concerns natural and cultural, rural and urban, personal and political. Seasoning the present with the past, he blends the whole into a tasty gumbo, that quintessential southern dish that combines a variety of ethnic cuisines into an art form. Recommended. *early crocus / the jay imitates / a ring tone; light rain / the syllabary song / in Cherokee; pre-op / the surgeon asks if i'm ok / with Led Zeppelin.* —mrb

Closed Systems of Joy, by Chris Gordon (Eugene, Ore.: privately printed, 2020). 24 pages; 5½" × 8½". Matte four-color card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: free for 6" × 9" SASE to author at 2115 Churchill Street, Eugene, OR 97405. *A Roman in My Garden*, by Chris Gordon (Eugene, Ore.: privately printed, 2021). 23 pages; 5½" × 8½". White card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: inquire of the author.

Chris Gordon is well-known for his editorship of *ant ant ant ant ant*, one of the first journals of experimental haiku, and for “series poems” anchored in the repetition of a single phrase (“The Invisible Circus” in one collection; “the crow” in another). *Closed Systems of Joy* is not of this ilk,

entirely, though it does share a drive to locate the unusual in the quotidian—or, rather, to make the quotidian in the quotidian more than unusually unusual. (As is the case with much modern art, it helps to know what the artist says s/he’s up to. See the poet’s interview, “The Superlative Quotidian,” available on the websites of *ant ant ant ant ant* or *A Hundred Gourds*, for some clarification.) The chapbook starts with a blank cover, opens to the haiku—100 of them, ten to a spread—and works its way “backwards” to the title, credits, edition notice, and front cover. Interesting decision, as if the poet has discovered what the collection is “about” and what it should be “called” only when he finishes assembling the work (and isn’t that just the case?). The reader tags along for that ride, as if in real time. Takes in casual juxtapositions and non-sequiturs. Bumps over disjunctive line breaks. Feels the speed, towards the end of the chapbook, in a riff of *ku* on the current epidemic. Only to discover that the tightening gyre of daily life in a year of shutdown has strangely infused the banal and the overlooked with renewed meaning. *closed systems of joy / under the fog / a thin band of light; lost on / the table ant / in winter; the virus / bargains with god / half off. A Roman in My Garden* repeats the same format and concerns as *Closed Systems of Joy* a year on (note publication dates). Along with more virus haiku, a number serializing “fires” mix it up. *fires / the virus / gets a break.* —mrb

The Silence of the Cymbals / A Tiny Wobble, by the Spring Street Haiku Group (New York: Privately printed, 2020). 40 pages; 4" × 5½". Glossy black and white card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$10.00 from Seidboard World Enterprises, PO Box 137, New York, NY 10012.

Two anthologies (2017 and 2019) in one binding from the New York group. Each of the twelve poets gets their own page which contains up to five haiku. This is a no fuss anthology which disguises its strong poetry. *a man coughs / the library quiet / deepens* (Bruce Kennedy); *removing his shoes / before entering the temple— / a man in a wheelchair* (Mykel Board); *insomnia — / what a peculiar structure / my rib cage* (Doris Heitmeyer). —pm

Far More Than I Ever Was, by Barbara Tate (Windsor, Conn.: Café Nietzsche Press, 2021). 108 pages; 5½" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7327746-9-8. Price: \$12.00 from the author at 15314th Avenue NW, Winchester, TN 37398.

In this handsome chapbook, a “service imprint” of Bottle Rockets Press, Barbara Tate loosely links together some thirty to forty haiku, a couple of tanka, and nine haibun. The effect is nice, as moments and memories crisscross past and present with a lightness of touch that seems at times to follow an imagistic, rather than seasonal or narrative flow. And then maybe not. What the whole may lack in unity, however, is made up for in the solid, understated craft of the haiku and some standout haibun, including “The Truth And Nothing But,” in which the narrator comes to terms with a painting teacher—“Did he really say I wasn’t good enough?” Reader, she is. *autumn / cottonwoods drip last night’s rain* (the haibun’s capping ku); *early snow / catching the sky / on my tongue; unbalanced / sharing a canoe / with a dragonfly*. —mrb

Journey, by Zane Parks (No place: privately printed, 2020). 56 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-67817-992-2. Price: \$7.00 from lulu.com

Zane Parks has confessed to a “skewed approach” to haikai forms, but the fifty-seven haibun collected here largely trace the tried-and-true lines of episodic autobiography. Okay, the few haibun that open the book with visions of death and war may seem a strange segue into childhood memories, though this reader quite enjoyed “For those in Peril,” a rumination on actually living the act of dying, capped by “fireflies / in a mason jar / slowly flicker out.” There’s a mordant wit operating in or just below the telegraphic prose and (for the most part) senryu that chronicle the boy’s growth into a man into a mensch. In another favorite piece, a toddler grandson begs to be picked up, only to reach for a nearby shelf, prompting the poet-narrator to consider Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: *earthworm / she drops the twig / for nesting*. —mrb

The Nothing that Is, by David Kāwika Eyre (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2021). 150 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-67-8. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

This is the second book of haiku from David Kāwika Eyre, a retired Hawaiian language teacher and writer of historical fiction for children. Some 120 haiku, one to a page, pay fine attention to—as the epigraph from Wallace Stevens suggests—the “Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.” Beginning with *dawn / awed / anew* and ending with *jan. / etc. / dec.*, Eyre’s haiku shift almost effortlessly from contemporary to avant garde, even as they present the normative seasonal round. Many common experiences of the natural world that readers will know well are evoked anew with not-so-common disjunctive techniques. Repetitions, semantic interruptions, impossibly true paradoxes, these along with a tendency toward the minimal offer many fresh perspectives on the human reckoning with time and mortality. With five paintings by Emma Eyre, art teacher and painter, all featuring shadows. Recommended. *leaf to dirt / since / ever since; dawn on the / roundness / of an apple; of soft beat / dark where / moth wings.* —mrb

Oblivious to Daffodils, by Jackie Chou (Ohio: Title IX Press, 2021). 27 pages; ebook. No ISBN. Price: free download from www.titleixpress.wix-site.com/home

A collection of twenty haiku and tanka. The standouts are several one-line haiku that reward upon multiple readings. Chou creates nice juxtapositions that ask who or what is the main focus of the poem, and question the why of it. The reader is often asked to shift perspective mid-poem; something the one-line form does well. *forcing a smile for the camera red roses; changing my l's to lower case narcissus.* —pm

A Sonic Boom of Stars: 2020 Southern California Haiku Study Group Anthology, ed. Beki Reese and Susan Rogers (Calif.: Southern California Haiku Study Group, 2020). 120 pages; 5½" × 8½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-578-64794-4. Price: \$18.00. Inquire of SoCalHaikuStudyGroup@gmail.com

The Southern California Haiku Study Group, founded in 1997 by Jerry Ball and currently moderated by Deborah P. Kolodji, is a stalwart among local haiku communities. In this fine anthology some eighty member poets, new and established, share their love of the form. And with up to four haiku or senryu per poet, there is a lot to celebrate. Other sections include foreign language haiku, haibun, and poems selected for inclusion in the Haiku Foundation's "Haiku Windows" blog monitored by kjmunro. On the cover, artwork by Stevie Strang resonates mysteriously with the title haiku: *broken window / a sonic boom / of stars* (by Kimberly Esser). Also catching the eye: *as if / no other answers— / mountain trail* (Peter Jastermsky); *morning slips in / through half-closed blinds— / your kiss on my shoulder* (Beki Reese); *clothesline— / the moon slips off / her kimono* (Tad Wojnicki). —mrb

Bar Resbel, by Bouwe Brouwer (The Netherlands: Sneak, 2021). 31 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Red and black card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: €15.00 from www.bouwebrouwer.com

Translated by the author from the original 2015 Dutch version, *Bar Resbel* is a collection of haibun from the author's trip to an unnamed Spanish island. Most of the haibun center around the eponymous neighborhood bar and its customers. The haibun are accompanied by color photographs. There is a nice distance between the prose and poems, which allows the moments to expand beyond themselves. That said, these are quiet poems, as are most of the haibun, which often consist of bar conversations and stories. Brouwer takes an interested notice of the bar's patrons. *outgoing tide— / left behind on the terrace / empty glasses; mountain village / an old woman / in a 4 x 4*. —pm

Staring at the Midnight Sky, by Mark Teaford (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 106 pages; 10" × 7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-65-4. Price: \$30.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

In this engaging chapbook, the physical anthropologist and anatomist Mark Teaford marries two of his avocational passions—photography and haikai poetry. Around a hundred haiga, organized topically, explore the poet's take on "relationships," "life today," "health and medicine," and "nature." The grayscale photographs make use of some lovely and fascinating effects to explore surface textures and patterns. More often than not, their juxtapositions with haiku (and some tanka) bring out interpretive and intuitive layers in the daily experience of our natural and manmade worlds. Some favorites: *nothing to hide / eyes of a child / in chemotherapy* paired with rusted bolts in a lichen-covered board; *late afternoon / the cat's shadow / reaches the bird first* paired with an overexposed rendering of shuttered windows on a city street, a pigeon just visible at the lower edge of the picture; and *anniversary... / none of the cards / says what I want* paired with myriad ripples in a stream, a leaf not yet caught up in the swirl. —mrb

Grateful Haiku, by Mark Dailey (No place [Rochester, NY.]: Free Food Press, 2021). 32 pages; 5½" × 8½". Four-color card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$8.00 from www.freefoodpress.org

Grateful Dead fans are an enthusiastic and loyal bunch, so it should come as no surprise that a collection of haiku has finally been written about the band. *Grateful Haiku* covers the many aspects of a live show (broken into sections such as "Before the Show," "First Set," "Set Break...") as well as follow-up visits years later. Many of the haiku utilize the names of Dead songs (*the scent of lavender / after light rain / sweet Peggy-O*) and for some poems you probably had to be there (*between sets / passing 'round a joint / Jehovah's favorite choir*). —pm

Contemplating Nature, by Robert Epstein (West Union, W. Va.: Middle Island Press, 2021). 211 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-8-701616-11-8. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

The latest collection from Epstein is his most rewarding of late. In it he combines quotes on nature with black and white photographs and his own haiku. For example, a quote from Buson ("Throw open your window and let the scenery of the clouds and sky enter your room") is placed above a picture of an open window with mountain scenery; Epstein responds on the opposite facing page with: *ragged clouds / what it feels like / to hold a rake*. In most cases, Epstein avoids the trap of too closely linking the quote and poem; rather than regurgitate a similar viewpoint, he uses the quote as an entry point to a nice variety of images and ideas. The leap from the Buson quote above is a strong example. The quotes themselves are from a wide reading and, importantly, the poems easily stand on their own. Some of his recent work has at times felt more epigrammatic, so we are delighted to see this return. Recommended. *dusk / a raven turns on / the lamppost; tall summer grass / so dry it hums / Dad's death day*. —pm

Mare Liberum, by Jacob Salzer (No place [Vancouver]: privately printed, 2020). 53 pages; 6" × 9". Black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-67819-836-7. Price: \$13.34 from online booksellers.

The title of Salzer's latest collection means "freedom of the sea," and serves as a good marker for haiku and tanka that, while singular, come to mean more when combined. Salzer seems concerned with the dislocation of mankind, both among tribes and with nature, and at times he seems to question his own place among the chaos. There is a strong point of view at work in many of the poems, yet at times the intentions seem to overwhelm the actual poetic moments: *cosmic bowling / the weight of a world / in my hands*. The better poems are those when he steps back and views the world without polemic. *tuning the guitar / the tension / between us; quiet life the rivers in my hands*. —pm

Seabeck Reunion: Tenth Anniversary Anthology, ed. Michael Dylan Welch (Bellevue, Wash.: Haiku Northwest Press, 2020). 131 pages; 7" × 10". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-953092-00-7. Price: \$18.00 from online booksellers.

The tenth anniversary anthology of the Seabeck Getaway is dedicated to Johnny Baranski, a longtime fixture at the weekend retreat. The 2017 anthology contains an introduction by John Stevenson and a detailed history of the Getaway's development by Michael Dylan Welch. This last is especially rewarding as it gives a sense of the scope of the retreat—including all the poets attending and presentations that have occurred. More importantly, the history reveals the weekend's diverse cast of characters and the overall welcoming spirit. Plus a lot of haiku! *passing clouds / the silence of those / no longer with us* (Johnny Baranski); *writing poems / on the floating dock / gull tracks* (Dianne Garcia); *the rust line / on our toilet tank / autumn deepens* (Scott Mason). —pm

Sound of a Leaf: 2018 Seabeck Haiku Getaway Anthology, eds. Carole MacRury and Vicki McCullough (Bellevue, Wash.: Haiku Northwest Press, 2020). 74 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-953092-01-4. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

The 2018 Seabeck anthology includes a brief introduction to the annual get-together in Washington State's Kitsap Peninsula. Aside from the over eighty haiku from a record-attended year, the volume also contains Margaret D. McGee's short history of Seabeck's three-time labyrinth and Garry Gay's brief origin story of renga. Like the Getaway itself, the volume is welcoming. *night train / we all think we know / where we're going* (John Stevenson); *birders pause / to identify the blossoms / autumn mist* (Victor Ortiz); *labyrinth / a breeze turns over / another leaf* (Cyndi Lloyd). —pm

Joining the Conversation: 2019 Seabeck Haiku Getaway Anthology, ed. C.R. Manley (Bellevue, Wash.: Haiku Northwest Press, 2020). 97 pages; 5½" × 8½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-953092-02-1. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

Editor Manley gives a detailed listing of the twelfth Getaway's daily events and programs, following it with the resulting haiku from rengay sessions, kukai's, and haiku walks. The rest of the book contains haiku from the over sixty participants, sprinkled with haiga from visiting presenter Ion Codrescu. Just reading the anthology makes me want to return. *dim autumn sky / old age slipping into / all my hiding places* (Michelle Schaefer – first place in the kukai); *cathedral in the woods / I find a stump / just my size* (Carol MacRury); *early spring / the chirp-chirping / of my key fob* (Adam L. Kern). —pm

The Rothrock Haiku Contest, by Kurt Westley (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2020). 54 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-68-5. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Westley presents and judges a haiku contest by two fictional poets ("haiku hermits" Waku and Woro) who inhabit the Rockroth State Forest in Pennsylvania. It is a contest of twenty rounds, in which Westley provides the haiku topic to write upon, as well as a commentary on the resulting poems themselves. As books go, it is both an odd one and a charming one, perhaps in equal measure. It is odd because Westley comments on his own poems, and the often over-wrought commentaries sometimes talk his own poems up beyond their merits. His interpretations don't leave a lot of room for the reader's own findings—especially if they clash. That said, it is an original and imaginative journey Westley takes the reader on. From the topic 'winter mountain:' *snow-capped summit / only the tracks of blinking / stars* (Waku); *winter mountain / ascending into the very clouds! / or is it coming closer?* (Woro). —pm

Flowers, How they Carry Us, by Jill Lange (Windsor, Conn.: Café Nietzsche Press, 2020). 89 pages; 5" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7327746-8-1. Price: \$16.00 from the poet at 2045 Staunton Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118 or online via www.macsbacs.com

The haiku and short poems in Lange's debut collection all relate to flowers—both wild and nurtured. She discovers them in places that previously held significance to her or her family, but also through their presence some places become significant. Their brief presence parallels other comings and goings in her life, which gives the collection a wonderfully lived character. The book is a joy to read over time, dipping into it like a garden tour, flower by flower, moment to moment. In her synopsis to *MH* she writes of flowers "as witnesses, companions, healers, and friends..." In her debut that is certainly true. *falling behind / the serious hikers / wild raspberries; the red hibiscus / posted on Facebook / liked by friends / its one short day.* —pm

I Wish, ed. Stephen Henry Gil (Japan: Hailstone Haiku Circle, 2020). 104 pages; 4" × 5¾". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-4-9911809-0-3. Price: \$17.00. Inquire of Hailstone officer Hitomi Suzuki at indigoapple28@gmail.com

The latest anthology from the Japanese group, which writes haiku in English, marks the group's twentieth anniversary. As might be expected of a group anthology, the quality of the poems varies, yet there is an earnestness in the voices. Over fifty poets are represented. Later sections of the anthology contain sequences on a local earthquake and typhoon, Australian wildfires, and the recent pandemic. An enjoyable outing. Some favorites: *Not a Buddha / but a man, arms folded / at a bus stop* (David Chigusa Stormer); *Unmanned station— / the sound of insects / comes aboard* (Terry Yosikawa); *A tiny blue butterfly / flits on ahead ... / all the way / to snowy Hakusan* (Tito); *Broken muzzles / of the shrine's stone foxes— / the rainy season returns* (Yaeno Azuchi); *Feeling I just heard / a turtle's whisper in the garden: / stay-home afternoon* (Hisahi Miyazaki). —pm

Tug of a Black Hole, by Deborah P Kolodji (Ohio: Title IX Press, 2021). 16 pages; ebook. No ISBN. Price: free download from www.titleixpress.wixsite.com/home

Science fiction haiku, or scifaiku as it is called, is an interesting boundary-event in English-language haiku. The speculative nature of the poems' subjects often makes it hard for a reader to ground themselves in a common understanding, so often the poems come across as senryu; that said, they can be very effective—especially in the hands of someone who knows both the science fiction and haiku camps. Kolodji's poems mine both the speculative mindset as well as one that exists on Earth, with all the isolation that a pandemic, as well as Kolodji's recent battle with illness, brings. Understandably, these recent events call for escape. Some of the twenty poems hit very hard emotionally, while others make us smile with their originality; found together, these two states are compelling. This small collection left us wanting more. Recommended. *the tug / of a black hole / this isolation; lace curtains / in a spaceship window / things we can't leave; drought planet / the wrong supplies / for a year of rain.* —pm

The Fragrance of Fog, by Praniti Gulyani (Ohio: Title IX Press, 2021). 24 pages; ebook. No ISBN. Price: free download from www.titleixpress.wixsite.com/home

Fifteen one-line haiku make up the text of this short ebook. While the poems are written in one line, there is usually only one break in the text and sometimes Gulyani uses spaces or punctuation to make it clear. More obvious is the use of bold text, as in the title poem: *kitchen window the fragrance of fog*; its use in nearly all cases feels gimmicky. The haiku are more interesting when she writes more personal poems, whether of herself or a persona. Here the images are evocative. *petrichor the newness of abortion; crescent moon how similar my scar.* —pm