

For Tarquinio, nature is not contained by humans. We may try to contain it or color it with our efforts, but ultimately, it is colored and celebrated best by “a bluebird’s song” that brings us *Home Again*.



### BRIEFLY NOTED

*Nick Virgilio: Collected Haiku*, ed. Geoffrey Sill (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 372 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-13-1. Price: \$30.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Virgilio was a seminal figure in ELH’s first wave, so despite falling out of favor in later years, a review of his work is welcome. Enter Sill’s *Collected Haiku*, which gathers all published work, as opposed to previous collections *Selected Haiku* (1985, 1988) and *Nick Virgilio: A Life in Haiku* (2012). The sheer volume of haiku in the new work, some twelve-hundred by my rough math, includes famous poems as well as more mundane works. Every poet has published work that isn’t up to their highest standards, and Virgilio is no exception, so the need for a full collected works might be applicable to only the scholar who wants to examine how he repeated lines and /or themes—or for the reader unfamiliar with more than a few passing poems. However, at his best—which he often was—Virgilio was an exciting poet.

*The Bird in my Hand*, ed. Carolyn Hall (San Francisco, Calif.: Two Autumns Press, 2023). 28 pages; 5¼" × 7". Matte four-color card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$10.00 (payable to "HPNC") from James Chessing, 2886 Calais Dr., San Ramon, CA 94583.

Companion anthology to HPNC's annual Two Autumn's reading. 2023's readers, Stephanie Baker, John Barlow, Terri L. French, and Dan Schwerin, each bring a strong individual voice to their work, which are briefly discussed in the introduction. The current volume is beautifully produced by editor Hall.

*A New Resonance 13*, eds. Jim Kacian & Julie Schwerin (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 176 pages; 5¼" × 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-18-6. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

The latest introduction to seventeen poets who, as the back cover relates, "you will hear often in the coming years." In this day and age, with all the available online and print journals, many of the names are already familiar—although this may be the first time a reader can see a representative amount of their work in one place; fifteen poems from each. The New Resonance series has always done a good job of balancing different voices, this last offering is no different.

*Deepening Leaves: 2022 Seabeck Haiku Getaway Anthology*, eds. Lisa Gerlits & Antoinette Cheung (No place: Haiku Northwest Press, 2023). 74 pages; 5" × 5½". Handmade paper covers; stringbound. ISBN 978-1-953092-05-2. Price: \$25.00. Inquire of [garcidianne@hotmail.com](mailto:garcidianne@hotmail.com)

The anthology of the 2022 Seabeck Retreat contains the work of fifty-one of the sixty-five attending poets, plus the winners of their kukai. The weekend is a blur of haiku activities and socializing, with 2022's featured speaker Cristina Rascón from Mexico. As always, a beautiful production.

*A Million Shadows at Noon*, by Lenard D. Moore (No place [Lakewood, OH]: Cuttlefish Books, 2023). 58 pages; 4" × 6". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7350257-6-6. Price: \$10.00 from [www.cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com/home/poetry-series](http://www.cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com/home/poetry-series)

An extended sequence on the October 16, 1995, Million Man March. The purpose of the march was to better vocalize a black narrative and dispel negative stereotypes about black men. Through 49 haiku, Moore links snapshots of individuals, groups, and families into a powerful sequence. Many of the poems reference autumn, whose fragility emphasizes the humanity of the marchers. While many of these poems have been seen before, this is the first time they are curated in one place. *buses parked: / the million black men gather ... / falling October leaves; sun plaza: one million shadows darken / foot by foot; night after the march / reading the million-man pledge / to my pregnant wife.*

*Japonia / Japan*, ed. Lidia Rozmus (Poland: Wydawnictwo Austeria, 2023). 169 pages; 5¾" × 8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-83-7866-523-6. Price: \$12.00 from <https://austeria.pl/produkt/japonia/>

Poems, prose, and photographs of and on Japan, in Japanese, Polish, and English by Rozmus and six Japanese writers—and perhaps, more importantly, blank pages for the reader to add their own. The book appears like a scrapbook from a trip, made to jot down notes and sketches, and slip images into, then published to share with friends. Another beautiful volume from Rozmus.

*Mountains and Loons*, by Nancy Orr (No place [Lewiston, Maine]: Privately printed, 2023). 41 pages; 6" × 9". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-852530-07-3. Price: \$8.00 from online booksellers.

A history of Orr's family with Baxter State Park, home of Mt. Katahdin, terminus of the Appalachian Trail. While structured as a single, long haibun, the poems don't leap in different directions, but rather reinforce what the prose says. Orr includes lots of family photographs, and the reader cannot doubt her love of the area and its various trails and lakes. *five years old / climbing the mountain / wild beginning; misty paddle / Canada geese amid / drowned tree stumps.*

*Children & Bubbles*, by James Schlett (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 114 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-95840826-1. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Combining advice for his newborn daughter, previously published in *Bottle Rockets*, with haiku based on lessons learned from his daughter's first seven years, Schlett's collection of haiku illustrates a father's journey. The poems are presented in sections—Family, Play, Wonder, Innocence—yet these aren't neatly packaged sections, for if the poems teach anything it is that the unexpected is too be expected. How haiku-like. A joyful collection. *blue autumn sky / tugging at my heart / her first kite; she's two now / it spreads all over / morning glory.*

*Into the Stillness*, by Peter Jastermsky (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 107 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-31-5. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

A collection of split-sequences from the form's founder. The split sequence is a three-line haiku broken into its individual lines, with three other haiku on a similar theme tucked in-between; the whole given a title. As could be imagined, there are interesting bleeds between the lines of the "seed poem" and those haiku within it; but this can also be jarring at times. Yet in the hands of Jastermsky, the poems open in delightful

ways. The title poem: “Into the Stillness” // *counting breaths // bead by bead / opening to / the quiet mind // a parallel path // shadowing a curve / the warm company / of light // in the labyrinth // among the turns / with every moment / we arrive.*

*Two Haiku Poets*, by Annie Bachini & Helen Buckingham (United Kingdom: Iron Press, 2023). 60 pages; 4" × 5¾". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-838344-41-2. Price: £7.00 from [www.ironpress.co.uk](http://www.ironpress.co.uk)

Seventy-four haiku from each poet. We’re not sure why these two poets were paired, but each knows their way around the form, and the amount of poems by each gives a good sense of their strengths. A satisfying read. Bachini: *lurching to a halt / the weight of the bus / inside my body; spring cleaning / what mother did / each week.* Buckingham: *snowman / down to his / last piece of coal; drive-thru / monoxide / sandwich.*

*Visible Magic*, by Charles Dowling Williams (No place: privately printed, 2023). 160 pages; 6" × 9". Matte blue cards covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: inquire of author at [kytrefarm@yahoo.com](mailto:kytrefarm@yahoo.com)

Our assessment of Williams’ work hasn’t changed since our review of his 2021 collection, *Echo Ridge*, despite the press release’s citation of the previous volume’s various awards and glowing reviews. The majority of his poems are composed of three disparate parts, which flattens the focus, and are often simple nature descriptions. He nearly always explains the significance of the moments—rather than structure any kind of tension and let the reader make a discovery. We don’t doubt his sincere love of these experienced moments, but as haiku they aren’t very effective. *wild geese nest at lake / I know this pair from last spring / recall their voices; last day of winter / viewing my neighbor’s spring lambs / their ears twitch sideways.*

*Curcubeu peste Fuj si Ceahlău* / Rainbow over Fuji and Ceahlău, by Vasile Moldovan (Romania: Editură Acreditată, 2023). 144 pages; 5¾" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-6-061374-20-5. Price: inquire of the author.

Haiku sequences, in Romanian and English, written by the poet over the last thirty-three years. The topics range widely: from poetic tributes on Romanian figures, to Japanese landmarks, seasonal overtures, and Covid. Many of the haiku narrate more than American poets are used to, as in *Fireworks— / the night between years / lit as well as day* and some of the translations are in need of a lot of work: *A helping hand— / mother tiches her daughter / to clomb her doll*.

*Postcards from Texas*, by Allyson Whipple (No place [Lakewood, Ohio]: Cuttlefish Books, 2023). 57 pages; 4" × 6". Glossy four-colored card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7350257-7-3. Price: \$9.00 from [www.cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com/home](http://www.cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com/home)

A collection of haiku from the poet's time in Texas. The state has an almost stereotypical mythos associated with it, which Whipple breaks down into more human components. Through her poetry we witness the good and bad, the humorous and ironic, that make up any locale. An enjoyable first outing. *late pepper harvest / in a stoneware bowl / Christmas lights; a sparrow carcass / almost picked clean— / heat advisory*

*Only Thunder*, by David Oates (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 114 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-23-0. Price: \$24.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Oates revisits his life, documenting important moments—big and small—in haiku and other micro poetry. Most involve his family, and he often finds the poignant and humorous. Some poems might be too personal for greater readership to appreciate, but even in them the reader

feels their importance to Oates. *her candy bar finished— / even on her back, / chocolate; winter night / when we touch / a spark.*

*After Curfew*, by Julie Bloss Kelsey (No place [Lakewood, Ohio]: Cuttlefish Books, 2023). 45 pages; 4" × 6". Glossy four-colored card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-7350257-5-9. Price: \$9.00 from [www.cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com/home](http://www.cuttlefishbooks.wixsite.com/home)

Haiku of an awkward adolescence. Part humorous, part heartbreaking, this small collection revisits Kelsey's teenage years, in which she tested boundaries and sought acceptance. These are poems of passed notes, car backseats, and fake IDs. All readers will find something identifiable in these moments. But the collection, like adolescence itself (although it didn't seem it at the time), is sadly too brief. *following her / out the window / my judgement; creased yearbook page / where you wrote / love.*

*One Day*, by Tom Clausen (No place [Ithaca, N.Y.]: Stark Mountain Press, 2023). 81 pages; 5" × 8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-8537798-5-3. Price: \$6.00 from online booksellers.

Based on a reading at the final Haiku Circle, *One Day* collects thirty years of haiku organized into a single day. Clausen has always been adept at haiku, and his gentle, everyday phrasing belies the significance he discovers in the many moments that make up a life. His poems seem to bumble into meaning, as if being in the right place at the right time—in the right frame of mind—wasn't a skill itself. We have always been a fan of his work. *daybreak / without a soul there / I signal to turn; down the beach / too far to yell / my children.*

*All Ears*, ed. Corine Timmer (Portugal: Bicaideias, 2023). 51 pages; 5¼" × 8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-989-99760-7-8. Price: €9.00 from [www.bicaideias.com/](http://www.bicaideias.com/)

Sixty-four poets are represented in the latest anthology, this go-round on all things rabbit. It is a playful collection of poems, each poet giving their own slant on the theme. *springtime again mowing around the rabbit hole* (Rickert); *threadbare bunny / in his bookbag / first day of school* (Tomczak). Like previous anthologies, the artwork—in this case rabbits made of beach shells—is a standout. All proceeds go to charity; in this case, House Rabbit Society, which advocates for the welfare of domesticated rabbits.

*Ukulele Drift*, by Matthew Caretti (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 114 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-27-8. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Caretti has been living and teaching in American Samoa for the last two years, the current volume a poetic tour. The poems a mix of new and old perspectives. Readers will learn the daily rhythms of the islands through his observations. He has a good knack for picking out the right details and shares them with an experienced hand. A fine outing. *this little island / the length of a rainbow / ukulele song; faded chant / a slow peopling / of the night sky.*

*Fury of My Fart*, by Adjei Agyei-Baah (No place: Nun Prophet Press, 2023) 114 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-373990-66-0. Price: \$4.02 from online sellers.

A sequel to the author's 2018 collection *Piece of My Fart* in English and Twi. In the dedication to his children, he asks that they not be afraid to speak of unmentionable things. Yet a little of that philosophy goes a long way. Many of the poems contain simple humor, such as *farting in class / I fan my nose and look accusingly / at my mate*, while a few make more interesting reading: *my fart / blown back to me / on Harmattan winds*. Overall there are too many and many of them fall flat.



*Memo to Warhol: A Collaboration of Art & Haiku in Color*, by Robert Epstein and Ed Markowski (No place: privately printed, 2023). 117 pages. 5" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-862017-88-5. Price: \$18.00 from online booksellers.

A collaboration between Epstein (haiku) and Markowski (art). To Markowski's colorfully abstract digital art, Epstein responds in haiku. Trying to describe the pairings in a written review is difficult, so we'll simply say that it is an enjoyable outing.

*Light Speed*, by Tom Sacramona (Windsor, Conn.: Bottle Rockets Press, 2023). 12 pages; 3" × 4". Black and white card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$5.00 from [www.bottlerocketspress.com](http://www.bottlerocketspress.com)

We love these small collections. A sequence of ten haiku on the space race from the past editor of Frogpond. The scifaiku combine the excitement of the moment, tinged with a sense of nostalgia. In just the right amount of poems. With so few poems I don't want to give the fun away; but a favorite: *astronauts / exit / the / lunar / module / breech*.

*Ancient History*, by Adelaide B. Shaw (India: Cyberwit, 2023). 82 pages; 5½" × 8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-8-119228-46-1. Price: \$17.00 from online booksellers.

Forty-nine haibun and tanka prose on growing up in New Haven, Connecticut between 1936 and 1952. Despite her comment in the introduction, "neither simpler nor more difficult than the present," the poems wear nostalgia heavily. The pieces move through her life, from youth to teen, family stories, chores, summer camps, and movie palaces, until she moves away. The haiku and tanka nicely complement the prose. An enjoyable outing.

*Bookmarks*, by Kelly Sargent (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 66 pages; 4¼" × 6¾". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-32-2. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

While we have seen some of these poems before, learning about her severe hearing impairment and the private language she and her sister communicated in, gives some a deeper meaning. For example, it is hard not to find that relationship and its tactile language in a poem like: *our fingers / lacing ... / waxing moon*. Other poems share moments of marriage, motherhood, and loss. A strong debut. *hospice book cart / bookmarks / between the pages*.

*Rust*, by Elmedin Kadric (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 104 pages; 4¼" × 6¾". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-29-2. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Kadric is a linguistic acrobat in this collection of haiku and other micro-poetry. We can think of few poets who so deftly use language to discover, surprise, and pry. He is especially apt at creating meaning through enjambment. As in: *one windmill not enough morning glories*. And his *fox carcass / I use / the selfie stick* opens amazingly. Recommended.

*Between Sun and Shadow: The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members' Anthology 2023*, ed. Naia (San Jose, Calif.: Yuki Teikei Haiku Society, 2023). 103 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-735723-54-9. Price: \$12.00 from [www.yths.org](http://www.yths.org)

The annual includes haiku by eighty-seven poets, as well as reports on the organization's annual spring reading, contest, and autumn retreat. Such anthologies are a great way to preserve history, but also to share with non-members the organization's activities. *wood ducks / between sun and shadow / a floating leaf* (Janice Doppler); *dense fog ... / firewood already highly / stacked* (Hiroyuki Murakami).

*Scent of Juniper*, by Jeff Hoagland (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 122 pages; 4¼" × 6¾". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-30-8. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Hoagland's haiku are an immersion in nature and describe what it means to be a self-professed nature-lover. His poems find the ever-changing energy in nature, from spring's exuberance to winter's pullback, all part of a dependent cycle that Hoagland is more than witness to. It is this perhaps lack of border between him and his subjects that gives his poems a vibrancy. Always recommended. *ice storm / someone's going / to break a limb; summer breeze / the scent of juniper / in my tumbler.*

*Touching His Scar*, by Mary McCormack (No place: privately printed, 2023). 21 pages; 5¼" × 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9981720-5-7. Price: \$9.99 from online booksellers.

Haiku on the effects of war on returned soldiers. Too many of the haiku are statements without any room for reader participation, ie. *sometimes lonelier / with people / than without.* And others feel too personal, *pulled taut / all his anger / in that one word.* McCormack is taking on a serious subject, and the reader can feel the depth of her conviction, but the haiku aren't as effective as they could be.

*Full Moon Radio*, by Stuart Bartow (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 88 pages; 4¼" × 6¾". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-33-9. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

An immersion into the natural world, reveling in its many mysteries, including those missed or unseen. Bartow's poems are by turn serious, ponderous, humorous, and absurd—just like life itself. He has a keen eye for connections that we are often envious of. A strong outing! *their whistling song peepers in the pond inside me; what the deer / turn into / morning fog.*

*Less*, by John Martone (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 70 pages; 4¼" × 6¾". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-35-3. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Latest volume from Martone. *Less* continues his tradition of looking into the eye of things, but where he often seems to settle on a single object, examining it from all sides, here he seems to be widening his view—looking at other artists (or at least their art) and how they connect to himself. We still see his individual poems as one big web making a single “life poem,” and the current volume contains many poems on daily devotions. A singular poet. *that man with his begging cup a well; years after / that ocean / the ocean.*

*A House Meant Only for Summer*, by Cherie Hunter Day (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2023). 80 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-34-6. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Fifty-seven haibun and tanka-prose from a skilled writer. Her prose is some of the most alive among haibun writers, imaginative, playful, yet it has a tight precision as well. Day combines her now with memory, herself with the natural world. The pieces are investigations of being. A very satisfying read.