

## BRIEFLY NOTED

*Late Blooming Cherries: Haiku Poetry from India*, eds. Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih and Rimi Nath (India: Harper Collins, 2024). 204 pages; 5" × 7". Matte four-color card covers; hardcover. ISBN 978-9-356999-96-1. Price: \$26.95 (Kindle version available) from online booksellers.

An anthology of Indian haiku. The book has a short introduction to the form which is easy to follow, although we quibble with a few of the statements, such as the idea that Japanese haiku were written in 'syllables.' But the meat of the anthology are the fifty-seven Indian poets, each represented by a brief bio and between five and twenty haiku. Even the most casual of observers will have noted India's strong output of haiku this century. The anthology does a good job of capturing the variety of voices and haiku, which are on both Indian subjects (*night raga / the moon / entangled in a tree*—Neha R. Krishna) as well as more universal ones (*unexpected showers / every puddle sets free / the child in me*—Vandana Parashar). With so many strong poets available paired with an admittedly subjective process—and an obvious limitation of space—some favorites will be missed. *Late Blooming Cherries* is a fine addition to any haiku library, and one worth dipping into. A few favorites: *paper boat / big enough to hold / a dream or two*—Sanjuktaa Asopa; *mother's funeral / the breeze gently / caresses my hair*—Arvinder Kaur; *flood / on the uprooted tree / the same birds*—Mallika Chari.

*Filling the Pondering Pool*, by Constance Patrick (Sedona, Ariz.: Privately printed, 2023). 57 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-987120-21-7. Price: \$8.95 from online booksellers.

An oddly structured book that mixes definitions of haiku from a variety of sources, quick bios of the four main Japanese masters, with her own work. The main problem is that her own work isn't up to the hype she generates about the genre. A few of her haiku: *Sun hides behind clouds /*

*pagodas poke at rain drops / Buddha smiles happy; morning arrives / sun-sounds make symphony / we are one.* Hard to recommend.

*Choking the Moon*, by Robert Letters (Raleigh, N.C.: Paucus Press, 2024). 133 pages; 5" × 7". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-733329-56-9. Price: \$12.00 from online booksellers.

Coming in at over 250 haiku, Letters' first haiku collection could use some culling. Stronger poems get a bit lost among rather blah uncut ones like *standing water / still in the cornfields / after the storm* or too-personal poems such as *secret sun / can't melt / the ice in your birdbath*. We think overall he needs to better understand the haiku's two-part structure, but his work has some nice observations. *on a tall ladder / in the pale dogwood / perfectly balanced; a serious girl / in a green sweater / choosing a pepper*.

*Shocking the Dark*, by Robert Lowes (American Fork, Utah: Kelsay Books, 2024). 103 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-639805-50-1. Price: \$23.00 from online booksellers.

Lowes includes a haiku section in his latest book of longer poetry. Fifty-two haiku that find the slant in modern life, seeing the everyday in new ways. They are a nice change from the longer poems which overtly ask questions, pose situations, often with resolutions, unlike haiku. *trees leafy again / I no longer see / the distant church; swarming the yard / I thought was mine / a flock of grackles; frozen ground / pigeons nodding yes / to everything*.

*Human Caring Through Healing Haiku: Mindful Journaling for Healthcare Providers*, by Janette Moreno and Jan Anderson (No place: Privately printed, 2024). 136 pages; 6" × 9". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-990449-90-9. Price: \$17.99 from online booksellers.

The book is designed to allow healthcare providers the opportunity to read quotes and haiku about healing, with space for them to then journal their own “healing haiku.” Sadly, despite the authors extensive mental healthcare bios, they don’t know the first thing about haiku. *Free yourself of pain / Let go of shame and the blame-game / Forgive, heal, and love.*

*On Time*, by Robert Epstein (No place: Privately printed, 2024). 100 pages; 5" × 8". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-323762-21-7. Price: \$13.00 from online booksellers.

Epstein begins his latest collection with a discussion on the illusion of time. The book is a collection of haiku, many paired with photographs. The photographs are closely related (a picture of a wizard beside a poem that references a wizard; a picture of a sandy pail beside a poem that references a sandbox) but don’t seem to add much beyond illustration. Most of the poems reference time in some manner, looking at it as a subject from a variety of angles. As we have noted in the past, he is a very prolific poet, and some of the weaker poems could have been culled, such as: *it’s that easy: / finding refuge / under the covers.* But other poems serve his theme well. *sundown— / a dead sparrow shatters / my steps; Sunday church bells— / every thing is ringing / now.*

*City Beach*, by Dee Evetts (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 118 pages; 5½" × 8½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-36-0. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Evetts second collection, a mix of haiku, senryu, haibun, and a few photo haiga comes twenty-six years after his award-winning *Endgrain*. In his Introduction he cites his interest in wordplay and a reader can easily find this at work in many of the poems. He finds the slant meaning of things and has a good sense of humor, as in *lockdown I miss my dentist’s touch.* While the tone of the collection is conversationally breezy, there are deeper poems that reward with time, and the overall feel is one of variety.

As a co-founder of the British Haiku Society as well as the Spring Street Haiku Group this isn't surprising. A good outing. *in the sleeping bag / I wake to June snow / someone speaking Dutch; fading light / I wonder about its origin / the word evening.*

*Shadow Elephants*, by Malintha Perera (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 104 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-46-9. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

A collection of poems on Sri Lanka's complicated relationship with elephants. It is impossible to not feel empathy for these animals, especially reading how their environment clashes with humankind's. Perera's poems do a good job describing the various overlaps between species, from their use in religious ceremonies to zoo attractions. Some of the poems are more sketch than fully formed haiku, but nearly all reward in some manner. A wakeup call. A few favorites: *savannah crossroad ... / jeep tracks through / elephant dung; sanctuary shade — / the short-chained bull / nods nonstop.*

*Upside Down, The Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2023*, eds. Jim Kacian & the Red Moon Editorial Staff (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 208 pages; 5½" × 8¼". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-37-7. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

The latest annual from Red Moon Press, its twenty-eighth volume! Its eleven editors, all well-established in the haiku field, have chosen haiku, senryu, haibun, and essays that they feel are the finest published in the previous year. Of the essays, Brad Bennett's "Repetition in Haiku," was previously published in *MH*; the volume also includes two from Randy Brooks: "Famous Japanese Haiku Narrators" and "Punctuation Words in English-Language Haiku." Both worth checking out. Also included are three of editor Kacian's "Clerikus." An always rewarding anthology.

*Raking Leaves*, by Yu Chang (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 104 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-50-6. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

A rewarding third collection from Chang. The poems tag along as he goes about his life, from simple daily chores to friend and family relations, all the while revealing the significance of his (and by extension, our) meetings. He has a light touch and a sly sense of humor, and many of the poems reward with repeated readings. Chang is a longtime favorite. Many of the poems have been previously published, but afield, so it is wonderful to have them together. *stargazing / another chair / on the floating dock; letting go / the red balloon / my daughter's embrace.*

*Street Beat: Haiku and Senryū from the pages of Tsurī-Dōrō*, ed. Tony Puppello (New York: Tsurī-Dōrō Press, 2024). 39 pages; 5" × 7". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-990797-20-8. Price: \$6.00 from online booksellers.

An anthology of urban haiku and senryu from the online journal *Tsurī-Dōrō*. A nice mix of observational, thoughtful, and humorous poems. *skid row sunset / looking west / toward Rodeo Drive* (Michael Henry Lee); *on the bus / snagged by something / her hijab tightens* (Annie Bachini); *condemned apartment block / demolition workers / put back the sky* (Mark Miller).

*My Wife & Other Adventures*, by Bob Lucky (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 112 pages; 6" × 9". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-42-2. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

A collection of haibun. Lucky is a world traveler, and he labels each piece with its location: Bahrain, China, India, Portugal, Trieste, etc... We are fortunate to travel with him through the book's sixty-three haibun. The

haibun are travelogues, and he encounters a cast of characters that are both entertaining as well as enlightening, and he makes for a fine guide—noting the little things that make a person or place. The pieces are nicely varied and he writes with humor and enough philosophy. Something all travelers come to understand is that the exotic characters—the erhu playing barber, the drunk in the plaza—probably see him the same way, so we as readers learn as much about Lucky as we do of the foreign climes he visits. He ends the collection with a haibun on the idea of “Home,” a suitable commentary for someone who is seemingly always searching for something. A deeply satisfying read.

*For the Birds*, by Sarah Paris (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 74 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-43-8. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

While most of the haiku in *For the Birds* contain some avian reference, other poems contain other nature images. These living images act as barometers of the poet's emotions at the time, and they never feel forced, instead feeling almost serendipitous. Paris was a student of Fr. Thomas Hand, and an understandably Zen sense of wholeness permeates the poems. Easily recommended. An enjoyable collection. *spring weeding / the persistent chip-chip / of a towhee; January morning / a beggar breaks bread / with pigeons.*

*World Haiku 2024 No. 20*, ed. Ban'ya Natsuishi (Japan: World Haiku Association, 2024). 230 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$15.00 from [sayumikamakura@msf.biglobe.ne.jp](mailto:sayumikamakura@msf.biglobe.ne.jp)

The latest anthology from the World Haiku Association contains nearly five hundred haiku by 166 members, many in English. Also included are a pair of essays (one in French, one in English), and the conference report of the association's 2023 Zoom meeting. The quality of the poems varies

(our impression of the association is that it is a gathering of enthusiasts), and some are more narrative or abstract than we are comfortable with. *a lonely mermaid / fluttering / at the bottom of the sea* (Missio); *with no light / a crucified soul / between sky and earth* (Maria Laura Valente). But others are enjoyable.

*It Breaks Your Heart: Haiku and Senryu on the 2023 New York Mets*, by James Knippen and Daniel Shank Cruz (Alpharetta, Ga.: Redheaded Press, 2024). 79 pages; ebook. ISBN 979-8-218-41884-7. Price: free download from <https://www.redheadedpress.com/free-e-books>

Following 2022's near historic season, the poets thought they would immortalize the upcoming season—highly expected to mirror the previous one—with haiku on the team's impending triumph. Fate had other plans for the team. Haiku on baseball have a long history and *It Breaks Your Heart* fits nicely into it. The poems are dated to correspond with actual events, so the reader gets to follow the poet's highs and lows through the long season. An introductory "Cast of Characters" list helps locate some of the names, such as in the poem: *sun and shadow / the prayer / in Raley's cap*. Others can be enjoyed on their own. *92 / in the shade / the fans' fans*.

*Two Summers*, by Bill Cooper (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 132 pages; 4¼" × 6½." Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-37-7. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

The latest collection (ninth?) from the poet. The poems are broken into thematic sections, yet none too constrained to trap his work. We have always enjoyed Cooper's poems for their breadth of subject matter and deft handling, and the current volume is no exception. There are poems on nature, family, sailing, etc.—a full and observant life. Yet despite this breadth there is a consistent narrator with a strong poetic voice. Anyone looking for a successful practitioner of the American mode should look no farther. *eaglet / a pompano head / as pillow; summer solstice / the turn of a tuning peg / on the bass*. Recommended.

*Dreamer's Moon*, by Mark Forrester (Windsor, Conn.: Buddha Baby Press, 2024). 72 pages; 4¼" × 5". Glossy black and white card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-9892491-0-7. Price: \$15.00 from [www.buddha-rat.squarespace.com](http://www.buddha-rat.squarespace.com)

Second collection from Forrester. There is a strong identification with the natural world in his work, and it is enjoyable to watch him explore the boundaries between himself and his surroundings, and ultimately finding some sense of meaning. An enjoyable outing. Recommended. *wishing softness / into my words — / morning rain; winter doldrums — / finally eating / the black licorice.*

*Weather*, by Rob Taylor (Canada: Gaspereau Press, 2024). 120 pages; 5" × 8½". Matte blue card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-554472-63-5. Price: \$29.95 from [www.gaspereau.com](http://www.gaspereau.com)

During the pandemic, Taylor began a routine of writing and editing in woods near his home. This period corresponded with the first three years of his daughter's life, so mixed among the poems on joggers and nature are poems on this familial change. Ultimately the book becomes about the push and pull of intimacy and responsibility. A beautifully produced book; an enjoyable read. *Google Translate / tab left open / we will visit in springtime; no notebook — / running home past the dog park / a poem in my mouth; alone in the woods / pulling from my pocket / my daughter's mitten.*

*The White Buffalo*, by Chad Lee Robinson (Durham, N.C.: Backbone Press, 2023). 32 pages; 5" × 7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-9881650-0-2. Price: \$10.00 from [www.backbonepress.org](http://www.backbonepress.org)

Winner of the 2022 Backbone Press Chapbook Contest. Robinson's fourth collection contains fifty-two haiku on the Great Plains. There is



an interesting mix of cattlemen, fisherman, Lakota, and the vastness of the Great Plains, which gives the book a timeless quality—yet also hints at lifestyle and traditions nearly lost. It is not surprising that all his collections are contest winners. Robinson writes with a distinctively authentic voice. *restringing fence wire — / the meadowlark's song one post / ahead of the wind; tapping trail dust / from the harmonica ... / twilight stars.*

*An Unlikely Truth*, by Sondra J. Byrnes (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 120 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-36-0. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

An enjoyable collection. Byrnes revels in space: the space around, near, and between things (including herself), as well as the objects that do or don't occupy those spaces. Her observations take surprising detours, and it is enjoyable to discover these new destinations with her. One thematic section of the book, on a new relationship, is especially rewarding. *identity theft / i'd give so much / away; everywhere / someone's hands / this old adobe.*

*The Ten Hands of a Fuchka Seller*, by Daipayan Nair (India: Penprints, 2024). 80 pages; 4¾" × 7¼". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-81-974036-2-0. Price: \$35.00 from online booksellers.

Through his poems Nair attempts to capture the city of Kolkata and its surrounding areas. Fuchka is a street food, and it is these kinds of boots-on-the-ground details that give life to the poems. Some of the poems are sketches and some too personal for this reader to get beyond a surface reading, which might be a cultural thing, but through them all the reader gets a sense of the city. The book also contains twelve illustrative photographs. *Kolkata's street corner — / the ten hands / of a fuchka seller; ma pushes me / towards the clouds / playground swing; as far as / the sunrise can reach / a subway beggar.*

*Sin Qua Non*, by Elliot Nicely (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 108 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-44-5. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

The title of Nicely's first full-length collection means "something essential," a good pick for a book relating the poignant moments of our lives. Nicely writes well, and his poems display a real, vulnerable heart at work. The poems are placed into thematic sections which gives the book an enjoyable, overall narrative. A good outing. *late supper / the crisscrossing of bats / beneath the barn light; all the wrong words vine-wrapped fence.*

*Coming Storm*, by Dave Reynolds (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 132 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-48-3. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Reynolds collection takes the reader through the calendar, January to December, with nine haiku per month. The poems are well-placed within their seasons, he has a good sense of the genre, and we enjoy the way he structures them, occasionally cutting his phrases to great effect, as in: *another year / another columbine shooting / up through the dirt.* There is a focus on relationships, many humorous, and his observations hit home. A fine collection. *she enters the room / my tonic / extra bubbly; the best raspberries / just beyond / the poison ivy.*

*Moonlight*, by David Kāwika Eyre (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 136 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-39-1. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Third haiku collection from Eyre. His poems are gentle explorations of what it means to be alive in his world. Some poems don't seem fully finished, as in, *whether it's / the crickets / or waterfall*, which seems to want a second half, yet others explore nicely, often within themselves. *new snow / old snow / shadow play; wood chopped / in self-therapy / unstacked still.*

*Again & Again*, by Guy Nesom (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 120 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-40-7. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

The third collection from Nesom in three years. Several of the poems are uncut sentences and other more statement-like ones could have been culled, but Nesom is a poet who walks his own path. The self-pseudonymous blurbs on the back and his casual poetic tone suggest he doesn't take himself too seriously, which at times describes the collection, but a fair number of the haiku are enjoyable. *waiting / to be said ... / my mechanical pencil; but still leaning / toward each other ... / weathered headstones.*

*Red Sky at Night*, by Dan McKinley (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 78 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-39-1. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Subtitled "50 Poems from 50 years in Haiku," the collection can be seen as a slim retrospective of McKinley's work. His poems are quiet reflections that take note of life's poignant moments. Of interest are some four liners, such as: *this spring / no fragrant flowers / on the dead magnolia / no one to pick them.* The volume includes a small section of haiku from the poet's travels. *a gentle wind ... / yesterday's wet snow / falls again; cyclist's jacket / puffed with the wind / first day of spring.*

*Evergreen*, by C. X. Turner (United Kingdom: Alba Publishing, 2024). 100 pages; 5¾" × 8¼". Glossy white and green card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-65-7. Price: £12.00 from [www.albapublishing.com](http://www.albapublishing.com)

Debut collection from Turner includes haiku, senryu, and tanka. We've been following her journey with interest, since she often includes more subjective perspectives in her work, and sometimes fanciful images. This boundary between what haiku has usually been and tanka gives her a fresh voice. Because she so often writes with an "I" the collection feels

intimate. A good outing. *picking up / the shadow of a tree / windfall apples; awakening the same but different robin song.*

*Silent After*, by Joshua Eric Williams (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 102 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-43-8. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

The collection's first poem, *empty beach / my mouth is / a seashell*, lets you know that you are in for something different. Williams is working in his own territory, often abstract, with unique juxtapositions and perspectives—and it is questionable if all of the poems will work for all people. His work is not to be digested easily, but when it hits it hits solidly. Recommended. *fire ant / without a colony / summer dusk; and the Touchstone winning silent after / the shooting / stars.*

*One Set of Footprints*, by Robert Loomis (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 88 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-38-4. Price: \$25.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Compiled from three unpublished manuscripts from the 1970s and 80s, plus a few newer poems. For such a short collection there are too many statement-like or uncut haiku, such as *this bag of candy / left on the beach / becomes our dessert*. But others fit well within the ELH tradition. He pairs some of the poems with the artwork of Susan Jokelson. *someone's worked / at this gate overnight / the web across my nose; gold country bonanza / pine sap gleaming / in lantern light.*

*First Notes*, by Dan Curtis (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 116 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-47-6. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

A good debut. Seasonality is a theme of each poem, and Curtis picks strong and resonant images within them. And while the collection is laid out seasonally there are runs of poems—like the one on his mother’s death—that because they reside in a Spring section feel the more heart-breaking. Overall there is a good variety of touching, thoughtful, and humorous poems. *shortest day / my toothpaste / promises brightness; wild-flower meadow ... / holding mom gently / in a plastic bag.*

*Dimes of Light*, by John Pappas (India: Yavanika Press, 2024). 30 pages; ebook. No ISBN. Price: \$3.00 from [www.yavanikapress.com](http://www.yavanikapress.com)

Twenty one-line poems that lean heavily on abstraction. Some interesting ideas and images, but ultimately the poems are enjoyed more in the head than the heart. Admittedly, we struggle with these kinds of poems at haiku’s edges. *dimes of light a study of ankles and elbows; crumbless now a forest of decision trees; barefoot through silvergrass the late quartets.*

*Waiting for an Oracle*, by petro ck. (No place: Nun Prophet Press, 2024). 119 pages; 5½" × 8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 979-8-864030-23-3. Price: \$4.98 from online booksellers.

The author states in his introduction that “The haiku and senryu in this collection have been created in part by using predictive text functions...” Add to that the author’s role as founder and publisher of the online journal *dadakuku* and the reader can expect a lively, abstract mix. This expectation is true with poems like *first day of summer / saying hell is here again / for a closer look* or *evergreen brown / the besieged climate changes / its welcome* which feel like they were assisted by a machine. But like a lot of surreal games, which are fun and interesting to play, we question the need for sharing them. Other poems, assumedly created in the same fashion, work by presenting surprising angles; these are the more enjoyable ones. And of course there are ones in between. An interesting experiment, and for the price worth checking out. *blackout / the candle bathes / in your eyes; capturing in a jar / thunder and lightning / bugs.*

*Natural Consequences*, by John S. O'Connor (Taylorville, Ill.: Brooks Books, 2024). 59 pages; 4" × 5¾". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-929820-33-7. Price: \$15.00 from [www.brooksbookshaiku.com](http://www.brooksbookshaiku.com)

The third haiku collection from O'Connor contains fifty haiku. Many of the poems in *Natural Consequences* reference times of trial, especially the deaths of his brother and mother, and the moments leading up to them. These heavier poems are partially offset by lighter, humorous moments, which give the collection a well-rounded feel. *relaxed fit jeans / unable to fasten / the changing room door; funeral mass / retuning the guitar / before putting it away; cleaning out her house — / the sweaters mom knitted / for my GI Joe.*

*A Silence or Two*, by Jennifer Hambrick (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2024). 150 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-42-1. Price: \$20.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

There is a new school of thought in haiku in which poems move beyond the simple, everyday language of "traditional" haiku and use instead abstractions to point at things. Often, as we have pointed out elsewhere, these abstractions feel pointlessly clever and we ultimately struggle to find a shared meaning in the poem; this is not necessarily the case with Hambrick. The first poem in *A Silence or Two* is a good example: *blood dusk / the sign language / of memory.* The first line *blood dusk* is an abstract and interesting way of describing a red sky at night (providing my reading is correct); the blood-color adds menace or violence. The following lines are equally abstract and introduce the idea of a handicapped memory. The reader is left to resolve these ideas in normal haiku-fashion. Unlike more opaquely abstract haiku we can find shared meaning in this poem, and the unsettled language adds to our resolution. An open question is why create these linguistic hurdles for the reader; an answer might be that in some cases they add meaningful layers or as in the case above attempt

to describe the indescribable. That said, in other poems of hers, such as *antimatter / a smattering / of broken gods*, any meaning seems to reside in the hot word “antimatter,” and what it means to each reader. There is, understandably, the risk that a word’s meaning to Hambrick isn’t universal to a reader—which can result in an untransmitted moment or in a poem’s feeling undecipherable. This “new haiku” approach isn’t for everyone, but of the poets who utilize its techniques, Hambrick is one of its finest practitioners. The book also contains a few slightly longer poems with similar themes. Some favorites: *broken stars / deep in the sonogram / a silence or two*; *nautical twilight / birthing and unbirthing / the undertow*.