

Arranged with one poem to a page there are pairings of poems juxtaposed across the page from each other that create a strong internal connection with an enhanced sense of understanding and compassion.

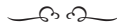
folding chairs  
uncomfortable  
at the grief workshop

winter morning—  
porridge in the pot  
breathing

Throughout *contractions* there is an indelible stamp of living in the Yukon, the wounds of loss, and the stretch marks of life. This collection touches high and low and will stay with you long after you have read it.

spring cleaning  
paw prints of the dog  
no longer with us

her room  
as she left it  
the dream catcher stirs



*oars up* by Joe McKeon, 2019 Red Moon Press ISBN 878-1-947271-35-7. \$15.00

*Reviewed by Tom Clausen*

Joe McKeon in *oars up* brilliantly recaptures the breadth of his life, from growing up-coming of age on through his adult life of family and work. The collection is remarkable for both poignant directness and a rewarding range of memory detail.

We all share certain childhood experiences, rites of passage and milestone moments that are indelibly with us seemingly for life. To read the poems in *oars up* is to be wonderfully awakened to how a poet can create poetry through the gift of his remembering.

Joe shares in his candid introduction that he was introduced to haiku and senryu in 2013 after he had retired and began to "reflect on his journey." He notes that he has "striven to write poems that have an openness that gives each reader a unique and personal experience." As I read *oars up* I felt both enchanted and imbued with reveries of my own memories that were brought to light through Joe's poems.

The book has sections; growing up, girls, clouds, sunshine and family. Within each section Joe has created sequences from poems that were previously published individually and it is his hope that readers will "enjoy his memories and then reflect on each poem individually for potential personal interpretations and meaning." These sequences and the haibun work beautifully and in my opinion will give the book an elevated trajectory in the heart of the reader. I found this collection to have a clarity that was refreshing and arresting. The many major life turning events are portrayed with both incisive awareness and a sense of humor.

Here is one sequence and two individual poems from this easily recommended book:

### Work

first day  
a poster of Tahiti  
on the office wall

subway heat  
every face turns  
to the whoosh

winter commute  
a yawn travels through  
the train station

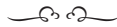
rush hour  
my GPS recommends  
the road less traveled

retirement party  
the cake knife slices  
through my name

and in closing ...

county fair  
second place ribbon  
in an empty stall

flea market  
we once had  
it all



*Tsugigami gathering the pieces* by Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff and Connie R. Meester (2018, Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA) 80 pages, 5.25" by 7.75", Perfectbound ISBN 978-1-947271-30-2, \$25.

*Reviewed by Jay Friedenber*

Valorie and Connie met in a haiku writing class in 1994 and have partnered together in writing for 24 years. Connie has been writing poems since the mid-80's and has received multiple awards for her rengay, haiku, senryu, and tanka. Valorie has been writing in long and short formats for 40 years. 250 of her pieces have appeared in journals and anthologies. This book