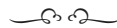


*unravelling: the redthread haiku sangha anthology 1997-2019*  
Jim Norton, Editor (2019, Alba Publishing, Uxbridge UK)  
76 pages, 5 ¾" by 8¼". perfectbound. ISBN 978-912773-29-9  
www.albapublishing.com

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

The members of Redthread seek, as stated in Jim Norton's forward to this anthology, "the practice of inner spirituality and its expression in haiku and haibun." The close connection between Buddhism and haiku is discussed in several well written appendixes, that also include one essay on the history of the Redthread group and one which is a workshop on how to write haiku. Most of the seventeen poets in this anthology have contributed a haibun as well as a number of haiku. While only a few haiku make a direct reference to Buddhism, most of the poems resonate with the calm of meditation and the quest for essence not cleverness. Some fine examples of the haiku that can be found in this volume: *Our chatter/inside a universe/ of birdsong*, by Jonathan Buckley, *Small noise in the empty house/ something shifting/to how it needs to be* by Ken Jones, *searching for mushrooms/everything looks/like a mushroom* by Jane Spray.

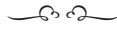


*on the fly* by Andrea Eldridge (2020, Buddha Baby Press, Windsor CT) 4¼" by 5". perfectbound, ISBN 978-1-7327746-6-7

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

Andrea Eldridge, a pilot for American Airlines, has divided her book of haiku into sections appropriately titled: takeoff, en route, destination, arrival, and landing. Interspersed amongst the poems are black and white photos, one for each section. Some of the haiku deal with flying such as: *creamsicle*

sky/ full of last night's dreams/ "cleared for takeoff" and a view from  
on high, arteries-/ city lights clogged/ with red brights. Other haiku  
are about the places where the plane has landed, first to see/ the  
canoes arrive-/ totem pole.



*Moment a poetry anthology* by Ian Turner (2020 Les Presses  
Littéraires, Pyrénées Orientales, France) 142 Pages, 5" by 6 1/2".  
perfectbound, ISBN 979-1-069937-25-3 \$10 plus \$10 postage at  
turnerian14@gmail.com

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

*Moment*, with its 368 poems covering work from 1997 to 2020,  
is an impressive collection. There are three poems to a page  
linked by a theme that is revealed in a delicate gray print at  
the bottom of the page. Examples of some of the themes are:  
coastal, parents, spring, wellbeing and humankind. There is a  
feeling of calm refinement to this collection. Everything from  
the font to the paper the poems are printed on contribute  
to this mood, and of course the poems themselves. A few  
examples:

still heat  
horses drift towards  
a thin tree

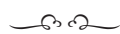
shining tor  
an old crow rises  
against the wind

cold nave  
the pale young harpist  
wears fingerless gloves

*From This Moment On* by Neal Whitman (2020 Cyberwit.net, Allahabad, India) 66 pages, 5 ½” by 8 ½”. perfectbound. ISBN978-93-89690-38-5 \$15.00 <http://www.cyberwit.net>

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

This collection of previously published haiku is presented two to a page, each with a citation where it first appeared. Whitman’s poems, presented in chronological order of publication from 2008 to 2019, show a range of subject matter and emotion. An example of a haiku that focuses on nature: *rising moon/ a dog barking/ somewhere* is paired on the same page with this senryu that shows Whitman’s fine sense of humor: *my blind date/ disarming the alarm/ invites me in*. The variety of subject matter and emotional tone makes for an enjoyable read where you never know quite what to expect from the next poem. *airport security/ he wears dark glasses/even indoors* and *father and son/ kicking a soccer ball/ a day with no goal*.



*A Bird Who Seems to Know Me: Poems And Haiku About Birds And Nature* by Wally Swist (2019, Ex Ophidia Press, Bainbridge Island, WA) 96 pages, 6 ¼” by 9 ¼”. perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-578-52156-5 \$21.50

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

This collection by long time poet Wally Swist, as the title suggests, is mostly about birds. While this is not only a book of haiku, there are many longer poems, even those longer poems have haiku sensibility. The longer poems are built of clear images. In some cases, the stanzas in those poems could be considered haiku. For example, the first six lines of *Evening Snow*:

ink on tissue paper  
the wet sound  
of falling snow

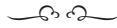
as if guiding his hand  
the fluid strokes  
of the brush

The haiku, as usual for Swist, are clearly delineated images depicting nature beautifully, but without sentimentality. A few examples:

out of the blowing reeds  
and swirling mist  
voices of geese

April morning  
spring  
in the robin's hop

This collection won the publisher's (Ex Ophidia Press) prize for poetry 2018 and it is easy to see why. This book truly brings the natural world to the reader through poetry.



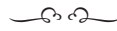
*One Leaf Detaches* by Margret Chula (2019, Alba Press, Uxbridge UK) 54 pages, 5" by 8", perfect bound, ISBN 978-1912773-24-4 \$15 free S/H in the US. Order at [margareтчula.com](http://margareтчula.com)

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

There is a sense of calm that infuses this collection of haiku. Reading these poems is like taking leave of the trivial frustrations of everyday life and journeying into a profound and relaxed place. *just a tinge/of red in the leaves/evening crickets* is a haiku that reveals the beauty of a moment while not glossing over the impermanence of all things.

Like the carp, in the following haiku, much is revealed in the simple straightforward language of these poems: *not seeing it/ till darkness fills the pond/the white carp*. Another haiku from

the collection: *the priest offers me/an orange an apple/left for the Buddha*. So too, these poems are an offering to the reader to partake in some of the peaceful and insightful observations of Margret Chula.



*Haiku Enlightenment: New Expanded Edition* by Gabriel Rosenstock (2019, Poetry Chaikhana, Boulder CO) 269 pages, 6" by 9", trade paperback, ISBN 978-0-9854679-8-2, \$16.95 [www.poetry-chaikhana.com](http://www.poetry-chaikhana.com)

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

To say that this is an expanded collection of Gabriel Rosenstock's writings about haiku would not be incorrect, but it would not be complete. To say that this is a lengthy love letter to haiku might be closer to the truth. Haiku to Rosenstock is more than just poetry. It is a way of life. It enables us as poets to become aware of, "...the mystery of being as we open ourselves, time and time again, to new vistas and to keener insights into the living, changing universe we inhabit." This book is not an academic lecture. It is a declaration of the virtues of haiku. Proudly stating that, "...haiku is a breath of freedom." To illustrate the virtues of haiku this volume is filled with the haiku of the Japanese masters as well as contemporary poets to expertly illustrate Rosenstock's ideas. Rosenstock equates the mindset of haiku with that of Buddhist enlightenment. Beginning with a quote by Dōgen, a Zen priest, "Forgetting oneself is being enlightened by all things," Rosenstock has a chapter titled, *The Gentle Art Of Disappearing* in which he assures you that, "Haiku can show you the way." Other chapters in this book include one on Issa, as well as a practical chapter titled, *Writing Haiku: Useful tips*. This a book as much about spirit as it is about haiku and is filled with a remarkable selection of haiku that exemplify the relationship between the two