

My favorite poem is:

slave museum  
the entrance fountain  
an ebbing shore

The placement of the phrase “ebbing shore” (which is used as the collection’s title) at the end of the poem, after “slave museum” and “the entrance fountain,” lends it rich layers of meaning. The image of a shore not only works nicely with the water fountain but also connotes the arrival of slave ships, and of these voices from history washing up on the shore of the current racial inequities in today’s United States.

Note how these lines slow the poem enough for a reader to connect the external images while also giving the reader time for the images to resonate internally, which is essential for strong haiku.

Following a photograph of 200-year-old oaks on the Oak Alley Plantation in Vacherie, Louisiana, is a poem pulsing with now:

election map  
the bloody south  
remains bloody

The truth will set us free, but first it will hurt.

old slave town  
we put down  
all our baggage

□■

#### REVIEWED BY REBECCA LILLY

*while dreaming your dreams* haiku by Réka Nyitrai (Mono Ya Mono Books, Valencia, Spain: 2020). 105 pages, 5" x 8". Matte four-color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-8409207268. \$19 from online booksellers.

Réka Nyitrai’s enchanting debut collection has a haunting surrealistic atmosphere and otherworldly feel as she deftly combines mythic images with those traditional to haiku, creating

fresh resonance through surprising juxtapositions:

the eternal feminine  
a mother-cloud  
and its cloudlets

Here her juxtaposition of the eternal (as archetypal feminine) with the quintessential image of transience (a cloud) brings the former abstraction down to earth and into our sensibilities with a deft play on Mother Earth. She succeeds, as well, in suggesting the deeper spiritual union of the transient and eternal in her personification of the cloud as a mother with children or young. The surreality of this unexpected grounding of archetypal abstraction in a sensory image common to many haiku makes this poem particularly effective. To the poet's credit, she doesn't eschew abstraction—or the personification of the inanimate, a literary device less common in haiku than other poetry.

The collection's epigraph ("while dreaming your dreams / sometimes I can hear / the blue beasts grinding their teeth") suggests that a major theme will be suffering or hardship. And indeed, a considerable number of poems do fit this theme: several suggest that the poet's father was a violent man, while other haiku allude to lost or failed romance, but the sentiment never feels self-pitying, maudlin, or trite. Most of the poems with romantic themes are imbued with nostalgic sadness, with images referencing a lost Eden or paradise (the apple, birdsong) or Christian religious iconography (angels and demons, a book of prayer, a book of psalms). A mythic or religious overlay often cloaks her struggles and yet the weaving of the mythic into the personal doesn't feel exaggerated or aggrandizing:

summer fling—  
the hollow thud  
of an apple

This is lovely, with the play on "toss" and "romance," the apple, of course, suggesting the approach of autumn and the poison apple of so many myths and fairy tales, which in this case is simply tossed away. The summer romance gets abandoned, and the magic

transformed into the poem instead. Another poem with a jarring surprise:

spring wind—  
what a feather may know about  
the pit

I particularly like “spring wind” with its floating feather, dropping the surprise of the third line with the hole in the wind, or the pit in earth where it (and perhaps the dying wind) settle. The poem sets us up for a springlike feeling, then does an about-turn, diving into what feels autumnal.

Another I especially like for its rich associations:

moonflowers  
out of her hand  
a moth becomes a falling star

The night-blooming moonflower attracts a moth by emitting a scent in the dark. It’s an earthy image, grounding us in several of our senses, that suddenly enlarges to reflect the visible universe as the moth becomes “a falling star” around the moon (the “flower”). In the second line, the ambiguity of the phrase “out of her hand” opens up varying interpretations: the moonflowers may be flowering independently of her hand (in a garden, perhaps yet to be picked) or may have dropped from her hand to a path in the dark, where the whites of both moonflower and moth fluttering away make the dark visible. That moonflower seeds are hallucinogenic further highlights the traditional mythic association of the moon with illusions and dreaming—an interesting juxtaposition to traditional Japanese poetics, where the moon may represent the Zen symbol of enlightenment. Again, Nyitrai melds the associations of iconic images from different traditions in a way that generates richness and magical surprise. In “moonflowers” there is pleasure in the sudden enlargement of the small earthy image to a cosmic scale, reinforced by the rich associations of different traditions of storytelling and poetics. In *while dreaming your dreams* Réka Nyitrai doesn’t merely

break with haiku tradition, but stretches its boundaries of inclusion in ways I found delightful. An impressive debut. □■

#### REVIEWED BY PIPPA PHILLIPS

*ea's e* by Scott Metz (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2022). 226 pages, 6" x 9". Matte four-color card covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1947271951. \$20 from <https://redmoonpress.com>.

In many of his poems, Scott Metz employs punctuation and spacing that confound an easy parsing of his poems—it is something of an ethos of his work. Metz offers a preliminary quote by Robert Grenier that proves illuminating: “Is it a long poem if you look at it long enough?” Metz extends the method to the title of his latest chapbook: *ease*, interrupted by errant punctuation—*ea's e*. The title is a haiku in and of itself, a paradox, whose meaning is subverted by an apostrophe and a space.

Metz's poems are laced with unexpected spacing and punctuation, creating breaths and pauses within the length of each poem, but also uniting the poems so they are in discourse with one another. Certain subjects recur throughout the volume. The leitmotif of leaves underscores the way Metz employs negative space to structure his poems—the poems themselves appear to be leaves scattered by the wind.

The volume is bookended by two poems that allude to the following haiku by paul m.:

outdated magazines  
In the green room  
Of a rose

In Jack Galmitz's *Views*, paul m. says the following about his verse: “The poem plays with the idea of a ‘green room’ which is traditionally a room stage performers wait in before they go on stage. I had in mind the green room of the Tonight Show or Letterman with their true and pseudo celebrities. The final line