

as an aside I shape-shift into a key

Whether the poet refers to a key for a lock, a key on a board, or a musical key is unclear—the word itself may be something physical, something symbolic, or something auditory. This mutability may be the source of the poet’s unnatural transformation—but it occurs on the vestiges, on the side of a space, or a conversation.

Later in the collection, the poet hero reaches an ecstatic state, delivering the self-creation promised in her first poem:

spring rain . . .
soon, we become
our own gods

It is notable that in a collection with a generally individualized perspective, that Shankar finds the godlike in the collective. Meaning is not out there, waiting to be discovered—we create our own meaning, by ourselves, and through our social connections. Though slim, Shankar’s chapbook is a complete experience, but also full of promise. It serves as an exemplary introduction to experimental haiku. Shankar is a poet to watch out for. ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY TERRI L. FRENCH

Dust and Rust haibun by Tayofeek Ayeyemi (Buttonhook Press, CA: 2022). 48 pages. Foreword by Rich Youmans. Available to download for free at <https://ojalart.com/buttonhook-press2022-chapbook-seriesmixed-formshaibunatofeek-ayeyemidust-and-rustwith-a-foreword-by-rich-youmans>.

In his debut book of haibun, *Dust and Rust*, Tayofeek Ayeyemi (Aswagaawy) introduces us to his family, friends, and lovers and celebrates the Yoruba culture of West Africa. The first few haibun center on childhood. We enter the writer’s modest home, where he and his siblings are taught respect, responsibility, and the suffering and rewards that come from hard work and diligence. But always his parents temper the harsh realities of life with love

and kindness, as examples of what it means to live a life of integrity with a grateful heart: “mum, who did the caregiving, held a loud silence that echoed the voice of hope,” he says in his haibun “(Im) Morality.” Religion and the Yoruba culture features prominently in his upbringing. “Christian families have named their children with Muslim names because of my father’s kindness,” the writer states in the haibun “Tabernacle of Flowers.” This kindness exhibits itself in the sharing of food that goes beyond the family dinner table. While what the community grows, harvests, and hunts may be meager, there always seems to be enough to go around. That sense of altruism even extends to the animal kingdom. “We were custodians of chirps, hisses, tweets, and buzzes,” he states in the title haibun, “Days of Dust and Rust.” Indeed, birds and wildlife appear often in the prose and haiku, from houseflies to hawks: (1) *second morsel . . . / a housefly follows / my hand* and (2) *sultry moon— / a hawk picks a lizard / picking termites*.

The haibun in the second half of the book express a nostalgic look back as the writer enters into adulthood as well as a romantic angst as he searches for a life partner. The haiku also speak to the vastness of the unknown: (1) *meteor . . . / before it fades / my wish* and (2) *how best to propose / I lift my face toward / the Milky Way*. Yet the hope instilled in him as a child is always present, which leads me to my favorite line in the book, from the haibun “The Venom and the Serum”: “Heartbreak is a venom. But instead of becoming poisonous, I’ll make a serum for anyone who comes my way.” I found the work in *Dust and Rust* to be just that, a serum, a wonderful elixir for any weary soul. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY KRISTEN LINDQUIST

Fireflies in the Rubble by Arvinder Kaur (Red River, Patparganj, New Delhi: 2022). 112 pages, 5" x 7". Matte four-color card covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-9392494130. \$9.99 from online booksellers.

In her foreword, Indian poet Arvinder Kaur describes herself as “writing a foreword to a memory,” as if the haiku and other short poems that follow are, taken altogether, one extended

reminiscence—a lovely image. She goes on to say, “Through this collection, I have tried to present a sketch, a graph of my mother’s life. But somewhere along the way . . . an Everywoman raises her head, coalescing at times into the wizened face of my granny as well as the radiant visage of my daughter.” (And, I might add, her own face.) She may be describing the process that guided her choices of what poems to include in this book, but she’s also describing how the best haiku link the personal to the universal. So many of these poems do that beautifully, whether featuring her childhood, family, love relationships, or the pandemic. Some of my favorites that touch upon childhood memories include: (1) *as if it is still the same childhood moon*; (2) *kitchen tales / passing my finger / through a smoke ring*; and (3) *tree swing / in and out of sunshine / my outstretched toes*. Even her sparest poems tap into wells of deep feeling, imbuing the book with a strong sense of loss and longing: (1) *mother’s funeral / the breeze gently / caresses my hair*; (2) *funeral day / dad’s chessmen / so still*; (3) *all the ways / I have never known myself . . . / autumn solitude*; and (4) *she blows away / a fallen eyelash / I wonder / how and when / I stopped wishing*. The title poem, *demolition / at childhood home / fireflies in the rubble*, captures the tone of this book perfectly: just as the light of fireflies brings beauty to the rubble of her lost home, so do these poems rise as bright sparks out of the pains (and joys) of her life: *as if / the unknown is all mine . . . / train window*.

Playground Grass: Haiku Options by Gary Hotham (Yiqralo Press, Scaggsville, MD: 2022). 38 pages, 6" x 9". Glossy four-color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 979-8802133958. \$6 from online booksellers.

This chapbook of 23 poems, punctuated by several photographs by the author, follows several other of his published works that have *Haiku* subtitles, including *Park Bench Memories: Haiku Tailwinds* and the award-winning *Rightsizing the Universe: Haiku Theory*. A quotation on the back cover by British historian Herbert Butterfield states, “Accidents and conjectures and curious juxtapositions are the very stuff of [the historian’s] story. All his art is to recapture a moment and seize the particulars and fasten down a contingency.” Perhaps this is where the “Haiku Options” theme comes into play, as a haiku by necessity contains only those details of a moment that the poet has opted to share. Hotham’s handful of quiet haiku

risk being overwhelmed by the poems that open and close the collection: William Stafford's "In Our State No One Ever" and an excerpt from "Psalms." Of special note, the title poem and a couple others: (1) *the wind's new strength / playground grass growing / taller*; (2) *rain clearing away the tourists / stones older than / the ruins*; and (3) *hiking / shade the sun / hasn't found*. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

Origins haibun (second, expanded edition) by Jacob D. Salzer (Lulu.com, n.p.: 2021). 50 pages, 6" x 9". Edited by Brandon Kent and Nicholas Klacsansky. Glossy color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-365-96238-7. \$9.99 from online booksellers.

In this collection of 27 haibun, Jacob Salzer invites us to go back to childhood memories of family life. The book starts with "Riding in the back seat of the truck with my sister . . ." and concludes with "Gramps lives on over twenty acres of forest." The haibun "Ascension" ends with this haiku: *rising / into unseen heights / sea fog*. I enjoyed both Salzer's everyday remembrances of family stories and the subsequent reverberating haiku that quietly extend the story into more universal feelings. This is a collection that invites you to become a member of the family and to recall your own childhood memories, and yet it is written with carefully crafted aesthetic significance. Highly recommended!

Lyric Savant: A Collection of Haiku & Senryu by Marita Gargiulo (buddha baby press, Windsor, CT: 2022). 139 pages, 5.5" x 8". Glossy four-color card covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-7366037-4-1. \$17 including shipping. Available from the author, contact by email at margararts1000@gmail.com.

Lyric Savant is an excellent first collection of haiku by Marita Gargiulo. Her haiku come from a wide range of human experience including parenting, music, family, relationships, science, and tornados. The beautiful title poem features a mix of music, loving family, and creativity: *singing lullabies / my aunt / a lyric savant*. Another favorite haiku includes a visual element: *old wedding quilt repairing / \/\ / the repairs*. Several haiku and senryu celebrate her

family's immigrant heritage: (1) *Times Square chestnut vendor / dad's accent / returns with the change* and (2) *Mafia wedding / dad's camera / met with a finger wag*. Sometimes she captures that sense of the past holding on: *no point in moving / they know how to travel . . . / my demons*. Other times, the past returns beautifully renewed: *and so / we meet again — / kintsugi*. Many of her senryu are about writing or trying to write haiku, such as this one: *people / with no third eye — / write haiku anyway*. This is a wonderful first collection.

Apparitions by Amelia Cotter (Highland Park Poetry Press, Highland Park, IL: 2022). 54 pages, 6" x 9". Glossy four-color card covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-0578343310. \$12 from online booksellers or <https://www.ameliacotter.com/p/books.html>.

Apparitions is Amelia Cotter's first collection of haiku and haibun. A writer of ghost stories and related supernatural folklore, Cotter writes in this collection about a more personal haunting that comes from anxiety, illness, and depression. As she states in the introduction, she explores, "the cycles of anxiety and depression, from the isolation of trauma and despair to the hope found in connection, reconciliation, redemption, and resiliency." Sometimes, as in this haiku, her two writer worlds merge: *her empty chair . . . / still telling / old ghost stories*. The haibun are personal reflections. For example, "Second City" is about how she battled Stage IV Hodgkin lymphoma at the age of 22. In another haibun, "Resurrection Mary," she writes about a baseball-sized tumor in her chest. Here is the subsequent haiku: *into the dumpster . . . / shrouded in mildew / my childhood toys*. In sharing her pain and haunting struggles, Cotter's goal is ultimately a celebration of healing and hope. Here is the final haiku from this collection: *shrunk tumors / the sun-painted walls / of my childhood room*. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY PIPPA PHILLIPS

Haiku 2022: 100 notable haiku published in 2021 edited by Lee Gurga and Scott Metz (Modern Haiku Press, Champaign, IL: 2022). Unpaginated, 5.5" x 4.25". Four-color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-0-9600855-5-2. \$10 plus \$3.50 shipping from <https://www.modernhaiku.org/mhbooks/Haiku2022.html>.

Lee Gurga and Scott Metz, prolific poets in their own right, have collected 100 notable poems from various journals of note. *Haiku 2022* is a wonderfully diverse collection, ranging from the traditional, to senryu, to the experimental. The poets gathered in these pages represent the best of English-language haiku. I'll note a few poems that stood out to me.

(1) *forest mushrooms / the faint whisper / of a nurse log* (David McKee). Through the mycorrhizal network, mushrooms have a symbiotic relationship with trees. Mushrooms serve to relay signals between trees, while trees provide sustenance for mushrooms. A nurse log is a fallen tree whose decay provides sustenance to seedlings. Such logs are often laced with mycorrhizae. McKee paints a picture of decay as ripe beauty, verging on the sublime: the log whispers. The personification elevates her to a maternal center of the sketch, her whisper a lullaby for the life she nourishes.

(2) *sleepless night / my virtual shopping cart / fills with rain* (Susan Antolin). I have a tendency to do just this to salve my insomnia, browsing online retailers for things I will never buy. There is a sense of dream and fantasy to this poem—the internet, after all, isn't a real place. Finding oneself far from dreaming, the screen is a tempting place to pursue an approximation of a dream. Yet something is awry in the juxtaposition, comparing the impulse to consume with the nourishment and fertility promised by rain. Conspicuous consumption does not truly satisfy—which brings the reader back to the first line. The dreams the poet seeks elude them. Better to turn from the screen to the sky.

(3) *I / dent / it(ch)y* (Fay Aoyagi). When one grows, or heals, it can feel itchy. An itch is a strange thing, small but capable of utterly consuming your attention. You can't help but react to it. We often refer to an itch as a sort of desire, a need to reach beyond oneself. The poem captures the sense of ill-fittingness and the impulse to move that presages a search for identity. Yet the poem remains open. Perhaps the poet has just shed a second skin; perhaps the one they've put on is too tight; perhaps their identity is a mask, perhaps who

they really are chafes at the world around them. *Haiku 2022* is a snapshot of an evolving art form featuring familiar and favorite names. It is available through Modern Haiku Press. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JEROME BERGLUND

Scaring Crow haiku by Adjei Agyei-Baah (Buttonhook Press, CA: 2022). 48 pages. Foreword by Hiroaki Sato. Available to download for free at <https://ojalart.com/buttonhook-press2022-chapbook-seriespoetry-all-forms-styleshaikuadjei-agyei-baahscaring-crow>.

Adjei Agyei-Baah continues to refine his craft and expand his focus with thrilling panache in *Scaring Crow*. After somberly opening with a heartfelt dedication to his treasured friend who was a long-time editor at *The Heron's Nest*, Paul MacNeil, Agyei-Baah dives with zeal and a newfound specificity into an exhaustive and riveting exploration of the humble scarecrow, that familiar archetype and symbol, which beyond its important practical applications in agriculture, frightening scavenging avians, has become an important part of humanity's language and philosophical underpinnings, from Ghana to New York to Antarctica presumably.

From the initial piece about an old man (the narrator's grandpa) leaving his clothing for use on one such admirable creation, the collection hits the ground running and never loses steam, finding in an astonishing 102 haiku, inventive and unexpected ways, shapes, and forms to invoke scarecrows. It requires truly astute and perceptive observation to find such relatability in so many fruitful applications for this ripe subject, and to vary them so as to never for a moment feel dull or repetitive. And does not the humble scarecrow make the perfect subject to embody, symbolize, and mimic the stoic, meditative, outdoorsy lifestyle the great *haijin*?

It's such a joy to watch this author continue to grow and fine-tune his process, and to see what topic and theme he next chooses to scrutinize with his trained and perceptive intellect. Once again, he has constructed a hard act to follow! (1) *flitting butterfly . . . / the scarecrow's shoulder / provides a rest*; (2) *a charred martyr— / the*

scarecrow after the passing / of forest fire; (3) and still he stands there / the scarecrow—a preacher / to a dozen crows; and (4) noon drizzle / a scarecrow steams / from sunshine.

Unexpected Gift haiku, senryu, tanka, tanka prose, haibun and tanbun by Sonam Chhoki and Geethanjali Rajan (*Editions des petits nuages*, Ottawa, Canada: 2021). 47 pages. Foreword by Mike Montreuil. \$2.49 on Amazon Kindle.

The recent years of mandatory social distancing, obligatory isolation, remote work, and self-quarantining have out of necessity redirected humanity's interactions and communications toward unconventional channels. While in many ways vexing, these constraints have also fostered some fascinating collaborations in the sectors of arts and literature, spurring vibrant dialogues such as the recent renga-inspired collection by Sonam Chhoki and Geethanjali Rajan *Unexpected Gift*. The collection's title, in combination with the cover artwork, which depicts flowers, both unopened and blossoming, both, etched from a black backdrop as if by an archaeologist uncovering unexpected treasures from a bleak void, or a determined optimist locating that scrap of white in a yin of scratch paper, the image certainly captures the nature and genius of this endeavor—"How two women from different countries," as Mike Montreuil puts it in the foreword, "can bring humanity to their many conversations in poetry"—wonderfully! (1) *a litter of shadows / in the toppled temple* (Chhoki) and (2) *cosmos blossoms / an urchin shares his home / with a stray* (Rajan).

Including an eclectic variety of short forms (25 samplings of haiku, senryu, tanka, and prose-blending hybrids) interspersed with a few gorgeous black-and-white illustrations— of natural and spiritual subjects both—which strikingly support overarching themes and concrete material content of the most exotic and diverse character, the two poets (who have forged an extraordinary perceptible rapport, further enhanced through editorial fellowship at the journal *Cattails*) put their heads together here in concert to engage traditions that have largely drifted in most familiar contemporary iterations toward individualistic practices and solitary auteur

modes, back to their fruitful roots in call and response, charged repartee, parry and riposte! (1) *is it their joyous laughter I hear / or their tinkling anklets* (Rajan) and (2) *myriad voices / of the jostling pilgrims* (Chhoki). Both also report learning a great deal about each other's very different cultures and customs through this association, in magnificent testament to the capabilities such exchanges promote! (1) *releasing the cool waters / a coconut seller's machete* (Chhoki) and (2) *slicing through / the noontime blaze / a koel's piercing koo* (Rajan). There are few staycations, short literary jaunts, you can take are more pleasurable than this exhilarating collection of duets tenderly bridging the space between India and Bhutan. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY MICHAEL KETCHEK

eggplants and teardrops: a haiku collection by Aaron Barry (Independently-published: 2022). 118 pages, 5 ½" by 7 ½". Matte color card covers, perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-7386339-0-6. \$10.99 from online booksellers.

Aaron Barry's *eggplants and teardrops* is a collection of haiku and senryu totally rooted in the twenty-first century. Using many terms and concepts that might be foreign to older readers (ask Google or your grandkids) these poems capture the spirit of this modern age with wit and humor: *#newalgorithm / #theadvertisersknowingmebetter / #thanme*. However, there are a wealth of poems that are easily understood even by those of us who remember slide rules and party lines (younger readers ask Google or your grandparents): *among the whole lot / not a single astronaut— / high school reunion*. If I were asked to describe this book in one word I would say fun but since no has asked me to do that I will add insightful, playful, and, in the parlance of the time, LOL. One last poem that I especially enjoyed: *marriage proposal . . . / I'm feeling so many / emojis right now* □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY TOM SACRAMONA

Scattered Sunflowers: A Ukrainian/Russian-American's Unique Perspective on the War – Told in Art and Poetry by Alexis Rotella (Jade Mountain Press, Greensboro, NC: 2022). 93 pages, 8.5" x 11". Glossy four-color covers, perfect softbound. No ISBN: 979-8440463356. \$29.99 from online booksellers.

Alexis Rotella has authored or co-authored more than 40 books, most focused on haiku and many award-winning. She's been a member of the Haiku Society of America since the late 1970s, served as the president and editor of *Frogpond*, started several haiku and senryu journals including *Brussels Sprout* and *Prune Juice*, and has been an honorary curator of the American Haiku Archives. *Scattered Sunflowers* isn't about her, although she wrote all of the poems and created over 40 of the breathtaking illustrations inside (the most beautiful haiga I've ever seen).

In her moving preface, Rotella explains, "In my art, I try to put myself in the shoes of Ukrainian people. When I use the pronoun 'I,' I intend to give voice to Ukrainians that I do not personally know but can only imagine the hardships they endure." She adds that she was inspired to write this book of her "impressions about the war in Ukraine precipitated by Russia" largely because of her own heritage "being descended from grandparents who emigrated from Russia and Ukraine." I found a Ukrainian proverb included touching and profound: "Light a candle, even for the sake of the devil."

Frogpond published some of these poems in the Spring/Summer issue. Rotella notified me that she was sharing her work on the Ukraine disaster on social media; I thought it was good that her powerful poems and their message against the atrocities committed by Russia were reaching a wide audience online, and I wanted to share them with our *Frogpond* audience as well. In our correspondence about the sequence by e-mail, I understood that people she knew were in grave danger, that her heart was full and hurting, and that this poetry she was writing at the time was from somewhere outside of herself: "I keep adding to the sequence as things unfold. An artist friend in Russia is praying to Mother Mary as his communication to the outside is being shut off. Another friend from Ukraine made it to Poland with her kids. I worry about the women alone with children and the vultures who are always circling around."

The proceeds from *Scattered Sunflowers* will go to Care and Doctors Without Borders as some assistance to the crisis facing

the Ukrainian people: (1) *new baby new war*; (2) *Shot in the back / an old man / with a sack of potatoes*; (3) *On a train to anywhere so long as the skies are clear*; (4) *No need / for these / new red shoes— / a long walk / to Poland*; and (5) *On Putin's desk no flowers*.

The View Arcade: Two Autumns Anthology edited by Nathanael Tico featuring James Chessing, Kristen Lindquist, Scott Mason & Julie Scherwin (Two Autumns Press, Santa Rosa, CA: 2022). 21 pages, 9" x 6". Glossy card covers, perfect softbound. No ISBN. Copies are \$10 (includes postage) postpaid to HPNC, c/o Jim Chessing, HPNC Books, 2886 Calais Dr., San Ramon, CA 94583-3117. Inquires: jchessing@hotmail.com

Nathanael Tico edited the thirty-second Two Autumns chapbook for the Haiku Poets of Northern California's annual Two Autumns reading held on September 18, 2022. J Hahn Doleman is responsible for the elegant book design. Tico writes in the introduction that the honor and privilege of choosing the poems was both easy and highly challenging—easy because James Chessing, Kristen Lindquist, Scott Mason, and Julie Scherwin are fabulous and skilled poets: “even if I had assigned a number to each poets’ haiku, threw them in a hat and selected at random, we would be guaranteed a fantastic collection.” Tico’s challenge was that “choosing from nothing but the varied gems from each poet was just plain hard.”

On behalf of the HPNC, Tico and Doleman have done fantastic work to produce a showcase of 49 poems by Chessing, Lindquist, Mason, and Scherwin. Beginning with the anthology’s first poem, which is a delightful opening choice in the sequence, here are two poems by each esteemed Two Autumns Anthology poet: James Chessing: (1) *it begins . . . / a galaxy of dust motes / in the projector's beam* and (2) *in the shade of the burned cottage: the flowering ocotillo fence*. Kristen Lindquist: (1) *afternoon rain / porpoises slipping / past the jetty* and (2) *autumn twilight / the lighthouse beacon turns / on the dark*. Scott Mason: (1) *first snowfall / a chirp to remind us / the battery's low* and (2) *soft spring earth / the statue of Demeter / has fallen face first*. Julie Scherwin: (1) *birdsong editing my dream diary* and (2) *quietly joining / the conversation . . . / prairie stars*.

a landscape in pieces by John Martone (Tufo, Charleston, IL: 2021). 208 pages, 4" x 6". Matte black and white card covers, perfect softbound. No ISBN. Price: inquire of the author at jpmx@protonmail.com.

Since 2018, John Martone has released his haiku and other poetry under a self-published imprint he calls Tufo. To date, his collections under the imprint include: *Adveniat* (2018), *Aquerò* (April 2018), *Miraculous City* (May 2018), *My Afterlife* (July 2018), *Postmark* (2019), *Homelands* (2019)—and now *a landscape in pieces* (2021). Notably, *Homelands* earned second place in the 2020 HSA Merit Book Awards, *a landscape in pieces* earned honorable mention in the 2022 HSA Merit Book Awards.

When I asked John what the name of the imprint means, he told me that “tufo (‘tuff’ in English) refers to the volcanic soil of southern Italy.” In addition, I learned from my own research that Tufo is the name of a town in southern Italy an hour northwest of the ruins of Pompeii and roughly an hour from the stunning Amalfi coast—elements of Italy that could be present in these two poems—they certainly invite us to picture those landscapes: *it’s confusing / I seem to be // looking out through / ruined arches // onto nature / in a ruins; distant // Amalfi / in blue light // but the foreground / tangled brush.*

With languages, you can express things in one you can’t express in another, and vice versa, which we naturally know as poets of Japanese verse. John Martone speaks and reads Italian (he has translated the poems of Giovanni Pascoli) as well as other languages (Vietnamese). So, we can understand Martone’s use of Italian in *a landscape* this way. To say exactly the way he feels, in the only language you can say it in. In this poem, the first word means *listen*: *ascolta // the pattered stones / of drainage courses // a century / after those immigrants— // listen.*

If you can, start at the beginning of the tour de force that is Martone’s Tufo project, beginning with *Adveniat* and journeying to a landscape, to most fully experience his quest: *thousands of pages – it’s a dead man’s room.* In 2022, John Martone is turning seventy

and living in Illinois: *I crush my pill / at a window above / the shell path.*

Part-Time Gods haibun by Peter Newton (Snapshot Press, Ormskirk, England: 2022). 32 pages. Available to download for free at www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks.htm.

Part-Time Gods by Peter Newton is a beautiful haibun collection imbued with his heartwarming sensibility. The cover features distant geese flying across a deep magenta sky in the dawn, and at the bottom, you can glimpse where the sky is still dark. What a wonderful cover concept for a book that is a journey into the light, including titles such as: “The Anatomy of Hope,” “The Ascension,” “Interior Landscaping,” and “Joy.” The style is laid-back and straightforward, and its use of direct address to the reader brings the book to life and makes it easy to forget you are reading poetry and not a spiritual source. Take, for instance, the haibun “Carousel”: *Vince says we’re all on the same carousel. Sometimes you’re riding a lion, sometimes a giraffe. We’re here to be humbled. You never know what animal’s gonna be open when you climb aboard. Maybe it is a horse. But it could just as easily be a turtle. Either way, we’re all getting there. // mentioning / her recent loss / the cashier hands me my change.* Newton is such a careful observer of speech, the way words sound, and what makes us human: our hope, love, and belief—even if all we know is that we don’t know: *It takes a bit of visual slaloming to look deep into the woods over the moose marsh between the trees to find a clear path through pine boughs past birch bark sloughing . . . // three crows / four pine treetops / my place in the world.*

still: new, selected & collaborative haiku by Philomene Kocher (Ekstasis Editions, Banff, Alberta, Canada: 2022). 103 pages, 5.5" x 8.5". Glossy color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-77171-468-6. \$23.95 Canadian from <http://www.ekstasiseditions.com/recenthtml/still.htm>.

still is a lovingly crafted book by a poet who discovered “the elegance of haiku in 1991.” Philomene Kocher writes from Kingston, Ontario, and sometimes with collaborator and friend

Marco Fraticelli. *still* is bookended with septanga written between Kocher and Fraticelli, centered on Kocher's individual haiku, which are arranged in four seasons. (The septanga linked form was created in 1997 by Alexis Rotella and ai li.) The first seven septanga included were written from 2000 to 2004, and the final seven were created in collaboration from 2014 to 2020. I found this collection and the decades-long collaboration between the poets inspiring and encouraging. This is not only a fantastic community of poets but also a treasured friendship. Kocher's solo haiku in *still* are in sections titled "Blizzard," "Dandelions," "Fireflies," and "Harvest," as well as "Rainwater in Cairo," which is a sequence of 21 haiku written in Egypt in February 2015: *two doves / standing in rainwater / in Cairo*. These are my favorite of Kocher's individual haiku: (1) *railway museum / the set of tracks end / at the fence*; (2) *only by its shadow / seeing the white hair / on the blank page*; (3) *at the bus stop / the little boy's shadow / leaving his mother's shadow*; and (4) *fuchsia jacket / a bee lands / on my heart*.

Desert Rain: Haiku Nook: An Anthology: Volume I (Haiku & Senryu), Volume II (Tanka) & Volume III (Haibun) edited by Jacob D. Salzer & the Nook Editorial Staff (Lulu.com, n.p.: 2021). 302 pages, 6" x 9". Glossy four-color cover, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1387976133. \$19.76 from online booksellers.

This is a three-in-one book divided into haiku and senryu, tanka, and haibun volumes. *Desert Rain* joins two other Haiku Nook anthologies produced by Jacob Salzer and the Nook editors since 2016. It opens with a dedication to Martha Magenta, who passed away in 2020, and "the 600+ million people who don't have access to clean water." Proceeds from *Desert Rain* are being donated to charity. The editors' note also details that the book "features tanka by Malintha Perera, haiku by Martha Magenta, Yanty Tjiam, and George Klacsanzky." (Yanty Tjiam passed away in 2015 and George Klacsanzky in 2003.) The haiku and senryu volume contains sections for three-line, two-line, one-line, traditional (5-7-5), and four-line haiku, ending with senryu. Many of the poets have poems included in every section, so this presents a wonderful way to find each

writer's voice as well as to enjoy them and in a variety of styles. The writers in this group are preliminary from the U.S. (specifically the Pacific Northwest) but also the Philippines, Canada, Germany, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom. Martha Magenta (1949–2020), to whom the collection is dedicated, was from Bristol, England, and previously worked for Action Aid, one of the charity organizations that the proceeds of the anthology support. Among Magenta's poems included, I especially like: (1) *pitch dark / glowing in the deep lake / stars* and (2) *warn rain the smell of bay mare*.

In every section, the work of Gabri Rigotti and Jacob Salzer stands out. Here, they are writing three-line and one-line haiku: (1) *Cape Town dry . . . / the lavender barely alive / among the dead* (Rigotti); (2) *forgetting my name / the hook disappears / beneath the water* (Salzer); (3) *softness a pointillism of drizzle* (Rigotti); (4) *bold winter shapes New York Times* (Salzer). The inclusion of short bios for each of the twenty-plus authors also deepens the appreciation of each poem through greater knowledge of the poets' backgrounds and individual lives. Recently online, Réka Nyitrai and Alan Peat started running the Modern Kigo competition. One winner (by Alan Summers) featured the new kigo "creeping sepia," defining it this way: "The transition into Autumn (Fall) as Summer fades, with a growing mixture of climate change effects, and nostalgia for when the seasons were clearly defined." We find that same feeling underlying Nicholas Klacsanzky's *heavy rain— / Seattle no longer / my Seattle*.

Other favorites: (1) *sleeping train / a snowshoe hare / from Narnia* and (2) *tank barrels / Banksy plants / a bigger daisy* (Alan Summers); (3) *watering down a good thing* (Momolu Freeman); (4) *leak in the faucet / his transactions with the bank / are all withdrawals* (Willie Bongcaron); (5) *snow covered lights hanging icicles* (Michelle Hyatt); (6) *beads of sweat / he fans himself / with a full house* (Dave Read); (7) *light rain headlines even more skewed* and (8) *blackberry tea father's tale about a grizzly* (Nicholas Klacsanzky); and (9) *cleaning trout / still trying to / say something* (George Klacsanzky).

In the Mountain's Shadow: the Issa Triad by Joy McCall and Don Wentworth, with poems by Kobayashi Issa, translated by David G. Lanoue (Stark Mountain Press, n.p.: 2022). 65 pages, 5" x 8". Matte color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 979-8838103208. \$4.99 from online booksellers.

The book features 75 poems by Joy McCall, Don Wentworth, and Issa, all grouped into different “triads,” as the authors term them. McCall and Wentworth have collaborated previously in journals and in a 2018 book *touching the now*. *In the Mountain's Shadow* has a poem by Issa (as translated by David G. Lanoue) on each left-hand page and poems by McCall and Wentworth on the right-hand page. Each triad teases a theme out of the Issa poem or works off of association or scent-linking like a good renku-in-miniature. Beginning with the theme of death, each poet provides a compassionate verse recording a dead creature. In Triad 6, all of the poems are about absence: (1) *after getting it / it's lost so soon . . . / paper fan* (Issa); (2) *today / giving up on love— / the first dwarf iris* (Wentworth); and (3) *goodbye morphine / hello pain . . . / and welcome back, mind* (McCall). A foreword by A A Marcoff shares that these poets are writing in a spiritual mode and the poems remain in awe of nature. Marcoff continues, “I have often thought haiku speak of ‘Being-in-the-world’, as Heidegger put it. And certainly in this book of 25 Issa triads, there is a metaphysical dimension capturing the eternal dialectics of life and death, and side by side with the snails and the spiders.” Wentworth was long-time editor of *Lilliput Review: newspaper / in the chain link fence / fleeing refugees*. Joy McCall was born in Norwich, England, then lived for some time in Amherst, Massachusetts, before moving to Canada and then back to England: *skimming stones / some sink, some land / on the other side*.

The Zen of Power Tools: My Favorite Rejected Haiku by Michael Ketchek (Free Food Press, n.p.: 2022). 8 pages, 4.25" x 5.5". Black and white paper covers, side stamped. No ISBN. To purchase send \$1 to the author at: Michael Ketchek, 125 High Street, Rochester, NY 14609, USA.

At a dollar, there's no losing with this book from Michael Ketchek and his self-publishing imprint Free Food Press. *The Zen of Power*

Tools pulls together poems that editors have passed on. By way of introducing Ketchek's 2010 book *over our heads*, Vincent Tripi wrote, "Every poet makes a contribution to *the art of seeing*." In *over our heads* (copies of which remain available from Swamp Press), Ketchek comments on his sources of inspiration: "... the natural world is a great inspiration, but parking lots, cigarettes, and litter are things that often strike me as poetic." All of these Ketchek tenants can be found in *The Zen of Power Tools*: (1) *wind whipped snow / rising from the field / settles down again*; (2) *the lone gull / in the parking lot / has found a french fry*; (3) *rolling a cigarette / on a windy day / one match left*; and (4) *vacant lot / a plastic bag clings / to a broken branch*. Here are two of my personal favorites: (1) *lonesome traveler / the sign says Red Roof Inn / 49 HD channels* and (2) *frustrated fan / how hard is it to throw a strike / to a guy hitting .167*. ◻■

Errata

My sincere apologies to the individuals below for these errors in issue 45:2:

1. Jill Lange's name was accidentally left out of the Author Index listing; her haiku appears on page 25.
2. On page 76, Joan Iversen Goswell's name was misspelled.

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HSA Membership and *Frogpond* Submissions

The Haiku Society of America (HSA) is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1968 to promote the writing and appreciation of haiku in English. The Society's journal, *Frogpond*, founded in 1978, features work by the HSA members and others, as well as essays, articles, and book reviews. The HSA has over 1,000 members across the country and around the world. Membership is open to all readers, writers, and students of haiku. The HSA maintains a website with additional information about the Society, archives of winners of the HSA contests, and other haiku activities at <https://www.hsa-haiku.org/>. The HSA has been meeting regularly since its inception and sponsors open lectures, workshops, readings, and contests. Details of locations, times, and programs will appear in the HSA e-newsletter and website, as will announcements and details of regional, national, and international meetings and events. Reminders of national meetings, HSA contest deadlines, and occasional other news or announcements will also be sent by e-mail. Inquiries regarding regional meetings can also be addressed to the appropriate regional coordinator.

HSA Membership: For adults in the U.S.A., \$35; in Canada/Mexico, \$37; for seniors (65 or over) and students in the U.S.A., \$30; all other countries, \$47, or international PDF-only membership, \$35. Pay by check on a USA bank or by International Postal Money Order, payable to Haiku Society of America, Inc. All memberships are annual, expiring on December 31, and include three issues of *Frogpond* as well as newsletters, the members' anthology, and voting rights. You can also subscribe online by PayPal or credit card at <https://www.hsa-haiku.org/join.htm>. All correspondence regarding new and renewed memberships, changes of address, back issues, and requests for information should be directed to the HSA secretary.

***Frogpond* Submissions:** There are three issues of *Frogpond* each year with month-long submission periods per issue—all of March for the spring/summer issue, all of July for the autumn issue, and all of November for the winter issue. Replies are sent as soon as possible but can take 4–6 weeks. Please see our full submission guidelines online at <https://www.hsa-haiku.org/frogpond/submissions.html>. E-mail submissions are preferred and can be sent to frogpondsubmissions@gmail.com.

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