

Many of the poems evoke a felt sense of intimacy—between the poet and a loved one, or with her natural surroundings—creating a resonance and empathy that pulls us further into Mahoney’s vision. They engage all of the senses to powerfully recall our own layered memories of beloved people and places and of time passing:

rinsing blueberries	what it means
what will my daughter	to have a body
remember?	midnight snow

In these haiku, Mahoney takes risks to expose her fragile midnight musings. She trusts us with the questions that haunt her sunny days and darker nights, inviting us to look at what it means to be human, living in our own vulnerable and scarred skin in this shifting world.

dark earth	late-winter pond
the furred spikes	a pulse of shimmer
of skunk cabbage	in a melt spot

Mahoney’s poetry offers comfort and a knowingness that we’ve journeyed with a skilled guide into this interior landscape. From the magical alchemy of the indigo moth-like cyanotype on the cover to the book’s concluding haiku, this collection is worth reading and re-reading. Highly recommended. ◻■

#### REVIEWED BY CRYSTAL SIMONE SMITH

*Lenard D. Moore and African American Haiku: Merging Traditions* by Ce Rosenow (Lexington Books, Landham, MD: 2022). 89 pages, 6.32" x 8.95". ISBN: 978-1-7936-5317-8. \$85 hardcover, \$45 eBook from <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781793653178/Lenard-D-Moore-and-African-American-Haiku-Merging-Traditions>

Ce Rosenow’s book, *Lenard D. Moore and African American Haiku: Merging Traditions*, brims with critical insights into Moore’s prolific career. Rosenow explores his approaches to both haiku and free verse in five deft chapters that examine Moore’s experiences with loss and grief, as well as his love for other artforms like jazz music—

all of which have informed his decades-long practice of writing in the tradition of African American culture.

Often referencing notable haiku scholars, Rosenow theorizes and elaborates on intersections of Moore's cultural explorations in his haiku. Chapter one, "Communal Narratives," expounds on Moore's traditions of storytelling. She emphasizes "Moore's deep investment" in storytelling, one that transcends his haiku and is often present in his free verse, allowing the poet to depict and preserve African American experiences.

She specifically notes his agrarian accounts of rural North Carolina and shared, collective experiences—distinctly, Black soldiers in the Gulf War from Desert Storm and Black men marching in *Gathering at the Crossroads*. In the following "communal haiku," Moore gives the civilian reader a glimpse into a war camp and shares his viewer's angle of a salient moment at the Million Man March, attended only by Black men:

Sunday morning	autumn dawn—
a black GI prays	a father briefing his son
inside his tent	in the parking lot

Rosenow's declaration of Moore as not only a widely respected poet but one of the leading practitioners of English-language haiku, appears most convincingly in the chapters that address his practice (and creation) of the form jazzku and his prominent success with elegiac haiku.

In the chapter on jazzku, Rosenow affirms Moore's melding of jazz and haiku together as a form created fully by Moore while acknowledging the long existence of jazz poetry. She notes that jazzku, as referenced, is "a significant contribution to haiku and American poetry." Jazz and blues are often present in Moore's writing, but his tendency to incorporate onomatopoeia to replicate or reproduce musical sounds make the form recognizable as jazzku. Examples included are the "plunk" of standup bass and the "ting" of a cymbal, as found in this jazzku:

bassist plucks chords  
before the cymbals ting—  
indigo night

Moore's creation and practice of jazzku align with his tradition of writing African American culture. Rosenow re-states the poet's attestation of this in the introduction of the award-winning anthology, *One Window's Light*: ". . . we infuse our poems with rhythm. We live with rhythm. We are rhythm. These poems sing with rhythm."

In chapter four, Rosenow highlights the haiku that Moore is most renowned for—elegiac haiku. Moore's use of haiku as a healing tool in the process of grief is well noted in the haiku landscape. Haiku he wrote for departed haiku poets, as well as his daughter and father are among the examples shared with readers. Rosenow borrows from Robert Epstein's article, "The Transcendent Function of Haiku," to contextualize Moore's penchant to, after profound losses, honor those gone and underscore what remains, and as Epstein states, "ground one's pain or suffering within the larger context of nature." This is evident in the following haiku:

I leave the dusk	Father's Day—
at her grave . . .	sitting alone
crickets	on the mall bench

Rosenow's book is an important addition to haiku scholarship. Apart from previous critical analysis of Moore's long engagement with haiku, this book is an expansive, in-depth look into the poet's versatility, as well as his distinctive approaches and contributions to the haiku. With this book, Rosenow establishes Moore as a virtuoso among contemporary haiku. □■

#### REVIEWED BY ALAN SUMMERS

*Miles Deep In A Drum Solo* haiku by Cherie Hunter Day (Backbone Press, Durham, NC: 2022). 36 pages, 7" x 5". Glossy covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-7363467-5-4. \$10 from [backbonepress.org](http://backbonepress.org)