

incredibly moving, such as the ones about a mother grieving the loss of her children during the war, but still showing profound and selfless compassion. I was also especially moved by the poems that express American veterans and Vietnamese people openly sharing their stories as they unveiled the deeper roots of the war beyond their individuality, providing a miraculous bridge for healing and peace.

Coming Home In Viet Nam is a vivid collection. It is a heavy book that also provides encouragement and hope in the aftermath of the Vietnam war. The book concludes with a legend: “Kim Quy: The Golden Tortoise: The tale of King Le Loi” based on Vietnamese myths and history that ends with a powerful and resonating message. ◻■

REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

Just Enough Moon: Collected Haibun by John Budan (Lulu Press Inc., 2023) 56 pages, 5.75” x 8.25”. Four-color card covers, perfect bound. ISBN 9781365402302. Available for \$10 from Lulu.com.

A note about the author states that “John Budan lives with his cat Minnie on an oak savannah nature habitat in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. He is a former merchant marine, military paratrooper, and psychiatric nurse.” This collection of 52 haibun draws on the author’s experiences, yet each haibun is a literary construction that shifts narrative perspectives, gender, culture, time and space—essentially creating a fictional space to explore a variety of human experiences and related feelings. In several haibun, we get a hint about the narrator in the first line. Here’s a few openings that show how he shifts (and quickly establishes) a variety of narrative perspectives. In the first haibun he writes: “We both describe ourselves as trim, financially secure, and interested in gourmet foods.” In another haibun, “Scammer,” he opens with: “I am ordered to retrieve a wrench that was dropped down a deep metal shaft.” And it ends with “The Navy says I’m trying to get out on a fake PTSD scam.” “Intruder” is written from a frightened child’s perspective. In “Faded Dreams” he imagines

going to school the day of the Ulvalde shooting. In “Naughty” the haibun is narrated by a woman entertaining a peeping tom. It starts with: “My husband no longer notices me or my clothes anymore.” In “Wheezer” the narrator asserts, “I am the real Wheezer from *The Little Rascals*. I think I am. I know I am. I hope I am.” The haibun, “Progress,” is about changes related to women in the workplace written from a granddaughter’s perspective. “During WW2, my grandmother was a volunteer dancer at the U.S.O. Club.” This haibun ends with “As the boss of a construction crew, I never experience abuse. They call me “BITCH” only when I am absent.” The haibun closes with this haiku: *grandma’s truck / her lipstick / under a chainsaw*. Perhaps one of his last haibun in the collection, “Saved,” best exemplifies how our identities shift: “I was born a Catholic. At age three, my mother had me re-baptized in a Lutheran church. Recently, a minister told me that I was a bona fide Christian, while a Trappist friend explained that since they got to me first, I was officially a Catholic. Meanwhile, I’m attracted to Buddhism and have joined the Unitarian men’s group where every member claims to be an atheist.” Budan’s collection of haibun is a tromp through contemporary North American life. Through the multiplicity of personalities and their life stories, we get a sense of how our identities carry cultural burdens but also shift and change with social circumstances. Why shouldn’t we write haiku and haibun with a familiar shifting of real fictional identities? ■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY LISA GERLITS

Tastes of Sunlight: Haiku for the Seasons by Mary McCormack (Independently-published: 2022). 70 pages, 5.25” x 8”. Glossy color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-0-9981720-3-3. \$9.99 from online booksellers.

Reading Mary McCormack’s debut haiku collection is like taking a walk with the poet while she points out delicate observations along the way. Arranged by seasons, the book begins in winter. The immersion is so complete that by the time I neared the end of the first section, I found myself longing for spring. As the