

morning walk —
 hoping to find the haiku
 i lost yesterday

The collection ends with a short sequence on writing haiku with an ever-shortening pencil. Here is the final poem:

pencil stub —
 just enough
 to write a haiku

Designated Driver is an outstanding collection of haiku and senryu from a masterful contemporary haiku writer. I highly recommend purchasing a copy for your library, so that you, too, can get away and join his poetry party. ◻■

REVIEWED BY LISA GERLITS

skipping stones: the Red Moon Anthology of English-Language Haiku 2022, editor-in-chief, Jim Kacian (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 202 pages, 5.5" x 8.25". Glossy, four-color covers, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-16-2. \$20 from <https://redmoonpress.com>

My habit when reading anthologies or journals is to circle in soft pencil those poems that take my breath away or delight me with a fresh perspective. Usually, I circle one every few pages. Often I circle only six or seven in an entire collection. Reading *skipping stones*, I wore my pencil tip dull, circling so many favorites.

The anthology contains nearly 90 pages of haiku/senryu (hereafter referred to simply as haiku), 32 pages of haibun and other linked forms, and a handful of essays. For an entire year, haiku and related works are nominated by current journal editors and the Red Moon Anthology staff of 11 editors. According to the book's back matter, "more than 3000 haiku and related works by over 2000 different authors" were nominated in 2022. For inclusion in the anthology, a nominated work then required a vote from at least 5 staff editors.

Because of this rigorous selection process, the quality of the poems is outstanding. You won't find ground-breaking or boundary-pushing poems here—just excellent examples of the haiku form as it is generally practiced in the English-speaking world. Here's a sample from a page spread where I circled every poem: (1) *buzzing flies— / men discuss politics / in a tea stall* (Daipayan Nair, India), (2) *grieving / the last piece of cake / at the funeral* (John Newson, United Kingdom), (3) *museum bone flute / the original owner / a bird* (Peter Newton, United States), and (4) *the space between stars— / a missing child / remains missing* (Subir Ningthouja, India). The haiku are arranged alphabetically, so any sequencing triumphs are happy accidents.

For those seeking more daring work, I advise heading straight to the “linked forms” section, which contains mostly haibun and a small sampling of other linked forms. The haibun stand out for their variety of approaches, exploring tough topics such as rape, alcoholism, and Alzheimer's alongside more playful subjects, like Susan Burch's very short haibun about eating raisin bran that made me laugh out loud and Ed Higgins' imagined account of Van Gogh's ear incident. In this section, the prose is clear and concise. Authors' voices leap off each page. Other standouts include Roberta Beary's haunting “What the Magdalen Asylum Scrubbed Clean,” Reid Hepworth's uplifting “Fresh Start,” and Keith Polette's “Letter From Basho to Robert Frost,” which concludes the prose with the luminous line, “Across these centuries, in this one world, and at this quiet hour, I send you this letter to wish you well and to say that I, too, often stop on my way home to hear horse bells jingling in the cold.”

While the essay section brims with international appeal, sprawling from Japan to North America to Australia to Ireland, I found most of the essays offered information (sometimes tricky to follow) rather than bright new perspectives. The gem in this section is Brad Bennett's essay, *Euphony in Haiku*, which felt like attending one of his workshops. Overall, an admirable anthology, highly recommended. ◻■