

## BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

*Haiku 2023* edited by Lee Gurga and Scott Metz (Modern Haiku Press, Champaign, IL: 2023). 128 pages. 4.3" x 5.5". Paperback. ISBN: 978-0-9600855-6-9. \$10 dollars from [www.modernhaiku.org](http://www.modernhaiku.org)

*Haiku 2023* is an anthology of 100 notable ku (haiku) published in 2022 as selected by the editors Lee Gurga and Scott Metz. Each haiku was first published in a journal before arriving in this anthology. The result is a rich mix of haiku in English that leans on the experimental side in both form and content. Some of the haiku in this anthology also express raw and challenging subjects that we are all affected by in some way or another, such as cancer. Three haiku that stood out to me are (1) *broken wing / the sort of snow / that stays* (Jaime Wimberly, originally published in *hedgerow*), (2) *night snow / the silent rooms / of dreams* (Ann K. Schwader, originally published in *Modern Haiku* 53:2), and (3) *cold damp morning / charred wood / in the raven's call* (Dave Russo, originally published in *The Heron's Nest* XXIV:1). The inclusion of poems from the *bones* journal and *Heliosparrow* is telling in regard to how experimental some of the poems are in this anthology. Through the eyes of Gurga and Metz, we get a taste of what they like and look for in haiku, which stretches the mind and I think encourages us to write beyond the confines of traditional approaches. This anthology finishes with an afterword written by Michele Root-Bernstein. In short, I think this is an interesting anthology worth reading, and also a bang for your buck for only \$10 dollars. □■

*Finding My Way Home: Haiku & Senryu* by Robert Epstein  
(Independently published: 2023). 103 pages. 6" x 9". Paperback. ISBN: 979-8-395211-1-63. \$14 from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

*Finding My Way Home* is a solo collection of haiku & senryu by Robert Epstein that explores the notion of home through physical, mental, and spiritual windows. I appreciate the inspirational quotes from famous people that revolve around home in the

beginning pages. I also appreciate Epstein's preface because he writes honestly about the challenges of physically moving and being forced to move. Three haiku in this book that resonate with me are (1) *my lost childhood home / in my dear friend's eyes / found again*, (2) *rain on the roof — / sometimes heaven / is that close*, and (3) *gone / gone before me / the peach tree*. While I feel some poems haven't reached their full potential, I greatly appreciate Epstein's inspirational power to write haiku about home through different perspectives. I think readers will find the same inspiration to write on this important theme and perhaps rediscover a wider sense of what home truly means. □■

***busted! reflections on police life: haiku, senryu and other short poems*** by Tim Roberts (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 118 pages. 4.25" x 6.5". Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-958408-11-7. \$20 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com)

This is a raw collection of haiku, senryu, and other short poems by Tim Roberts that focuses on many moments he experienced as a past police officer and detective. I was particularly touched by the author's words in the preface when he says writing haiku helps him cope with Parkinson's disease. In terms of the poems, these three haiku stood out to me: (1) *the fallen man — / a shoplifter stops / to give first aid*, (2) *weeping birch / some truths / are better hidden*, and (3) *cobbled streets / chasing suspects / through ancient echoes*. Some of the poems in this collection are violent and graphic, making them very hard to read, though I appreciate how Roberts is writing haiku from a vantage point that many people cannot personally relate to. While there are a few humorous poems, overall, this is a challenging book of small windows that reveal some of the darker sides of humanity and the raw situations he encountered as a police officer and detective. □■

***Soft Serve: Haiku Remains*** by Gary Hotham (Pinyon Publishing, Montrose, CO: 2023). 61 pages. 4.625" x 6.25". ISBN: 978-1-936671-92-2. \$25 from [pinyon-publishing.com](http://pinyon-publishing.com)

Gary Hotham started writing haiku in 1966 and he has never stopped. *Soft Serve* is a handmade, limited edition chapbook of 69 haiku. I appreciate how I can recognize Hotham's voice on

the page when I read his haiku. Three haiku that I enjoyed in this chapbook are (1) *on the playground / what a grandson imagines / about my past*, (2) *in the guidebook / ancient names for the places / we walk over*, and (3) *untouched / by human hands / winter moonlight*. His haiku are all center aligned in this chapbook and have an extra space between each line, which slows down my eyes as I read each haiku. I appreciate this slower pace of reading. Interestingly, some of Hotham's haiku also have a dash alone in the second line, which I have not seen before. This also had a slowing effect on me as the reader. I think it's remarkable that Hotham has been writing haiku for 57 years. I think he will continue to inspire more people to write and read haiku, even during times of struggle or uncertainty, as is depicted in this haiku: *where / the stars are / stumbling in the dark*. □■

*All the Words Kept Inside* by Mary McCormack (Independently published: 2023). 52 pages. 5.25" x 8". Paperback. ISBN: 978-0-9981720-4-0. \$9.99 from amazon.com

*All the Words Kept Inside* by Mary McCormack is a haiku journey that starts with her divorce and ultimately unfolds into a new beginning. From darkness to light, these selected haiku and micro-poems transform from self-doubt and loneliness into hope and a new mindset. McCormack courageously invites us into her world, where together we are *stepping through cobwebs / into the forest / with a clear mind*. Poems like this one beautifully mark the transition into self-respect and compassion, inspiring readers to emerge from their griefs and look for what gives them joy. These three haiku stood out to me: (1) *black walnuts – / the ground no longer firm / beneath my feet*, (2) *a gentle breeze / opening the door / to my mind*, and (3) *heartwood / open to the elements*. I appreciate McCormack's raw honesty in this collection. She expresses the challenges of a dark time in her life, yet also writes the first pages of a new chapter. I think her haiku will inspire readers to let go of their past and create space to live more fulfilling lives. By the end of this collection, I feel a reverberating voice of empowerment, as McCormack depicts in this ending haiku: *heading out / on my own / dawn's first light*. □■

*Nature is calling for Peace* by Ruth Esther Gilmore (Geest-Verlag, Germany: 2022). 188 pages. 5.5" x 8". Paperback. ISBN: 978-3-86685-928-9. \$12.50 EUROS from <https://geest-verlag.de/>

This is a very large solo collection of 498 haiku & senryu organized by the four seasons. While many poems in this book are focused on Nature, some are not. I also found some of Gilmore's haiku contain a wabi-sabi aesthetic. Here are four poems that stood out to me: (1) *the badger's song / spring is talking / in her sleep*, (2) *adoption plans – / a cuckoo places her egg / in a stranger's nest*, (3) *breaking the hush / snow spirits howl across / the mountain's face*, and (4) *the bonfire— / the ashes of my letters / ascend to heaven*. There are some well-written haiku in this book. While I feel some poems tell a bit too much, many poems also have excellent imagery. In addition, I found a handful of interesting and original phrases in some haiku such as: *the nights of stolen summers / are rushing through us* and *swans carry my winter / away to the sea*. While I think some poems have the seeds of high-quality haiku, I also found some real gems in this book. Given the sheer volume of poetry, I think readers are bound to find some inspiration within these pages. ◻■

#### REVIEWED BY JEROME BERGLUND

*on Earth as it is* by Frank Higgins (Spartan Press: 2023). 88 pages, 5" x 7". ISBN 978-1958182260. Available on Amazon for \$13.

on fire  
the monk remains  
in lotus position

You know a collection of poetry faces challenging subjects when the verse on its back cover alludes to a monk immolating himself in protest of corrupt government and the book begins with a tank blast in the opening line! Dramatist and educator Frank Higgins' *ON EARTH AS IT IS* is rooted in environmentalism and our interconnectedness with nature. The title also invokes

ideas of correspondence, which Catholics will recognize from the Lord's Prayer and its basis in hermetic texts. The front graphic depicts a yin-yang with a hand and paw print inhabiting mirror complementary halves of one integrated whole. As a result, this makes for quite a hero's journey through the seemingly sordid pits of hell.

There are plenty of rock solid, traditional haiku, including work previously exhibited in the most uncompromising, devout markets — *Frogpond*, *Kingfisher*, and *Modern Haiku* — that will please classicists, not to mention a bounty of haiku of the variety Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Richard Brautigan championed. Some poems originally appeared in more gendai, didactic oriented platforms such as *The Heron's Nest*, *Tsuridōrō*, and senryu showcase *Prune Juice*. These poems are rich in Americana and rife with a spirit of idealism, soulful pathos, and activist calls to arms and righteous dissent. Indigenous subjects and green thought figure prominently into content, energizing the text and imbuing a sense of urgency for anyone following current events and tracking climate devastation. The use of poignant parables, and anthropomorphic explorations highlight vivid, thought-provoking commonalities between other species and our own further aligns with the book's themes and shall particularly please fans of Richard Wright.

spring blizzard  
bison blowing hot breath  
on the newborn

Evincing unflinching poetry of awareness and empathy, self-critique and radical honesty, this treatise pulls no punches, delivering a sound, imperative drubbing to anyone with even a smidgeon of conscience. It's tough-loving, which our world desperately needs at this eleventh hour, and I'm grateful to Higgins for his service, training capable sights on flagrant social

and cultural ills and marginalizing – from homelessness to human trafficking, race to gender, class to orientation, gun violence to colonial adventurism, animal rights to ableism – when it might be safer and more comfortable to rhapsodize ambiguously upon obscure flowers.

Arranged in conventional seasoned sections, with poems facing every direction, this book challenges readers to climb on our desks and look at the world from every diverse angle possible. The author has furthermore amassed some of the most incendiary, eclectic senryu you'll encounter in one place. Other standouts include excerpts from a sequence exploring our National Pastime in the context of Japanese internment camps, ekphrastic homages to significant artists and opuses, disquiet over truth's erosion, and the insidious reactionary tendrils spreading like a cancer across our misinformation age. Having conscientiously guided and nurtured young scholars for a meaningful career from Missouri to Kansas, Higgins' revelatory moments and compassionate vignettes are especially concerned with legacy, improving upon and stewarding this planet and society we are gifting to future generations. Such considerations seem never far from each piece and can verily be inferred in the ma between nearly every line in some way. This book would make an excellent gift for young adults finding themselves and calibrating their moral compasses. One of my favorite poems is:

winter morning  
 child and dog at the window  
 noses to the glass □■

*Where Days Begin* by Peter Jastermsky (Cyberwit: 2023). 68 pages, 5.5" x 8.5". ISBN 978-9395-2249-8-7. Available through the publisher for \$15.

*dreaming in caveman we carbon date ourselves*

Monoku mavens and serious sequence splitters won't want to miss the latest vibrant collection of single-line poetry by acclaimed innovator and pioneer Peter Jastermsky. This book follows earlier titles by the prolific author, including a seminal showcase of

the collaborative linked-form he invented, co-written with the current Haiku Society of America president Bryan Rickert, and last year's Yavanika Press chapbook published by Shloka Shankar, which is also exhibited material collected herein. Other pieces have made previous appearances in exciting, impressive places such as: *Bloo* *Outlier Journal*, *bones*, *Cold Moon*, *Failed Haiku*, and *Frameless Sky* to give readers an idea of the range, audacity, and inventive spirit to be anticipated in these iconoclastic torpedoes of verse.

Shankar has a long-running, cutting edge literary journal *Sonic Boom* and she provides a splendid introductory blurb applauding these contents too, commending the author's particularly original deploying of *kireji* punctuation and grammar. Jastermsky demonstrates his flair when applying that characteristic penchant for groundbreaking poems based on the line-break absent approach popularized by Jim Kacian, which is arguably more accurate in approximating the original Japanese, as opposed to our more familiar three-level tercet structure.

WHERE DAYS BEGIN has four sections, only the first of which is not capitalized, in concert with their titles (Unspooling, MELTING, SLIPPING, SENSING) communicating an exponentially increasing tenor of unease and fragmentation, feel distinctly situated in the season of Fall and utilize the technique of *sabi*. The cover image of a tree viewed from inside a hollow seems particularly apropos, both socially and politically. Besides suggesting the proverbial cherry blossoms, this image equally reminds us of the several years of quarantine and isolation we are emerging from and the Platonic allegory our citizens again find themselves grappling with in the face of creeping dystopia and doublethink.

Cyberwit Press is famed for presenting the boldest, most daring works in micropoetry (Adam T. Bogar's *Feynman Lectures* was another subversive triumph). This book is no exception and continues that pivotal mission. This style of writing may conceivably concern the strict formalist. On the other hand, enjoyers of Scott

Metz will be quite enchanted. Those who are able to let their hair down and embrace the *yūgen* can find oodles to admire and learn from in this book and apply the techniques to their own monoku.

*school's end taking a torch to the rubric* □■

### BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

*Keeping Time: Haibun for the Journey* by Penny Harter (Kelsay Books, American Fork, UT: 2023). 102 pages. 6" x 9". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1639802913. \$23 from [kelsaybooks.com](http://kelsaybooks.com).

Emphasizing the journey more than end results, Harter's collection of haibun is organized "first by seasons of the heart and then by the actual seasons." She invites readers to join her stories of soul-searching hope where haiku pop in as interludes or capstones of feeling. Most of her haibun are written with a warm voice of remembrance, including two or three haiku as moments of clarity and wonder. She goes on a "Twilight Walk" where she observes "The duck has twisted its head to bury its beak in soft back feathers. One dark eye, half open, shines in the twilight" followed by this haiku: *reading glasses on / she studies the map of / her aging hand*. The haibun later closes with a memory of "Your father liked twilight walks you say ..." and this haiku: *the silence / of snow on tombstones — / even your name buried* (30). The title poem "Keeping Time" is an especially moving haibun. It starts with "Two hawks circle far above" followed by their shelter in a cave during a storm and ends with: "A gas burner spurts blue ..." and a haiku celebrating life: *nursing, the baby / smiles — milk bubbling / from her lips* (53). Harter includes a short list of "Tips for writing haibun" in the back pages. This book is a rewarding journey of the heart. □■



*Enlightened by Defilement: Haibun, an Almost Memoir* by Vera Constantineau (Latitude 46 Publishing, Ontario, Canada: 2023) 132 pages. 5.5" x 7.5". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1639802913. \$20.95 from [latitude46publishing.com](http://latitude46publishing.com).

What do we learn from our hopes, desires, attachments, sins, and mistakes on our way to growing up? Do we ever find fulfillment? In *Enlightened by Defilement*, Vera Constantineau explores the 108 Buddhist defilements that challenge us on the way to enlightenment. The author focuses on realizations or lessons learned from noticing these challenges. For example, "Risk and Reward" starts with an account of her brother's attachment to cigarettes. "Thirteen. A popular age for folly. It's when I tried vice too. For my brother, it was a hook that set. For him it was a moment of silence, something to do with his hands. For him the urge to quit came with the diagnosis. Too late." The final haiku is: *the flick / of his lighter / last time* (9). Although the subject matter is serious, the author's tone is personal, light, and sometimes humorous, conveying an acceptance of our common human shortcomings and losses. □■

*Haibun Chowder* by Bryan D. Cook (B.D.C. Ottawa Consulting, Bolton, Ontario, Canada: 2023). 112 pages. 6" x 9". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 979-8847741835. Available from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) for \$11.70 U.S.

Bryan Cook writes that "I hope my eclectic chowder of haibun, gathered from a lifetime of experiences and global wanderings, brings you warmth and satisfied smiles." This book includes 85 haibun. In 2019 he received the Grand Prix award in the Genjuan International Haibun Contest. The haibun in the book offer a variety of travels and memories, typically with a concluding haiku. One of my favorites was "Sex-Ed" which recalled growing up in the 1950s. His parents deflected answering his questions and gave him "a book on sex with botanical metaphor, the vogue in those prudish times. The front cover, two fruit flies circling a banana, is supposed to explain it all." Here is the final haiku: *tanned girls /*

on beach towels / banana split (23). Another haibun reminded me of a list my daughter used to keep called “Things out of me.” Cook’s haibun is titled “Part of Me” and chronicles the loss of his tonsils and ultimately the fact that he has “willed my body to science.” Here is the concluding senryu: *tonsil, colon / appendix, teeth / next, the mind* (74). These haibun will stick with you, like a good bowl of chowder. □■

***Bird Whistle: A Contemporary Anthology of Bird Haiku, Senryu, & Short Poems*** edited by Stanford M. Forrester and Johnette Downing. (bottle rockets press, Windsor, CT: 2023) 156 pages, 5.5” x 8”. Four-color card covers, perfect bound. ISBN: 978-1-7366037-9-6. For ordering information, contact the poet at: [bottlerockets\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:bottlerockets_99@yahoo.com)

This is an excellent collection of contemporary haiku on birds, edited by Stanford M. Forrester and Johnette Downing. It features two or three bird haiku by well-known contemporary haiku authors, gleaned from recent journals and books. I loved this one by Johnette Downing, our New Orleans co-editor: *sparrows in the café / a baguette / brawl* (34) and Kristen Lindquist’s haiku: *bluebirds at field’s edge / so many ways / to be happy* (72). Elliot Nicely contributes this one: *divorce papers — / the suddenness / of sparrows* (87). I also enjoy this early-bird haiku by Julie Schwerin: *morning birdsong / so many small / reunions* (108). In this appropriately short poem (just two words) we get this tiny haiku: *hummingbird dogfight* (124) by Nathanael Tico. Near the end of the anthology, we get an epic battle haiku by Robert Witmer: *the robin pulls / the worm / pulls back* (134). This is a remarkable anthology for all bird and haiku lovers! □■

#### BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

***pages from a tanka diary*** by Pamela A. Babusci (Independently published: 2020). 96 pages. 5.5” x 8.5”. Paperback. ISBN: 979-8847851671. \$15 from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and online booksellers

This is Pamela A. Babusci’s third collection of tanka poems. Her first two collections are titled: *A Thousand Reasons* and *A Solitary*

*Woman*. In *pages from a tanka diary*, Babusci provides 120 tanka organized by the following section titles: another indigo evening, stuck in a bell jar, silent grace, deepest shade of regret, depths of my sins, and wear me like raw silk. These titles form the main themes of this book. Here are four tanka that stood out to me: (1) *without love / one is dying / a slow death / i gaze deeper / into the cosmos*, (2) *autumn prayers / i release them / silently / the last ginkgo leaf / surrenders to the wind*, (3) *lay your body / across my lonely bones / before i crumble / into white dust / & disappear*, and (4) *spring sky— / blue light / fills every room / opening myself to you / like a sapphire lotus*. I appreciate Babusci's raw honesty in her tanka. We get a real glimpse into her life and her world. I find her tanka express courage and vulnerability. Here is one more example: *no husband / & no children— / the family i desired / drowned in a sea / of saturated blue*. A powerful and moving collection. □■

*swallow s tail s* by Marshall Hryciuk (*Nietzsche's Brolly*, Toronto, Canada: 2023). 64 pages. 4.2" x 5.5". Paperback: stapled. ISBN: 978-0-920489-82-6. No price listed.

This is a collection of 61 concrete haiku that flutter across each page like the flight of swallowtails. Aside from swallowtails, other subjects featured in this book include: blossoms, lilacs, hawks, crows, basalt cliffs, bird nests, pine trees, Indian paintbrush, monarchs, warblers, deer, bears, dragonflies, squirrels, blue jays, cardinals, Glacier Park, a raven, catkins, and Niagra Falls. I think this book will inspire poets to experiment with creative formats when writing haiku and consider how formats inspire movement in haiku poetry. □■

*Meteor Hound* by Doris Jean Lynch (*Mediajazz*, Bloomington, IN: 2023). 68 pages. 6" x 9". ISBN: 978-0998543314. \$14 from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Illustrated by Thom Kevin Gillespie.

This heartfelt collection of 39 haibun by Doris Jean Lynch is organized into three main sections: (1) Alaska & Other Adventures, (2) Travel & Other Pilgrimages, and (3) Birth & Other Transformations. Lynch's haibun depict landscapes with vividness and spiritual reverence. As an example, her haibun include passages such as: "As our jigging unlocks tomcod from the frozen lagoon the women sing century-old songs." Her prose is

engaging, transporting readers into Mother Earth through the eyes of Motherhood and Indigenous culture. This haiku stood out to me in her haibun titled "On the Cusp of Silence": *Inupiaq graveyard / whale bones curl / out of the snow*. Here is another passage demonstrating her skill at expressing landscapes from her haibun "Night Driving": *"Above the village towns, I discern the breast mounds of hills, while a road here and there climbs into the clouds."* Another haiku that stood out to me is: *all night the river / hums over stones - / your rhythmic breathing*. In her last haibun, Lynch writes: *"In the sheen of ice, we see ourselves: small, mutable, mouths open, begging for forgiveness, mercy."* This is a truly inspiring and immersive collection of haibun that resonates with family, motherhood, Indigenous culture and Mother Earth. I highly recommend this book. □■

***Der Einfluss des Haiku auf Imagismus und jüngere Moderne: Studien zur englischen und amerikanischen Lyrik*** by Sabine Sommerkamp (iudicium, Germany: 2023). Reprint of the 1984 edition, revised and extended with an epilogue. 427 pages. 7" x 10.2". ISBN: 978-3-86205-603-3. Hardcover. EUR 38 from <https://www.iudicium.de/>.

This is a dissertation by Sabine Sommerkamp that examines the history of haiku, its structure, and its expressions in the West. The majority of the text is in German. However, almost all the haiku and other poems are in English. In addition, there are several quotes and passages throughout the book translated into English. For those who don't read German, it takes some time to locate the English text amongst the German text, but there's valuable information. This book appeals to academic professionals who are studying haiku and poetry, and would be most beneficial for those who read in both German and English. □■

#### REVIEWED BY RICK CLARK

***The Wanderer Brush*** by Ion Codrescu (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2020). 184 pages. 7.5" x 10". Perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-947271-62-3. \$30 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com)

How wonderful to let the eyes wander through Ion Codrescu's collection of haiga *The Wanderer Brush*, inspired by a selection of 79 strong haiku from the United States and Canada. Playfulness is the reigning spirit in Codrescu's work in this attractive soft-bound coffee table edition published by Red Moon Press. Each poet is

represented by two facing pages, where the reader will discover Mr. Codrescu's haiga based on a haiku by a poet, as well as a short bio of the poet on the opposite page, two more haiku by the poet, and an admired haiku by another poet accompanied by a paragraph explaining why the poet chose to share it. Codrescu's practiced hand, combining a light touch and deft movements, explores such visual approaches as a diversity of styles and strokes, interconnectedness, literal and non-literal representation, poetic association, and innovation.

The irony is that, while the word "wandering" tends to evoke thoughts of non-attachment, aimlessness, and homelessness, the wanderer in Codrescu's book, like a bee in a garden, is busy interconnecting a universe of views, experiences, subjects, styles, images, and words. His lines wander through each page, deftly tying together poets' haiku with images and patterns that themselves either represent the haiku, suggest a sensation or feeling supporting the haiku, or set off the haiku to enhance it.

Some of Codrescu's ink-work is abstract in that, rather than directly representing the words, he lays down patterns of lines, splotches, and dots to create a physical sensation or background suggesting a parallel sensation or feeling evoked by a poem. The calligraphy is generally consistent in style from poem to poem while the imagery varies notably in degrees of abstraction, representation, detail, omission, pattern, and singularity versus multiplicity.

Codrescu makes abundant use of traditionally established yohaku, or empty space, as an expression of silence, with minimalist representations of landscapes, rocks, and trees. Snow is represented by the use of no ink at all. He uses pale ink versus bold ink to depict depth, and distance and thick lines versus thin lines to suggest depth. There are so many kinds of brush strokes—circles and squares, boxes and portholes, and other shapes that suggest objects or concepts. His nimble hand creates patterns of lines to suggest movements of water, wind, and sound.

Wandering is evident in the first haiga of the collection, where Jim Roberts' haiku refers to "the rail." We tend to think of a rail as straight, but here Codrescu produces a sinuously curving and bending line of ink that suggests that our experience of

moving along a straight line is anything but straight. We may want to travel directly from point A to point B, but it seems our path, in reality, is almost never direct. Thus, the book proceeds, haiga after haiga, reminding us to visit all the corners of the garden.

Even in our eighth decade, as described by Carolyn Hall in her haiku, our memory of a stream must adapt to an ever-changing stream-bed. Codrescu gives us what appears to be a rock-solid brickwork, with an organic stream of ink cutting through it, underscoring the wandering that takes place in, through, and around the structured, adamantine, and regular.

The haiga that follows, on a haiku by Lynn Jambor, reveals Codrescu's penchant for calligraphic wandering and interconnection, as the tails of Ys from previous words cross Ts of later words, playful as well as suggestive. He also makes the word "slow" the largest word on the page, which invites us with its size and its long O to dwell on, or in, the word at length, inviting us as readers to slow our pace, especially in how we see and hear the world. For many, the new year is about starting fresh, with renewed energy, but this poem, the words as brushed on the page, induce us to slow down and dwell in the here and now and in the haiga and the book itself.

It would appear that Mr. Codrescu considered carefully how one haiga flows into the next. Following the haiga on Jambor's haiku is Codrescu's haiga on a haiku by Pamela A. Babusci: a water lily grows so large as to fill a pond, which is how paying attention works. Dwelling on an object, image, word, or sensation expands it till it fills our minds, whether it's the slowness of the moment or the lily's size in the landscape. Still, Codrescu helps keep the lily in perspective by linking almost all the words to stones "grounding" the empty water.

Mr. Codrescu's haiga on Mike Stinson's haiku utilizes what one might interpret as gift boxes, as in the poem on Father's Day, the father is gifting the sighting of a firefly to his son, conveying the idea that it's the parents, the adults, who must draw the loving attention of our children to the small creatures and objects around us. The overall layout of this haiga involves an intuitive flow of

calligraphy and image from the top to the bottom of the page, suggestive of the downward flow of gifts to children, even on Father's Day.

The next haiga, on a haiku by Carmen Sterba, demonstrates how Mr. Codrescu can represent and enhance a haiku but can also step aside with a more distant, more peripheral image. Sterba's haiku:

ferry horn  
the island dissolves  
in the porthole

is a complex construction of comings and goings of image and sound that Codrescu has the good sense not to try to represent directly. He simply gives the viewer the slightly fading end of an island. No porthole, no sound waves, no actual fading, etc. He uses omission to draw the reader-viewer in.

But Codrescu's skill at representation, or at least his realistic treatment of a subject, gets its moment in the book here and there. For Hans Jongman's haiku mentioning a weathervane, Codrescu gives us an accurate depiction of a stellar jay (I think), not abstracted nor representing an actual weathervane, but as a haiku-like juxtaposition. Not only can we see that Codrescu is versatile in style, but the book also ranges greatly in its variety of treatment and imagery. Every page holds a surprise.

Not only do the calligraphic strokes and water wander through the pages, but other less fluid items and substances can flow through, as well. In susan spooner's haiku:

harvest moon  
vegetable soup  
in an orange bowl

a flight of vegetables seems to start beyond the edge of the page, flows through a moon-like bowl, then continues off the other



edge of the page, further developing themes of flowing and interconnectedness while underscoring haiga innovation.

Shiela Sondik's haiku describing a spider's dance has afforded Mr. Codrescu an opportunity to use the wanderer brush to create sensations of motion. Patterns of fine lines and shading create an image of vibrating webs that catches the male spider off guard, a step in the dance that ends in sexual conjunction and ultimate death. In fact, in various haiga, Mr. Codrescu succeeds in representing such phenomena as sound, ripples, flowing water, and waves of wind.

Mr. Codrescu has succeeded in creating a wonderful effect in my own haiku, a tarn of Zen emptiness where, in seeing nothing, one sees everything. To have painted worm trails crisscrossing mountain faces would have made the work redundantly literal. Mr. Codrescu, by omitting the detail, has excited the imagination. Thus, his haiga imagination rigorously serves the purpose of his themes of fluidity and interconnectedness.

Codrescu's ink paintings never distract from or otherwise take away from the included haiku. Rather, his ink-work supports, enhances, or highlights them. In the end, the haiga are singular, integrated works. While possessing a great variety of painterly techniques and styles, Mr. Codrescu remains recognizably Codrescu. Just as Bashō wandered through Japan in the 17th century, so the reader can wander through the ever-changing word-scapes of Mr. Codrescu's *The Wanderer Brush*, then return home and perhaps try a hand at the brush and ink. □■

#### REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

*Selected Haiku 1933-1962 Sanki Saitō* translated by Masaya Saito (Isobar Press, United Kingdom: 2023). 294 pages. 6" x 9". Paperback. ISBN: 978-4-907359-43-0. \$25 from amazon.com

This is a thorough collection of 1,141 haiku by Sanki Saitō, who was a towering haiku figure in Japan. His actual name was Saitō Keichoku, but his pen name was Sanki. This book starts with a biography that reveals significant turning points in Sanki's personal and professional life involving his family, relationships, abandoning his family, and working as a dentist. This book also describes Sanki as an integral part of the New Rising Haiku



movement during the modernization of Japan. Some of Sanki's haiku combine Nature with modern city life, while other poems contain no *kigo* or seasonal reference and are based on his imagination. This book includes historical notes on how his haiku based on imagination received fierce criticism in the context of traditional haiku views, the Second Sino-Japanese War, and World War II. The text goes on to say how some New Rising haiku poets were arrested for violating the Peace Preservation Law in the face of nationalistic views. Some poets wrote *zensen haiku* (war-front haiku) but Sanki wrote *senka-sōbō haiku* (haiku about war, but based on imagination).

However, as this book explains, Sanki's hardships and poverty during World War II when he left his family and moved to Kobe also marked a turning point in his writing. After the war, Sanki started writing haiku with a *kigo* and wrote about what life was like, as he started to abandon his imagination in his poetry. Three haiku that stand out to me during this chapter of his life are:

Withered garden –  
a snow-white dog  
watching me

My rubber pillow  
sloshes –  
the cold sea

Something huge  
hiding in the swamp –  
blue night

Scattered throughout this book there are some surreal haiku by Sanki, including this one:

In the drought-stricken sky  
a raven, which I imagine has flown  
out from my breast

However, increasingly, as time went on, Sanki wrote haiku based on what he saw in daily life as he left behind his wit and sentiment, and sought for more clarity in his poetry. Here are a few more examples:

No lamplight  
on a cold night, my face  
unmoving

The train has moved  
wholly into the snowfield . . .  
the passengers fall silent

Under a glaring sky  
a graveyard ...  
alone, a child passes

The haiku in this book reveal Sanki's complex personality. I feel his surreal haiku are windows into his mind. However, a common thread I found in this book is Sanki's ability to write about darker subjects and the many challenges of human life. Even though he especially used his imagination when he started writing haiku in his thirties, later in his life he did not avoid the rawness of the human condition and wrote with courage and honesty. I think this book will inspire readers to think about why they write haiku and perhaps spark discussions about the place of imagination when writing haiku. An interesting book. □■

*The Routledge Global Haiku Reader*, edited by James Shea and Grant Caldwell (Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon & New York, NY: 2023). 344 pages. 6.14" x 9.21". ISBN: 978-10322-7-265-8. Paperback. \$46.95 from [www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com)

*The Routledge Global Haiku Reader* is an impressive collection of sixteen essays that provides a historical overview and a comprehensive analysis of haiku and its development on a global scale across many different languages, poetic movements, and cultural contexts. This book is organized into five main sections: (1) **Haiku in Transit**,

(2) **Haiku and Social Consciousness**, (3) **Haiku and Experimentation**, (4) **The Future of Global Haiku**, and (5) **the Afterword**.

To provide a more thorough glimpse of the content, here are the titles of each essay. **In Section I (Haiku in Transit)** there are three essays: (1) *Beyond the Haiku Moment: Bashō, Buson, and Modern Haiku Myths* by Haruo Shirane, (2) *Hearn, Bickerton, Hubbell: Translation and Definition* by Hiroaki Sato, and (3) *Reading an Evening Breeze: Buson's Hokku in Translation* by James Shea.

**In Section II (Haiku and Social Consciousness)**, there are four essays: (1) *A Second-Class Art: On Contemporary Haiku* by Takeo Kuwabara, (2) *From the 2.26 Incident to the Atomic Bombs: Haiku During the Asia-Pacific War* by Hiroaki Sato, (3) *New Rising Haiku: The Evolution of Modern Japanese Haiku and the Haiku Persecution Incident* by Yūki Hō, and (4) *Translations and Migrations of the Poetic Diary: Roy Kiyooka's Wheels* by Judith Halebsky.

**In Section III (Haiku and Experimentation)** there are four essays: (1) *Ezra Pound, Yone Noguchi, and Imagism* by Yoshinobu Hakutani, (2) *Haiku as a Western Genre: Fellow-Traveler of Modernism* by Jan Walsh Hokenson, (3) *Marking Time in Native America: Haiku, Elegy, Survival* by Karen Jackson Ford, and (4) *The Disjunctive Dragonfly: A Study of Disjunctive Method and Definitions in Contemporary English-Language Haiku* by Richard Gilbert.

**In Section IV (The Future of Global Haiku)**, there are five essays: (1) *Non-Japanese Haiku Today* by Grant Caldwell, (2) *One Hundred Bridges, One Hundred Traditions in Haiku* by Charles Trumbull, (3) *In the Shade of the Cherry Blossoms: The Reception of Haiku in Post-Soviet Russia* by Cécile Rousselet, (4) *From Haiku to the Short Poem: Bridging the Divide* by Philip Rowland, and (5) *Future of World Haiku* by Ban'ya Natsuishi.

**Section V is the Afterword** by Anita Patterson. In short, this is an excellent book for professional academics who are immersed in Asian studies, comparative literature, creative writing, cul-

tural studies, and literary studies. It's also a great book for those interested in learning more about the history of haiku on a global scale up to the present time and peers into the future. It is thoroughly referenced. A high-quality publication. ◻■

#### BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY TOM SACRAMONA

*Home Again* haiku by Rick Tarquinio (Odd Duck Press, New Jersey: 2023). 4.75" x7.5". 55 pages. No ISBN. \$20, postage-paid. To order, contact the poet at: [soundingplace@gmail.com](mailto:soundingplace@gmail.com)

The author of *Mostly Water*, *Star by Star*, and now *Home Again* offers readers over a hundred haiku that get right to life's essence—haiku that inspire, delight, and by turns, amaze us. *Home Again* is Rick Tarquinio's third haiku collection and first in six years. I could quote nearly every poem, which are presented two per page. Here is a haiku for each season: (1) *new spines / on the thistle / lingering frost*; (2) *pasture fence / where the paint ran out / a bluebird's song*; (3) *to be the no one / Basho spoke of . . . / autumn road*; (4) *first flakes / a beaver's tail / slaps the river*. A subset of the haiku touch on life's big questions (*first buds / religion / enough*) and baseball (*blown save / my grandfather cussing / the Phils in Italian*). The beauty of Tarquinio's poetry is how at home he is among Southern New Jersey's landscape and wilderness. Sprinkled among the nature-dominated haiku are a few humorous observations, including this one that only a musician could write: *sunset bog / the frogs / on 11*. The book also includes four finely detailed wood-block illustrations. These were created by Rick's son, Matt, who is also credited in the acknowledgements as selecting the poems included in *Home Again* and arranging them into the book's sequence. I hope father and son are proud of their collaboration. Any poet I've talked with who has read *Home Again* has loved it. One more favorite: *broken reeds / my long-forgotten / dharma name*. ◻■

*Crows at Dusk* haiku by James Roderick Burns (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2023). 4.25" x 6.5". 109 pages. ISBN: 978-1-958408-22-3. \$20 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com)

A first haiku collection by James Roderick Burns from northeast England and volunteer reader at *Ploughshares*. His haiku collection begins quoting a Buson haiku: *They end their flight / one by one / crows at dusk* and a second quote glossing the meaning of *wabi-sabi*. Perhaps for this reason, the first section is autumn (instead of spring) which he reprises again at the end. One haiku from each of the autumn sections that have *wabi-sabi*: (1) *Nothing more / than this still rowan — / November day*; (2) *November wind — / I join the old men / who talk to dogs*. I'll quote a few more to give a genuine feel for the book: (1) *Ear infection — / traffic stately as cloud, / lines of silent wings*; (2) *Sun, rain / and overnight poppies / in a dead yard*; (3) *Just as good — / the storied snow-goose's / wild, inky honks*. ◻■

#### BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

*Border Line* by Miriam Sagan (Independently published: 2023). 108 pages. 6" x 6". Paperback. ISBN: 979-8369733356. \$6.25 from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

This is a collection of 101 haiku by Miriam Sagan. The title marks a gap between worlds, and this is depicted in some of the haiku. Four haiku that stood out to me are (1) *what crosses borders / as easily as a dream — / red petals*, (2) *ruined mission church / crosses mark the unnamed / smallpox graves*, (3) *intermission / a meteor streaks / over the opera house*, and (4) *border checkpoint / my grandmother tenses up / inside me*. While I feel some poems have room for improvement, I appreciate the author's personality in this book. I also appreciate her vulnerability in this haiku: *so many friends gone — / writing haiku in the old / address book*. ◻■

*Uncle John's Haiku* by John Hamley (Independently published: 2022). 80 pages. 5.83" x 8.27". Paperback. ISBN: 978-1778127403. \$15.95 from amazon.com and online booksellers.

This is a collection of 85 haiku interspersed with the author's thoughts on his poems, haiku in the West, colored photographs, anecdotes, and glimpses into the poet's life. The format of this book is unique and expresses the poet's personality, aesthetic, and at times, his sense of humor. Here are three haiku that stood out to me: (1) *Lilacs / the dust of / some settler's dreams*, (2) *Ice and snow / and darkness falls / on the road less traveled*, and (3) *Silence / then an owl's call / as clear as the stars*. I appreciate Hamley's thought that: "...before we take a pen in hand we should have something meaningful to say." I also appreciate his thought that while writing haiku we should be "respecting the Japanese tradition but not imitating it." I feel the driving message here is to have the courage to be authentic in our writing and to write from depth. I feel this book is a kind of portal into the poet's life. An interesting read. □■

## Errata

Our sincere apologies for this error in issue 46:2:

Donna Bauerly is an HSA sponsor who was not mentioned by accident. Our sincere apologies for the mistake.