

## BRIEFLY REVIEWED

By Randy Brooks

**The Black Between Stars** by Elliot Nicely (2017, Crisis Chronicles Press, Parma OH) 16 pages, 2¼×7", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-940996-40-0. \$4.99 plus \$3 shipping from Crisis Chronicles Press, 3431 George Avenue, Parma, OH 44134.

On the Crisis Chronicles Press website, Elliot Nicely notes that "We set out to develop a new work that is both startling and stark, a book which invokes a sense of disquiet and discomfort." The book is published backwards to English conventions with the cover and title page coming last, and the reading pages progressing from right to left in a reverse chronology sequence. The title haiku is *waiting / for her lab results / the black between stars*. I like the way this haiku shifts from a contemplative outdoors, to the inner consideration of a medical scan. The chapbook progresses through two reversed pages with white ink haiku on black pages for two death scenes: *first prayer / of the wake / only the wine breathes* and *blackberry winter / in the cemetery / a fresh grave*. Small chapbooks have always been an excellent way to present a short sequence or unified series. Nicely's *The Black Between Stars* excels as an example of this haiku publishing tradition.

**B-flat Blues** by Bill Cooper (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 100 pages, 4¼×6½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-92-9. \$15 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

With this latest collection, we see that Bill Cooper has a polished voice and that his haiku focus on a wide range of experiences and perceptions. He clearly understands people and their motives and enjoys sharing insights about people through haiku, such as *preschool / she lays out her project / on snails*. He excels in haiku that mix or layer various sensory perceptions, as in *fading decals / the scent of bus fumes / on a trumpet case* and *walk-off double / the pitcher tastes the string / of his glove*. Several of the haiku connect music to natural occurrences, as in *rain loosening / each sunflower petal / new oboe reed*. As a long-ago

trumpet player, I fondly consider the smells in this one-line haiku of a trumpet player: *cold midnight oiling the third trumpet valve*. Sometimes Cooper contrasts the social and natural worlds: *election poll / a honeybee slides / down the stamen*. Sometimes he surprises us with political social issues: *straw hats in a row / Amish men discuss / opioids* and *first snow / a hint of smile through / her blue burqa*. This is an excellent collection of haiku.

**Buying Time** by Elmedin Kadric (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 80 pages, 4¼×6½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-94-2. \$15 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

On opening *Buying Time*, many of the poems fell flat and were too prosaic for my taste. Several appeared to be little more than expressive assertions, such as *because she said so persimmons*. However, as I read more of the collection, I also found excellent haiku with subtle shifts and hints of expansive scenes. For example, *the way / you wear / this trickling stream* is a single-image haiku that presents a vibrant image of someone bathing or splashing in sunlit water. In this haiku I enjoyed the sounds: *the soft click of marbles an eye for an eye*, where the competitors are trying to get even, capturing each other's cat-eye marbles. Sometimes Kadric's haiku are too predictable and rely on clever expression or witty linguistic tricks rather than delivering insight, but I did like the surprise ending of *rock paper scissors war*. My favorite was the title poem written with a more traditional haiku cut: *roadside diner / the soldier buys himself / some time*. Give this collection time and imagination. You will find excellent haiku hidden among the linguistic weeds.

**Earth in Sunrise: A Course for English-Language Study** by Richard Gilbert and David Ostman (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 134 pages, 7×10", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-86-7. \$20 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

This is an interesting textbook on teaching English as a second language to high school or college students. The chapters are organized as topics for reading and analysis such as the environment, work, nature, love, war, etc. Each chapter starts

with a reading of Japanese or English haiku related to the topic, discussed by the authors. Key words are bolded in these discussions to highlight vocabulary words defined in the glossary at the end of each chapter. Homework assignments usually prompt students to write something on the topic and also to fill in the blanks of a paragraph by choosing appropriate words from a “Cloze Word List.” For example, in the chapter on animals, an idea for composition is to “Become an animal; write as that animal.” Several chapters encourage students to try to write haiku related to the topic of that chapter such as “Write a haiku about a familiar animal—now try another, considering a very unfamiliar animal.” The textbook includes a wide range of haiku in English or translated into English from around the world. For example, chapter one includes Raymond Roseliep’s *with his going / the birds go / nameless* which is discussed as an example of a haiku about the pain of separation. Some of the haiku are more abstract, such as Johannes S.H. Bjerg’s *a word that takes time defoliation*. Other examples, such as Peter Yovu’s *monday bleeding down to money*, might be very challenging to readers new to English. However, the authors provide readings of these poems that help English-language learners understand them. In an indirect way, these discussions of haiku provide a model for students on the art of reading haiku.

**Eucalyptus Wind** by Karina M. Young (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 74 pages, 4¼×6½”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-99-7. \$15 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

Karina Young is a poet in touch with her environment around Salinas, CA, and writes haiku about the local flora and fauna. When people enter into her haiku, they are usually interacting with the surrounding elements, such as in *shorter days / a spider outruns / the hose water*. I especially liked her late autumn haiku, *dark clouds / over the field / unwanted pumpkins*. I can picture the dark clouds of coming winter and scattered pumpkins left behind in the field. This creates a foreboding feeling as in Basho’s famous “crow on a bare branch” haiku. Another haiku that plays with the borders of nature and civilization is:

*no trespassing / a crow slides / into home base.* One more favorite because it is simply splendid: *the whole inlet / glinting with sunlight / belugas.*

**Even the Mountains: Five Years in a Japanese Village** by Sean O'Connor (2017, Alba Publishing, Uxbridge, UK) 92 pages, 5¾×8¼", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-910185-60-5. \$12 from Alba-Publishing.com.

Sean O'Connor is a writer and musician from Ireland who became interested in Japanese culture through his studies and practice of judo, aikido and Zen. He has graduate degrees in psychiatric nursing and international peace studies. This book is an account of five years living in Yuzuri, Okayama, Japan starting after his marriage to Junko Oda. Each section begins with a personal narrative on one aspect of O'Connor's experience, followed by related haiku. For example, "To Your Bones" is about living in a traditional farmhouse where they relied on a paraffin stove instead of central heating. He states "It is customary to have a very hot bath every evening...to warm up, rather than merely washing yourself. You warm up to the extent that you could walk naked in snow afterwards" (11). A related haiku is: *steaming / after a bath / snow in the back yard.* This collection is a wonderful encounter with everyday life in a small village of Japan. The haiku are quiet, contemplative, simple, and immediate. The prose is sincere and direct and conveys a voice of wonder and gratitude. Like haibun, this combination of narrative and poetry creates an extended context for better appreciation of both. The last section, "Farewell," talks about their departure and concludes with *Fuji / inside its mouth / the shadow of our plane.* Ah, this collection reminds me that haiku are a means of sharing the gift of our humanity with each other, across cultures and beyond artificial political boundaries.

**Four Seasons** by Satoru Kanematsu (2017, Gakuhōsha, Nagoya, Japan) 74 pages, 5¾×8¼", perfectbound. ISBN 978-4-9907320-1-4. \$8 from Gakuhōsha, 4-5-10 Sannō, Nakagawa-ku, Nagoya 454-00011, Japan.

Satoru Kanematsu started writing haiku in Japanese and English after he retired as an English teacher in 1997. He is a member of Kō Poetry Association and Haiku International Association. Many of the haiku in this collection were previously published in the *Asahi Haikuist Network* edited by David McMurray. The collection is organized into four seasons according to *kigo* in the old lunar calendar. The author notes that “Though I started to write haiku following the traditional 17-syllable count like the haiku on the first page of each season, I prefer now a more pithy form because I feel the sound of 3–5–3 syllables is close to Japanese haiku.” Here is an example of a 17-syllable haiku: *Far thunder rumbling— / the curry cooked by my wife / just spicy enough*. I like the softness of the distant thunder and how “spicy enough” can refer to both the curry and his wife. Not too hot, not too loud, not too spicy, just right! From the autumn section, here is a 3–5–3 haiku: *Wooden scent / of a sharpened pencil: / new coolness*. Kanematsu expresses everyday Japanese life throughout his haiku, but he also enjoys multicultural perspectives as in this winter haiku: *Rereading / Anne Frank’s diary— / winter roses*. I imagine Louis Armstrong singing this one: *Spring leisure: / from the gramophone / “c’est si bon.”* If you haven’t read his haiku before, you are in for a real treat with this collection. You might just end up agreeing with David McMurray, who writes in his introduction, “Kanematsu Satoru sensei is my all-time favorite haikuist.”

**Ghost Moon** by Mark Gilfillan (2017, Alba Publishing, Uxbridge, UK) 104 pages, 5¾×8¼”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-910185-68-1. \$18 from [AlbaPublishing.com](http://AlbaPublishing.com).

*Ghost Moon* is Mark Gilfillan’s first collection, gathering 98 of his best haiku and senryu. Several have previously been published in *Blithe Spirit*, *Prune Juice*, *The Heron’s Nest*, and *Frogpond*. Gilfillan knows the hills, valleys, and rivers of North Derbyshire in the Peak District where he grew up. It is evident in the haiku that he values and appreciates his time in the countryside. While often located outdoors, his haiku come alive with humans and their ghost-like traces, as in the first haiku: *barely legible /*

*a vintage love / carved in oak.* His senryu also have that mix of scene and humanity as evident in *along the towpath / herbs for sale / honesty box... chained.* I enjoy the playful personification in the following: *from the reservoir / the old steeple emerges / praying for rain.* I like the hint of a small community that has gone under with the building of the much-needed reservoir, evident now only by the steeple which once stood as the tallest structure in the village and a place of many prayers. This is an outstanding collection that celebrates being alive: *after the excitement / of snow / one left mitten.*

**A Golden Leaf** by D. W. Skrivseth (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 66 pages, 4¼×6½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-88-1. \$15 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

D. W. Skrivseth's collection opens with the title haiku *rainy afternoon... / one of many puddles / holds a golden leaf.* I place myself in this quiet scene and imagine that I am avoiding stepping in the puddles. The rain has let up and sunlight illuminates one golden leaf in this puddle right at my feet. Skrivseth's haiku excel at such moments of quiet noticing. And to borrow a phrase from Peggy Lyles, his haiku connect the outer weather with his own inner weather. For example, *mocking my / dislike of yellow... / dandelions.* Some of the haiku in this collection fail to move beyond the outer weather, but his best connect the natural and our ordinary human fears as in this haiku: *balancing / household budget... / the empty wasp nest.* I especially like the spiritual humility in *dusty clothes... / ringing the temple / bell.* Skrivseth ends with a glimpse of mortality: *my reflection / in the gravestone... / not yet not yet.*

**A Gust From the Alley: A Collection of Haiku** (2017, Spring Street Haiku Group, New York NY) 84 pages, 4¼×6¾", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-329-85059-0. \$7.17 from [lulu.com](http://lulu.com).

**Low Growling From the Petunias** (2017, Spring Street Haiku Group, New York NY) 20 pages, 4¼×5½", saddle-stapled. ISBN none. \$5 from Seidboard World Ent., POB 137, New York NY 10012.

The Spring Street Haiku Group published two collections of their members' work this year, *A Gust From the Alley* and *Low Growling From the Petunias*, a special chapbook anthology in celebration of their 25th year of gathering to share their own haiku with each other. In the introduction to *Low Growling*, Mykel Board explains "The Spring Street Group works differently from many haiku groups. First, we are not nice. People bring their haiku to Spring Street to be criticized, rejected, laughed at, reworked, discussed, argued, fist-fought, and dueled to the death. For a short time, we had a rule that anyone who presented a haiku that was liked by all would have to pay a 25¢ fine for giving us an ego-booster rather than a haiku that needed work. What you see in this chapbook are haiku that have gone through that grinding process." In the second collection, Efren Estevez provides a more extensive description of the workings of the group with examples of how haiku such as Jay Friedenberg's original *over the hill / through the trees / sounds of distant music and screams* gets edited into a final version, *walking to the fair / distant music / and screams*. The success of these collections suggests that the Spring Street Haiku Group is an effective model for other groups. Here are a few more excellent haiku from these two recent collections. One of the titles comes from Kei Andersen: *Hunter's moon—/ low growling / in the petunias*. Bill Kenney has a twist on the urban legend: *hitchhiker / in the rearview mirror.../ big sky*, but my favorite from *Low Growling* is *trees begin to bloom / out on the street a boy rides / his father's shoulders* by Miriam Borne. A couple of favorites from *A Gust From the Alley* include *Coney Island Parade / a mermaid holds a / mermaid baby* by Bruce Kennedy and *ruined mansion—/ a lizard sunbathes / on the toppled nymph* by Efren Estevez.

**Haibun Hotels** by Marshall Hryciuk (2017, Imago Press, Toronto, Canada) 144 pages, 5½×7", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-907100-05-5. \$20 Canadian + \$5 US postage from Imago Press, 30 Laws St., Toronto ON M6P 2Y7 Canada.

*Haibun Hotels* is a travel journal with interspersed haiku, written by Marshall Hryciuk from his six years in Canada as

publishers national sales representative. He writes about the mundane experiences of traveling and revels in his encounters with others. And throughout, the spark within the ordinary is the haiku that emerge out of these ordinary scenes. The haiku are not necessarily eye-popping or extraordinary, but they do come with an authenticity expressing Hryciuk's urban sardonic irony. I enjoyed reading his playful, sometimes naughty, haiku: *crow flying / with a coupon in its beak / lets it go* and *fresh hyacinths / by the window / a line of underwear*.

**Haiku Anthology: Insights and Observations** ed. by Robyn Corum, Douglas Paul, and Michael Mann (2017, Douglas Paul Creations, LLC. and FanStory Haiku Club) 68 pages, 6×9", perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-6928498-8-0. \$14.98 from Amazon.com.

The FanStory Haiku Club is a social media website group that encourages writers to learn more about haiku by sharing their work with each other. This club grew out of an online FanStory class on writing haiku taught by MariVal Bayles. *Haiku Anthology* is a collection of their selections of the best haiku from 26 contributing members of the club. The collection focuses on nature haiku written in response to weekly challenges on topics such as fire, water, earth, air, birds, fish, weeds, etc. Here are sample haiku on "water": *a calm eddy / amidst raging rapids—/ welcome reprieve* by Douglas Paul and *first morning dew / graces Mount Madonna—wet ankles* by MariVal Bayles. It is always good to find a new group of writers studying the twin arts of reading and writing haiku.

**Haiku Detective** by Michael Ketchek (2017, Free Food Press, Rochester NY) 152 pages, 5½×8½", perfectbound. ISBN none. \$18 postpaid from FreeFoodPress.com.

Over the last decade we have seen a growth in haiku fiction, including the novels by David Lanoue and fictional haibun. As the title suggests, this is I believe the first *Haiku Detective* novel written from the point of view of a detective whose "vices are an occasional nibble off the bourbon bottle and haiku." Ketchek enjoys playing with this perspective, with the narrator, Francis



Swift, hiding his haiku habit when the *femme fatal* enters the office looking for help. Throughout the novel his haiku appear as the inner, secret thoughts or observations of the detective. At the crime scene he writes: *a shaft of sunlight / sinking into / the bloodstained carpet*. Sometimes he starts a chapter with a haiku that sets the mood or focus of the next scene: *limp on a hanger / old disco party dress / two sizes smaller*. Ketchek further integrates haiku into the novel as the detective discovers that the murder victim had book shelves filled with haiku books and a blood-stained page of five haiku under his chair. Turns out the victim is “Paul Woodnose, editor of *Modern Frog*, the dirty bastard who kept rejecting all my haiku.” The web of haiku-involved people grows as our haiku detective continues to write and collect haiku from others. I won’t spoil the mystery of the novel, but simply recommend that if you like detective fiction and haiku, you will enjoy this book.

**How to Write a Haiku** by David Lindley (2017, Verborum Editions, Northamptonshire, UK) 68 pages, 5×8”. Gray card covers, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-907100-05-5. \$10 from [verborumedititions.com](http://verborumedititions.com).

This small book is less about “how to write a haiku” and more about a beginner’s reflections about discovering the art of haiku. David Lindley is a writer and translator, and as a relative newcomer to haiku, this is a short introduction to what he has discovered about the literary art of haiku. Based on cited sources and recommended “further reading” it does not appear that he is aware of contemporary haiku journals, haiku societies, or recent books of haiku in English or Japanese. In addition to general observations from his reading, Lindley does provide some advice on writing haiku such as calling for writing about “concrete things” and the use of juxtaposition of images. He prefers writing with five-seven-five syllable count in his translations and original haiku. Unfortunately, his own haiku lack the simplicity, conciseness, and subtle intuition valued in the best haiku. Here is an example of his “regular” 5–7–5 haiku: *Spring. Lost in the woods. / White wild garlic and bluebells. / A lone pink flower.*

He notes that “irregular” haiku are often written, such as this one he composed: *The crows are around somewhere / but not in their nests / wrecked by wind and rain*. The examples of his own work suggest that he may not be the best guide for beginners seeking to learn how to write a haiku.

**JuxtaThree: The Journal of Haiku Research and Scholarship**  
*ed. by Peter McDonald and the editorial board (2017, The Haiku Foundation, Winchester VA) 190 pages, 6×9”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-93-5. \$35 from The Haiku Foundation.*

*JuxtaThree* is the perfectbound print version of *Juxtapositions 3.1*. The editorial board seeks to promote and publish scholarship on haiku from all academic perspectives. This issue features an essay by Ce Rosenow on haiku and the aesthetics and philosophical ethics of caring and compassion. She introduces readers to the philosophical discussion of care ethics, then explores “how haiku might contribute to developing the human capacity to care.” Applying James Thompson’s work on the aesthetics of care, Rosenow discusses how haiku are “small creative encounters that can be experienced momentarily yet returned to repeatedly” and often convey an aesthetic of caring. She points out that the aesthetics of caring is not simply a matter of conveying one’s own experiences, but rather being able to imaginatively share and care about others’ experiences as well. For this brief review, I cannot summarize each essay, but I do want to note an interesting collaboration between neuro-/cognitive scientists and haiku poets titled “Haiku and the Brain.” In this study Stella Pierides, Hermann J. Müller, Jim Kacian, Franziska Günther, and Thomas Geyer have studied eye-movements and brain processes of people reading haiku. Most significantly, these scholars have attempted to understand the process of how a reader receives a haiku and re-reads it repeatedly until there is a “realization of the haiku’s ‘meaning gestalt’ in the reader’s mind.” This is very interesting research that has already led to several additional studies now available on The Haiku Foundation web site. This issue also includes essays on (1) “Emotional Depth in the Haiku of Ban’ya Natsuishi” by Anna Cates; (2) “Riddle Haiku” by Stephen Addiss;

(3) “Mixed Language Haiku” by David McMurray, and (4) “The Sound of Water” and ecocritical essay by Ian Marshall. Between the articles are a series of colorful haiga by Billy Collins, Stephen Addiss, Pamela A. Babusci, Guy Beining, Terry L. French, Annette Makino, Ron C. Moss, Ellen Peckham, and Lidia Rozmus.

**La ou l'eau sale se mêle à l'eau douce / Where Saltwater Mixes With Freshwater** by Kent Neal (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 88 pages, 4¼×6½”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-90-4. \$12 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

Kent Neal grew up in Oregon but has lived in Lyon, France since 2003. He is a member of the French Haiku Association, and this collection is published as a dual-language edition in French and English. The book opens with this haiku: *through the bars / of the truck cage, in the cool wind, / a pig snout*. A quick comparison of the haiku in French and English suggests that Neal attempts to follow the order of images and a close proximity of words in both versions. The French haiku are often written in 5–7–5 syllables resulting in slightly more linguistic content than many contemporary English-language haiku. For example, compare these versions of the same haiku: *sous un parapluie / femme, briquet, flame, cigarette / nuage de fume* and in English, *under the umbrella / woman, lighter, flame, cigarette / cloud of smoke*. Although some of Neal's haiku provide a typical haiku cut, many seem to string along images, phrases or lists: *the sky, the sidewalks, / the street, the river—today / everything is gray* which is nevertheless an effective haiku. I love this refreshing one: *a handful of blueberries / to put in the pancakes—bare / feet on wet grass*.

**My Fifty Favorite Haiku** by L. A. Davidson, ed. by Laura Tanna (2017, DLT Associates, Inc., Miami FL) 44 pages, 5½×8¼”, saddle-stapled. ISBN 978-0-9674991-1-6. Available from DLT Associates, 3245 Village Green Dr., Miami FL 33175.

Published on the 100th anniversary of her birth, this is a collection of fifty favorite haiku by L. A. Davidson. The editor, Laura Tanna, explains that when Davidson sent copies of her published haiku to Charles Trumbull to be added to his database, she

indicated fifty favorites. In addition to these fifty haiku, the editor has included a short biography of her mother. There is also an overview of the “L. A. Davidson papers 1965-2007,” which is a special collection available at the Columbia University Butler Library. A few of my favorites by Davidson: *The Mississippi / a mile wide at Winona / and still rising* and *that time again / heaped on cornflakes / blueberries*. The biography and book end with her famous minimalist haiku, *beyond / stars beyond / star*.

**New Resonance 10: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku** ed. by Jim Kacian and Dee Evetts (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 176 pages, 5¼×8¼”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-00-5. \$17 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

The ten featured writers in *New Resonance 10* include S. M. Abeles, Mary Frederick Ahearn, Johan Bergstad, Meik Blötenberger, Mark E. Brager, Sondra Byrnes, Bill Deegan, Chase Gagnon, Elmedin Kadric, Marcus Liljedahl, Joe McKeon, Stella Pierides, Rob Scott, David Serjeant, Els van Leeuwen, and Dick Whyte. I always enjoy this anthology series, which presents about fifteen haiku by each poet, just enough to catch their voice and approaches to haiku in English. The authors are from around the world including the USA, England, Australia, India, and Sweden. While most of the haiku have been previously published in journals, several are new to this anthology. A couple of excellent haiku include: *the last of the rain / your apology / lingers* by Mary Frederick Ahearn and *sunset... / debating Rothko's / use of red* by Mark E. Brager. Bill Deegan wrote my personal favorite, *Father's Day— / blueberry pie softens / the conversation*. The youngest author is Chase Gagnon from Detroit who writes: *no regrets— / fresh graffiti / on the dilapidated boxcar*.

**On the Edge: A Collection of Short Poems Inspired by the Landscape of the Peak District** by Tim Gardiner (2017, Brambleby Books, Ltd, UK) 64 pages, 5×7¾”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-908241535. \$9 from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

Tim Gardiner has a PhD in entomology and works as an ecologist for the Environment Agency in Essex, England. It is not

surprising that his expertise informs the haiku and senryu gathered for this collection from the environment of the Peak District near Derbyshire. Gardiner explains “The collection takes the reader around the Peak District National Park, on a literary ‘haikuing’ tour.” He organizes the haiku into four sections: edges and sedges; moors and tors; vales and dales; and towns and crowns. Each location is described with photographs and notes about the historical or cultural significance, concluding with a few haiku or senryu. For example, at Baslow Edge, Gardiner writes that there are two landmarks: “the Eagle Stone (also known as the Witches’ Stone) and Wellington’s Monument. It is said that men had to climb the Eagle Stone to prove their worth before they would be eligible to marry!” (17). The subsequent poem is a one-liner: *a man stands atop the Witches’ Stone soon shackled*. The prose and photographs enhance the reading of the haiku, but the haiku go beyond the mere physical elements described. Another favorite comes from the Garland Day celebration in Castleton: *maypole dance / the circle broken / by a sudden shower*. This collection gathers haiku situated in the cultural significance of a specific locale. I enjoyed Gardner’s playful voice of creativity and wonder.

**Paper Ships** by Joyce Walker Currier (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 124 pages, 6×9”, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-96-6. \$15 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

Joyce Walker Currier has been writing haiku since the early 1970s, and *Paper Ships* gathers 360 of her best work previously published in journals and anthologies. The title haiku illustrates her enthusiasm for adventure and discovery: *fog over the reefs / I can no longer see / the paper ships*. In the author’s note, she writes “In her journey through traditional and modern haiku, she experienced a heightened awareness of the rhythms of life and nature.” I have always loved this haiku by her, originally published as a High/Coo Press poem card: *boarded up house; / even the shadows decay / on the parking lot*. The collection includes several haiku sequences such as “Iraqi Freedom,” “After the Parting,” “Wedding,” “Rhode Island,” and “In Memory of My Father,” which includes *October moon: / in my grandson’s pocket / my*

*father's goose call and somewhere out in his lake / that muskie / he never caught.* This is a rich lifetime of awareness captured through haiku.

**River-willow: One-line Senryu** by Steven Carter (2017, Alba Publishing, Uxbridge, UK) 50 pages, 5¾×8¼", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-910185-67-4. \$10 from [AlbaPublishing.com](http://AlbaPublishing.com).

Steven Carter is a prolific writer of haiku. The back cover cites publication of over 50 books and several literary awards. This collection starts with a Wikipedia definition of Japanese senryu (17 *morae* or syllables, about human foibles, often cynical or darkly humorous, no *kireji*, no *kigo*). The collection includes 84 one-line poems that do not attempt to follow any elements of this definition of Japanese senryu. There are no acknowledgements, so I presume that this is the first publication of the poems included. The collection could benefit from an editor. Many are clever short phrases like, *One size fits all*, or assertive statements such as, *Judge lest ye be not judged*. (All poems in this review are cited in their entirety.) The collection lacks a poetic playfulness or turn of insight about "human foibles" which I enjoy in the best senryu. For example, I don't find *The rain applauds the rain* interesting or "darkly humorous," and there's not enough content to encourage my imagination to build more from this statement. While these one-liners do not employ Japanese cutting words, most do have a clear indication of cutting through the use of white space between phrases. Some poems contrast the two phrases with italics: *Old guy at the bar* *A cigarette is a friend*. Overall, I would say that this collection, an experiment in one-line poems that are not haiku and not necessarily senryu, is not as successful as Carter's other collections.

**Sisyphus: Haiku Work of Anna Vakar** ed. by Vicki McCullough (2017, Catkin Press, Carleton Place ON, Canada) 92 pages, 5½×8¼", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-928163-17-6. Available from the editor at [sisyphus@telus.net](mailto:sisyphus@telus.net).

Vicki McCullough has edited a wonderful collection of 133 selected haiku from Anna Vakar's decades of writing haiku. In

addition to the featured haiku, McCullough has written a short biography of Vakar and an introduction about her work as a haiku writer and editor, including her poetics calling for discipline and traditional rules for writing haiku in English. The title poem is *all day, Sisyphus, / this boulder on the shore / throws back the water*. I enjoy this quiet haiku, *rusting / on the peaceful mountain road / a muffler*, which hints at a loud car that previously disrupted the tranquility now present. Vakar likes to showcase contrasts such as *a nest of ants / opened by a hoe—/ the quick and some dead*. I can feel the empathy of the gardener and the frantic scurrying of the ants, carrying the larva and dead away. Often her haiku reveal a compassion for living things as in *Easter morning—/ she picks a glistening worm / from the black road*. And one more favorite that takes an inner, psychological turn: *still on the edge—/ the balancing rock I walk to / in the fall*. This collection is an excellent tribute for one of our early English-language haiku pioneers.

**Tokaido** by Terry Ann Carter (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 82 pages, 6×9", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-82-9. \$15 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

*Tokaido* is a remarkable book of haibun, written and strategically organized as an artist's journal on a quest or pilgrimage to see and feel what matters most in our lives... desire, loss, creativity, love, joy, pain, fear, hope, and especially, art. The book is titled Tokaido based on a famous collection of Japanese woodblocks by Ichiryusai Hiroshima. He created a series of 53 prints of landmarks along the way of the Tokaido road. These prints are popular because they not only capture the beauty of these views along the ocean but also the ambitions, work, and life of the people traveling or living in 19th century Japan. The sixteenth print, "Yui," is shown on the cover of Carter's book. As preparation to review this book, I revisited my copy of Hiroshige's prints and enjoyed seeing the range of scenes, the variety of people and their behaviors, and I especially appreciated the multiplicity of details included in each print. In these prints life is never just one thing happening, but many things happening simultaneously.

Carter has organized and titled each of the haibun in this collection based on the stations in Hiroshige's book. In the same spirit as Hiroshige her haibun capture a multiplicity of things and feelings happening at once. Within a single haibun she may begin with references to woodblock printing but shift to beeping medical technology. Her bittersweet journey is both a creative response to art and a more immediate, intuitive response to the life around her. She dialogues with Hiroshige as a fellow artist but doesn't stay stuck in the culture of old Japan. Her haibun provide connections that can leap and combine time and space, art, and technology, and end with a haiku that snaps us back to a moment of "for now" in this instant. I sense an underlying sense of loss and desire that there is never a perfectly completed piece of art and likewise never a completely fulfilled life. We have to make do with what we can accomplish and how much love we can nourish into fruitful blessings. However, artists like Hiroshige and Carter still seek to capture both as fully as possible. Take your time with this collection. It will invite you to pause along your life's journey.

*Reviewed by Edward J. Rielly*

**100 Haiku for 100 Years: A Celebration of Raymond Roseliep**  
*ed. by Randy & Shirley Brooks (2017, Brooks Books, Taylorville IL)*  
32 pages, 4¼×8½", hand-sewn. ISBN 978-1-929820-14-6. \$12  
from [brooksbookshaiku.com](http://brooksbookshaiku.com).

*100 Haiku for 100 Years* serves three purposes, all of them important. It offers 100 of Raymond Roseliep's best haiku as judged by the editors. Second, as the subtitle indicates, the collection is intended as a celebration of the poet. The collection was released on August 11, 2017, at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, where Roseliep taught for many years. The publication coincided with a gathering at Loras to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Roseliep's birth. Third, the selection previews the forthcoming *Collected Haiku of Raymond Roseliep*, also from



Brooks Books. Roseliep, a Catholic priest as well as a beloved educator and a pioneer of English-language haiku, started writing haiku in the early 1960s, gradually leaving behind longer poems in favor of haiku. By the time of his death in 1983, he had created a body of work that thoroughly deserves not only this selection but also the collected edition and the excellent biography of Roseliep by Donna Bauerly, *Raymond Roseliep: Man of Art Who Loves the Rose*, published in 2015 (reviewed in *Frogpond* 39:2). Many of Raymond Roseliep's haiku are among the finest written in English, and even the small sample in this collection of 100 haiku demonstrates his mastery of the genre. A few of his haiku: *the Mass priest / holds up bread / the still point; ghost of my mother / on the clothesline waving: / flour sack dishtowel; campfire extinguished / the woman washing dishes / in a pan of stars; on my bed / her gloves / hold each other.*

*Reviewed by Terri L. French*

**Calculus of Daylilies** by Carolyn Hall (2017, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA). 99 pages, 4¼×6½", perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-97-3. \$15 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

The fourth collection from renowned poet, Carolyn Hall, this book of seventy-one poems, thoughtfully arranged into six segments, is one to read and reread. Many of the three and one-line poems are difficult to classify as haiku or senryu, as they seem to be a mixture of both, juxtaposing such sensual and seasonal imagery as lilac dusk, overripe melons, frosted moons, yellow jacket shadows, and finches with the many facets and foibles of our human relationships.

Hall explores universal yet personal topics with a mixture of subtly and candor few can accomplish. Infidelity, abuse, illness, death—her poems paint more than pretty pictures, they make you think and question your own life and choices: *frost moon couching my words in pine needles.*

The fickle human condition—expectations, vulnerabilities, half-truths, and lies, the pain and disappointments that are not

easily shaken—are addressed without taking sides or proselytizing: *two sides to every story / wildfire ash / clings to my soles*.

This is a book for our times, tackling with a frugality of words such huge issues as war, gun control, and women's rights: *cocklebur / the court reaffirms / open carry*. And yet Hall also uses her tongue-in-cheek wit to add a bit of levity and lightness which keeps the collection from becoming too serious: *what is / your 'safe word' / pink petunias*. The poet seems to be telling us that in these turbulent times, try not to take ourselves too seriously, ride it out, take the good with the bad and learn to forgive. *keep this / toss that / spring*.

*Reviewed by Bruce Ross*

**Petale în vânt / Petals on the Wind** by Cezar Ciobîcă (2017, Editura Pim, Romania) 100 pages, 4¼×5¾", perfectbound. ISBN 978-606-13-3689-0. \$5 (suggested) contact author at felixlara4@yahoo.fr.

Cezar lives in a medium-size town surrounded by farmland in northeast Romania. He has been noted as one of the top 100 most creative European haiku poets. This bilingual collection (Romanian/English) is arranged seasonally, with a short selection of non-seasonal haiku at its conclusion. Romanian haiku is generally in a traditional haiku format with deep personal feeling connected to nature. The title leads to an understructure of the collection and is derived from a haiku on its back cover: *silver wedding / in the sour cherry orchard / petals on the wind*. The metaphor of nature changing things physically through floral petals (spring) and snowflakes (winter) dominates as symbols connected to personal feeling: *petals on the wind—/ even the scarecrow / changes its clothes* (10) and *first snow—/ for the stone angels / new feathering* (83). The poems are filled with the atmosphere of the countryside and the Eastern Orthodox seasonal practices. Some of the English translations could be more sharply worded. Yet this is a second collection of Cezar's haiku which reveals a fine sensibility, sometimes with humor. —fp