

winter commute
a yawn travels through
the train station

rush hour
my GPS recommends
the road less traveled

retirement party
the cake knife slices
through my name

and in closing ...

county fair
second place ribbon
in an empty stall

flea market
we once had
it all



Tsugigami gathering the pieces by Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff and Connie R. Meester (2018, Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA) 80 pages, 5.25" by 7.75", Perfectbound ISBN 978-1-947271-30-2, \$25.

Reviewed by Jay Friedenber

Valorie and Connie met in a haiku writing class in 1994 and have partnered together in writing for 24 years. Connie has been writing poems since the mid-80's and has received multiple awards for her rengay, haiku, senryu, and tanka. Valorie has been writing in long and short formats for 40 years. 250 of her pieces have appeared in journals and anthologies. This book

is a collection of the two author's rengay and linked verse. It is illustrated with paper created in the Japanese tradition by Connie. The term Tsugigami refers to this type of hand made paper that was used for collages in the 11th century.

In the first poem titled *Pink Moon*, some of the shifts between links are of the associative variety:

abandoning a past
to the thrift store
spring cleaning

old journals
kindle a cozy fire

While others are of a more contrastive nature:

doubling back
blue heron stone-still
on the same sand bar

wading in anyway...
rushing water

Some of the rengay here have direct thematic coherence, like *Red Caboose*, whose focus is on trains. Others challenge the reader to thread the overarching theme through the alternations. Some of the links are strong enough to stand on their own regardless of context:

one last goodbye
between us
a wedge of geese

There are also one-lined linked verse pieces in the book. One-liners are a great fit for renku-styled poems. The lines flow visually into one another and are easier to conceptually

integrate. More writers should consider using this form.

Tsugigami covers mostly relationship type topics like romance, family, and homecomings with a few poems whose subject is mostly the natural world. It is thus more senryu than haiku leaning. This work took time to create and will in my opinion stand the test of time. Highly recommended for its unique mix of verbal and visual content and its in-depth exploration of human nature.



Alone on the Shortcut by Vasile Spinei and Ion Codrescu (2018, Bons Offices, Chisinau, Moldova) 255 pages, 5.5" by 8.5", Perfectbound ISBN 978-9975-87-426-7, No pricing provided.

Reviewed by Jay Friedenberg

Vasile Spinei is the author of eleven books of haiku and senryu. His book *The Monk's Smile* received a Special Award for its artistic presentation. His poems have been included in several international anthologies. Ion Condrescu founded The Albatross haiku journal and is the author of thirteen books of poetry, haiga, and essays. He has illustrated more than 100 books, magazines, and journals and his paintings are housed in both private and state collections.

Alone on the Shortcut contains poems written by Vasile Spinei and is illustrated with Sumi-e by Ion Condrescu. The artwork is nicely interspaced throughout and complements the haiku and senryu in terms of content. The page layout is superb with two haiku per page in Romanian (?) and spaced English translations with each brush painting occupying a full right side page. The paintings depict flowers, insects, fruit, and landscapes.

Many of Vasile's haiku are aesthetic interpretations of nature and fit in with classical Japanese modes of observation. They are quite lovely. Take for instance: