

*Amnesiacs of summer* by Kyle Hemmings, 2019. 85 pages, 7.5"x9.5", published by Yavanika Press, ISBN9781797031309.

*Reviewed by David G. Tilley*

As I sit in a room of windows, the light filters through gray clouds over Lake Ontario and some seventeen seagulls dance out far enough and up high enough that they only form little dark V shapes that glide, flutter, dip and dive. In my lap is Kyle Hemmings's *Amnesiacs of Summer* a loose collection, it seems to me, of haiku, *hagia*, and *haibun*, though with Kyle's style of writing one is never quite grounded enough to be sure. One can also consider it a collection of haiku, prose poems and images.

Let's start with the images. As I flip the pages the images become the glue that holds the volume together. Their continuity does not lie in their content, but in the eye that selected and framed the captured moments. This is a roving eye, an observer being observant on the street, on the subway, and in the mind. This last bit, the observer being observant within the mind, to me is the key to my reading of *Amnesiacs of Summer*. There are blur, motion, dance, freeze-frame over the shoulder glances, and manikin heads modeling hats. The hats tip, the heads nod to a surrealistic sense. Many have recognizable content, others are more abstract, but all seem to be semantically open to the reader's subconscious.

Rewind. Having surveyed the mindscape of images I read again

shadows of Elms I kill my Hamlets

Hemmings sets out his war machine of disjunction. At once, in the first poem, he makes a break from the latticework, the strata of the book.



So how does one judge what Hemmings has done? Look at the images, the poems, not what they mean but what they do. We don't know if any of the prose pieces are actual, historical. What we do know is that they speak truth. The images haunt. The haiku surprise us, at times they weep. What is at stake? A tenderness of the heart. A willingness to see and live the everyday dreamworld of the street.

There is a secret that every poet knows. A book has done its job if it makes us want to write. *Amnesiacs of Summer* has certainly done that for this writer. Grab a copy and read it, again and again. At some point you may look out at birds as I do now, and remember in a forgetful way, the *Amnesiacs of Summer*.



*leaf raking* by Michael Morell, 2019, edited by Stanford M. Forrester, baby buddha press, 56 pages, perfect softbound, 5" x 7", available from the author at: [michaelnmorell@gmail.com](mailto:michaelnmorell@gmail.com)

*Reviewed by Tom Clausen*

Michael Morell began writing in Japanese short forms in 2010 and *leaf raking* is his first collection of haiku/senryu. Featuring one poem per page this memorable collection is dedicated to his family. With an inviting blue cover photograph of a rake leaning against a barn wall this is a welcome addition to my haiku library.

There are four 'sections' to this selection of his poems which have previously appeared in over fifteen well known contemporary journals. The opening section contains 7 poems with a deft touch of Buddhist quality that beautifully prepares the reader to appreciate the life experiences that follow in the subsequent three sections.