

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

*a small tree of tender leaves* by K Ramesh (2020, CinnamonTeal Design and Publishing, Margao Goa, India) 54 pages ISBN 978-93-87676-61-9

*a small tree of tender leaves* is full of the details that come from life carefully observed. There are many places where Ramesh catches the small important moments that make up his haiku. Some of those places are nature:

the ant hole  
too small for the potato  
chip piece

Some of the places are in town:

barber shop...  
only one fish left  
in the aquarium

Sometimes the moments happen right at home:

winter night...  
mother and I search  
or a pill on the floor

With 54 pages and two haiku to a page, there are plenty of places to visit with Ramesh and share his insights. A fine collection of haiku that I highly recommend.



*the silence of cymbals* and *a tiny wobble* by the Spring Street Haiku Group (2020) 4 1/8" by 5 1/2" stapled. \$10 postpaid (US only) Spring Street Haiku Group c/o Seidboard World Enterprises, POB 137 New York NY 100012. Cash or check made out to Seidboard World Enterprises or Paypal@seidboard.com Foreign orders inquire at mykelboard@gmail.com

Remember those old westerns or sci-fi paperback books with two front covers and two novels in one volume. The Spring Street Haiku group brings the flip-over book to haiku. One side is a *tiny wobble* haiku from 2017 (the year Spring Street forgot to publish an anthology of their members' poems) and the other side is *the silence of cymbals* haiku from 2019. The Spring Street Haiku Group is made up of many well-known poets and in this double volume we get a sample of their best work. Two from each year, first 2017:

courthouse ladies' room  
the man in the stall  
avoiding I.C.E.

*Miriam Borne*

winter beach  
a mylar balloon snagged on driftwood  
parties on

*Scott Mason*

From 2019

the circus in winter seclusion  
the elephant chained to a palm  
trumpets to the moon

*Cor van den Heuval*

dusk  
rabbits quietly  
eat the windfalls

*Doris Heitmeyer*

*Where the Tide Meets the Stream* by Glenn G. Coats (2020, Pincola Publishing, Carolina Shores, North Carolina) 68 pages, 6" by 9" perfectbound. ISBN 9798670630597 \$8.00 on Amazon Books.

Glenn Coates, in a note accompanying this book, describes this collection of haiku as, "a tribute to my father and all he has taught me about fishing and water." The lessons have sunk deep as can be seen in this poem:

they drip  
even in my dreams  
water from oars

The connection that Coats has with nature is evident in the following two haiku:

a life on the line mountain trout  
  
and  
  
scent of pine  
I pour the river  
From my boots

Fifty poems, one to a page, each a testament to what a father has taught his son.



*One Breath* by Ben Gaa (2020, Spartan Press, Kansas City, Missouri) 63 pages, 5" by 7" perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-952411-21-2. \$13.00 available at amazon.com.

Ben Gaa's new book of haiku and senryu is neither rooted in nature nor in an urban environment. Gaa travels effortlessly

back and forth between the two. From life in a pond:

alone again  
at the water's edge...  
white egret

To life in a pub:

catching the wrong eye across the bar  
cocktail bitters

A very fine collection of poems that make you pause and listen to what is said as well as to what isn't. As in this haiku which conveys much feeling without falling into sentimentality:

the pub  
full of old friends  
that aren't mine

With three haiku to a page there are many haiku to savor in this coaction.



*The Helping Hand Haiku Anthology* (Including Senryu, Tanka, and Haiga) Edited by Robert Epstein (2020, Middle Island Press, West Union WV) 256 Pages, 6" by 9" Perfectbound. ISBN 9798691997808

Epstein's book *The Helping Hand Haiku Anthology* is dedicated "To All Those Who Help & Care Everywhere." It starts with a variety of quotes by well-known people from Mother Teresa to Mohamad Ali. The quote from the man who floats like a butterfly and stings like bee is one I especially like, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room on earth." Following the quotes is a thoughtful preface by Epstein on the nature of compassion, kindness and helpfulness. This book of 256 pages,

with mostly four haiku per page, is an outpouring of love. Examples of all sorts of kindness are touched upon. There is the kindness given to a dying friend by John J. Dunphy:

hospice  
I summarize the book  
He won't finish

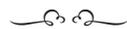
The kindness to one's fellow creatures as told by Bill Kenny:

come back sparrow  
I make a lot  
of crumbs

Even the unintentional kindness of a child:

tender green  
naming his friends  
my child includes me  
*Marcus Larsson.*

This book is an antidote to the pessimism and helplessness of the troubled times in which we live. So, allow yourself to feel the compassion that comes from the hearts of the poets that are in this fine anthology and read.



*Spring Visitors* by Joseph M. Kusmiss (2020 Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA) 4 1/2" by 6 1/2", perfectbound, ISBN 978-1-947271-64-7 \$15.00

*Spring Visitors* with its four chapters, one for each season, takes us not only through the year but also travels through space. Starting on the ground:

though unbidden  
they arrive—  
dandelions

A haiku that rises up:

morning supermarket  
in the gray sky  
sea gulls circle

Up to the heavens:

unable to sleep  
the seven sisters  
keep me company

And even a poem to an ethereal place well known to all us  
poets:

very close  
another haiku returns  
to limbo

With its cheerful cover *Spring Visitors* is an enjoyable read  
through the seasons and more.



*Cricket Dusk* by Carolyn Hall (2020, Red Moon Press,  
Winchester, VA) 4 1/2" by 6 1/2" perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-  
947271-59-3. \$15.00

*Cricket Dusk* is divided into four parts. Each part takes its name  
from a haiku in that section. The four haiku that give title to  
those sections are.

unfurling oak leaves  
a burst of birdsong  
brings out the binoculars

hungry but for what winter moon

bend in the heron's neck  
minnows catch  
the sunlight

patched crack  
in asphalt  
these autumn poems

These four poems are a fine example of how carefully chosen words can paint a scene and suggest a variety of emotions. From the exuberance of spring in nature the “unfurling” of leaves, the “burst” of song and how it leads to the same in people; time to get those “binoculars” out of winter storage. *hungry but for what winter moon* is nicely open ended. It leaves me wondering if the poet couldn't decide between cheese or a cookie or maybe love.

The last two haiku both show Hall's ability to say a lot by not saying too much. This is a fine collection of poems by a highly esteemed haiku poet.



*Travel Souvenirs haiku from near and far* by Adelaide B. Shaw (2020, Cyberwwit.net, Allahbad, India) 94 pages, 5 ½” by 8 ½”, Perfectbond, ISBN 978-81-948271-3-9 \$15.00

Adelaide Shaw's *Travel Souvenirs* is truly a trip around the world and through time, and as Shaw warns us, “Changes occur over time, and what I wrote about ten, twenty, thirty years go and more, may not be true now.” Going back to a Swiss village in the 1970s:

night life  
the café's German Shepard  
snaps at flies

Time is most fluid in Rome where the ancient mingles with  
the living moment:

Coliseum at dusk  
the hungry eyes of cats  
in the arena

Smell, taste and sight are all present to give the reader a sense  
of the Seychelle Islands in 1993:

scented darkness—  
the waitress serves  
spicy curry

Not everything is from distant lands and I picked this haiku  
because it might have been written less than ten miles from  
where I live in Rochester New York:

autumn ritual  
crowding the apple orchard  
city day trippers

So from the foreign to the familiar ( I have been part of those  
“city day trippers” at a “U-pickem” apple farm) this collection,  
with between three to five haiku per page, covers a wealth of  
places and experiences.



*Zigzag of the Dragonfly Writing the Haiku Way* by Patricia J.  
Machmiller (2020, Yuki Teikei Haiku Society) 98 pages, 8 ½” by  
8 ½” Perfectbond. ISBN 978-1-7357235 \$18.00 at [www.wyths.org](http://www.wyths.org)

*Zigzag of the Dragonfly*, as is plainly stated in the introduction, “is about how to write haiku.”

It is divided into three sections, the first entitled, *A Way of Writing* gives the reader several exercises to get the creative juices flowing as well as the time-tested advice to take a walk. Machmiller also offers suggestions on what to do while taking that walk, “Experience the world through your senses and absorb it...” and practical advice to take along a notebook “as an aid to remembering your experience.” The next sections of this first chapter is advice on how to turn the jottings in one’s notebook into poems. The second chapter, *Elements of Haiku* is divided into eight sections which goes into more technical aspects of haiku such as kigo, seasonality, juxtaposition, sound and form. The last short chapter *Revision and Developing Your Critic* offers a fine list of books that will help a poet cultivate a better understanding of what makes a good haiku. Machmiller also suggests personalizing your inner critic in order to develop a working relationship with him or her. In closing Machmiller lets the reader know that besides having guided the reader to be a better haiku poet, “my wish for you: an open and growing mind filled with wonder and appreciation for the world as you find it in your daily life. “



*Legacy: Thirty Years of Haiku* by William Scott Galasso (2020, Galwin Press, Laguna Woods California) 163 pages 6” by 9”, perfectbound ISBN 978-1-7327527-2-6 \$14.95 US at Amazon.com For further information on previously published books contact galwinpress@yahoo.com

*Legacy: Thirty Years of Haiku* is 163 pages with most pages containing four haiku. And I do mean haiku. If you are looking for senryu you need to go to last year’s book by Galasso, *Rough Cut: Thirty Years of Senryu*. In these 163 pages there is not only a wealth of haiku, but a wealth of really good haiku. It is with great difficulty that I pick a few haiku to highlight the work

of this splendid poet. Divided into the five traditional seasons of haiku I will chose one from each section.

From New Year's Day:

New Year's Day  
the couch conforming to  
my well fed bulk

From Winter:

snowflakes...  
until the sea joins them  
no two alike

From Spring:

fair exchange  
birdsong for  
birdseed

From Autumn:

resting my axe  
for spiced cider,  
for blackberry pie



*Rattled haiku*, Corine Timmer editor (2020, Bicaideideias Publishing, Estoi Portugal) 48 pages, 20,5 cm by 13.5 cm, paperback. ISBN 978-989-99760-4-7 Available [www.bicaideideias.com](http://www.bicaideideias.com)

2020 is the year of the rat according to the Chinese calendar. This may seem appropriate to those people who have a negative

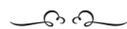
opinion of rats, but not Corine Timmer who says, “My aim with this anthology is to present the rat in a more positive light. But let’s not forget about the mouse. In the Chinese language, rat and mouse share the same root word—shu—and the Year of the Mouse sounds a whole lot better to some.” So, mice haiku are also included in this anthology. For those people with negative opinions of rats let it be known that proceeds of this book will go to, APOPO a charity “known for its HeroRATs. These are African giant pouched rats (*Cricetomys ansorgei*) trained to find landmines, and good at it. For twenty years, APOPO’s scent-detection rats have been sniffing out landmines.”

Part of the charm of this book are the cover and six delightful pages of art that depict rats made out of leaves and other natural objects. The haiku, many from well-known poets, are as varied as the lives of rats and mice.

attic mice  
building a nest from  
his love letters  
*Carol Raisfeld*

ninja-like  
the kangaroo rat eludes  
a rattlesnake’s strike  
*Alan S. Bridges*

gothic teenager  
her pet rat dressed up  
in leather and studs  
*Ron C. Moss*



*All This Talk Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members Anthology 2020*  
edited by Charles Trumbull (2020 Yuki Teikei Haiku Society,  
San Jose California) 140 pages, 6” by 9” ISBN 978-1-7357235-  
0-1 \$15.00

*All This Talk* is composed of seven chapters plus an introduction by the editor. From my reading of this anthology, I learned that the Yuki Teikei Society was founded in 1975 as the “English-language Division of the Yukuharu Haiku Society of Japan.” It became an independent entity in 1978 when it took the name Yuki Teikei. This, and more of the history of the society, can be found in several of the chapters. Of course, no members’ anthology would be complete without a section of members’ haiku, and as a bonus this anthology also contains a chapter featuring black and white haiga. With artwork ranging from painting to photography, this chapter showcases the many varieties of haiga. One of the chapters that I found most interesting was the one that featured the winners of the Tokutomi Haiku Contest. The contest guidelines, in part, are as follows, “writing haiku in English along traditional Japanese guidelines, using three lines with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern and a seasonal reference.” Reading the winners and honorable mentions of this contest highlighted what dedicated haiku poets can do following these traditional rules. A few examples beginning with the winner of the contest:

acorn on my palm  
the life of a mighty oak  
flashes before me

*Priscilla Lignori*

immediately  
our conversation lightens  
two soaring skylarks

*Alison Woolpert*

park closes at dusk  
the plaintive howling of wolves  
from deep in the zoo

*Linda M. Papanicolaou*

With its many fine haiku and other interesting features this anthology is a worthy addition to any person’s haiku library.

*Backwards: senryu* by Vasile Moldovan (2020. Editura UZP, Bucharest Romania) 94 pages, 5 ¾" by 8" Perfectbund. ISBN 978-606-9654-25-5

This delightful book of senryu by Vasile Moldovan, the former president of the Romanian Society of Haiku, also features humorous full color drawings by Crisiti Vecerdea at the beginning of each of the six sections. There is also an informative Forward to the book by Dan Norea.

In the chapter titled *The Old Scarecrow* was one of my favorite senryu in this book

In my pocket  
as in that of scarecrow  
no coin

From the chapter *The Snowman* a senryu that reveals how the current pandemic is the same worldwide:

All in quarantine  
only a man outside...  
and that is made of snow



*Roaming the World: Photo-haiku anthology* edited by Cornelia Atunasiu (2019 Romania) 190 pages 5 ¾" by 7 ⅞" perfectbound. ISBN 978-606-8412-68-9

This book of photographs and haiku was graciously sent to me by Vasile Moldovan who kindly translated the title for me as it and the introduction are only in Rumanian, but thankfully the haiku are translated into English, and of course the black and white photos need no translation. A photograph of a statue that depicts an eagle tearing at the liver of Prometheus (his punishment for giving us mortals fire) is accompanied by this haiku:

Promethean torture—  
But are we worthy  
of this wonderful gift  
*Jules Cohn Botea*

A photo of Montreal's Olympic stadium with a haiku that honors the achievement of Nadia Comăneci a Romanian gymnast:

The Olympic Games—  
In Montreal a mark ten  
Romanian girl  
*Dumitru Rosu*

This book is another example that haiku is alive and well in Romania.



*Recycled Virgin* by Lori A Minor (2020, Human/Kind Press, Wilmington, DE) 62 pages 6.5" x 6.5". Perfect Bound, Soft Cover \$10 from <https://www.humankindjournal.org/bookschaps.html>

*Reviewed by Joshua Gage*

Haiku and senryu poets are no strangers to the topic of sex. The earliest masters of both forms readily accepted sex and human sexuality as worthwhile topics for their poems, and much has been written about this topic. In English Language Haiku, numerous books and anthologies of erotic and sex haiku and senryu have been published, and certain Japanese short-form poets are known for their sexual poems. Similarly, topics like abuse and feminism are also readily accepted in modern English Language Haiku. Many poets have written about such topics. However, rarely has a poet taken these two topics—sex and violence—and combined them into a stirring