

blood moon
my period under
his foreskin

However, whereas some poets might use these topics in ways to shock or upset the reader, Minor works them into a narrative of sexual growth and ultimate triumph, so that they do not read as shocking, but simply awkward and tender moments with a larger narrative of sexual exploration and survival.

Ultimately, Lori A Minor's *Recycled Virgin* is a very young, very exuberant, very bold book. She approaches the topic of sex from the perspective of a young woman in an honest and modern way. While some authors would approach the topic with caution or veiled euphemisms, Minor fully embraces the topic of human sexual relationships in all its glory. Her poems are frank and unflinching, but also gentle and sensual when necessary. If *Recycled Virgin* is any indication, Lori A Minor is a poet to keep one's eye on. This book certainly should be on everyone's shelves.



All the Windows Lit by Rich Youmans, (2017 Snapshot Press, Ormskirk, Great Britain) http://www.snapshotpress.co.uk/ebooks/All_the_Windows_Lit.pdf

Reviewed by Taofeek Ayeyemi (Aswagaawy)

All the Windows Lit is a medley of masterpieces that cling to the reader moments after reading them. A nostalgic haibun collection with narratives of intense family relationship and love affairs – right from his parents to his own, we are welcomed with “On Finding a Photo of My Mother and Father’s First Date,” wherein the poet shows how his parent sowed their seed of love, basking in the aura of affection unknowing what the future holds amidst better and worse experience:

“They stare so intently—can they see it all? The dates, the

wedding, the red-brick home, the daily insulin that toughens her arm; the picnics and vacations, the midnight reactions, the son whose birth prompts the first eye hemorrhage; more hemorrhages, year after year, until blindness, failing kidneys, infection, and then..”

dinner for two:
over a bitter wind
wishbone’s crack

The fleeting nature of haiku are impressively found in the urgency with which the prose in this collection are crafted, their one-paragraph-ness and the justifying alignment formatting gives them a visual beauty that encourages readership.

In “Swish,” while narrating what seems to be his childhood experience at basketball, his dexterity at jump shot and making swish, he shows subtly the ecstasy of winning as follows:

“He closes his eyes, imagines it again: the court, the tiered crowd, the ticking clock, the ball rolling off his fingertips and rising over every shout and whisper, every wide eye, rising and rising and then falling falling falling into that final sound of entry, passage, deliverance..”

longest night—
a boy’s chalk outline
facing all the stars

Worthy of note is the brilliant use of kireji in the haiku which help attain precision and, by way of experimentation, the use of monoku and four-line haiku in some of the haibun. In “Hospice,” we have this:

bird shadows across
the drawn shade:
the pulse in his neck
flutters

The skillful configuration of cosmic-banal elements throughout the book makes one wonder if the author is an astronomer. In the closing haibun “Hale-Bopp,” where the two lovebirds await the comet that comes every 4,000 years, and where we have the title verse, we read:

“Me, the house, the birches—all are swallowed by the deep night. Then I look toward Ann. Her eyes, bright as planets, peer toward the great sky, watching, hoping . . .”

our small house
under galaxies—
all the windows lit

Every piece in this collection is a painstaking yet effortless display of deftness by a Master of haibun – Rich Youmans – an editor of the defunct *Haibun Today* and Editor-in-Chief of *contemporary haibun online*, as he takes his reader by the hand and walk him through haibun aesthetics. His exploration of natural environment to set beautiful plots for his narratives is commendable. And the spontaneity of these powerful and personal stories make the work unputdownable.



This One Life by Renée Owen (2020, Backbone Press, Durham, NC), 7” by 5” perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9994659-7-4. \$10.00 from backbonepress.org.

Reviewed by Sharon Pretti

This One Life won 2nd place in Backbone’s Haiku Chapbook Contest. It follows Renée Owen’s first full-length haiku collection, *Alone on a Wild Coast*, and is equally rich, layered, and skillfully written. Renée explores our relationship to impermanence along with our connection to nature and our fellow humans. These are poems by a poet who cares deeply about the world and knows how to use language to shine light