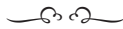


So how does one judge what Hemmings has done? Look at the images, the poems, not what they mean but what they do. We don't know if any of the prose pieces are actual, historical. What we do know is that they speak truth. The images haunt. The haiku surprise us, at times they weep. What is at stake? A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

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.

meditation bell
the impermanence
of silence & sound

Michael's family figures prominently in the second section of 11 poems. There are plenty of 'reality checks' here suggesting that as much love as a family can give the breadth of life circumstances eventually turns the tables and presents the author with burdens and woes that are inescapable.

November sun—
the way my father
loved me

A budding relationship is the heart work filling out the 9 poems in the third section. There is a feeling of hope and promise that as quickly as it arrives it concludes in a parting...

driving toward the moon
but never getting closer—
unrequited love

The last section features nature and in some cases how the poet finds his place in the relationships and visitations that are part of getting out and becoming an aware part of it all. This section contains 26 poems of which many have a subtlety and character that is deserving of repeat readings to let them settle in.

all day rain—
the new color
of the river

