

“[she] dips the photo into the steaming wooden bowl and stirs” (“Looking for words”) and “with our venom we hold sway. Who will dare face our glorious heads or provoke our blistering spit?” (“Fool Moon”), among others. Chhoki’s poetry scares you, then comes to your aid; drifts you into the cloud of suspense, then pulls you out. A look at some of the horror-ku is revealing: (1) *frozen waterfall / the lammergeier’s shrill whistle / echoing in the ravine; cave temple — / eyes of Meditating Buddha / in lightning flashes* and (2) *fog-bound shrine / the sound of dung-kar / comes and goes*. The title haibun does not only show step-by-step how the event unfolds; we’re also made to have the experience—we can see the moon rotate on our body as we progress, and we can feel the temptation and entry into the mystical realm: “Together they climb into the moon.” Sometimes a bird, other times a cobra, Chhoki fearlessly explores the depth of her imagination to share her stories with readers, and paints them in a lush language and day-to-day images. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY TOM CLAUSEN

Wild Graces 7 edited and arranged by Robin White (Deerfield, NH: 2021). 49 pages, 5.5" x 6". Two-color card covers, perfect bound. Gifted to contributors.

Wild Graces 7 is the first anthology of the annual end-of-summer Wild Graces gathering in Deerfield, New Hampshire at the Shire, home of hosts Robin White and Marshall Hatch. The anthology is a celebration of seven years of this event and a gift from White, Wild Graces founder and *Akitsu Quarterly* editor, to everyone who attended the eighth Wild Graces event held August 28, 2021. (Robin kindly sent copies to those of us who were unable to attend in person.) Wild Graces is a magical place and has a Shangri-la feeling of being transported to a relaxed and extraordinary location, where poets in a beautiful setting commune and share their love of haiku, nature, and friendship. It is “a day of creativity and sharing among haiku poets, artists, and musicians amidst the old apple trees, herb gardens, and frog ponds,” located in northeast woodlands, in the

shadow of Pawtuckaway's North Mountain not far from the New Hampshire coast (see her website: <http://www.wildgraces.com>). *Wild Graces 7* (WG7) features one poem per page from each of the 46 poets who had previously attended and submitted poems for this special occasion. Wild Graces is "a hidden gem off the beaten path" and provides a most fitting culmination of another year coming to fruition. Besides being home to Robin and Marshall, it is a natural refuge for dragonflies, frogs, deer, owls, porcupines, and wild turkeys. Even moose wander by every now and then, as well as numerous other wild visitors, including the poets who come from near and far to enjoy the day! Three haiku from WG7: (1) *haiku gathering / strands of spider silk link / two folding chairs* (Mary Stevens); (2) *wet turtle shell / how it mirrors / the sky* (Kath Abela Wilson); and (3) *For / the butterfly's two-weeks of life / another butterfly* (vincent tripi). ◻■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JO BALISTRERI

The Color of Bruises by Terri L. French (buddha baby press, Windsor, CT: 2019). 42 pages, 4"x 5". Glossy cover, perfect softbound. \$10 plus shipping available from the author at <https://www.terrilfrenchhaiku.com>.

The Color of Bruises by Terri L. French, dedicated in part to, "all the unheard people of the world," is a book of senryu unlike any other I've read, in that every single poem packs a punch from the first offering: *wrapped in a quilt / the stories / we're afraid to tell*. French has listened with love to the victims. She tells the stories with compassion, and in doing so, has offered the reader an opportunity to examine and forgive their own and others' uncomfortable truths. For example: *a father's love / stealing the sparkle / from his daughter's eyes*. She gets to the crux of this heart-wrenching situation in ten words. The reverberations are too many to count. It is Terri French's acute sense of detail, the way she homes in on what is important that make her senryu stand out: *solitary confinement / searching for faces / in the mildew stains*. Perhaps some of us can relate to this poem due to the recent lockdowns and self-isolation during Covid-19. Reading *The Color of Bruises* is an emotional experience that will make you sit up and take notice of our shared humanity. ◻■