

poet whose due is late in coming. This collection establishes Hisajo Sugita as one of the masters. It should be considered essential reading for anyone with an historical interest in haiku and for those undertaking serious study of the *shasei* technique. Having recently won a Touchstone Distinguished Book Award, *Lips Licked Clean* isn't just good; it's important haiku literature. □■

#### REVIEWED BY TAOFEEK AYEYEMI

*Long Rain* haibun and tanka by Lenard D. Moore (Wet Cement Press, Berkeley, CA: 2021). 140 pages, 4.25" x 7". Matte color cover, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-1-7324369-9-2. \$14 from <https://www.wetcementpress.com>.

*Long Rain* is a collection of 104 rustic yet refined tanka, punctuated with three haibun and one haiku. The book is divided into four parts, coinciding with the elements: "Earth," "Wind," "Fire," and "Water." This division leads to an expectation that a full taxonomy of life will be portrayed in the pages, and the reader is not disappointed.

in an instant  
blue jays switch places  
on the powerline  
I listen to its humming  
as the sun goes down

I love the urgency and just-as-it-is-ness of this verse. The singular "its" redirects our focus to a single blue jay searching for a comfortable place to settle. In the verse below, we see the patterns of the broom across the yard:

washing a pan  
in the broom-swept yard  
a black woman at dawn;  
she sings "The Negro Anthem"  
as maple leaves rustle

We also hear the sound of rustling leaves adding melodies to the woman's Anthem. Moore establishes that he is romantic at heart and takes us through some erotica:

May midnight—  
she turns the light out  
and the music on,  
suddenly our rapid breaths  
are all I hear

All this magical poetry is found in the "Earth" section. The "Wind" section offers glimpses into the science of wind with an owl haibun followed by several tanka displaying the good, bad, and ugly workings of the wind:

tornado lifts off  
the top of the old couple's house—  
the sudden quiet  
until a burst of birdsong  
in all that sunbleached stillness

In the "Fire" section, we realize that not everything that burns destroys: the fire of love and affection when it burns, enlivens, as is evident in the welcoming haibun: "I remember our kisses, the fire shooting through us." Under "Water," we witness H<sub>2</sub>O in its variants, and below is my favorite:

a woman kneels  
where a fountain rises and falls;  
a chickadee sings  
in the black walnut tree  
that towers over me

Lenard D. Moore's collection *Long Rain* is a worthy addition to the bookshelves of those wanting to get insights into the beauty of life and culture through the mechanism of the ancient Japanese poetic form of tanka. □■