

From her haiku in *Red Leaves*, here are four favorites: (1) *sunlit reeds— / a dragonfly thumps / my third eye*, (2) *prayers for peace / a blue turtle rising / from the starry sea*, (3) *a lily bud / swells underwater— / unspoken thoughts*, and (4) *trail's end / the waterfall / and the rest*.

This book concludes with an About the Author section, an Obituary, Publication Credits and Literary Awards. Lyles wrote haiku for over 30 years. Indeed, this book is a celebration of her life and her haiku. We can now join her in that celebration. □■

Editor's Note: Per Randy Brooks, "Retail price is \$30 but it may be purchased directly from brooksbookshaiku.com for a 20% discount price of \$24."

Coming Home In Viet Nam by Edward Tick (Tia Chucha Press, San Fernando, CA: 2021). 188 pages, 6" x 9". Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-882688-60-9. \$19.95 from Amazon.com

Coming Home In Viet Nam by Edward Tick, Ph.D. is a collection of haiku, haiku sequences, tanka, one haibun, and longer poems that depict the Vietnam war and its aftermath from different perspectives. In his introduction, Dr. Tick reminds us that even when war ends, it continues within both the people and the land. Following his calling, Dr. Tick states: "I sought every avenue for comprehensive healing of war's invisible wounds." Profoundly, he shares healing stories between Vietnamese people and American veterans in what he calls *reconciliation journeys* where he took veterans back to Vietnam to heal from war memories and PTSD to stop the war within. This forms the foundation of Dr. Tick's poetry in this book.

In the introduction, Dr. Tick states: "There are three voices in these poems." In short, the first voice carries the stories from the Vietnamese people (including the women and children during the war). The second voice is of returning American veterans and their stories. The third voice is the author's experiences and observations. Dr. Tick states: "Poetry is the language of the soul...It allows us to achieve a spiritual intimacy and cultural bridge with the other that transcends differences."

In regard to Dr. Tick's haiku, here is one example that shows a haunting scene during the war. This haiku is found in a haiku sequence titled "Tuyen: 13-year-old street vendor":

My father's rice paddies
thick with green shoots
and rusting shrapnel

Here is another example that depicts the desolate horrors of war:

My mother wailing—
I must walk tall
carrying his bones

There are also some haiku that juxtapose war (or the aftermath of war) with Nature. Here are two examples:

Rows of wet paddies
covering my old firebase—
bittermelon vines

Burned rotting tank hull—
sprouting through its turret holes
eucalyptus trees

Some of Dr. Tick's haiku also hint at reincarnation or life after death. Here are two examples:

Beyond the ditch
where my daughters died –
new green rice

We hold hands
in remembrance of our dead—
a sweet breeze answers

While some haiku are inevitably vivid and haunting, there are also haiku about healing, starting with this haiku in a sequence titled “In the Pagoda”:

Praying with Buddha—
burning fires in my sore heart
soothed by cooling rain

This healing theme continues in a few haiku inspired by ancient goddesses from Vietnam’s history, such as Quan Am. Dr. Tick states: “Quan Am is the Vietnamese goddess of mercy, known more commonly by the Chinese name Quan Yin. She is also called Lady Buddha and her statue stands outside most Vietnamese pagodas.”

As a last example, the following haiku resonates directly with the book’s over-arching theme and its title:

“Come home”
we cry to his soul—
lightning on the mountain

Some poems in this book read as three lines without a clear *kireji* or juxtaposition. A few three-line poems also have two dashes at the end of two lines, which is not usually found in haiku. However, there are several well-written haiku throughout this book, in addition to a handful of tanka, one haibun, and several longer poems.

It is also interesting to note the individual haiku in this book have titles, which is not customarily found in most haiku poetry books. However, in this book, the titles often provide more context for the poems and weren’t a distraction for me. The atmosphere of the book as a whole reminds me of a series of diary entries.

In terms of Dr. Tick’s longer poems, I found them to be raw and descriptive. Some of his poems depict experiences in natural landscapes, while others are extremely sad and revealing, such as a poem about poverty and the lengths a young girl will go to feed her starving father. There are also poems that are heart-wrenching and

incredibly moving, such as the ones about a mother grieving the loss of her children during the war, but still showing profound and selfless compassion. I was also especially moved by the poems that express American veterans and Vietnamese people openly sharing their stories as they unveiled the deeper roots of the war beyond their individuality, providing a miraculous bridge for healing and peace.

Coming Home In Viet Nam is a vivid collection. It is a heavy book that also provides encouragement and hope in the aftermath of the Vietnam war. The book concludes with a legend: “Kim Quy: The Golden Tortoise: The tale of King Le Loi” based on Vietnamese myths and history that ends with a powerful and resonating message. ◻■

REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

Just Enough Moon: Collected Haibun by John Budan (Lulu Press Inc., 2023) 56 pages, 5.75” x 8.25”. Four-color card covers, perfect bound. ISBN 9781365402302. Available for \$10 from Lulu.com.

A note about the author states that “John Budan lives with his cat Minnie on an oak savannah nature habitat in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. He is a former merchant marine, military paratrooper, and psychiatric nurse.” This collection of 52 haibun draws on the author’s experiences, yet each haibun is a literary construction that shifts narrative perspectives, gender, culture, time and space—essentially creating a fictional space to explore a variety of human experiences and related feelings. In several haibun, we get a hint about the narrator in the first line. Here’s a few openings that show how he shifts (and quickly establishes) a variety of narrative perspectives. In the first haibun he writes: “We both describe ourselves as trim, financially secure, and interested in gourmet foods.” In another haibun, “Scammer,” he opens with: “I am ordered to retrieve a wrench that was dropped down a deep metal shaft.” And it ends with “The Navy says I’m trying to get out on a fake PTSD scam.” “Intruder” is written from a frightened child’s perspective. In “Faded Dreams” he imagines