

from the collection that illustrate the style of Sōseki and the translator's panache (mostly translated as two lines):

mountain ascetics lined up at the checkpoint;
plum blossoms

stagnant vermilion water in an inkstone
a butterfly slakes its thirst

deep within the forsythia;
the click of playing a go stone

an invalid leaves the foot-warming table
snowfall viewing

Since the translator, Erik R. Lofgren, is a recognized expert on Sōseki's work and left many of the Japanese cultural terms in the haiku unchanged, this collection is an excellent way to learn more not only about Sōseki's oeuvre but also about Japanese life. The book is also organized by seasons and even has a section for non-seasonal haiku. Finally, the translator was kind enough to offer accompanying online audio recordings of the haiku in the collection in English and Japanese. *Sōseki Natsume's Collected Haiku* is a goldmine not only for those learning more about haiku, as it explores seasonal references and haiku history, but also for academics who are interested in diving into the work of one of Shiki's students and whose haiku has been rarely seen in the West.

REVIEWED BY DANIEL SHANK CRUZ

Crazy Bitches: Selected Haibun by Roberta Beary (MacQ, Winston-Salem, NC: 2025). 128 pages, perfect softbound. ISBN: 978-8-3305-6606-8. \$25.00 from online booksellers.

Roberta Beary, who splits time between the USA and Ireland and is *Modern Haiku's* haibun editor, is a giant of English-language

haikai, so a new book by them is always a noteworthy event. *Crazy Bitches* includes eighty haibun that appear in three parts running in reverse chronological order, newest to oldest. They are accompanied by five black-and-white photographs from throughout Beary's life, four color reproductions of paintings by Beary's brother Kevin, and a few other miscellaneous images related to specific poems. Despite a bias towards newer work—all but fifteen poems were originally published within the past decade—the collection provides a captivating overview of Beary's haibun corpus.

Beary is co-author of the excellent *Haibun: A Writer's Guide* (2023), and it is a gift to have a haibun collection available from one of the best practitioners of the genre for our enjoyment. Whether readers are new to the genre or are widely published in it, they will learn from *Crazy Bitches* because of Beary's facility with a wide range of subjects. Some of the poems are about traditional topics, such as childhood:

Benchmark

Father Flynn says it's a mortal sin for girls to have impure thoughts. Then he lets us out for recess. That night I ask Mom what he means. She gives me a Catholic book for teens called, *Your Changing Body*. It shows a black & white photograph of two older girls slow dancing. Underneath the photo it says, Banish impure thoughts through prayer. But no matter how hard I pray I can't get that photo out of my head.

just friends—
a taste of summer
in her kiss

Some of the most striking poems are those written about fictional characters (e.g., Nancy Drew, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack Sprat and his wife), as in this example, which ties a meal at a steakhouse chain to an episode of the old television series *Bonanza*:

At the Ponderosa with Susan

Cowboys gather on the porch. They say that the rancher's killer could only be an outsider. Their voices rise to the upstairs window and enter the pink bedroom. There, the young widow smiles. She lifts her sewing scissors and drains the basin. Her delicate hands carefully close the window. Now that the smell of bleach is all but gone.

pine casket
the benedictions of
black-eyed susans

Beary writes in a note at the end of the book that they “write haibun for the people who view themselves as unseen and unheard.” Therefore, *Crazy Bitches* includes poems about frequently marginalized topics such as abortion, dementia, divorce, drug use, homophobia, neurodivergence, queer joy, and sexual abuse. These haibun illustrate how to write politically conscious poetry of high aesthetic quality, just one reason why Beary's work is essential.

REVIEWED BY ALLYSON WHIPPLE

One Hundred Poems from Old Japan: A New Translation of the Hyakunin Isshu edited by Fujiwara no Teika and translated by Michael Freiling (Tuttle Publishing, Rutland, VT: 2025). 223 pages, hardcover. ISBN: 978-4-8053-1923-9. \$19.99 from [tuttlepublishing.com](https://www.tuttlepublishing.com) and other online booksellers.

One Hundred Poems from Old Japan is a contemporary translation of the *Hyakunin Isshu*, a 13th-century waka (tanka) anthology whose title means, “one hundred poets; one poem each.” A canonical anthology in Japanese literature, this English-language translation aims to bring the enduring legacy of these poems to an English-language audience not just through the translations, but also through the original color illustrations and the supplemental audio recordings available online. Translator Michael Freiling has