

the chance to hear what these poems sound like in their original language. Those who already have some experience with tanka also certainly stand to develop new insight; Freiling has provided a strong overview of literary Old Japan in 20 solid pages. And those already adept at tanka will appreciate this book as a keepsake; it's a well-constructed volume, a worthy container for these poems that stand the test of time.

The Poetry of Chiyo-ni: The Life and Art of Japan's Most Celebrated Woman Haiku Master edited by Patricia Donegan and Yoshie Ishibashi (Tuttle Publishing, Rutland, VT: 2025). 253 pages, hardcover. ISBN: 978-4-8053-1866-9. \$19.99 from tuttlepublishing.com and online booksellers.

The new edition of *The Poetry of Chiyo-ni* (first published in 1998 and long out of print) aims to present the multifaceted creative life of Chiyo-ni within the broader context of classical haiku. In addition to collecting her haiku, haiga, haibun, and linked verse, Patricia Donegan provided essays that are both biographical and accessibly academic. This volume is not just a comprehensive overview of Chiyo-ni's work, but also an opportunity to deepen one's knowledge about the social function of both standalone haiku and linked verse in Chiyo-ni's time. In doing so, Donegan and Ishibashi have provided new insight into the ways in which English-language haiku practitioners can honor the haiku tradition.

The introductory matter contains two essays: "Chiyo-ni's Life" and "Chiyo-ni's Haiku." The latter section opens with a discussion of the haiku form that goes beyond the basics, situating the form within the cultural context of 18th-century Japan. I felt the 7 ½ pages devoted to this topic were well worth the cost alone, as they provided historical and cultural insight that might not be familiar to beginner or intermediate practitioners. From there, one hundred of Chiyo-ni's haiku are arranged by season, with notes identifying the kigo and occasionally providing additional

context. Her haiga are interspersed throughout the haiku, and while it's disappointing (but understandable) that logistical considerations required them to be black and white, I appreciated the opportunity to have them included.

Following the haiku, we are treated to a small assortment of Chiyo-ni's haibun, and then her linked verse. The linked section also has its own short essay, which expands on the social function of poetry in 18th-century Japan. The poems consist of a selection of tanrenga, as well as renga of various lengths. This section also includes an assortment of "greeting" haiku which, although not linked verse in and of themselves, further illustrate the Donegan and Ishibashi's focus on the social nature of haiku.

The Poetry of Chiyo-ni is a well-structured volume that will appeal to a range of audiences. It is a comprehensive overview of the range of Chiyo-ni's work, and also provides aesthetic and cultural insight that is often overlooked in the haiku education of English-language practitioners. The strong theoretical focus will appeal to academics and more advanced poets, but the writing is accessible and engaging, so those without a background in theory or history will enjoy it as well. Donegan and Ishibashi have created a book that not only celebrates the life and work of a great haiku master, but also given English-language practitioners the ability to strengthen our understanding of the form and, by extension, our own haiku practice.

Bird Haiku: Poems and Illustrations of North American Birds by Spencer Thompson (Sioux Falls, SD, Oxbow Commitee: 2025). 126 pages, perfect softbound. ISBN: 979-8-218-62541-2. \$24.00 from online booksellers.

In Spencer Thompson's debut collection *Bird Haiku*, he pairs 57 poems along with a corresponding public domain image. In his introduction, Thompson notes that, "These haiku capture meaningful moments within my life that involved a bird in one