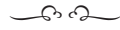


than take it all in at once. Alexis is a poet operating at the top of her game and every single one of these shines with quality and insight.



*emogi moon haiku and related text* by John Stevenson (2018, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 72 pages, 5.25" x 7.5" perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1-947271-31-9. \$15.00

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

*emogi moon* showcases the breadth of Stevenson's poetic vision. Haiku, senryu, haibun and tanka are featured in this book. In these different genres the poems range from the traditional:

canned peaches  
the darkest corner  
of the cellar

to the experimental:

the  
of  
winter

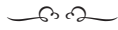
There are humorous poems that also hint at something deeper:

my cat  
content to let me  
do the talking

There are heartfelt poems that never become sentimental:

the soldiers drift in  
a few at a time  
Arlington

There are poems you will make you laugh, some that will give you insight into this life and some that will probably confuse you, but if you want a collection of poems that is never dull and always thought provoking, then *emogi moon* is right for you.



*Stillness of Crows* by Gabriel Rosenstock (2018, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform) 5.5" x 8.5" (13.97 x 21.59 cm) Color on White paper 102 pages ISBN 978-1-72491926-7. \$19.98

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

The first word that comes to mind after seeing this book is beautiful. The artwork is by Japanese master print maker Ohara Koson (1877-1945). In this book there are 46 prints each with one haiku by Gabriel Rosenstock in English and Irish on the facing page. The prints are magnificent, mostly of birds though fish, insects and mammals do appear and I did spot one small human under an umbrella in one print that featured a temple in the rain.

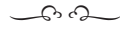
The haiku mesh well with the prints, adding a touch of spice to the artwork. In one print of ducks under the moon, done in mostly shades of brown, the haiku reads:

somewhere on earth  
war is being waged—  
sleeping ducks

In a charming print of a sparrow feeding its young under a vine of yellow flowers in varying stages of bloom, the accompanying haiku adds an extra dimension with the words “first taste”

first taste  
of dragon-fly—  
young sparrow

This a book that is meant to be savored as each print is a masterpiece and the haiku a welcome thought that give extra depth to the art.



*smiling anyway selected haiku and senryu* by stanford m. forrester/  
sekiro (2018 Stark Mountain Press, Colrain, MA, 4.25" x 5".  
Perfect bound. ISBN 978-0-9864328-5-9. Price (includes  
postage) USA—\$13.00 (USD); Canada & Mexico—\$14.00  
(USD); Asia & Europe—\$16.00 (USD) Send payments to  
Stanford M. Forrester PO Box 189; Windsor, CT; 06095 USA

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

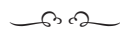
*smiling anyway* is one of those rare books in which every poem is worth lingering over. The haiku and senryu in this collection have been carefully selected. These are some of the best by one of the best contemporary haiku poets. From the first poem:

not getting my joke  
but smiling anyway—  
the stone buddha

to the last:

tea ceremony—  
it begins and ends  
with an empty cup

you will find poems that make you smile, reflect and in the end make you feel better about yourself and the world.



*A Piece of the Berlin Wall* by Marcus Lawson (2018, Red Moon Press, Winchester VA) 64 pages. 4.25" x 6.5" ISBN 978-1-947271-29-6 \$15.00

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

There is one haiku in Marcus Larson's new book *A Piece of the Berlin Wall* that describes the general mood of this collection of poems:

is it me  
or is it Sarajevo  
spring melancholy

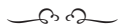
It's that feeling at the end of a day, that has been filled with pleasant events and quiet beauty, and yet because it is ending it is tinged with a bit of sadness. It is that feeling that fills this book. Another haiku which exemplifies this feeling:

someone's chin  
on someone's shoulder  
summer stars

These haiku are about people. The author, in a note at the end of the book explains, "I use the haiku form to address relations between people simply because I understand people better than I understand animals, insects and plants."

One more from this collection:

gentle wind  
the teenager and the florist  
settle for one rose



*nameless haiku and senryu* by d w skrivseth (2018, Red Moon Press Winchester VA) 64 pages, 4.25" x 6.5" perfectbound 978-1-947271-28-9. \$15.00

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

This book features over 60 poems, mostly one to a page, that give you a glimpse into hidden aspects of the natural world:

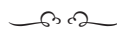
shards of light  
pierce the dense woods  
wild ginger

and into the life of the poet:

we're different poets  
i drink gin but not  
from the bottle

A satisfying read with attention to detail as in this poem:

snowflake  
on her eyelash  
chance meeting



*Spilling Seeds* by George Dorsey (2018 bottle rockets press, Windsor CT ) 12 pages 2 3/4" by 4", stapled. \$3.50 ppd U.S.A. \$4.50 outside U.S.A.

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

Ten well-chosen haiku, one to page, that give a good example of Dorsey's range as a poet. A favorite from the collection:

dead hamster  
my son invents  
a religion

*Changing Light* by Gavin Austin (2018 Alba Publishing Uxbridge UK) 5 7/8" by 8 1/4" 80 pages Perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-912773-10-7 www.albapublishing.com

*Reviewed by Michael Ketchek*

Gavin Austin, an Australian, is truly a poet of place. His haiku are shaped by the vast country he lives in. While he himself resides in Elizabeth Bay near Sydney his poetry lives in the immense natural world, sometimes focusing on its grandeur as in this haiku:

sandstone gorge  
the cliff-face burnished  
in sunshine

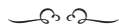
Other times his poetry zeroes in on the tiny:

sand  
paw prints hold  
the morning rain

The book is divided into five sections: Land, Sea, Sky, Fur & Feather, and Life & Death. These are haiku about the world the poet lives in, not about the poet himself. In the approximately seventy pages that contain poetry the word "I" is only used in one poem and people rarely enter into these haiku though, along with the moon, I give you one quick chance to play the voyeur:

skinny dippers  
the moon peeping  
through the cloud cover

A fine book that gives one a taste of Australia in well crafted haiku.



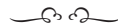
*On the Planet* by Deb Koen, (2018 Free Food Press, Michael Ketchek Editor,) 5" by 7" Perfectbound. ISBN: 978-0-578-41529-1

*Reviewed by Tom Clausen*

To be human on this planet involves such a complex range of meanings, feelings and wonders. Deb Koen, in her new collection, *On the Planet*, offers poetic revelations and commentary that are consistently rewarding. It is a real pleasure to read these poems informed by a poet fully engaged in being here now. There are certainly familiar scenes and situations to be found here yet Deb brings new light and a unique view of this world. I found myself smiling and silently saying 'yes' in shared understanding and gratitude for her celebration and questioning of life. This is a collection that both awakens and confirms the gift of existence without denying the troubled lot we find ourselves in. The seventy-six haiku and senryu in *On the Planet* provide a breadth and depth that make this a collection well worth repeat readings. Easily recommended!

bog walk  
the reflecting pool  
in a pitcher plant

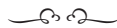
Earth Day  
getting heavy  
all these people



## Briefly Reviewed by Randy Brooks

*Checkout Time is Soon: More Death Awareness Haiku* by Robert Epstein (2018, Middle Island Press, West Union, WV) 258 pages, 6" by 9". Four-color card covers, saddle stitched. ISBN 978-1732502338. \$15 from Amazon.com.

Robert Epstein has recently published several collections of haiku on death, including two books on mourning the loss of his mother and father. In this collection he writes haiku from the perspective of someone recognizing his own mortality. In the preface he writes, "To be wholly alive and awake is to move outside time. Death awareness haiku take one out of time; by its nature, the poetic perspective of haiku tilts one in the direction of the Eternal Now and elevates things so we may apprehend a higher truth." While his haiku have a morbid theme, they are actually very playful—celebrating being wholly alive within an awareness of impermanence. For example, the opening haiku is *packing ... / but I only need one / birthday suit* (5). After planning his trip, he writes: *free hotel coffee / an alternative / to embalming?* (27). Several are senryu: *got death covered / but who will pay / my taxes?* (64). The last section is titled "Beyond" and includes: *haiku afterlife— / please check your death poem / at the door* (95).

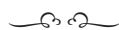


*Haiku Days of Remembrance: In Honor of My Father* by Robert Epstein (2018, Middle Island Press, West Union, WV) 180 pages, 6" by 9". Four-color card covers, saddle stitched. ISBN 978-1732502307. \$17 from Amazon.com.

This is a collection of haiku written about the author's father, Harry Epstein. Whereas his previous collection, *Free to Dance Forever: Mourning Haiku for My Mother*, focused on the recent loss of his mother, this collection covers a span of 16 years of mourning and related memories of his father. The book



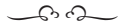
is arranged chronologically based on when the poems were written, starting with his father's death in 2002: *Dad's gone / I ask my brother for / his impersonation* (10). In addition to various moments of grief, there are simple remembrances such as: *sex ed class / the long ride home / with Dad* (16). Some of the haiku recount family tales: *sketchy details / Dad's father let him spend / a night in jail* (29). Grief sometimes connects you to childhood: *five years gone / that ride on his handlebars / five again* (51). And memory can lead to an act of imagination, as in this haiku near the end of the collection: *gone fifteen years / I reinvent him / for Father's Day* (195).



*Wishbones: Haiku & Senryu* by Ben Moeller-Gaa (2018, Folded Word Press, Meredith, NH) 144 pages, 5" by 7". Two-color card covers, saddle stitched. ISBN 978-1610191166. \$12 from Amazon.com.

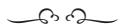
*Wishbones* by Ben Moeller-Gaa is a beautifully produced collection of evocative haiku. Folded Word Press is to be commended for engaging a calligrapher, JS Graustein, to present each haiku on a cream-colored page. Her calligraphy provides a human touch to the haiku, as if we are reading them from someone's journal. The book starts with the title poem: *wishbones / the way we split / in two* (3). I like the way this haiku moves from the physical connection of splitting a wishbone to the more symbolic expression. It invokes this childish ritual with the deeper realizations about serious wishes and differences. The haiku in this book continually play with ordinary events and their mystical underlying significance, for instance: *clip on tie / the unseen order / of things* (5). Sometimes the tension between the immediate and the unseen is the passage of time: *an old argument— / untangling / the christmas lights* (23). Moeller-Gaa writes from a variety of circumstances and emotions. I appreciate the togetherness in this one: *morning calm / the pacing of pages / between us* (53). Consider this more ominous one: *talk of war / sugar cubes dissolve / into darkness* (57).

In this haiku he invites us to join him: *koi pond / removing the weight / of my backpack* (79). This is an outstanding collection, especially because the author engages in deep thinking, close wondering, and caring about feelings. Like most of our best writers, he takes the time to notice significance in his life and capture that significance in the literary art of haiku.



*Haiku/Senryu: A Biologist View* by David H. Rembert Jr. (2018) 88 pages, 6" by 9". Four-color card covers, saddle stitched. ISBN 978-1984122421. \$12.95 from Amazon.com.

David Rembert Jr. is a retired biology professor who started writing haiku a few years ago. This is a collection of 424 haiku, two previously published in the Haiku Society of America members' anthologies. He organizes the book into six groups: Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn, Non-seasonal, and Modern. Most of the seasonal haiku are written as observations and/or statements in 5-7-5 syllables such as: *Carolina wren / Shares my early morning walk. / Nearby nest concealed.* (26). Here is one from his non-seasonal section about Emily Dickinson: *Lady from Amherst / Her life in a thousand verses / In a lonely room.* (52). In the modern section, Rembert drops the capital letters and periods and syllable counts. Several are written in two lines. Here is an example: *moonlight on a shiny car / high school prom* (69).



*Wishbone Moon* edited by Roberta Beary, Ellen Compton, and Kala Ramesh (2018, Jacar Press, Durham, NC) 112 pages, 5.5" by 7.5". Two-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-936481-26-5. \$17 from [www.jacarpress.com](http://www.jacarpress.com)

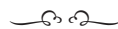
*Wishbone Moon* is an anthology of English-language haiku written by contemporary women in the international haiku community. Without fanfare or an introduction, the anthology

features haiku by women without any detectable over-arching theme or organizational strategy. On the back cover the editors explain their process for soliciting contributors: “As editors we consulted women journal editors and haiku leaders around the globe. We asked them for help in identifying women whose work they regarded highly.” Following nominations, the editors “asked the nominees to give us their very best work. We did not suggest a theme or topic.”

The editors made final selections and published them three to a page with all haiku published on left pages being left justified and haiku published on right pages being right justified. The result is a wide range of topics and a continual sense of surprise for the gift the next haiku might bring. I personally recognized many long-time favorites such as: *first light ... / the shape of you / around me* by Maria Steyn (5) and *warm rain before dawn / my milk flows into her / unseen* (73) by Ruth Yarrow.

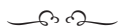
The voices and contexts vary from haiku to haiku. For example, L. Teresa Church’s haiku *tobacco harvest / women in lamplight / tie the quilt* (1) evokes a rural community whereas Susan Burch’s *giving my hair / color again— / New Year’s confetti* (4) puts us in the middle of Times Square. From Japan I enjoyed *ice skater / the lake surface etched / with love letters* (15) by Kit Pancoast Nagamura, and from Ireland I found this touching one: *her bony back / against my palm— / Mother’s Day* (17). The intriguing title poem is by Beverly Acuff Momoi: *my father left me / this dark thirst / wishbone moon* (64).

The book closes with three haiku by each editor including this favorite by Ellen Compton: *kaleidoscope / the little sound of a star / shattering* (103). *Wishbone Moon* is an excellent collection of haiku by many of our best women writers.



*Haiku Forum* 1.1, Edited by Toru Kiuchi, 2-1233 Nisshin, Saitama, Japan 331-0823. Subscription available by Paypal at the website: <<https://tkiuchi.wixsite.com/haiku-forum>>.

Haiku Forum is a new international haiku journal edited by Toru Kiuchi, a well-known scholar and writer of haiku. In the postscript to this first issue, Kiuchi explains that he is publishing this magazine to encourage writing and sharing of haiku “all over the world”. He encourages the use of “Google translation” to help writers translate their haiku into multiple languages. Kiuchi has translated most of the haiku in this first issue. Kiuchi has invited a variety of poets and clearly wants to share a diversity of approaches and topics for haiku. One of my favorites is by Kyoko Uchimura: *O’Keeffe’s bones / extremely white— / summer has come* (Tokyo, 24). Bruce Ross contributed: *this year / deeper into the ground / autumn scarecrow* (Maine, 19). This one by Sanae Izumi has a reference to Shakespeare: *water buttercup— / like Ophelia at the bottom / of the water* (Kanazawa, 9). I encourage haiku lovers to subscribe and to submit to Haiku Forum.



*Horizon: The Haiku Anthology* edited by Santosh Kumar (2018, Cyberwit, Allahabad, India) 180 pages, 4.5” by 7.5”. Three-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN 978-93-88125-06-2. \$15 from [www.cyberwite.net](http://www.cyberwite.net).

This international English-language haiku anthology is a collection of 53 haiku, one per poet. The cover is designed with the red and blue pattern associated with air mail, representing the idea that these haiku are coming to the reader from afar. Each page features one haiku in large print and two to three sentences about the poet. The poets range from well-known authors to relative newcomers. I’m not sure how the editor selected haiku for inclusion in this anthology, but it appears that several of the haiku may be what I call “signature haiku”.

In my global haiku course at Millikin University, I explain that a signature haiku is a favorite haiku you often share with others when they discover you write haiku. It is a haiku that you write and sign as a gift for someone as a representation of your creative work. In this anthology, you will find favorite haiku such as *Christmas solitaire / a little glitter / on the bonsai* by Darrell Lindsey (18) and Ban'ya Natsuishi's *A future waterfall / from a rainbow / of voices* (13). A newcomer to me, Kate Asbury writes *snow in the mountains / our passion for argument / cools for the season* (24). Natalia L. Rudychev writes a quiet haiku: *rested / my shadow lifts / from a flower bed* (39). The editor's haiku is written from a Christian perspective: *Nailed to Calvary's tree / the dripping blood: / I was in the crowd* (47). This is a good anthology in which to meet writers one haiku at a time.

