

largely through the over-extraction of resources from Mother Earth in a consumer-based economy, which also creates a wide disparity between the financially rich and poor. This haiku depicts that shift when Capitalism took precedence.

This book ends with a short biography of Francine Banwarth and acknowledgments, which include: haiku journal citations, journals and books edited, haiku anthology citations, and haiku & senryu awards. Readers will enjoy the variety of subjects in these haiku and will receive real glimpses into the heart and mind of Francine Banwarth. I highly recommend this book. □■

***One Thread: Zoka in Contemporary Haiku*** edited by Janice Doppler (Independently published: 2024). 6" x 9". 251 pages. ISBN: 979-8335710350. \$25 from amazon.com

This is an impressive collection of essays and haiku that focus on the Japanese word *zoka* through the lens of certain ancient poets and contemporary haiku poets. In addition to each poet's bio, publication credits, and comments on *zoka*, there are 300 haiku in this book. This book is an expansion of Janice Doppler's essays "Following Bashō Following *Zoka*" published in *Frogpond* 46:1 Winter 2023 and "Cultivating *Zoka*" published in *Frogpond* 47:1 Winter 2024.

In the foreword by Kala Ramesh, she states, "*One Thread: Zoka in Contemporary Haiku*, edited by Janice Doppler, has the potential to be a classic. Leaving no stone unturned, Janice has meticulously gathered excellent and detailed information on *zoka*." Ramesh continues, "I conclude, after plunging deeply into the pages of this wonderful book, that cultivating the strength to step out of oneself is *zoka*. What is change if not our supreme way of stepping out of ourselves? Only when we step out can we see how connected we are. As long as we remain within ourselves, all we see are the walls hemming us in. Following *zoka* allows us to connect with a world pulsating with rigour and vigour just a breath away — the huge throbbing web of life."

In the introduction, Doppler mentions the inherent challenge of bridging the gap between the reductionist Western perspective and the holistic Eastern point of view. Doppler also articulates a conundrum for English-language haiku poets: we use words, yet *zoka* is ineffable, indescribable, and beyond words. The following passage by Matsuo Bashō, translated by Steven D. Carter in *Matsuo Bashō Travel Writings*, exemplifies the essence and title of this book, *One Thread*: "The waka of Saigyō, the renga of Sōgi, the paintings of Sesshū, the tea of Rikyū — there is one thread that runs through them all. For it is the essence of art to follow the Way of creation, taking the four seasons as a companion." When we follow this thread, where does it take us?

This book is organized into three main sections: I: What the Ancients Sought, II: Contemporary Perspectives, and III: Appendices.

To better inform Section I, the three main wisdom texts that the ancients studied and referenced are: (1) *The Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*, (2) *The Book of Changes/Yijing (I Ching)*, and (3) *The Zhuangzi (The Chuang Tzu)*. Bashō encouraged his students to read the third book mentioned, *The Zhuangzi (The Chuang Tzu)*.

The beginning of Section I is a sub-section titled "Way of the Cosmos," and includes the advised notion to not emulate the ancients, but rather seek the principles that they sought. In the context of the *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching)*, which, in Doppler's words, "outlines the mystery," she further states, "One of the advantages of haiku is the importance of giving details of immediate existence. This allows us to live within the mystery without trying to explain it." She proceeds to discuss the *Yijing (I Ching)*, which includes "six-line symbols called hexagrams to symbolize the dynamics of change in the cosmos." The ineffable *zoka* is described as flowing with different qualities throughout each season. Specific elements and symbols are then discussed, such as fire, water, thunder, wind, mountains, lakes, and dragons. Dragons appear in Chinese and

Japanese literature and symbolize or point to "the unnamed origin to all heaven and earth." In the context of *The Zhuangzi* and the art of writing haiku, Doppler states, "Perhaps awareness of *zoka* can foster experiencing the natural world in previously unrecognized ways or spark new expressions of creativity that communicate awe and wonder."

In the next pages, Doppler discusses meditation, haiku as a meditative practice, haiku mind vs. logic mind, *kokoro*, and the impulse to write. She emphasizes the importance of experience, intuition, and mystery. It has been written that Bashō himself experienced moments of awe and wonder that he couldn't find words for. This is further emphasized in the next sub-title: "The Way of Art." Another remarkable point about Bashō was his deep study of ancient poets who came before him, which informed much of his poetry and the landscapes he saw and treaded through. Doppler proceeds by illustrating *zoka* through the following historical figures: Sen No Rikyu (a *Chanoyu* or Japanese Tea Ceremony Master), Sesshu Toyo (a Japanese Landscape Painter), Ino Sogi (a Japanese Renga Master), Saigyō (a Japanese Waka Master), Li Bai (Li Po) (a Tang Dynasty Chinese Poet), and Du Fu (Tu Fu) (another Tang Dynasty Chinese Poet).

Section II: Contemporary Perspectives focuses on essays from 26 poets around the world, and includes a dozen of each poet's haiku. The poets included are: Sean O'Connor, Don Baird, Emiko Miyashita, Hiroyuki Murakami, Wakako Miya Rollinger, Mimi Ahern, Debbie Strange, Ron C. Moss, Chuck Brickley, Robert Erlandson, Patricia J. Machmiller, Janice Doppler, Gregory Longenecker, Bill Sette, Iliyana Stoyanova, Nicky Gutierrez, Patricia McGuire, Gilles Fabre, Lakshmi Iyer, Neena Singh, Vandana Parashar, Arvinder Kaur, Jo Balistreri, Ravi Kiran, Ryland Shengzhi Li, and Kala Ramesh. Readers will appreciate the concise comments and the variety of perspectives that each poet brings to the discussion on *zoka*.

Section III: Appendices starts with a quote by James W. Hackett: "Haiku is ultimately more than a form or even a kind of poetry: it is a Way — one of living awareness." This is followed by a re-printing of a prose poem by Jim Kacian titled "Presence," which Doppler states, "was written in a style somewhat similar to [the] Dao De Jing...poetic and enigmatic." Jim Kacian's poem can be seen as a meditation on language and silence. The next two pages are suggestions for creating haiku in English by James W. Hackett. Following this, there is a discussion of martial arts, haiku, and *zoka* by Don Baird. This includes a re-printing of Don Baird's essay, "Zoka," which was originally published in *Simply Haiku* in 2012 and in *Under the Bashō* in 2013. One of the most powerful notions in Baird's essay is seeing the larger cosmos in microcosmic moments, and experiencing the beauty and mystery of the interconnectedness of life. This book closes with a short bio of Janice Doppler.

In summary, *One Thread: Zoka in Contemporary Haiku* provides several ways of deepening our haiku practice by acknowledging the wordless depths of life and the cosmos in each moment. Readers will be encouraged to study ancient texts after reading this book and will be inspired to find their voice in this web of meaning. Perhaps most importantly, readers will feel more connected with the Earth, the cosmos, and each other after reading this book, in this complex web of life. I recommend it. □■

#### REVIEWED BY SHELLEY BAKER-GARD

*Unthrown Stones* by Evan Coram, edited by Randy and Shirley Brooks (Brooks Books, Taylorville, IL: 2024). 4" x 5.75". 56 pages. ISBN: 978-1-929820-32-0. \$12.00 plus \$5.00 postage. Order from <https://www.brooksbookshaiku.com>

Evan Coram has a musical ear honed to a fine tune. His song writing skills facilitate the rhythm of his haiku and senryu in the chapbook *Unthrown Stones*. Sometimes they strike a staccato and at other times they drift one into a Clair De Lune dream of moments