

## Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY CE ROSENOW

*Glimmering Hour: Haiku Northwest 35th Anniversary Anthology* edited by Connie Hutchison, C.R. Manley, Susan Roberts, R. J. Swanson, and Michael Dylan Welch (Haiku Northwest Press, Bellevue, WA: 2024). 156 pages. 6" x 9". Perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-953092-07-6. \$20.00, plus shipping. Order through Amazon.com: <https://www.amazon.com/Glimmering-Hour-Northwest-Thirty-Fifth-Anniversary/dp/1953092071/>

*Glimmering Hour* beautifully picks up where *Haiku Northwest's* last anthology, *No Longer Strangers*, left off. That book celebrated the group's first twenty-five years. The new volume covers the next ten years, 2014-2024, while also adding to the important historical information from the first collection.

The introduction, "Enlarging the Circle" by Michael Dylan Welch, reminds readers of the group's origins in the home of its founder, Francine Porad. He then connects its more recent activities to these beginnings: the Seabeck annual retreat including the installation of twenty haiku plaques on the Seabeck Conference Center grounds; collaborative events with groups in and outside of the Seattle area; *Haiku Northwest's* YouTube channel; and its new status as a nonprofit organization. As Welch states, "The book you now hold in your hands is an extension of those early meetings convened in Francine Porad's living room – displaying the circle of haiku appreciation we have eagerly developed in the last ten years, adding to the previous 25." The community fostered by Porad and maintained by the group's members is at the center of this anthology.

Porad, who passed away in 2006, still maintains a valued presence in this community. For instance, *Haiku Northwest* oversees the Porad Award each year and has produced videos of the winners from 2018 on. In honor of Porad's contributions, the anthology

includes a wonderful essay comprised of personal reflections by Connie Hutchison. Hutchison was the associate editor of *Brussels Sprout*, the journal Porad edited for eight years, and a close friend. Her insights and memories provide special details about Porad as a poet, visual artist, editor, and leader in the American Haiku Movement. Hutchison points out that the essay can “help others know her better and appreciate her legacy.” Readers are given a real sense of Porad as a person, poet, and artist. This anthology also provides a window into the history of haiku in Washington state.

One benefit of carefully constructed anthologies such as *Glimmering Hour* is the preservation of haiku literary history. Hutchison’s essay is one aspect of that history as is Welch’s introduction. Additionally, the book contains lists of the group’s officers and directors as well as its publications. Haiku Northwest’s interest in preserving its own history extends to its website, YouTube channel, and the archiving of its materials at the University of Washington, thanks largely to Hutchison’s efforts. *Glimmering Hour* is a significant contribution to that larger work.

Another equally important benefit of this anthology is the presentation of haiku and senryu by so many fine poets and the sense of community that permeates throughout. Seventy-nine poets provide the book’s 158 poems. Eleven of the poets are listed alphabetically in the memorial section with four poems each, including the following haiku by Johnny Baranski:

long before I came  
long after I leave  
blossoming pear

The rest of the poems, however, are not organized by the author’s last name. Instead, they are gracefully arranged by subject and by relationship to each preceding and subsequent poem. In this way, the robust haiku/senryu section reads as a well-edited

journal or book, with poems linking and shifting much in the way Hutchison describes putting together an issue of *Brussels Sprout*. Consider the following three poems printed consecutively across two pages:

both parents passed  
nostalgia  
even for the scolding

Bill Fay

inheritance –  
her recipe for stock  
and how to pick a bone

R. J. Swanson

tarnished silver  
the warp  
of dreams

Dianne Garcia

Different approaches to the loss of one's parents and types of inheritance play off one another, providing a rich and layered experience of each specific moment. This same type of sequencing runs throughout the selections of one, three, and four-line haiku addressing a range of subjects, styles, and tones.

The artwork in the book enhances the poetry and the historical documentation. Artist and poet Sheila Sondik created *sumi* paintings on crinkled paper. She notes that the work was “created between 2000 and 2007” and involves “briefly soaking *masa*, a lightly stiffened Japanese paper, in water, crushing it into a ball, then gently laying it flat. Diluted *sumi* ink brushed over the damp paper creates unpredictable textures.” These beautiful paintings suggest but don't insist on the Pacific Northwest landscape, connect to haiku's Japanese history, and recall Porad's work as a visual artist.

*Glimmering Hour* is an excellent anthology that celebrates a vibrant, talented, and welcoming community: Haiku Northwest.

Here is one final example from this highly recommended book, the title poem by Carmen Sterba:

glimmering hour  
an amazement of deer  
in my camera

□■

#### REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

*Bare Necessities: Selected Haiku of Francine Banwarth*, edited by Randy and Shirley Brooks (Brooks Books, Taylorville, IL: 2024). 132 pages, 6.5" x 9.5". Clothbound. ISBN: 978-1929820-19-1. \$30 from [brooksbookshaiku.com](http://brooksbookshaiku.com).

In the publisher's note, the editors Randy and Shirley Brooks write, "As a selected collection, this book includes many of the very best haiku written by Francine Banwarth since she started writing in 1988." They continue, "...her haiku come from a passionate heart—supporting and caring for others and for the future of planet earth." In the author's introduction, Banwarth echoes, "I feared for my children's future, for the future of our planet, under the increasing buildup of nuclear weapons and underground nuclear weapons testing. It was the summer of 1988 and on a local walk for peace and justice, I reconnected with Bill Pauly...." She goes on to describe how she was introduced to haiku during a haiku conference that commemorated the five-year death anniversary of Raymond Roseliep. In regard to writing haiku, Banwarth writes, "I write a lot of haiku 'on the move'...Motion frees my mind and helps me find a starting point to anchor some silk, let the wind carry it to wherever it can grab on, and then spiral to the center, the heart. Much like a spider weaving its web, the process seems deceptively simple, but the result, when done well, is layered in complexity." In the reader's introduction, Michele Root-Bernstein adds reflections about Francine Banwarth's original voice, her authentic sensibility, and their friendship.

Francine Banwarth has been writing haiku for over 36 years. There is a total of 250 published haiku in this impressive collection. The publication credits are listed beneath each haiku, along with the year of publication. Readers will enjoy reading Banwarth's haiku in chronological order as she progressively found her voice. Some of her haiku are observational, but most of her haiku juxtapose an image in Nature with a subjective thought or phrase. Here is a sample of her work in *Bare Necessities* with commentary:

slow bend in the river  
he comes around  
to my point of view

I appreciate how the river and her relationship with this man are both depicted as long journeys that have many turns over time, while also referencing a specific conversation.

anniversary moon . . .  
all that I keep  
to myself

I appreciate the complex psychology in this haiku. This haiku is asking us, in a serious relationship, what do we want to share and what do we want to keep to ourself?

autumn fog . . .  
the river knows  
the way

A moving haiku that could be seen as a metaphor for the power of intuition through difficult or confusing times.

enough said . . .  
the moon rises  
out of the sea

The balance between concrete imagery and mystery in this haiku is striking. I appreciate how this haiku ultimately shows the limitations of the English language and gives space for silent awe, reverence, and mystery.

more colors in the leaves falling for someone else

This is an effective monoku that uses "falling" in two different ways. I appreciate how this monoku also shows a transition in both the seasons and her life with hardfelt emotions.

wind in the sail  
the sea  
with no zip code

A deep philosophical haiku that encourages us to re-consider our place on the earth. I also appreciate how this haiku could communicate the importance of getting out of our comfort zones and exploring new places.

night wind  
the long grasses  
have stories to tell

I appreciate how Francine Banwarth is giving the grasses a voice in this haiku. I admire haiku that give space for non-human voices.

prairie wind . . .  
when buffalo roamed  
the back of nickels

This is a powerful haiku that has significant historical and present-day implications. Indigenous Peoples didn't have money or a currency before European settlers arrived. The colonial economic system of Capitalism clashed with the Indigenous ways of trading goods and services. To this day, we are all paying the price for it,

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."