

for an event? We can get a clear image from this haiku, but the cultural context and implied significance may be difficult for readers unfamiliar with the Kalkata perspective. I interpret this poem as a representation of a confident mother, possibly a bride, taking care of the essential business of changing a diaper. The joy of this haiku, and this collection, is that we get to imagine and share in the life of fellow humans on the streets of Kalkata. Thanks for this gift of haiku and senryu, Daipayan Nair. □■

REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

Conversations with Lenard D. Moore, edited by John Zheng (The University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, MS: 2024). 198 pages, 6" x 9". Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4968-5395-0. \$25 from www.upress.state.ms.us

This is a collection of 16 interviews with Lenard D. Moore, ranging from 1995 to 2023. The introduction text states, "Known internationally for his Japanese-style poetry, Lenard D. Moore (b. 1958) has published eight poetry collections over the course of his career. Moore has distinguished himself especially in such forms as jazz poetry, haiku, tanka, renga, sequence, and haibun, expressing moments of aesthetic delight as well as a voice enriched with African American culture." The back cover also states, "The conversations here lead the reader into Moore's creative mind, demonstrating his fusion of African American music, culture, and history into poetry, especially his jazz poetry, jazzku, and bluesku."

After the introduction by the editor, John Zheng, a chronology provides key events in Lenard D. Moore's life from birth to 2023. In chronological order, the interviewers in this book are: Jane Reichhold (1995), Doris Lucas Laryea (1996), L. Teresa Church (2009), Sheila Smith McKoy (2011), John Zheng (2017), Crystal Simone Smith (2020), David G. Lanoue (2021), Ann Angel (2021), Dee Clere (2021), Toru Kiuchi (2022), Susan Antolin (2022), Sharon Hayes-Brown (2022), Lauri Scheyer (2022), John Zheng

(2023), Ce Rosenow (2023), and Olga Ponomareva (2023). The first interview in this book is relatively concise and includes how Moore began his haiku journey while sick in bed with the flu in 1982. After reading haiku in a literature textbook, he attended the Annual North Carolina Poetry Festival, which propelled him forward. One of the first magazines that published his haiku was *Dragonfly*, edited by Lorraine Ellis Harr.

From humble beginnings, Lenard D. Moore's writing grew into a forest of literary works and poetry, with firm roots in African American culture, music, compassion, religion, and his sense of wonder for people and nature. These excellent interviews have in-depth questions that, in-turn, provide deep insights into Lenard D. Moore's life, heart, and mind. His down-to-earth demeanor and his considerate tone of voice also come through in his answers.

In the interview titled "The Open Eye of Lenard D. Moore," in response to Doris Lucas Laryea's question, "Why do you write?" Moore answers, "I write because it is my way of life. I must write to survive. Writing is like a beating heart, a vital organ that keeps history and heritage alive. Writing is as crucial as inhaling and exhaling. In addition, I write to learn, to stay in touch with my inner self, to make sense of the past, present, and future, to inform and entertain, and to celebrate our existence." After Moore's answer about listening to his grandfather's stories, Laryea asks, "What is poetry?" Again, his answer is inspirational: "Poetry is the language that touches our innermost feelings, language that is at once lyrical, imagistic, magical, and mystical, and language that is concisely written; it is innovative to the core and imbues readers and listeners with the history of the ever-changing times. Poetry is the touchstone of our human existence; it lets us be. . . Poetry is everything that makes the earth, and the earth itself is a poem rotating toward infinity." Lenard D. Moore's connections to the earth is expanded in his words: "The sense of place is very important in my work because I feel a great kinship to the land of my hometown and its people and customs. I am interested

in the geography and geology of Piney Green Community in Jacksonville, North Carolina. I am also very much interested in genealogy."

In relation to bluesku, Moore writes, "In what I call bluesku, I try to evoke the pain and tone of the blues with a rhythm that is at once fluid and musical. I maintain the use of the kigo (season word) in the poems, but in my 'blues tanka,' I build upon what I do in bluesku by rhyming in the last two lines. Jazzku is an effort to evoke excitement and tone within jazz with allusions to both jazz songs and artists." Indeed, some of his poetry has also been written to the rhythm of live jazz music. This intersection between music and poetry runs deep and creates new bridges. Other collaborations include photography with his haiku, such as "Gathering at the Crossroads," which includes Eugene B. Redmond's photographs of the Million Man March. In other collaborations, such as "The Satire Project," Professor Larry Lean's visual art and paintings are the sources of inspiration for Lenard D. Moore's haiku.

As part of Lenard D. Moore's large body of work, he also wrote a book titled "Desert Storm: A Brief History," which was based on his brother's experiences while fighting in the Gulf War or Desert Storm. Religion also finds its way into some of Moore's work, based on his religious upbringing and involvement in the choir. Yet Moore does not restrict himself to specific subjects or poetry. Moore has written dramatic monologues, short stories, essays, book reviews, autobiographical works, plays, and novels. The interviews also reveal Moore as a mentor, a teacher, a father, a brother, and a friend.

Some questions are repeated in this collection of interviews, and some answers are echoed as a result. A handful of questions and answers are also educational, such as: "What is haibun?"

Notably, Lenard D. Moore also expresses gratitude to African American poets who came before him, including Richard

Wright, Etheridge Knight, Sonia Sanchez, and Kalamu ya Salaam. Moore was also significantly influenced and inspired by the poetry of Langston Hughes, A. R. Ammons, Gwendolyn Brooks, Sharon Olds, Miller Williams, Raymond Roseliep, Rita Dove, Michael S. Harper, Maya Angelou, Margaret Walker, Zora Neale Hurston, and James Baldwin. This recognition stems from his deep appreciation, and creates strong bonds and a greater context for his work.

Readers will also discover Lenard D. Moore's perseverance and dedication in these interviews. As two examples, his work "The Geography of Jazz" took over 20 years to write, and he's been writing haiku for over 40 years.

In summary, this excellent book reveals deep insights into Lenard D. Moore's heart and mind, and his impressive body of work. Scholars will be well-informed, and poets and writers will feel both encouraged and inspired by this remarkable man. I highly recommend this book. □■

Origami Butterflies: The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members' Anthology 2024, edited by Gregory Longenecker (Independently published: 2024). 126 pages, 6" x 9". ISBN: 978-1-7357235-6-3. \$15. Send a check or money order payable to "YTHS" for the price of the book(s) plus shipping [\$4.95 (US); \$11.95 (CAN, MEX); \$13.95 (all other countries)]. Mail to: Jeannie Rueter, Publications, P.O. Box 412, Monterey, CA 93942. Please see: <https://yths.org/publications/> for details.

Origami Butterflies: The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Members' Anthology 2024 celebrates the Society's 49th anniversary and includes quality haiku by members of this thriving haiku group, and much more. The contents, in order of appearance, are: [Notes] From the Editor, Members' Haiku, Members' Challenge Haiku, the 2023 Tokutomi Contest Results, a report on the 2023 Asilomar Retreat, 2024 Haiku in the Park, two essays titled "The Yuki Teikei Haiku Society Season Word Handbooks," and "Bashō and the Poetry of His Pen Names," Rememberance, and a list of contributors.