

At its best, the love between two people spirals outward to embrace the world.

Burch's tanka bring moments of insight, playful responses, and the silence between. Even as they embody waka's ancient traditions and tanka's contemporary vitality, the poems in *The Alchemy of Love* also belong to the realm of authentic *high/coo*. □■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED BY JACOB D. SALZER

Wildflowers in Bloom (Two Autumns Press, Santa Rosa, CA: 2024). Edited by Tanya McDonald. 32 pages, 6" x 9". Paperback, saddle-stitched binding. No ISBN. U.S. copies \$10 postpaid to HPNC, c/o Jim Chessing, HPNC Books, 2886 Calais Dr., San Ramon, CA 94583-3117, and PayPal, add \$1.00 to hpncadmin@gmail.com. Overseas orders \$16.00 via PayPal. For inquiries, email Jim Chessing at jchessing@hotmail.com, subject line: HPNC Books.

This is an excellent anthology that is modest in size, featuring haiku by four poets: Jeff Hoagland, Deborah P Kolodji, Ron Moss, and Sarah Paris. The last page of *Wildflowers in Bloom* states, "This book is produced in conjunction with a reading on September 22, 2024, the thirty-fourth in the Two Autumns series of haiku readings by the Haiku Poets of Northern California." This anthology is edited by Tanya McDonald, who also wrote the introduction. McDonald highlights the important bonds that are made between poets in the haiku community and how haiku connects people. In turn, McDonald also writes, "because we are a community, we feel the loss of one of our members deeply." She then notes the shock waves that reverberated throughout our community from the unexpected passing of Debbie P Kolodji, who was described as being vibrant, good-spirited, and generous. The title "Wildflowers in Bloom" originates from one of Deborah P Kolodji's haiku: *wildflowers in bloom / when your children / take care of you*.

A total of 48 haiku are featured in this anthology (12 haiku per poet). All the haiku in this anthology were first published in a journal and/or won an award. Here are four examples: (1) *summer brook / perfect skipping stone / on the other side* (Hoagland), (2) *glass bottom boat / feeling the sway / of a kelp forest* (Kolodji), (3) *Mother's memorial / wading the warm sea / to be with her again* (Moss), and (4) *fallow field / inside a sheep's skull / wild iris* (Paris). Readers will enjoy becoming acquainted with each poet's voice and style. This is a memorable anthology that resembles a bundle of wildflowers in our hands. ■

REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

Sunny Uplands: Haiku by Anne Elise Burgevin (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2024) 102 pages, 4.25"x 6.5". Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-1-958408-53-7. \$20 from redmoonpress.com.

Sunny Uplands features Anne Burgevin's haiku adventures through the seasons. With quick observations and a heart full of wonder, she enjoys sharing the excitement of discovery. In a blurb on the back cover, Brad Bennett writes that she "carries *karumi* [the beauty of ordinary things spoken of in a simple way] into the 21st Century with her pure and humble haiku." Consider the understatement in this haiku:

pine shadows
a wren's song
bubbles over

The haiku starts with the darkness of pine shadows. However, when we pause to consider the rest of the scene, we are given the energetic wren's song. Instead of a desolate darkness, the song "bubbles over" with an abundance of enthusiasm and joy. This song is contagious. We are uplifted by the wren's song and join in our shared celebration of life. While her haiku, at first, appear to be focused on things in nature or from our ordinary lives, upon a deeper reflection, they offer a glimpse of human connection and emotion.

Here are four more haiku, with one from each season beginning with Spring:

when life
doesn't make sense
hummingbird eggs

One from Summer:

long way home
a girl's pockets
full of weeds

Obviously, our haiku speaker admires this little girl with a pocket full of weeds. We join the speaker in imagining the "long way home" she has come. Perhaps we are a parent, relieved that the little girl is finally home. We understand the tension between the joy of a child's perspective and the mother's feelings of no longer being that girl.

A haiku from Autumn:

sunny uplands
a cluster of monarchs
combs the meadows

This title haiku features the migration of monarchs. The speaker is in awe of how many monarchs have gathered and now comb the meadows. They are in full appreciation of the sunshine of the uplands as they prepare to head further south.

Finally, here is a favorite from Winter adventures:

her small hand
shakes me awake
pink sunrise

I remember when we first published this haiku in *Mayfly* 71, many of our readers loved this girl's tenderness and excitement—eager to share her discovery of the pink sky. *Sunny Uplands* is an outstanding collection of haiku that show us how to keep a child's sense of wonder and discovery in our lives. □■

The Ten Hands of a Fuchka Seller: Haiku and Senryu by Daipayan Nair (Hawakal Publishers, New Delhi, Calcutta, India: 2024) 80 pages, 4.75”x 7”. Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN: 978-81-974036-2-0. \$33 from amazon.com.

In my haiku class at Millikin University, my students soon discover that they love haiku for two very different reasons. Sometimes they love a haiku because the reader can easily relate to the images and experiences presented in the haiku. But sometimes they love a haiku because it shares images and experiences never before imagined or encountered. Haiku may affirm what we already know in our own hearts, or they may push us to learn about life and hearts we've never known before. Often a mix of the familiar and strange draw us to read and reread certain haiku that become favorites. Various disjunctions between the known and unknown, the felt and never before felt, the everyday and the extraordinary, and the common and odd language compel the reader to look again more deeply for meaning and understanding. Daipayan Nair's collection *The Ten Hands of the Fuchka Seller* carefully balances these dichotomies of excellent haiku. The language seems familiar and conversational. But the cultural context and related vocabulary may be unknown. Haiku can bridge these gaps and share our human connections.

In this collection of haiku and senryu, Nair embraces a poetry of place (what the Japanese call *utamakura*). As Pravat Kumar Padhy writes in the introduction, “The poems are primarily centered around the way of life in Kalkata ... The collection of verses portrays a cultural tapestry of this historical city” (7). Here is the title poem: