

Briefly Reviewed by Joshua Gage

magic carpet by Frank Hooven (Red Moon Press, 2025.) 122 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-58-2. \$20 from redmoonpress.com and other booksellers.

Frank Hooven's first book, *magic carpet*, represents ten years of haiku writing from one of the prominent voices in English-language haiku. This is a thick collection of poems featuring over one hundred of Hooven's haiku as well as a few black and white illustrations from Emily White. Hooven's haiku are sparse and minimal, leaving a lot of room for the reader: crickets' thrum/ another seed/spins to earth or double rainbow/the trailer park/ glistens. Any reader of haiku will find something in this collection to savor.

traffic by Guy Nesom (Red Moon Press, 2025). 102 pages, 4.25" x 6.5". Perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-55-1. \$20 from redmoonpress.com and other booksellers.

Guy Nesom's fifth haiku collection, *traffic*, focuses on haiku, including a section titled "stretching archetypes," which has Nesom's honkadori based haiku. Though a thin collection, there are two haiku per page, all of which display Nesom's casual, colloquial writing style: family names/and unfamiliar faces--/reunion or escaping/through a break in the fence/tumbleweeds. This is a very accessible collection, despite its high price, and any reader will enjoy something in this book.

Sincerely Yours: Haiku in Honor of Onitsura by Robert Epstein (Self-published, 2025). 142 pages, 5" x 8". Perfect softbound. ISBN 978-8-316298-92-1. \$13 from bookshop.org and elsewhere.

Robert Epstein's newest collection, *Sincerely Yours*, is based on the haiku and poetics of Uejima Onitsura, a younger contemporary

of Basho. Onitsura, according to Epstein's solid introduction, prioritized "makoto," a Japanese term roughly translating to "sincerity" or "truthful expression." The rest of the book is over one hundred haiku, many illustrated with stock photos, of Epstein wrestling with this aesthetic in his own haiku: in case/I had any doubt/cicada shells or last light/a young mole scurries/along her own path. Not only will English-language haiku authors enjoy the haiku in this collection, but they'll also be inspired to seek out Onitsura's work to learn more about "makoto" in haiku.

Mapping the Borderlands: Haibun and Tanka Prose by Barbara Sabol (Sheila-Na-Gig Editions, 2025). 46 pages, 6.5" x 6.5". Perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-962405-15-7, \$14 from bookshop.org and elsewhere.

Barbara Sabol's newest collection of haibun and tanka prose, *Mapping the Borderlands*, explores the interstitial areas where the human world and the natural world meet. Whether imagining a polar bear's dreams in "Nanuq" or celebrating chorus frogs in "Ode to Spring, Peeper," Sabol's work dances back and forth between human perceptions and the deeper, richer images from the wild, animal world. This chapbook will enthrall readers of haibun and tanka prose, but most readers of haiku and nature literature will also want to peruse this collection.

white heat by Sara Tropper (Red Moon Press, 2025). 88 pages, 6" x 9". Perfect softbound. 978-1-958408-64-3, \$20 from redmoonpress.com and other booksellers.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas led a massive, surprise terror attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip, resulting in the deaths of over 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and the taking of over 250 hostages; Sara Tropper's book, *white heat*, serves as poetry of

witness to this event and its aftermath. Written in English, Hebrew, and Arabic, this is the poetry of war and all its casualties: suddenly winter/my child/chanting kaddish or still life/beneath the bodies/a prayer. This is a collection of fear, to be sure, but also hope and resilience, and any reader who is opposed to human suffering and desires peace in the world will want this on their shelves as a constant reminder.

Briefly Reviewed by Allyson Whipple

telling the bees: *The Red Moon Anthology of English Language*

Haiku 2024 edited by Jim Kacian et. al. (Red Moon Press, 2025.)

172 pages, 5.5" x 8.25". Perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-62-9.

\$20 from redmoonpress.com and other booksellers.

telling the bees is the 2025 installment of the Red Moon Anthology series, covering selected works of haiku, senryu, linked verse, and essays published in English-language haiku journals. The anthology closes with an overview of the RMA editorial process, a worthwhile read for those interested in the thought and decisionmaking that goes into an anthology.

When reading this volume, readers can see the care that the RMA board took when making their selections. They consistently chose expertly-executed haiku that clearly draw from the tradition while nonetheless addressing modern themes. The title of the anthology is borrowed from Randy Brooks' haiku:

election over
one of us must tell
the bees

The human concept of politics is at the forefront of this haiku, and yet we have a seasonal referent as well as a strong fragment/phrase construction. In this haiku, the human and the wild are not separate; the point of this poem is that the events of our sphere will impact flora and fauna. The level of virtuosity in this haiku appears throughout the rest of the book.

My favorite part of the Red Moon anthologies is the opportunity to encounter excellent work that I missed in the previous year. While we all subscribe to a range of print journals and do our best to keep up with online publications, we're balancing our haiku reading with all of our other commitments as well as additional literary interests. Avid readers of English-language haiku will certainly encounter familiar favorites in these pages, but no matter how diligent you are, you're likely to encounter something overlooked as well. For that alone, it's worth keeping the next volume in your collection.

A New Resonance 14: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku

edited by Jim Kacian and Julie Schwerin (Red Moon Press, 2025.)
176 pages, 5.5" x 8.25". Perfect softbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-65-0. \$20 from redmoonpress.com and other booksellers.

A New Resonance 14 is the 2025 installment in this biennial series. Consisting of haiku and senryu by 17 poets selected through a rigorous process, *A New Resonance* is one of the best-known ways to discover new and new-to-you haiku poets writing in English.

What I love most about this anthology is the ability to feel that I am getting to know each poet a little better. While I disagree with the statement that increased publication opportunities in the 21st century "makes it harder to see an individual poet's style and voice emerge across multiple publications," (4), the intimacy of this poem helps me learn about the poet beyond simply their haiku style. The mini essays introducing each poet are a way for me to cultivate a sense of why each of these poets write haiku. I appreciate the insight the editors bring to each poet's work.

As a reader, we connect with each poet through one or maybe two or three poems in any given publication over time. While I think avid readers will have no trouble learning a poet's

voice, the extended study that *A New Resonance* provides the opportunity to feel like we're not just reading someone's poetry, but getting to understand it in a new way. The 14th volume consists of poets I have seen in journal pages and submissions queues for several years now; after reading this volume, they are more than just acquaintances on the page. I feel we are all on our way to becoming friends.