

quickly becomes something like the color of the ink or the typeface—something seen but in most cases not given much thought too.

Like all good poets Stevenson has more than one trick up his sleeve. *(d)ark* is a satisfying collection and well worth picking up.

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spring in the lobby  
let's not wait  
for the elevator

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## BRIEFLY NOTED

*Chispas de Pedernal*, by Diente de León (Medellín, Colombia: Mi Libro, 2014). 118 unnumbered pages; 15 cm; 6"x6". Hardbound; green hand-made paper-covered boards, embossed with color label; Smythe-sewn. No ISBN. No price given; inquire from [edicionesmilibro@gmail.com](mailto:edicionesmilibro@gmail.com).

This collection of 223 haiku from Diente de León (Juan Felipe Jaramillo), the organizer of the WHA conference in Medellín, Colombia, in September 2013, presents an important new voice in Latin American haiku. The book is divided into several thematic sections: “Life in the Temple,” “Like the Sea, This Love That Comes and Goes,” etc., each prefaced by a short meditation on nature, humans, and poetry. A sample from the section “Fleeting Time” with Charles Trumbull’s translation: *Brisa mensajera— / de la amada difunta, / el olor de la tierra.* messenger breeze— / from the dead lover / the scent of the earth.

*Shouting Your Name Down the Well*, by David W. McFadden (Canada: Mansfield Press, 2014). 165 pages; 5"x9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-77126-041-1. Price: \$20.00 from [www.mansfieldpress.net](http://www.mansfieldpress.net)

A collection of haiku and tanka by a well-known Canadian poet, yet his haiku, mostly in the 5-7-5 form, never rise above simple commentary. *My morning glories / Are hiding this morning. What / Are they ashamed of?*

*I Am No Jesus and Other Selected Poems, Tanka, and Haiku*, by Ram Krishna Singh (No place, 2014). 52 pages. Ebook. No ISBN. Free from [www.slideshare.net](http://www.slideshare.net). Also available from Createspace at online booksellers.

In English and translated into Tatar. A book of short form poetry that includes a haiku section. The quality of the haiku is mixed and Singh doesn't consistently find the right balance between telling too much and sketching. One of the better ones: *incense sticks smoke / before the paper goddess / one more new year*

*The Pocket Haiku*, by Sam Hamill, comp. and trans. (Boston and London: Shambhala, 2014). 117 pages; 3"x4½". Semigloss, white, tan, and gray card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-611801-53-8. Price: \$8.95 from booksellers.

This potboiler anthology from a prominent poet and translator is a recycling of mossy renderings, mostly in 5-7-5 syllables—the ones Hamill used in his 1995 books *The Sound of Water* and the spun-off *The Little Book of Haiku*. This cute miniature might make a nice gift for a friend but needn't concern serious haikuists.

*The Most Beautiful Haiku with Ugly Illustrations*, by Juha Lilja (No place: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014). 72 pages; 6" x 9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-149978-62-31. Price: \$6.50 from online booksellers

The artist wishes to be known as APN201: a person as well as an art project. The pseudonym might be a wise choice because all the poet knows of haiku seems to be the 5-7-5 form. *Powerful message / How much more can you swallow / When heavens do cry*

*Bus Stop Haiku*, by Brian Robertson (No place: Katandy Press, 2014). 215 pages. Ebook. No ISBN. Price: \$3.99 from [www.smashwords.com](http://www.smashwords.com)

A collection of urban haiku that includes brief text from the author's haiku workshop. The haiku are mainly sketches, and despite the prompting of the workshop to show not tell, a fair amount do just that. *This new apartment— / the one I moved from / just now seems better*

*20 Years: Reflections of an Empty Sky*, by James Fuson (Detroit: [sic] Press, 2013). 78 pages; 5½" x 8¼". Matte brown and white card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$15.00 from [www.softsculpture.org](http://www.softsculpture.org)

In 1994 the state of Michigan sentenced James Fuson to life imprisonment without possibility of parole. *20 Years* collects several hundred haiku written since then. The poet is self-taught so the volume contains a number of beginner's stumbles (too many images, exposition, etc.) yet there are also some poignant moments as would be expected. Perhaps the best way to think of the collection is as a poetic memoir instead of a fully fledged haiku collection. Fuson has lately begun to publish his work in the major journals, but those haiku seem to postdate this volume. *a dimly lit hall / the soft echo of voices / tomorrow is winter*

*Richard Wright and Haiku*, ed. by Yoshinobu Hakutani (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2014). 216 pages; 6" x 9½". Hardcover. ISBN 978-0826220011. Price: \$50.00 from booksellers.

There seems to us a disproportionate emphasis on Richard Wright's contribution to English-language haiku, so yet another volume on the poet is met with suspicion. Hakutani is one of the editors of *Haiku: This Other World* and *Richard Wright and Racial Discourse*. The current volume, however, is a bit of a muddle. It is composed of several sections, most on Wright, but also including ones on haiku's Japanese history, Yone Noguchi, Ezra Pound, and Imagism. While such sections are important to English-language haiku's development, they have little to do with Wright, who received his knowledge of haiku from R. H. Blyth's books. In fact much of Hakutani's explanation of haiku owes a debt to Blyth, even while exaggerating Wright's importance, such as when he claims that Wright eschewed cutting words in favor of punctuation. The first wouldn't make sense in English and the latter is clearly the influence of Blyth. Still, the book contains interesting information on Wright and his poetics, albeit not all of it necessarily new.

*Bagworm* (No place [Charleston, Ill.]: Samuddo / Ocean, 2014). 217 pages; 5¾" x 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-312119-12-3. *Mantram* (No place [Charleston, Il.]: Samuddo / Ocean, 2014). 37 pages; 5¾" x 8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-312236-08-0. Both by John Martone. Both available as e-books for free online at [www.scribd.com/john-martone-2968](http://www.scribd.com/john-martone-2968) or \$12.00 (*Bagworm*) or \$7.00 (*Mantram*) from [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)

*Bagworm* collects together fourteen smaller collections into one volume, while *Mantram* collects together two others. *Mantram* begins with a short tenant from Pure Land Buddhism—"many-calling is nothing but the accumulation of single-calling"—that seems to speak tangentially to Martone's many writings, to see them as a whole, a single life-poem. His is a sharp eye.

*So Happy to See Cherry Blossoms: Haiku from the Year of the Great Earthquake and Tsunami*, ed. Madoka Mayuzumi, trans. Hiroaki and Nancy Sato (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2014). 119 pages; 5½" x 8". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-30-0. Price: \$12.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Editor Mayuzumi, a well-respected haiku poet, was in Paris the day the tsunami hit. After returning to Japan she traveled to the affected area, met with some survivors, and held haiku workshops. From these Mayuzumi published in 2012 a selection of 126 haiku with each writer's account of the poem and her own notes. The present volume is a translation of the 2012 volume, with the added benefit of helpful translators' notes that provide information on among other things the variety of *kigo* used. For example, the translators' note on the haiku, *Blackout in the kitchen alone a blurred moon*, adds: "In Japanese poetry blurriness has been regarded as one of the attributes of spring when the world thaws, warms, and grows suffused with softness." As usual, Sato translates the haiku in one line. While the poems showcase the substantial losses each poet suffered, they also show the strong spirit of the survivors. The various notes are helpful in understanding the context. Recommended.

*fresh paint: towpath anthology 2015*, edited by Roberta Beary (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press for the towpath haiku society, 2014). 36 pages; 3½" x 5". Matte four-color card covers; saddle-stapled. ISBN 978-1-936848-31-7. Price \$5.00 from towpath haiku society c/o Lee Giesecke at [lee.g2013@verizon.net](mailto:lee.g2013@verizon.net)

The twentieth anniversary pocket anthology of the Washington, DC, area's towpath haiku society. An eclectic and evocative selection of 32 new haiku, two by each of the sixteen poets represented. A perfect stocking stuffer. By Kristen Deming: *merry-go-round all lit up the galaxy*

*Luminous Orange: Contemporary Haiku and Other Poems* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Red Heifer Press, 2012). 78 pages; 6"×9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9855199-0-2. *After the Moon a Blue Ocean* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Red Heifer Press, 2012). 69 pages; 6"×9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9631478-7-5. Both by Alexander Forbes. Price for each: \$16.95 from [www.redheifer-press.com](http://www.redheifer-press.com)

Two similar volumes that are predominantly haiku but also contain a few haibun and tanka. While Forbes uses the three-line form, his poems often break in the middle of the second line, or not at all. Thematically, his styles range from traditional to modern. His is a pleasing voice and the reader feels like they are being let in on a great secret. *small plane / dragging a sentence / across the sky*

*Pale Moonlight*, by Gerard John Conforti (Windsor, Conn.: Bottle Rockets Press, 2014). 34 pages; 4¼"×5½". Glossy black-and-white card covers; saddle-stapled. ISBN 1-929116-004. Price: \$5.95 from [www.bottlerocketspress.com](http://www.bottlerocketspress.com)

A reissue of the 1999 Deep North Press edition. Primarily a collection of sequences from Conforti's time in an orphanage and mental hospital, and also one on his brother who died of AIDS. The haiku are sparse, honest, and often heartbreaking. *Autumn night: / the tap, tap, tap of a moth / inside the lampshade*

*Contemporary Haibun: Volume 15*, ed. by Jim Kacian, Bruce Ross, and Ken Jones (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2014). 116 pages; 5¼"×8¼". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-25-6. Price: \$17.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

The annual "best of" anthology includes seventy-nine haibun and sixteen haiga—the haiga reproduced in black and white. A nice variety of styles.

*Some Measure of Excellence*, by Marjorie Buettner (Red Wing, Minn.: Red Dragonfly Press, 2014). 75 pages; 5½" x 8½". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-937693-52-7. Price: \$15.00 from [www.reddragonflypress.org](http://www.reddragonflypress.org)

Fifty-one haibun arranged by season. Buettner is a strong practitioner of the form and she punctuates her haibun with both haiku and tanka. The prose covers a lot of territory—dreams, myth, philosophy—but she always brings it down to earth and makes it accessible. A wonderful balancing act that is nicely executed.

*Enter the Stream*, by Genie Nakano (No place: privately printed, 2013). 55 pages; 5¼" x 8¼". Glossy blue and white card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$15.00 from online booksellers.

Thirty-six haibun that contain either haiku or tanka as their capping verse (in some cases the haiku are tanka-like). The haibun are autobiographical and detail the poet's wanderer's life, but she often finds her ground in strong details. Enjoyable.

*Noise of Our Origin*, by Dietmar Tauchner (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2013). 98 pages; 4¼" x 6½". Four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-27-0. Price: \$12.00 from [www.redmoonpress.com](http://www.redmoonpress.com)

Who knew that haiku about man's relationship with the scientific universe (neutrinos, supernovas, dark matter, and much more) could be so engrossing? These are big poems that have many openings to enter, yet they don't overwhelm—unless you let them. Tauchner moves smoothly, and convincingly, from a lyric such as *winter morning / the glittering rail / towards the moon* to a more abstract poem such as *leonids / my mind back at the source / of words*. In German and English. Recommended.

*Dream That is Not a Dream: A Conversation in Haiku*, by Elizabeth Searle Lamb and Miriam Sagan (Santa Fe, N.M.: Miriam's Well, 2014). 48 pages; 6"x7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-893003-17-0. Price: \$14.95. Inquire of the author at [msagan1035@aol.com](mailto:msagan1035@aol.com)

Sagan was a close friend of Lamb's and was editor of her collected works *Across the Windharp*. After Lamb's death in 2005, Sagan came into possession of a number of unpublished haiku. As she read them over time she found herself responding to them with haiku of her own. While Sagan's haiku don't "answer" Lamb's, they are often close thematically, and at times we might wish for greater separation. As a friend, however, that might have been hard for Sagan to achieve. So instead of a call and response, the volume is really more of a conversation. Two haiku that get the balance just right:

talk of UFOs—  
at a nearby table a diner  
winks

*ESL*

why did she swat  
a fly from my coffee cup  
that cafe patron

*MS*

*Touching Each Tree*, by John J. Dunphy (Rochester, N.Y.: Free Food Press, 2014). 38 pages; 5¼"x8¼". Glossy black and white card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$10.00 from [www.freefoodpress.com](http://www.freefoodpress.com)

Dunphy writes mostly senryu, and he has a keen eye and heart for the human condition—a condition he often seems to find wanting. While some of his poems may be uncomfortable for readers who prefer haiku on birds and flowers, they are necessary. *even the tooth / her father knocked out / placed under the pillow*



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*Crying Soul*, by William Armstrong (No place; privately printed, 2014). 88 pages; 6"x9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-692262-57-3. Price: inquire of author at [armstrong405@outlook.com](mailto:armstrong405@outlook.com). Also available as free Kindle ebook at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

The author has subtitled his collection “modern haiku in 3–2–4 and 5–7–5 beats” and on the back cover labeled them as “haiku prose,” yet nowhere are these historic decisions explained. The majority of the poems are commentary that don’t go beyond the syllabic requirement into something truly haiku-like. A large number carry the title “Love.” *Spoken aloud / Her point / She thinks I’m deaf*

