

These are questions you may ask yourself as you read and reread Wanda D. Cook's book, *winter pruning*, a celebration of both the natural seasons and the seasons of a persons' life.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Earthlings, by Allan Burns (No place: 2015) 40 pages; 41MB. E-book. No ISBN. Price: free download from www.mutteringthunder.weebly.com

We tend to think that the titular word only applies to human beings, but of course that isn't the case. *Earthlings* continues in the nature tradition of Burns' ejournal *Muttering Thunder* where he has developed a well-deserved reputation for nature haiku and its stewardship. The poems in this slight collection show a deep empathy and love for nature and humankind's place in it, but also our responsibilities toward it. Like the ejournal, the artwork of Ron Moss accompanies the haiku. I could have easily picked any one of its forty poems as an example. A strong offering and well-recommended! *colors of dawn... / beyond the brush pile / the fox's black ears*

Journeys: An Anthology of International Haibun, edited by Angelee Deodhar (India: Nivasini Publishers, 2014). 238 pages; 5½"x8¼". Glossy two-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-81-929002-1-6. Price: Inquire of the editor at angeleedeodhar@gmail.com

A collection of 122 haibun by twenty-five international practitioners of the genre. Picking the representative authors was undoubtedly a challenge and for the most part we agree with the editor's choices. All well-known names and some favorite pieces.

The Sacred in Contemporary Haiku, edited by Robert Epstein (No place: Createspace, 2014). 251 pages; 6"x9". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-500993-01-6. Price: \$19.50 online booksellers

In five other haiku anthologies, Epstein has explored recovery, death awareness, renewal, firsts, loss, and other related emotions. In *The Sacred in Contemporary Haiku* he turns his gaze toward what he calls the “sacred”, but wisely refuses to define beyond it being “recognizable in the way it evokes wonder, awe, veneration, reverence, worship.” Similar to his other books, *The Sacred* contains hundreds of haiku on the theme. A reader, unfamiliar with Epstein’s ways, might suspect the book to limit itself to religious or spiritual haiku, but Epstein is also concerned with a “spiritual sustenance in Nature” or secular sacreds, and his notion of “sacred” is even wider than that. The Introduction itself is worth the price. One at random: *in our breath / this bitter night— / the milky way* - Harter

Deflection, by Roberta Beary (Lexington, Ky.: Accents Publishing, 2015). 29 pages; 5½"x8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936628-33-9. Price: \$8.00 from www.accents-publishing.com

Through sixteen haibun and nine haiku sequences, Beary reports on her familial history and relationships. Whether about the slow disintegration of her mother, her relationship with an abusive father, suicide of a close relative, or others, the narratives are haunting and often heartbreaking. Beary treads this territory bravely, and more importantly, with an emotional honesty. And while some readers may be uncomfortable pulling back the curtains to let the light shine on some of these scenes, others may be glad to discover a fellow survivor. This is an honest art; nothing is done for shock value. Beary has been getting good press for this collection—and rightly so. She is one of the strongest practitioners of the form. A deeply personal collection and one that we’re grateful to receive. Recommended.

Spring Rain Winter Snow, by Edward J. Rielly, illustrations by Angelina Buonaiuto (Brunswick, Maine: Shanti Arts Publishing, 2014). 32 pages; 9"x9". Glassy four-color cover; hardback. ISBN 978-1-941830-94-9. Price: \$19.99 from www.shantiarts.co

Haiku books for children often don't get the mix of artwork and haiku right, and often the haiku are amateurish or dumbed-down. That isn't the case here. The artwork in *Spring Rain Winter Snow* is bold and contains a variety of natural objects that will easily engage a child, allowing for extended storywork on each page, and the haiku themselves are well-suited for children but also smart enough for adults. A perfect pairing! *October moon: / among the pumpkin vines / small footprints*

Something Out of Nothing, by Ion Codrescu (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2014). 162 pages; 7½"x10". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-936848-35-5. Price: \$30.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

An interesting project in which Codrescu created over seventy haiga from solicited haiku. He is a talented brush artist and his engagement with each poet is enjoyable. The size of the pages allows a good glimpse of the work—which is sometimes representational and other times abstract.

Impressions Octave, by John Bryce Belbas (No place [Oregon House, Calif.]: Privately printed, 2014). 133 pages; 4"x6¾". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$15.00 from the author at P.O. Box 442, Oregon House, CA 95962

While the collection contains interesting haiku (*Toward harvest's end: / Starting to look at the vines / with the pruner's eye*) they are unfortunately mixed with too many uninteresting ones (*She swims nakedly / between the Moon & Venus— / She likes the waters*). Overall a collection that could have used a second editorial eye.

A Compendium of Glimpses, by Steve Dolphy (No place: 2015) 96 pages; 575KB. E-book. No ISBN. Price: \$2.99 from online booksellers

Haiku from Dolphy's ten-year residence in Vietnam from 1998 to 2008, as well as haiku from his return to the United Kingdom. His description of the poems as "snapshots" or "mindful moments" is apt. He has an inquisitive eye and he often lands on just the right details. The poems on Vietnam show a vibrant country that seems to exist in both the past and here and now simultaneously. The poems that take place in the United Kingdom aren't much different from the poems on Vietnam, and I suspect a resident of Vietnam would find them exotic. A few of the poems come from his 2004 collection *The Cry of the Duck Egg Seller*, and the collection ends with a single Vietnam haibun. Overall, a rewarding collection. *pagoda sunset / in time to see / incense ash fall*

Clouds Come and Go, by Steve Sanfield and John Brandi (No place [El Rito, N.M.]: Tooth of Time Books, 2015). 28 pages; 5¼"x8½". Matte tan card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: Inquire of John Brandi at P.O. Box 275, El Rito NM 87530.

Brandi and Sanfield have been writing linked pairs of haiku since at least their first collection in 1988. *Clouds*, their sixth and final collaboration (Sanfield passed away this year), continues that tradition. Each poem pair is presented without any attribution, so the reader doesn't know who wrote which poem. It can be fun to try and decipher authorship, although their absence also creates a nice freedom from what can sometimes be distracting. An enjoyable conversation between two veteran poets; unfortunately the last.

too often	twice in one day
too close	chased inside
to falling	by the same bumblebee

Not Like Fred and Ginger, by Elizabeth Crocket (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2014). 22 pages; 4"x5¼". Glossy four-color card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Price: \$7.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

A small volume of sixteen haibun that tell the story of the author's battle with cancer: the chemo, the surgeries. There is an odd disconnection to the prose as if Crocket is outside of herself, watching herself endure the treatment like a dance where someone else leads—in this case the doctors. The capping haiku are often on natural subjects, fitting, and well-composed, yet none of this hides the powerful narrative. We are grateful for Crocket's status as cancer-free and for her sharing of experience.

Chester Creek Ravine, by Bart Sutter (Minneapolis, Minn.: Nodin Press, 2015). 81 pages; 4½"x7". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-935666-75-2. Price: \$16.00 from www.nodinpress.com

After success in longer poetry, fiction, and drama, Duluth's first Poet Laureate turned his attention to haiku. The haiku are from the poet's walks "covering the same 2½ mile loop through Chester Creek Ravine repeatedly..." Many are simple portraits without much for the reader to grab a hold of; and others are too narrative. Nearly all rhyme! Yet some do succeed in an enjoyable, if not old fashioned way. One suspects Henderson's *Introduction to Haiku* was the poet's inspiration. *To my right, a log rots: / To my left, a cloud of pale / Blue forget-me-nots.*

their names (No place [Charleston, Ill.]: Samuddo / Ocean, 2015). 16 pages; 3"x4¼". Matte tan card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. *an eye* (No place [Charleston, Ill.]: Samuddo / Ocean, 2015). 24 pages; 3"x4¼". Matte tan card covers; saddle-stapled. No ISBN. Both by John Martone. Price: Inquire of the author.

Two new gatherings of Martone poems. The observing reader will have noticed Martone's recent use of mixed italicized words and larger fonts.

He has always worked with pivots, but these methods are also an interesting way to emphasize, isolate, or set off words—or the objects they represent.

this pine's
put out
an eye

Lost in the Long White Cloud, by David H. Rosen (Eugene, Ore.: Rosenberg Books, 2014). 208 pages; 5½"×7½". Glossy four-colored card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-4982-0226-8. Price: \$28.00 from online booksellers

The first in what can be assumed is a series of memoirs. Rosen takes the reader from his birth to age twenty-nine and the death of his father. To call it an extended haibun is misleading, since the haiku are too straightforwardly narrative; yet they are well situated in the ideas and emotions at hand. A psychiatrist, Rosen looks carefully at the paths he has taken; a deeply personal book. *The sun sets / yes / she is the one*

Into the Light, by Harriot West (Eugene, Ore.: Mountains and Rivers Press, 2014). 48 pages; 5½"×8½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-0-9896021-2-9. Price: \$15 from www.mountainsandriverspress.org

West's first collection includes twenty-nine haibun and related haiku. The book divides nicely into three sections: a series of haibun on the author's childhood and her relationship with her parents, haiku on a courtship, and a series of haibun on a relationship. Yet those broad categories do not do justice to the discrete reveals in the pieces, and the haiku are perfectly balanced (neither explaining the prose nor jumping too far). The reader feels like a confidant. I was surprised to learn that it was her first collection; a mature work.

Alone on a Wild Coast, by Renée Owen (United Kingdom: Snapshot Press, 2014). 72 pages; 5"x7¾". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-903543-34-4. Price: £9.99 from www.snapshotpress.co.uk

Owen's first collection is the winner of the 2012 Snapshot Press Book Award. The book is made up of fifty haiku, twelve haibun, and two haiku sequences, many previously published in journals or award-winners. The title of the collection is an apt one since many of the poems deal with endings, reevaluations, and regrets, yet these feelings are offset by measured acceptance, and a reverence of the moment and natural world—which often acts as an indicator of her feelings. Owen's poetic voice is confident and strong, and she successfully integrates her outer and inner worlds. Overall, a strong outing and recommended. *even in a sparrow / I see only you / seeing me*