

upbringing, as well as the images of growing up black in the rural south, in his haibun. These combinations give an individualistic feel to what is a lost way of life, and much the way the haiku in his “Desert Storm” and Million Man March sequences do, can act to create a larger group poetry. However, the shape of the haibun themselves and the way the capping haiku link to the prose isn’t much different than other English-language haibun writers—many of whom are not African-American. Of his capping haiku, they are often complementary to the prose and don’t leap in shocking directions. Moore clearly wants the reader’s attention to stay in the scene.

Combined, the book is a good overview of Moore’s career in haiku, with swerves into some of his longer poetry when the themes overlap. Moore is a varied and prolific writer and he has dipped his toes into any number of forms. Yet, many of the themes that drive his larger work are present in his haiku, which Rosenow does a great job of ferreting out. As mentioned above, several volumes of essays have been written on African-American haikuists, however, the quality of their output isn’t on par with many of the best haikuists in what has been called the haiku community. Moore has created a strong oeuvre and we are glad to see him get the attention; we hope other haikuists—regardless of race—will get the same spotlight.

A Box of Feathers, by Brad Bennett (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2022). 98 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-03-2. Price: \$20.00 from www.redmoonpress.com

Reviewed by Jeff Hoagland

Brad Bennett takes the reader for a walk through his environs with his third collection of haiku, *A Box of Feathers*. Through this offering, we visit a variety of settings, from different perspectives, always with a keen sense of observation and the fresh eyes of a student. I took this pocket-sized book with me on walks through my countryside, enjoying it in small sips, along the stream, in the forest, and out in the sunny meadow.

Bennett resides in Arlington, Massachusetts, and clearly spends time in the town's nature reserves. However, he travels widely as well, enjoying hikes *out there* in the wild whether it be small reserves, wildlife refuges, or national parks. He has shared his craft of haiku in journals, contests, and through workshops (highly recommended). His two prior collections, both through Red Moon Press, are *A Drop of Pond*, which won the 2016 Touchstone Distinguished Book Award from The Haiku Foundation, and *A Turn in the River*, published in 2019. All three books are dedicated to his partner Barbara.

It is clear from the start that Bennett is a naturalist—he admires the sky, follows a canyon wren, anticipates ripening blackberries, and watches the gulls head out in the morning, all in the first pages of this collection. He observes the world of nature around him as if it were lit in neon. He relishes the community of life found out there in the wild. He is a part of nature, not apart from it.

Visiting the wide-open spaces of meadows, Bennett captures and illuminates some of the happenings, the little miracles in nature. This skill as an observer is continually complemented by his ability to make connections and express them in a succinct poetic voice. He reminds us to drop our agendas and be attentive—there are gifts awaiting everyone and his gift is capturing them in words.

open meadow	a vole sips
a monarch hinges	from a trail puddle
on a milkweed	a hole in the clouds

Out along the edge of the sea, Bennett succinctly and beautifully captures the omnipresence and perpetual motion of water. During the summer of 2021, he was Artist-in-Residence at Acadia National Park in Maine. Some of the haiku born there are sprinkled throughout this volume. I can hear the water in these haiku.

crests and troughs	spindrift
an eider	a gull's down feather caught
slides under	in a fissure

Haiku should deliver a range of sensory experiences, sometimes solely through inference, as above, and at other times, more directly. Engaging multiple senses is an effective means of transporting the reader. Bennett is a master of multi-sensory poems and he takes us away with these haiku. Breathe deep. Listen carefully. Savor the flavor. Eyes wide open.

following	one raspberry left
the zigzag bridge	in my lemonade
pine-scented wind	red rock sunset

Among the many habitats visited in this volume are gardens. A garden is a unique habitat, a place purposely shaped by the gardener's desire for flavor and beauty. It is a place of nurturing though nature still reigns, sometimes in disappointing ways. Here Bennett celebrates the joy of this sacred work, providing clear images, garden action, and deft word choice.

storm clouds	deadheading day lilies
new potatoes roll	a curled petal clings
off the shovel	to my finger

In this collection we also learn that Bennett is a birdwatcher as birds are a common subject in many of these haiku. They are seemingly everywhere—in the sky, in the meadow, at the creek, in his yard. Employing brevity in these monostiches, Bennett creates a sense of vastness that gets filled up by the bird.

birdsong every now	a long stretch of sky heron
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Some of his bird haiku reveal that Bennett is not simply an observer or watcher of birds, but he is a *lover* of birds, seeing them as an integral part of his family.

lamplight ...	creek trickle
a bowl of rainwater	a chickadee lands
for the birds	on my hand

In addition to being a naturalist, gardener, and birdwatcher, Bennett is a teacher. As an elementary school teacher for over twenty-five years (*Hallelujah!*) Bennett has a gift that translates perfectly for haiku—he sees the world with the fresh eyes of a student and maintains a child-like perspective. Additionally, the classroom is a great source of “haiku moments,” and Bennett harvests some of these moments here.

summer's end	remote learning
a box of feathers	he holds up a jar
for show and tell	of tadpoles

I think these haiku brought me the greatest joy. I wonder how many readers had that box of feathers in their childhood? I'm betting the poet, along with this reviewer, also harbored a box of feathers, possessing briefly some of the beauty and magic of our world.

Lastly, we encounter Bennett the poet, not just through this collection of haiku, but in his haiku about writing. Certainly, this collection speaks loudly of Bennett's skill as a writer, employing subtle but effective literary techniques in short visual poems. But he has also included haiku that are reflective, at times instructional, exposing the writer's life and again, his keen perception.

show don't tell saguaros	spring clouds I have yet to write
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This book will expand your appreciation for nature, its smallness, and bigness, its place in the center of haiku. It will illuminate the connections between your “day-to-day” existence and the community of life around you, wherever you are. Thank you, Brad Bennett, for sharing your world and your words with us, and for helping us discover the extraordinary in the ordinary.