

but it is easy enough to find elsewhere, if you are interested. The notes of course explain the seasonal reference, and what the poet probably intends in each case, and how the poem works, all highly instructive.

So what do we learn from all this? On the one hand there is the note about the season-word as it is generally understood: the subtle difference between ‘spring wind (*harukaze*)’ and ‘the wind of spring (*haru no kaze*)’ for instance, or what the simple mention of a shuttlecock on a battledore conveys of girls in beautiful long-sleeved kimono celebrating New Year. The precise word selection is examined, or the use and significance of numbers, or an irregular division into segments, and how these all affect the resonance of the poems, or amplify their meaning. Often other verses are quoted too: either by the same poet, or else by one to whom they have responded. Contextual detail sometimes shows us how a single line can capture an entire life.

There are photographs of the natural world in Japan between the four sections, with a few non-seasonal verses added at the end, besides a brief selection of haiku by Ozawa. Everything is elegantly rendered, and the notes are meticulous and helpful. A verse by Takahama Kyoshi, “Autumn wind — / everything I see / is haiku,” is but the first of a dozen on this rich seasonal topic, all quite different, the last of them alluding to a Song dynasty poem in Chinese. But the younger poets too bring something fresh, that comes across in English, like this verse by Yamaguchi Yūmu (b. 1985): “Of light, the beating heart / knows nothing — / snow melting in the river.” This is a valuable book, highly recommended.

A Drift of Birdsong, by Carol Purington ([Colrain, Mass.]: Privately printed, 2021). 171 pages; 5½" × 8½". Glossy blue and black card covers; perfectbound. No ISBN. Price: \$16.00 from Nancy Purington, PO Box 2233, Palm City, FL 34991.

Farm Song, by Carol Purington (Colrain Mass.: A Winfred Press Book, 2020). 191 pages, with photographs; 8½" × 11¼". Hardcover. No ISBN. Price: \$28.00 from Nancy Purington, PO Box 2233, Palm City, FL 34991.

Review by Patricia J. Machmiller

Any consideration of *A Drift of Birdsong*, published this year, must begin with *Farm Song* from the year before, for the two books are closely related—and also very different. Much to my surprise, I was taken with Carol Purington's (1949–2021) *Farm Song*. It's a large, thick, hardcover book that, at first, seems too big to be a haiku book. But I was soon won over by its exuberant embrace of the farm, the family, and a life made by growing things.

Purington writes from a unique perspective: she was born in 1949 on a dairy farm that had been in the family since the end of the Revolutionary War. She contracted polio in 1955 which left her bedridden; she lived the rest of her life with respiratory and computer devices that helped her breathe and speak. Her milieu was the farm and the family, and a major feature of the book, in addition to the haiku, are the photos. These are not polished, professional photographs; they are ad hoc snapshots taken over time at home, in the fields, in the maple tree forest, at festivals, at ballgames by many different family photographers and many different cameras. They document among other things an attic storeroom, a youngster's birthday, a nuthatch at the birdfeeder, tubs of tomatoes, the night sky, a collection of birdhouses, children (both young and grown) making frosted cookies, haiku written by a child, the farm covered in snow, an immense barn with black and white Holsteins, trees hung with sap buckets—a huge collage of the bits and pieces that make up life on the farm. They are assembled together like a scrapbook. And embedded in this collage are the haiku stitching it all together: the everyday, the personal, the what-is-now with what-has-been, making a living from the land with the wonder of the stars. The book is a work of art, a giant tapestry, a quilt with each page a patch; the amateur snapshots speak eloquently of the homespun quality of life on the farm. And Purington's haiku have that same authenticity, the voice of a woman who knew farming and farm life and appreciated what it did to make a family, with all its boisterousness and variety, cohere. This book for all its boundless energy and exuberance coheres. It is an art book.

A Drift of Birdsong, published posthumously, is a paperback book of haiku featuring most of the haiku that are included in *Farm Song*. The poems are arranged in sections with each section divider graced with a color photograph of a bird; these photos are the work of Jean and Thom Shippee. The haiku do stand alone, and this book is \$12.00 cheaper than *Farm Song*. That said, I found the poems in the context of the photos of the farm and family to be a richer experience. The farmhouse itself has a presence that is only hinted at in *Drift*. And in *Farm Song* there are glimpses of Purington and her condition. If Purington suffered, you cannot tell it from her haiku. She must have been loved and well-cared for, for her attention is on appreciation—of children (“Teaching a child / to touch the pony gently — / the way the sun does”), of birds that visit the farm (“Snow on the road / on the fields, on the branches... / on the cardinal”), of family and their foibles (“Autumn get-together / the ones who won’t eat broccoli / still won’t”), of celebrations (“Tchaikovsky / through the festive house / the fragrance of pine”), of winter (“Left from yesterday’s blizzard / slanted wind / in slanted icicles”). Here are a few more haiku from the books:

Too hot to think
sharing the shade
with a box of ripe tomatoes

Setting sap buckets
the snowman’s teeth fall out
one by one

Almost-full moon
the teenager argues
his curfew

Garden diary
a blank page for bulbs
that didn’t come up

Vanished...
no conversation on the hillside
where owls talk

Naming the calf
after the child’s cousin’s mother—
family farm