

give offense
in the field
to the overseer

made to lie down
over a hole
dug to receive her

This is a lovely line of poetry, and our quibble might seem small, but Smith makes a point of calling her three-line poems haiku. While we appreciate the breach into the larger poetic conversation, calling them haiku is misleading.

As poetry, however, none of this detracts from the strong emotional pull and anger at man's inhumanity to his fellow man that is revealed throughout the collection. At its best, haiku, through strong and carefully chosen images and without explanation, can put the reader tangibly into a scene. This is especially powerful when the scene is one of fear and flight, with terrible consequences should the runner be captured. In a way, this immediacy is perhaps more powerful than a non-fiction book or documentary on the institution of slavery. As such, *Runagate* is a fine addition to both the corpus of Black literature and English-language haiku tradition.

Timbre: Selected Haiku of Hilary Tann, eds. Gary Hotham and John Stevenson (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 128 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-59-9. Price: \$20.0 from www.redmoonpress.com

Reviewed by Ferris Gilli

Coming two years after Hilary Tann's death, *Timbre: Selected Haiku of Hilary Tann* is a fine and highly welcome collection of the poet's work in haiku and senryu. John Stevenson's wonderful Introduction in *Timbre* reveals personal insight into the poet's mind and heart, and it is the perfect prelude to this haiku trove.

An internationally acclaimed Welsh American composer, Hilary Tann loved haiku. While communicating with the language of music on a grand scale, perhaps she felt more intimately rewarded when sharing her moments of discovery through this poetry genre. A finished haiku is structurally very small, yet can be layered with implication and perception far beyond its physical size. The clarity of this poet's imagery pulls me into her world, as her events enter mine. The doors into her haiku open both ways. Within these pages you will find more than a book of poems, more than a careful selection of outstanding haiku and senryu. Here you will find beauty and gentleness amid the often harsh realities of our existence.

A moment's discovery from this astute poet easily stirs my sensory perceptions:

late August	mountain stillness —
table-ready tomatoes	the loon call
warm to the touch	held by the lake

As I read each haiku apart from and uncolored by those surrounding it, I pause and imagine the moment, sharing unstated emotions with the poet. The first poem below could be a metaphor; throughout life, we too must often “turn with the tide.” My reading of “childhood beach” evokes a rush of memories and nostalgia.

late summer —	childhood beach
eelgrass turns	I select a pebble
with the tide	for mother's grave

As with the following three, reading the poems in their significant order of presentation further enlightens, deepening my awareness of the inevitable ebb and flow of life. Equally moving is a growing sense of insight into the poet. Each poem elicits my sudden realization, expressed with a whispered, “Exactly!”

first visit	nursing home —
seeing the colors	so many
she lives with	cut flowers

windblown apple blossoms
I reach
for my childhood

Throughout the collection, the poet's use of effective juxtaposition creates layers of meaning in her haiku. For example, the poem "nursing home" above is more than an observation of flowers inside a care facility. With the second and third lines, I find a poignant reminder of the residents' circumstances, having lost their ability to live independently. Many may lose touch with the world beyond the nursing home.

With ease and grace, Tann's vivid moments shaped in haiku and senryu go from strength to strength, from lighthearted to heartfelt. A subtle mood shift may occur within a single poem, as happens with the last line in each of these:

calling	February fields
from balcony to balcony	all the colors
caged birds	of my long-lost collie

You won't find avant-garde inclinations in this book; what you will find is tradition, realism, and credibility. Tann's fluency in this genre assured that she had no need for words of emotion or inessential modifiers to draw readers into her experience. Within timbre is evidence that she was a master of concision, while expressing her truths with captivating imagery.

old friends —	blue heron
sunlight plays	all paddles
through the leaves	at rest

One poem in the collection evokes a sense of loneliness. I wonder if others might feel an unexpected tension. Readers who ever sat quietly folded into a tight self-hug as adults raged may share a connection with “sitting.”

sitting
where I sat as a child
waiting out the storm

In “queen anne’s lace,” Tann’s sharp focus draws me closer to the bloom. I also suspect there is a message buried in this flower, something waiting for me to grasp. See what you think:

queen anne’s lace
the tiny
dark heart

Of her occasional monoku, the one below offers much to envision, along with a hint of humor, if you know a little about rioting tulips. Simply typing it makes me smile.

after three days the tulips riot

As the poet invites us to share her harmony with nature, her perfectly concise imagery urges me to feel and hear the crunch of acorns, see the reeds and dripping paddles. And I do.

mild December —	above the reeds
walking acorns	the rise and fall
into the earth	of kayak paddles

The poems in *Timbre: Selected Haiku of Hilary Tann* are remarkably compelling. Only rarely does a poet’s work reach so deeply into my heart. Reading the haiku in *Timbre* today, I can hear Tann’s vibrant, unmistakable voice:

blue irises	early morning
mother's laughter	the silence
in the sun	of good companions

The essence of the poet touches me, as I believe it will touch you.

Magic Carpet, by Frank Hooven (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2025). 122 pages; 4¼" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-58-. Price: \$20.0 from www.red-moonpress.com

Reviewed by Barbara Ungar

This debut book by Frank Hooven is a delight. There is not a weak poem here: each haiku resonates. The style is simple yet profound. No cleverness or wordplay, no experiments with language or spacing: Hooven demonstrates that traditional haiku can still be full of surprise and satisfaction.

The haiku are arranged by season, beginning with summer and ending with spring. Most are unpunctuated, usually in three lines (rarely one or two lines), some as short as five words. Yet every one contains a turn that conveys powerful emotion. From the opening poem, we know we are in good hands:

roughhousing
at the pool's edge
a gang of sparrows

The opening verb "roughhousing" conjures up most likely a group of boys "at the pool's edge," which seems to go along with the noun "gang" in the third line: the turn comes in the very last word, "sparrows." The image is sharpened by our expectation being overturned, and contains within it an inherent parallel between human and animal behavior. There is both humor and delight here, in the scene precisely observed, the