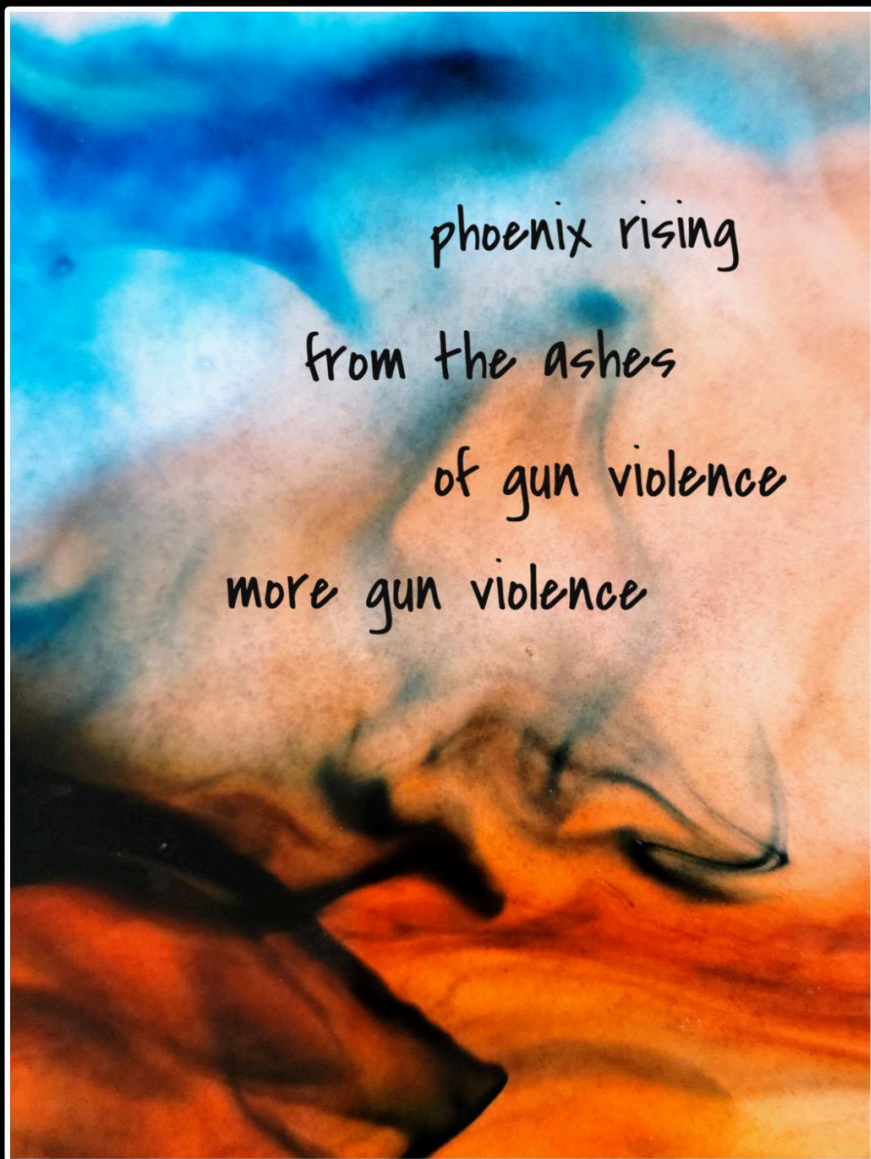


#FemkuMag



Issue 38
Spring 2025

#FemkuMag

revolutionary haiku
by women, trans, & gender expansive voices

Rowan Beckett Minor: Founder and Editor-in-Chief

Vandana Parashar: International Women's Month Editor

Carissa Coane: Assistant Editor & Social Media Coordinator

Kelly Sargent: Assistant Editor

Cover Haiga: Julie Schwerin

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International Women's Month

Edited by Vandana Parashar

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HAIKU

northern lights
the invisible glow
of our body heat

Meredith Ackroyd, USA

chronic dis-ease
the shortest day
too long

Marilyn Ashbaugh, USA

between sandstones
and swirls of seaweed
her red painted toes

Deborah A. Bennett, USA

Haiku

every night's
a school night
Orion's Belt

Helen Buckingham, UK

December wind
through the kitchen door
my mother motherless

Antoinette Cheung, Canada

a flutter of black
in a passing man's "hello"
bat orchid

Adele Evershed, USA

ghost apple
no longer hanging on
in my womb

Adele Evershed, USA

Haiku

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telling her gardener
she walked into a door

Adele Evershed, USA

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the daughter she cut
from her will

Laurie Greer, USA

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hidden within
a dozen roses

Patricia Hawkhead, UK

election returns
my uterus would bleed
if it could

Morag Elizabeth Humble, Canada

Haiku

resolution list
the things they tell me
I should want to change

Morag Elizabeth Humble, Canada

sap hardening my stance to solid amber

Colette Kern, USA

wildflowers
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take root

Yvette Nicole Kolodji, USA

long haul trucker
the prairie route
tanned to her arm

Barrie Levine, USA

Haiku

bare roadside tree
why shouldn't we be
friends

Eva Limbach, Germany

when we were selkies
the lively conversations
of sea ducks

Kristen Lindquist, USA

inaugural dance
one step forward
two steps back

Sarah E. Metzler, USA

frozen lake
a shadow of myself
in the mirror

Daniela Misso, Italy

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book launch-reading
on Women's Day –
our sensible shoes!

Maeve O'Sullivan, Ireland

November 5
the world in darker
shades of grey

Helen Ogden, USA

stand of the tide
a wheel of her chair
close to the edge

Lorraine A Padden, USA

snow-hush
your mouth opens
to mine

Ce Rosenow, USA

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summer wind combing the nape of the meadow

Ann Sullivan, USA

a May wind listed among strangers

Ranice Tara, India

the blizzard raging white power outage

Margaret Walker, USA

walking through snow
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meet again

Allyson Whipple, USA

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of autumn crocuses
our late love

Annie Wilson, UK

regretting
my new hairstyle –
winter wind

Juliet Wilson, Scotland, UK

funeral parlour –
too cold
for the time of year

Juliet Wilson, Scotland, UK

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the small o of my newborn's mouth
and the pale moon

Meredith Ackroyd, USA

morning sickness
guessing the neighbor's
next meal

Genevieve S. Aguinaldo, Philippines

who says the world is fleeting river rock

Rupa Anand, India

ventifact my weaknesses riddled by the wind

Cynthia Anderson, USA

the kindness of boulders their reliable silence

Cynthia Anderson, USA

through wildfires a wishbone of geese

Marilyn Ashbaugh, USA

back home late —
his sleeptalk lasts
till dawn

Hifsa Ashraf, Pakistan

crab fest
s l i c i n g
into
the 2nd
wife

Roberta Beary, USA/Ireland

yolk-yellow morning
the hen's brooding
purr

B. L. Bruce, USA

dragon flies :: dam self lies

Helen Buckingham, UK

ritual His tic

Helen Buckingham, UK

helium balloon
not wanting to fly away
I just want to fly

Marcia Burton, Canada

boardroom
I pronounce my name
as they do

Antoinette Cheung, Canada

oversized t-shirt
our bodies hidden
for safekeeping

Antoinette Cheung, Canada

circle dance
calloused female hands
clasp soft ones

Janice Doppler, USA

prettier
if I'd just smile
today's mask

Eavonka Ettinger, USA

stumbling along together –
their differing thresholds
of pain

Laurie Greer, USA

the colors I add
to his intentions –
evening sky

Fatma Zohra Habis, Algeria

Mum's old cookbook
between two salads
a recipe for hash fudge

Louise Hopewell, Australia

in our communal
head space
rearranging wishes

Roberta Beach Jacobson, USA

ice sculpting
she carves deeper
for feeling

C. Jean, Canada

what it takes to detach bleeding redwood

Arvinder Kaur, India

invasion of the body snatchers in every bedroom

Colette Kern, USA

night light
my patchwork quilt
of dreams

Deborah P Kolodji, USA

call to a lost friend
the apology i offer
for what she did

Suzanne Leaf-Brock, USA

when war began. . .
your name cut into
the beech trunk

Eva Limbach, Germany

impact zone
we call the moon's scars
seas

Kristen Lindquist, USA

what my mother
instilled in me
gravity fields

Hannah Mahoney, USA

the roar
of a wide river mouth
their bickering

Bipasha Majumder De, India

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sifts through the peepul. . .
self-love

Devoshruti Mandal, India

manicured hedge
my life
before kids

Sharon Martina, USA

wide awake
an owl's cry
haunting the dark

Mary McCormack, USA

the years
of silence
before the book

Mary McCormack, USA

lies David told
on the way to the throne
not taught in Sunday School

Wilda Morris, USA

mother's cousin
on the basement stairs
what I never told

Wilda Morris, USA

star-crossed depending where you put the decimal

Kelly Sauvage Moyer, USA

losing it
all my thoughts
on sticky notes

Helen Ogden, USA

local dialect
how easily she slips into
subservience

Lorraine A Padden, USA

gathering clouds—
he explains my storm to me

Basiliké Pappa, Greece

giving all she has —
 a river
bursts its banks

Shruti Patel, Switzerland

suspense movie
 I sneeze
at gunpoint

Kala Ramesh, India

we unfold layers
until nothing's untouched—
dalit's poem

Kala Ramesh, India

Year of the Snake
shedding
my shame

Ce Rosenow, USA

“He loves me. . .”
I just keep looking
for the right daisy

Marjolein Rotsteeg, The Netherlands

fragile they say
my ribcage houses
a hornet's nest

Jenn Ryan-Jauregui, USA

reincarnation
I fold myself and pass me
on to the next me

Jenny Shepherd, UK

bloody knuckles
I let the night
hit back

Nalini Shetty, India

mother's ring
a circle
I won't step into

Nalini Shetty, India

zoom conference
carefully positioning the arrow
up his left nostril

Sandra Simpson, New Zealand

mossy steps –
the family stories we remember
not to tell

Sandra Simpson, New Zealand

diaspora . . .
the weight
of what they carry

Mary Stevens, USA

barrenlands no offspring to keep me grounded

Debbie Strange, Canada

half-open blinds dusk finds the room empty of us

C.X. Turner, UK

momentum spins us into sunrise documented or not

Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff, USA

g(all)s
the
unwanted
love
handles

Nitu Yumnarnam, India

TANKA

i pin patches
over hole-filled fabric
gathering wind
what it means to be
turned inside out

Kirsten Cliff Elliot, England

swallowed
by the well-worn grooves
in our bed
we no longer reach across
the barrier between us

C. Jean, Canada

the free will
of a dandelion's seed
in the wind
what am I if not
a wildflower?

Jenny Polstra, Aotearoa/New Zealand

holding court
in a field of wildflowers
Queen Anne's lace
her wardrobe signaling
that choices matter

Bonnie J Scherer, USA

KYOKA

emerging
from the shapewear
I become
the sum of my whole
curves and handles

Rashmi VeSa, India

HAIBUN AND LINKED FORMS

American Gothic, Washington, D.C., 1942 (*Photograph*)

Gordon Parks, American (1912-2006)

Caroline Giles Banks, USA

Gordon Parks poses Ella Watson between a rag mop and bristle broom, the American flag behind her. Her nighttime job description: government charwoman, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration. In the midnight hours Ella cleans the offices of neck-tied civil servants tasked with aiding farm families, families like the Dust Bowl couple portrayed by Grant Wood, their pitchfork idled, the tines turned up.

Ella is not part of a pair. Her father was lynched, her husband murdered. Wearing her Singer-sewn polkadot shirtwaist dress she faces us straight on. Resolute. Promises to keep.

single mother making ends meet laundress and
church deacon

Conundrum

Roberta Beary, USA/Ireland

The woman in the photograph wears a gold heart that hangs from a delicate chain. Like the gift you gave me on our wedding day. A tweed jacket, identical to the one I inherited from your mother, is slung over her shoulders. Do you see the gothic R pinned on the lapel? A twin for the one we found in the secondhand shop. The back of the image bears my married name in what looks like my handwriting, and is dated two years before you left. I don't understand why the woman looks so miserable. As if her life were one dark cloud. It was kind of you to bring this photograph to me, but I can't accept it. That woman isn't me.

tulips bloom
beside an empty chair
another year gone

Shedding Bark

Deborah Karl-Brandt, Germany

Buying a new pair of jeans. Have I mentioned how much I hate this? No? I apologize!

The ones with the extra wide legs are designed to fit only extra narrow waists. The ones with extra slim legs are what some designer thinks are the best option for women with tummies, bums, waists and thighs. Do you know I have tights? Oh yes, I have tights. They are altered by lipedemia and every squeeze hurts. The new jeans with narrow legs cut into the soft flesh around my knees and make me cringe. Now you feel uncomfortable? Sorry to hear that, my dear.

black cauldrons
and the scent of sugar
through the open door
how could a story like this
ever end well?

The Gift of Womanhood

*Inspired by the sculpture Cadeau by Man Ray**

Maureen Kingston, USA

after delivery

Yoga class. The grueling chair pose. I focus on the young woman in front of me—the curious square tattoo on her left shoulder. It doesn't help. My thoughts continue to pinball. Innnnnhale. Exhaaaaaale. Free radicals begin to coalesce, rally around a single memory, a single face: Amy, my first babysitter. I'd worshipped her. She was unbridled, a flowy-skirt hippie who never tired of twirling me.

the porcupine's soft quills

Sunday evening. Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. Amy's father out of whiskey. Thrashing sounds. Lion roars. Amy tapping on our sliding-glass door. Amy face-down on our couch, surrounded by bloody towels, belt-buckle imprints all over her back.

harden

*www.clevelandart.org/art/2011.198

Crème Brûlée

C.X. Turner, UK

lantern glow
a moth circles
its quiet heat

Her hands, nicked and scarred, tell the story of a kitchen too small for her ambitions. She brushes sugar onto the custard's surface, the torch sputtering a low growl as it glazes the brittle crust.

A thin bandage peeks from her wrist, half-hidden, skin raw beneath. "Just clumsy," she says, but her friend once noticed how she pressed her fingers too close to the flame, as though daring it to answer back.

She moves through life like her choux pastry: precise, golden, and hollowed out in places you wouldn't expect. Even perfection demands a certain edge, a willingness to endure the sting.

drifting snow
the blade pauses
against pale skin

On Edge

Laurie Wilcox-Meyer, USA

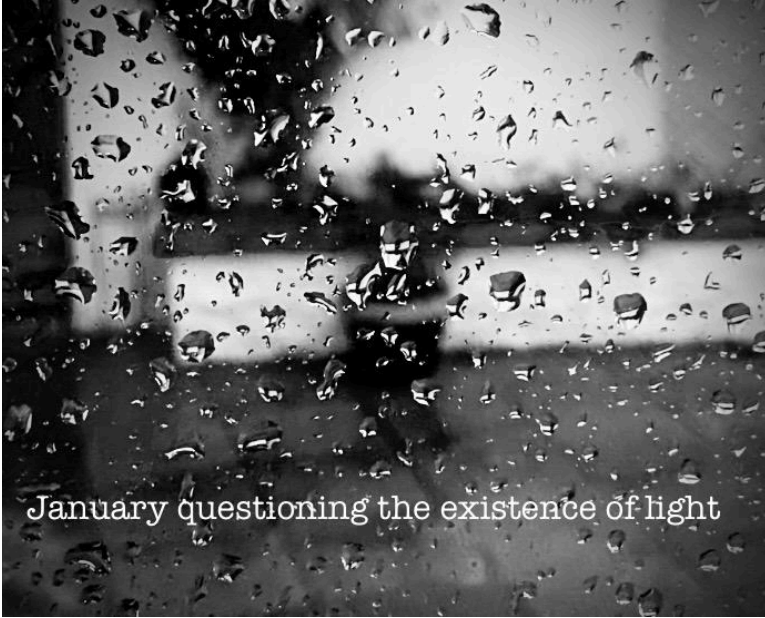
I dash to get done what (I think) has to be done. Have
scurried to post offices in raging thunderstorms. (Not
without a speeding ticket.) Projects and hurdles, a state bottle
bill didn't get passed though we were fierce. The devil's
details tick-tock without end, leading where?

at the gas station
one humorous sign:
.59/Lb boneless bananas

A Buddhist monk next to me on a plane once shared: Feeling
pressured is no sin. Then he cringed as turbulence jolted him
closer to me.

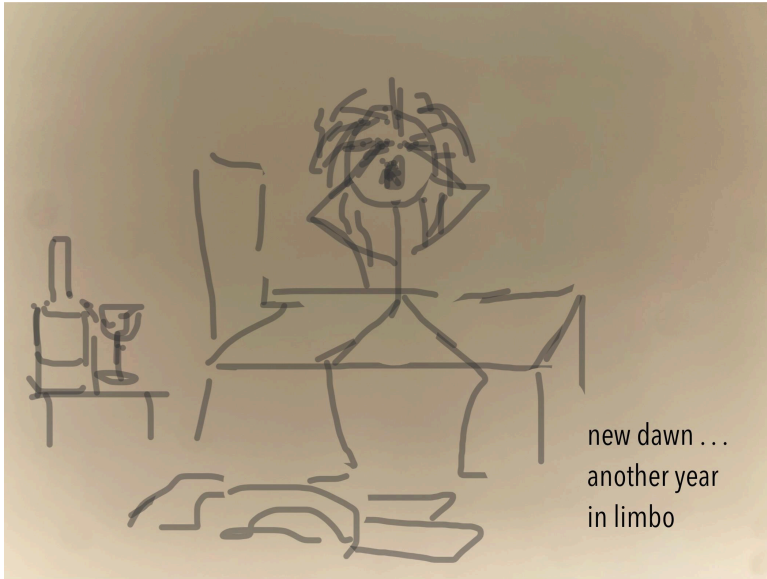
my mother at 90 leaves her phone off the hook

HAIGA AND VISUAL POETRY



Marion Clarke, Northern Ireland

Haiga and Visual Poetry



Marion Clarke, Northern Ireland

Haiga and Visual Poetry



Marianne Paul, Canada

Haiga and Visual Poetry



Bonnie J Scherer, USA

Haiga and Visual Poetry



Debbie Strange, Canada

autumn dusk
I pick up the habit
of her sigh



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C.X. Turner, UK

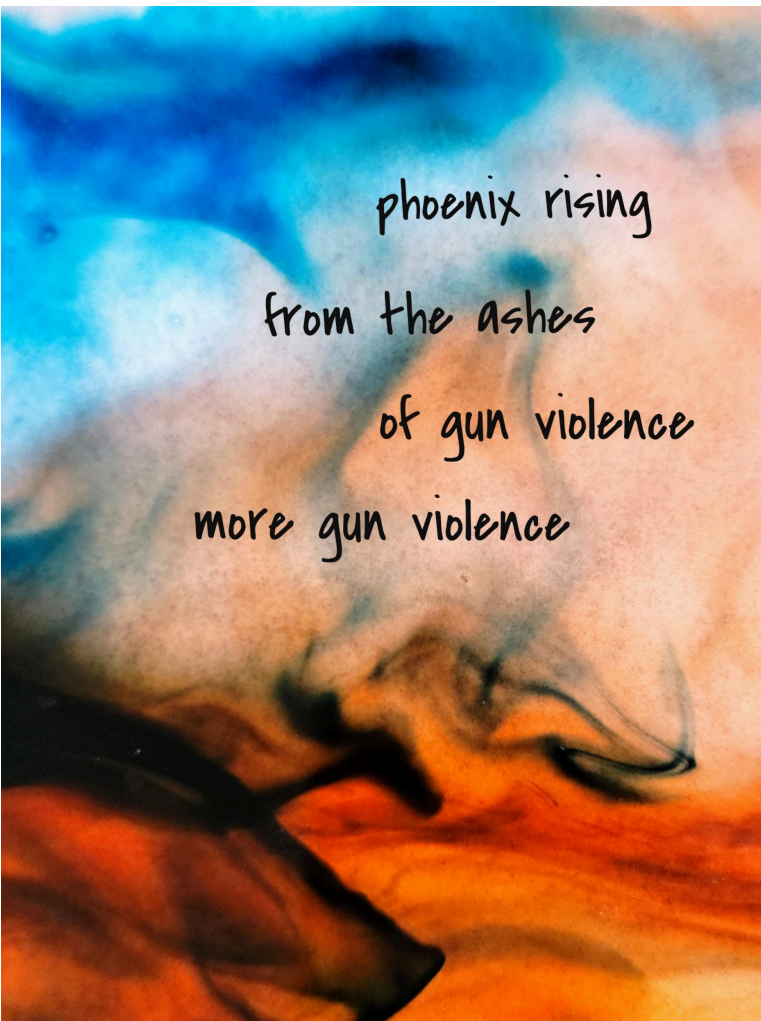
FEMKU FEATURE

Julie Schwerin, USA

Julie Schwerin (she/her) is an associate editor at *The Heron's Nest* (www.theheronsnest.com) and a member of the Red Moon Anthology Editorial team. She is the author of three collections: *What Was Here* (Folded Word Press), *Walking Away From the Sunset* (Brooks Books), and most recently, *still growing wings*, which was the 2024 winner of the Backbone Press Chapbook Contest.

my butter knife era
the winter wind's
bitter slice





phoenix rising
from the ashes
of gun violence
more gun violence

BOOK REVIEWS

Moonflowers, by Bipasha Majumder De (Winchester VA.: Red Moon Press 2025). 96 pages; 4.25" x 6.5". Perfect softbound.
ISBN 978-1-958408-57-5. \$20.00 from
www.redmoonpress.com

Reviewed by Vandana Parashar

Moonflowers by Bipasha Majumdar De, published by Red Moon Press, is an impressive debut by the poet who started writing haiku in 2021.

The poems in this book mainly centre around the theme of war and relationships.

Majumdar De has put haiku to good use in conveying the complexities of war and its impact on individuals and communities. Haiku like “frontier zone / I can hear the ghost soldiers / laughing together”(which reminds of Basho’s haiku about soldiers, as Alan Summers noted in the introduction) and “night sky / war orphan’s wailing / hides the stars” particularly stand out in capturing the haunting presence of war.

The theme of memory and its relationship to place and family have been sensitively explored through haiku-like “childhood home / walls slough off / their memories” and “new born girl child / my mom’s puffy eyes tell me / a lot of tales”.

I would've liked stronger juxtapositions in some haiku, but overall, this is a strong and poignant collection that shows the potential of the poet. I wish Majumdar De all the best in her future endeavours.

Broken China, by Bernadette O'Reilly (Uxbridge, UK.: Alba Publishing, 2024). 86 pages; 6"x 9". Perfect softbound. ISBN 9781912773695. £16 from www.albapublishing.com

Reviewed by Rowan Beckett Minor

Bernadette O'Reilly is a writer who was born in and currently resides in Ireland. Her work has been published in various international journals including *Presence*, *The Bamboo Hut*, *Cattails*, *seashores*, *whiptail*, and *Failed Haiku*. O'Reilly's debut haiku collection, *Broken China*, was published by Alba Publishing in September 2024.

Broken China is a collection of haiku, senryu, and haibun that center around family and life transitions through the lens of seasonal variation. While quite traditional in tone and subject, these poems are specific to the poet's life and personal ancestral history:

uncle's half acre
we run between
bales of gold

It is this distinct use of language, particularly adjectives, that embeds the author's individuality so deeply and richly into her work.

One haiku and senryu craft tool that O'Reilly is especially skilled with is the element of surprise:

ant epidemic
my sister stamps her foot
on our parents' grave

The author carefully selects her line breaks to create a potent climax, then leaves readers with a striking resolution that we might not expect.

Most haiku and senryu are nearly perfect in craft, and very few poems might rely on one another for the reader to complete the narrative arc as a whole. However, not one poem feels out of place within the collection.

While the haiku and senryu are strong, it's O'Reilly's haibun that stand out as her strength. It is obvious that the author knows how to subtly leap between the title, the prose, and the haiku/senryu, effortlessly tying everything together while also leaving space for readers to come to some conclusions on their own.

Book Reviews

Overall, *Broken China* is a captivating collection with poems that wrap you up in a warm blanket and make you feel right at home. It is poems like O'Reilly's that will satisfy the reader, and also leave them wanting more.

2025 Publication Schedule:

Summer 2025

Edited by Rowan Beckett Minor & Carissa Coane

Open to women, non-binary, & trans-identifying poets only

Submit: May 1-31

2025 Marlene Mountain Memorial Contest

Judged by Vandana Parashar & Rowan Beckett Minor

Open June 1-15, 2025

Autumn/Winter 2025

Edited by Rowan Beckett Minor & Kelly Sargent

Open to women, non-binary, & trans-identifying poets only

Submit: September 1-30