

Reviews



Kokako 19 edited by Patricia Prime and Margaret Beverland. Subscription \$25 for two issues annually. kokakonz@gmail.com. ISSN: 11770902, and **100 Tanka by 100 Poets of Australia and New Zealand** edited by Amelia Fielden, Beverley George and Patricia Prime, with illustrations by Ron C. Moss. Port Adelaide: Ginninderra Press (2013). RRP: AU\$16. Pb, 66pp. ISBN: 9781740278317. Reviewed by Jane Orchard.

Kokako 19 treats us to tanka, haiku, haibun and a range of derivative Japanese poetry forms. They feature a fascinating interplay between Japanese tradition and newer interpretations of the form. The traditional Japanese haiku is written as one line but Western poets adapted the form to the three-line 5-7-5 syllable pattern. Now not only has the number of syllables been freed but we are taken back to the one-line form:

heron's legs along for the ride
Alan Bridges

bowl of leek soup & soy bread date wears diamonds
Francis Attard

The traditional focus on Nature remains

buried robin
just in from heaven
the sextant beetle
John Parsons

but is often left behind

lost art
the ability to fold
a road map

John Soules

This excellent anthology leads us on from the subtleties of haiku to other Japanese forms. Its playful junicho renku and shisan written by several poets, its rengay by pairs of poets, through to the complexity of Steven Carter's 'Deena', ensure variety, challenge, fun and insight.

The **100 Tanka by 100 Poets of Australia and New Zealand** is a much more formal anthology. In allocating only one poem per poet, we are exposed to a wide range of styles and subject material. The introduction by Kiyoko Ogawa, co-editor 2000-10 of *Poetry Nippon* 1967-2011, gives us an insight into the form and its history. This collection was inspired by the classic Japanese anthology of *100 Poems by 100 Poets* believed to have been edited in 1235 by Fujiwara no Teika.



The collection is beautifully presented with illustrations by Ron C Moss and with only two tanka per page we are given the physical space to appreciate each work as a separate being.

Twenty-four of the poems are by New Zealand poets and we see many familiar names as well as a few new ones.

We are reminded of the complexity of emotion that can be wrapped into five lines in poems such as

gone overnight
a row of new carrots
as fresh as my sister's smile
the night she went to bed
and never woke

Karen Peterson Butterworth

Reviews



planning our wedding
in the hospital chapel
while I have chemo
I am not dying
but part of me is

Kristin Cliff

Patricia Prime is the New Zealand editor for **100 Tanka** and jointly edited **Kokako 19**. Her expert hand is present in the quality of the selections and the interest they hold for the general reader.
