

Eucalypt eNews August 2022

Eucalypt

A Tanka Journal

CELEBRATING
30
YEARS

Submissions to Issue 33 close 30 September 2022

Email up to 6 tanka to editor.eucalypt@gmail.com

Dear Poets and Friends,

It is lovely to hear of *Eucalypt* poets publishing new books, and this issue of our eNews reports on some of the recent publications I've heard about. Congratulations to all.

Thanks to Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti for allowing me to publish in this newsletter the text of her launch speech for Anne Benjamin's new book, *After all this time*. The launch was a lovely occasion and opportunity to meet up with other poets.

Also a pleasure is 'talking about tanka' which I will be doing with first editor Beverley George during a workshop for the Society of Women Writers NSW at SLNSW on Wednesday 10th August.

Submissions for issue 33 will be read in September. Please don't send poems before September 1, as it is difficult to keep track of email sent at other times. Please also include your full address. I'm looking forward to reading your poems.

I'm also hoping to enjoy spring wildflowers, after such a rainy winter.

I wonder, what are you celebrating this year?

Warmest wishes,

Julie



The Scribble Awards

It is my pleasure to announce the SCRIBBLE AWARDS for issue 32.

The Distinctive Scribble Awards recognise two outstanding poems from each issue of *Eucalypt*, selected and appraised by winners of the Awards in the previous issue.

The winners from issue 32 are . . .

Liz Lanigan

pounding
pegs to pitch a tent
on hard ground
my hammer's head
flies off the handle

—*Liz Lanigan*

selected by Jan Foster

Amelia Fielden

stroking slowly
through cool blue silkiness
I lose concern
for things I can't control—
the sun will set at seven

—*Amelia Fielden*

selected by Mira Walker

The appraisals can be read on the Eucalypt website maintained by founding editor Beverley George <http://www.eucalypt.info/E-awards.html> Congratulations to Liz and Amelia

who are invited to be our award judges for issue 33!

Classic Poem

while watching
the long rains falling on this world
my heart, too, fades
with the colour
of the spring flowers

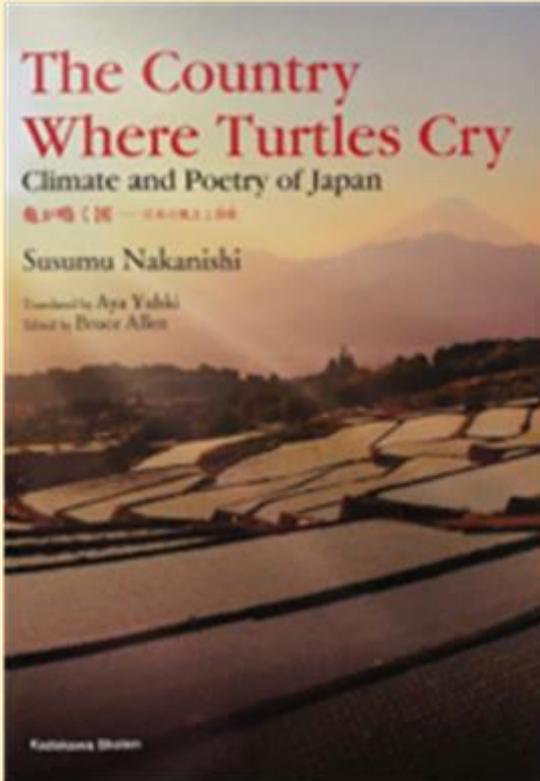
Ono no Komachi

Translated by Jane Hirshfield with Mariko Aratani

Book Notes

Publications we have heard about . . .

Please send your book news to:
editor.eucalypt@gmail.com

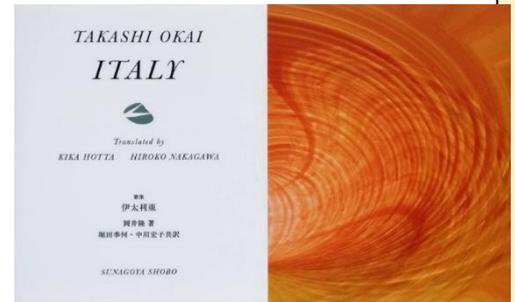


Italy by Takashi Okai

This book of tanka was written by Dr Takashi Okai, teacher of tanka to the Imperial family, during travels in Italy.

The poems are presented in Japanese, in English translation by Kika Hotta and also in German by Hiroko Nakagawa.

gently shining
roofs and blue wheat
of Florence—
from the Orient I have come
to stand here smiling



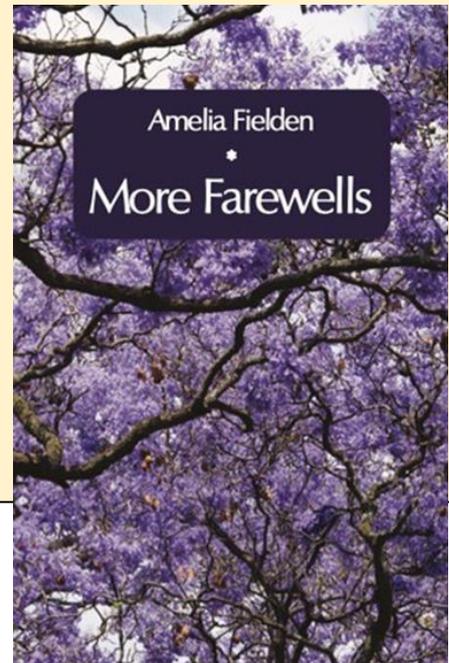
This unique publication sold out in Japan, but I have some copies to share with *Eucalypt* subscribers, courtesy of Hiroko Nakagawa. For details, please email editor.eucalypt@gmail.com

The Country Where Turtles Cry: Climate and Poetry of Japan

By Susumu Nakanishi, translated by Aya Yuhki, edited by Bruce Allen. Kadokawa Shoten, 2022.

What is the Japanese aesthetic sense that has been passed down from the ancient times of the Manyoshu, and how was it nurtured in the climate and lifestyle?

An English translation of a masterpiece that deciphers the cultural characteristics of Japan, using waka, tanka, and haiku as clues.



More Farewells

Tanka by Amelia Fielden
Ginninderra Press, 2021
ISBN 978 1 76109 231 2 \$32.50

'In the tanka tradition, Amelia shares the personal in her life, yet offers her human adventure in a universal manner. Her readers will recognise their own lives in the specifics of the life Amelia has shared in her tanka. Also, she respects the tanka tradition of writing lyrical poems. Read out loud her tanka for yourself and/or recite for loved ones and friends so that you (and they) will hear the song-like quality of her verse.' - Neal Whitman

Beachcomber

Poems by Colleen Keating
Ginninderra Press, 2022
ISBN 978 1 76109 242 8 \$30

A poet as beachcomber walks the beach, sometimes with pen and paper, gathering sights and sounds, shells and stones, scents and seagull scenes. Yet it is not always about the waves and wind, for the sea carries the stories of the world; how it connects and disconnects, how it gives and takes, reveals how we treat it. Humanity is always present in its deep moans and its dance of exaltation. When you listen, the ocean has much to say.



On the Web

Titbits and other interesting reads . . .

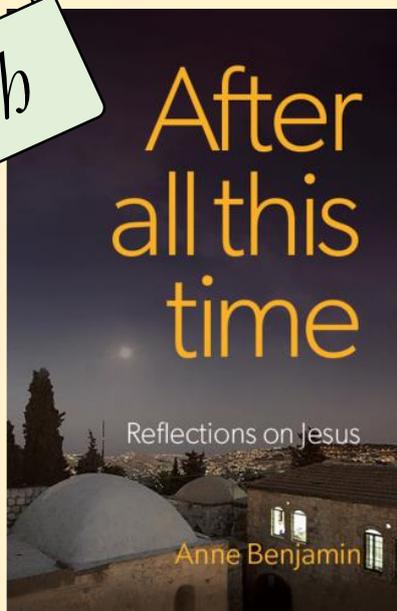
Eucalypt found only in Sydney suburbs confirmed as new species

An incredibly rare eucalypt found in some of the most densely developed areas of Sydney has been confirmed as a new species.

The yet-to-be formally named species is a shrubby type of eucalypt with cup-shaped fruit and is found in the Hills District in Sydney's north-west. *[Where Eucalypt a tanka journal is published!]*

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-21/new-eucalypt-species-sydney-botanic-gardens/101255680>





After all this time
by Anne Benjamin

In the book's introduction, Anne says the scriptures invite her to respond in action and words, and her responses in this book are written in both prose and free verse poetry, most of the poetry being in tanka form—some which are in strings; others poignantly placed within prose.

Anne's responses are aided by her creative writer imagination but also ring with authenticity due to pilgrimage in Israel and Palestine—many of her experiences there as they would have been in the first century, such as feeling Nazareth's 38-degree summer days, seeing wind-tossed wildflowers beneath Mount Tabor in May, and hearing "the noisy tumbling clarity of the Jordan River splashing down rocks and rushing through narrow cuttings".

Anne uses her experiences to bring aspects of the ancient biblical scriptures into sharp focus and, as many of her reflections are in tanka, Anne asked me to speak briefly about this form.

I first met Anne, 16 years ago when her sister, Carmel Summers, brought her to a meeting of the Eastwood/Hills Branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers—a broad church of writers who pen everything from sonnets to sci-fi.

Back then, Anne was an accomplished academic writer but had been introduced to tanka by Carmel and so she joined 'The Tanka Huddle' - a sub-set of our members who shared and critiqued their tanka, including Beverley George (founding editor of the Australian tanka journal – Eucalypt), Julie Thorndyke (current editor), David Terelinck, Marilyn Humbert, Carmel Summer, and Jan Foster, among others who have become Anne's "tanka companions" with whom she has also co-written on many occasions.

Anne took to tanka and related forms with alacrity. Her work has now been published in journals here and overseas, including *Eucalypt*, *Kokako*, *Presence*, *Japan Tanka Journal*, *Ribbons*, *Gusts*, *Atlas Poetica*, *Skylark*, *Red lights*, *Haibun Today*, *Take Five: Best Contemporary Tanka*, *Simply Haiku*, *Moonbathing*, and *Wisteria*.

Anne contributed to Carmel Summers' tanka anthology *The Last Day before Snow* and, in 2016, edited *Gemstones*, a tanka anthology she wrote in collaboration with seven other international and renowned poets. Now, dare I say, 'after all this time', Anne has used tanka as an integral part of her reflections on Jesus.

For those unfamiliar with it, tanka are five-segmented poems that originated in Japan over 1,300 years ago. They were historically written in one unbroken line, were sung, and became the preferred verse form in the Japanese Imperial Court.

When I first held this book, my eye was caught by the 'tanka-like' layout of the text on the cover. Traditionally, tanka in English are structured in five lines – in a short, long, short, long, long pattern some speak about as being lines of 5, 7, 5, 7 and 7 syllables totalling 31. However, Japanese sound units are generally much shorter than English syllables and many tanka in English are far fewer than 31 syllables.

Tanka is the antecedent of that 300-years-young poetry form haiku which simply presents an image without editorialising. Unlike haiku, tanka allows the inclusion of the poet or human element.

There is usually a shift from the image-focussed three opening lines into a metaphor, simile, or personification for the two closing lines, (but this turn might be seen after the second or fourth line). This personal response is often heralded by a pivotal line or word that can link to the lines above or below it, or by an ellipsis, or em-dash as in Anne's example inspired by the Jordan River:

freed from rocks,
the stream rushes
in a torrent—
sometimes in my life
the way forward is so clear

or this from a reflection on the disciples following Jesus to Jerusalem:

the wind blusters
through the window holes—
this fragile dwelling
shelter enough
for those who walk with me

Tanka doesn't use devices such as metre, rhyme, alliteration, or assonance—although a little chiming of sounds that occurs incidentally is pleasing to the ear, as in this extract from Anne's imagining of Martha preparing a meal for Jesus:

flustered
and dusted with flour
she complains—
her sister sits attentive
to every word you say

Writing such succinct verse requires discipline. Each word (and indeed each syllable) must be necessary.

Now, those are the 'nuts and bolts' that underlie the magic of these poems to evoke reflection, often about subjects that are profound or emotionally stirring. And, if you read translations of ancient tanka by poets mourning or in love you'll notice they still resonate. So, what better vehicle for Anne's reflections on Jesus - a man, prophet, teacher born into a very different place, culture, and time, but who has occupied human hearts and minds for millennia?

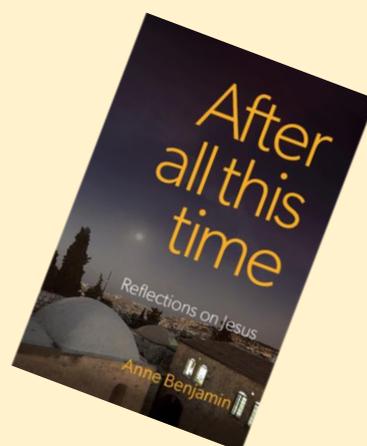
In reading the manuscript, Anne gifted me new insights into often read biblical passages, and images presented in her tanka, free verse and prose have lingered long in my mind.

I believe the synergy between Anne's skills as a poet, story writer, and educator bring Jesus, the cast of characters and setting of his story (that may not instantly, or easily, resonate here and now) to life for 21st century readers. And, at this time of pandemic, global warming, and high levels of anxiety in so many, this book designed to help others ponder and connect with an enduring story of hope is an important one.



Carolyn and Anne at the launch

Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti
edited launch speech, 23 June 2022



After all this time by Anne Benjamin \$39.95
Coventry Press, 2022. ISBN 9781922589170
<https://coventrypress.com.au/after-all-this-time>

Subscriptions for 2022

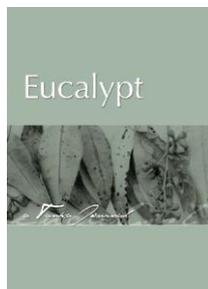
Online payment buttons have been added to my website for your convenience.
<https://juliethorndyke.com/eucalypt-a-tanka-journal/>

Thank you for your support!

Missed a Eucalypt newsletter?

Back issues are archived [HERE](#)

<https://jthorndyke.wordpress.com/eucalypt-a-tanka-journal/>



SUBMISSION CLOSING DATES:

MARCH 31
SEPTEMBER 30

Please email poems to
editor.eucalypt@gmail.com

With the subject line:
Submission – [your surname here]

**Australian subscriptions
still only \$30 AUD per year.**

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**\$50 AUD for other
international subscribers.**

PayPal is available.

ABOUT EUCALYPT

Eucalypt is the first Australian journal devoted to this ancient Japanese poetry genre.

Japanese waka (now called tanka) are five-segmented poems. In English, they are usually written in five lines. Often, they address profound human emotions, such as love or mourning, but can also be used to record everyday experience.

The genre is 1300 years old, but is surprisingly relevant to the way we think and feel today.

Eucalypt is a print magazine which showcases contemporary tanka poetry written in the English language, and publishes only those poems its editors consider to be of the highest standard.

Its objectives are to offer wider publication opportunities to tanka poets and to make more people aware of the delights of reading and writing tanka.

There are two issues per year, in May and in November

Julie Thorndyke
3 Forest Knoll
Castle Hill 2154
NSW AUSTRALIA
editor.eucalypt@gmail.com