

FOREWORD

I am honored to have been asked to write the foreword to this luminous anthology of haiku and haiga reflecting the four seasons in the American Southwest. My late husband, William J. (Bill) Higginson, and I moved to Santa Fe in 1991, and we hadn't been there long before I announced to him, "This is the place where air is made." The mountains seemed part of the sky, and the Milky Way had never looked so clear. The title of this volume also calls us into the sky, as does the title poem by Lesley Anne Swanson:

lifting the sky
high over Arizona
saguaro arms

During our eleven years living in Santa Fe, Bill and I traveled throughout New Mexico, as well as into Colorado, West Texas (where my parents had relocated from New Jersey), and California. Since then I have visited my sister in the Texas Hill Country. Although New Mexico is often referred to as the Land of Enchantment, the whole region enchants me.

If I were writing a review of this volume, I'd find it hard to stop quoting poems, and I'd want to find a way to reproduce many of the wonderful haiga that are so aptly placed within the overall flow of the work. It's clear that the editors deeply cared about the ongoing order of the poems, both within the seasonal sections (starting with Fall) and within the book as a whole.

Here we enter haiku and haiga that take us through the beauties of the landscape—from desert and mountains to the sea; poems that express the poets' political, spiritual, mythical, cultural, and deeply personal connections to the Southwest; poems that make us laugh or cry; and poems drenched in light that repeatedly carry us from the Earth into the stars and galaxies. As does the landscape, these poems lift us out of ourselves. And this is underscored in the closing haiga, by Allene Rasmussen Nichols:

all things vanish here —
horned lizards, animal bones
cactus blooms
and
us

Back in 1992, shortly after Bill and I had moved to Santa Fe, I wrote the following haiku:

a morning glory
cupped in his hand —
the sky

This anthology is like that morning glory. Cradle it, open it, and enjoy!

Penny Harter
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