

A full moon is positioned in the upper center of the frame against a dark, clear sky. A bright, shimmering reflection of the moon extends vertically down the center of the image, appearing as a glowing path on a body of water. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a night scene.

the
weight
of
moon
light

spring street

haiku group

the weight of moonlight

a collection of haiku by
spring street haiku group
nyc 2019

The year was 1952. John Cage debuted the performance of his piano piece **4' 33"**. There was outrage as the musician sat in front of his instrument for four minutes and 33 seconds—hands folded— not a note played.

"Where's the music?" complained the audience... without realizing that they, themselves, were the music.

It was Cage's idea, that chance would decide what people heard. That chance would include a cough, a shout, a grumble in the piece. The music was outside the piano... in the air. Chance created the composition, and made it different each time.

William Burroughs, too, used chance in his art. In his "cut-up technique," he tore his manuscripts into quarters, randomly shuffled and reassembled the pieces, looking at the haphazard pairings for new sentences, new ideas, brought together by chance.

Heads it's a consonant. Tails it's a vowel. The first letter of this introduction was the flip of a quarter. That's it. In many ways, this little chapbook relies on the idiosyncrasies of chance. The order of poets was decided by a draw from a hat. The order of poems within each poet was decided by the random order of submission.

The haiku themselves, were not chosen by chance, but through the work of the poets themselves (choosing their best, after much— often harsh— discussion over Evian and senbei) and the work of the editors... whoever came to discuss what was to be included and what not.

In your hands, you certainly hold the best work of *Spring Street Haiku Group* 2018. (The exception being two of Cor van den Heuvel's three haiku... some of the best of which we overlooked in the last chapbook and have included here.)

Chance, however, plays a large part. Not only the order of the haiku, but in *Spring Street Haiku Group* itself.

A chance meeting of interested people at a last-century HSA function. An offer from Poet's House (then located on Spring Street in Manhattan) for free use of a meeting room. A series of encounters at a zendo... a random asking "Does your group have room for one more?" ... and dozens of other chancities. Members have their own, untold and possibly unremembered, stories of chance that brought them to the group.

Haiku itself is so much chance. With the random flitting from branch to branch in a forest... or from rat to rat on subway rails. You will find connections in this little book that would not be here except for chance. That's the way it should be. You can start at the beginning and go right through... or open at random and dig right in. You'll see how chance works its wonders.

If you're lucky, you'll find new places and connections that never occurred to you before. If you're unlucky, then close the book for a few seconds, close your eyes for a few more... and try again.

--Mykel Board, chance member of *Spring Street Haiku Group*

Thanks to the members of Spring Street Haiku Group for making this possible. Also for making ME possible, at least in my current incarnation.

Also thanks to Miriam Borne for her tireless hostessing of the sometimes raucous meetings at her East Village apartment.

Also thanks to Noreen Ash Mackay for hostessing the editorial meeting described in the introduction.

Yet more thanks to Cor van den Heuvel and Doris Heitmeyer who, though no longer able to physically climb the stairs to Miriam's place, were able to contribute with communications to other members. They are the rock on which we build this sometimes shaky Spring Street structure.

Yet more thanks to Kei Andersen for helping with the layout and cover design. And to all the members of *Spring Street* who found each other by chance, and made this book possible.

THE HAIKU

Central Park
in a birder's binoculars
rain on a maple leaf

mom's apron
she smooths a wrinkle
from the roses

blue harbor
the breeze balloons in turn
each small white sail

it's dusk
a crooked line of snow
glows in the oak

—Carl Patrick

farm grid
the river
has other ideas

train commute...
the passing cemetery
has more legroom

crack of dawn—
the monster under my bed
a dust bunny

first light
every chirp
cricket-fed

—Scott Mason

a caterpillar drops...
clings to my dress
a living accessory



—Noreen Ash Mackay

subway saxophone
that high note held
extra long

gym house-music
the added baseline
of treadmill runners

winter night
the flash
of a stranger's smile

footbridge
an old man carries
his old dog across

—Miriam Borne

subway platform
a young couple dances
to the rumble of the train

hiding
my AARP magazine—
I flirt back

the cockroaches
near the coffee-maker—
hyperactive

at the top of the stairs
an old man in a wheelchair
laughs

— Mykel Board

lying in his coffin
here
not here

all eyes
follow the flip
of the short yellow skirt

city bus—
above her orthopedic shoe
a gold snake anklet

almost summer—
on the sidewalk
a fledgling's tiny corpse

—Kei Andersen

hot day—
even the chainsaw loses
to the cicadas

a train whistle
somewhere in the night
full moon

stuck to the porch
of the boarded-up station
wet autumn leaves

—Cor van den Heuvel

the weight of moonlight on a pillow

in silence
the family watches a golden sunset—
hospital waiting room

—Bruce Kennedy

ten thousand worries
the moon in my window sinks
pane by pane

school recital
one of grandma's snores
in tune

from behind layers of cloud
the calls of passing geese

one stray

—Efren Estevez

at eighty-nine years
too slow with the flyswatter
even to scare them

with one swat
the housefly
the salt shaker

—Doris Heitmeyer

checking the bird guide
then looking back—
the empty hawthorn branch

bare branch
against the night sky
its own blackness

midnight walk
the scent of lilacs
from the gated park

summer heat
the pacing of the dog
in the backseat

—Matt Beck

lonely night...
high above the horizon
Venus

afternoon gray
the backyard puddle
expands

this endless road...
everywhere but nowhere
the prairie

—Jay Friedenberg

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