

Review of *The Way of Haiku* in *Blithe Spirit*, the Journal of the British Haiku Society (Volume 29, #2) by Iliyana Stoyanova

Along with *Poetry That Heals* and *The Way of Tanka*, *The Way of Haiku* is the last installment in Naomi Wakan's compelling trilogy on the Japanese haikai poetry. An accomplished poet and personal essayist, Wakan has written over fifty books and is the Inaugural poet Laureate of Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada, and the Inaugural Honorary Ambassador for the Federation of British Columbia Writers.

Although in the introduction to the book Wakan states that she has written it primarily for absolute beginners, *The Way of Haiku* offers a lot more than that. Wakan not only introduces the reader to the world of haiku, its key elements and principles, but she also discusses the history and development of this particular genre of poetry as well as showing the differences between haiku written in Japanese and those written in the Western world. Wakan has lived in Japan and has explored Japanese literature closely, which is noticeable from the way she uses numerous examples accompanied by translations and useful explanations.

Just like in the other books of her trilogy, Naomi Wakan's style of writing is very clear with certain carefully chosen words and explanations, without going into any deep and dry theoretical statements which might put off some readers at the beginning of their haiku journey. Her prose carries the characteristics of a haiku poem and it leaves freedom for the reader to search for more and to improve along the way of writing haiku. An excellent guide for both learning and teaching the way of haiku.