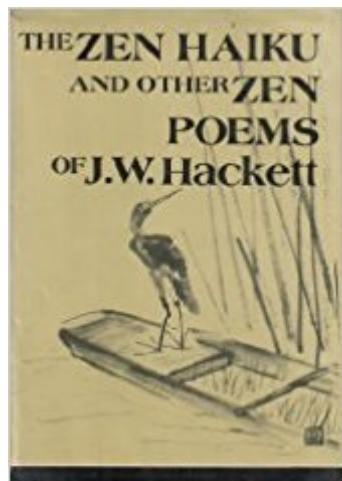


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Zen Haiku And Other Zen Poems Of J.W. Hackett



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Customer Reviews

This book is occasionally cited in English haiku anthologies, but I found it disappointing. The R.H. Blyth "forward and comments" struck me as rather fatuously admiring, but the preface by Eido Tai Shimano was instructive. And the "Author's Introduction" illuminates a process wherein the author believes "it is far more important to live with haiku awareness than to write haiku poems." Hackett's "Suggestions for Writing Haiku in English" are helpful and were later revised and posted online as "Suggestions for Creating Haiku Poetry in English." However, Hackett's own haiku are too densely descriptive compared with Japanese haiku, the danger of allowing oneself 17 English syllables. The Japanese 17-syllable poem contains quite a bit less "information" than an English poem of 17 syllables; for example, the word "haiku" is 2 syllables in English but 3 in Japanese, so English haiku should be shorter to stay within the Japanese haiku spirit. With a 17-syllable allowance, an author can pack too much into each poem, as usually happens in Hackett's haiku: A long line of webunseen, but for shifting stretches that return the sun Too "full" for my tastes -- too much emphasis on the words and not enough on the experience -- and not in the spirit of #17 of Hackett's 18 points on writing haiku, namely, "Remember that haiku is a finger pointing at the moon, and if the hand is bejeweled, we no longer see that to which it points." Similarly, many are just too emphatic: Summer dusk ... the birds gather in one tree and share the day's excitement! Overpunctuation and fancifulness can also sink the haiku: Why alight, dragonfly? With such wings you can live always -- on the wind.

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