

Press Release

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NYQ Books™ Announces the Publication of *On the Chicopee Spur* by Al Ortolani



April 30, 2018 - New York, NY - NYQ Books™ is proud to announce the publication of *On the Chicopee Spur* by Al Ortolani. In *On the Chicopee Spur*, the haibun form allows Ortolani to speak plainly in the bread of prose, and then slice the loaf with haiku. It's the form Basho used to highlight his journeys across Japan in the seventeenth century. Many of the haiku are not written in the traditional 5-7-5 syllable format, but instead, speak tersely in the spirit of the haiku, experimental, American. Some of the subject matter comes from the immediacy of the hospice experience, others from memories and daydreams along the way.

"Here in these poems the poet shows you life, real and unblinking. Here also, "sunlight like yellow flowers patchworks the timber."

—Marjorie Saiser, author of *The Woman in the Moon*

"In a good haibun, a chemical reaction ricochets between the prose and the haiku, a synergy akin to mixing baking soda and vinegar. Al Ortolani finds this synergy repeatedly in his book's rich, well-paced, and wide-ranging haibun. Whoosh!"

—Michael Dylan Welch, founder, National Haiku Writing Month, former vice president, Haiku Society of America

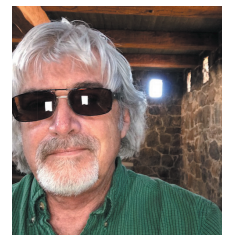
"The haibun just might be the perfect poetic form for Al Ortolani, poet of many voices and designs. The haibun combines most often vernacular prose with the precision and concision of haiku: 'I saw a panda in the garden this afternoon. When I looked closer, it turned out to be a patch of snow: glaucoma, cataracts, old guy eyes,' with, 'brushing silverfish out of a notebook of poems.' Though subject matter is often somber, this book is alive with close observation and the fine writing of a craftsman of words: 'Blue-tailed skink skitters into patch of sun.'"

—Brian Daldorff, editor, *Coal City Review*

"The title of Al Ortolani's *On the Chicopee Spur* gives the reader a feel for the flavour and creativity of the writing. *Chicopee* is a collection of haibun poetry. It contains 67 short, prose plus haiku works in the style of Basho, a 17th Century Japanese Poet/ Monk/Traveler. Well-crafted, highly varied, accessible themes, candid, autobiographical—each quite enjoyable. Ortolani's writes from a more senior perspective. The work shows flashes of wit, insight, wisdom accompanied by the pathos that occurs when parents and friends begin to suffer serious infirmities and slip away. I've much enjoyed sitting by the fire reading just a few at a time."

—Ray Rasmussen, General Editor, *Haibun Today*

Al Ortolani's poetry has appeared in journals such as *Rattle*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Tar River Poetry*. *Ghost Sign*, a collaborative work, released in 2017 from Spartan Press, was designated a Kansas Notable Book. Ortolani is the Manuscript Editor for Woodley Press in Topeka and directs a memoir writing project for Vietnam veterans across Kansas in association with the Library of Congress and the Kansas Humanities Council. He has recently retired after 43 years of teaching. He lives in the Kansas City area with his wife Sherri.



NYQ Books™ was established in 2009 as an imprint of The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc. Its mission is to augment the *New York Quarterly* poetry magazine by providing an additional venue for poets who are already published in the magazine.