



Nodin Press
210 Edge Place, Minneapolis, MN, 55418
Contact Norton Stillman (952) 546-6300 / Fax (952) 546-6303
nstill4402@aol.com

Natural Life

a field guide

Stanley Kusunoki

The poems in this collection explore a range of themes and emotions, reflecting the remarkable diversity and complexity of the natural world, the flow of life and death, the wonders of human character and social interaction, and its impact on the environment. Some of the poems have an anguished political edge, other touch on such delicate themes as the role of salad Nicoise in nurturing a romantic relationship. Kusunoki is a teacher, and his concern for the future of young minds and spirits rings out through the collection.

Elizabeth Weir writes that “To read these poems is like wandering through different gardens with a wise teacher, who shares experiences and reflections in a delightful way.” And Michael Kiesow Moore describes the collection as “blooming with stories of travel, elegies that remember people lost, poems that honor ancestors and bear witness to our changing climate and places of human suffering.”

Stanley Kusunoki has taught creative writing to young people through programs at The Loft, Asian American Renaissance, Intermedia Arts, and S.A.S.E., The Write Place. He was the recipient of a Loft “Asian Inroads” mentorship, and was awarded a MN State Arts board “Cultural Collaboration” grant to create, write and perform “Beringia—The Land Bridge Project” with Ojibwe performance poet Jamison Mahto at Intermedia Arts. He is the former co-host/curator of the Literary Bridges reading series at Next Chapter Booksellers in St. Paul. Kusunoki most recently was the High Potential Coordinator at Red Oak Elementary School in Shakopee. He lives in Duluth with his wife, Claudia Daly.

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