

## Elizabeth Gauffreau Shares Nostalgic and Heartfelt Poetry Collection

There are common circumstances shared by all people; perhaps the most basic are life, death and family. Yet, each individual experiences these commonalities uniquely. Elizabeth Gauffreau addresses this in an extremely personal collection of family photos and poems that express her most inner feelings — *Grief Songs: Poems of Love & Remembrance*.

The poems present a lifetime of memories blended through the points of view of the author as a child through adulthood. Her carefully selected words emphasize and capture the presence of mothers, daughters, and family as they consider the lives and pasts of a mother and father who are now gone. While grief is embedded in the poems, so is joy, excitement, optimism and a healthy dose of the family interpersonal relationships many of us have also known. As one reviewer of the collection wrote, “...These memories bring home, in free verse recollections, the entirety of the family system of support, love, and experience which the author and her readers can grasp as legacies of the past and touchstones for the present.”

Gauffreau’s collection is written in the Japanese style of tanka — each poem is unrhymed and has 31 syllables in total. “The inspiration for the book began with curiosity about syllabic poetry, sparked by a blog I follow,” said the author. “I’d always written free verse, thinking that following a set form was too restrictive. I decided to experiment with tanka and found that it worked well.” Soon after, Gauffreau’s mother died. “As I was going through our photograph albums, brief lines of poetry started coming to me that lent themselves best to the formal restrictions of tanka. I then curated the poems into an associative narrative for the book.”

As many authors, Gauffreau had difficulty concentrating during the pandemic. “As a result, I wrote more poetry than fiction because it was easier to focus on the word and the line than to sustain characterization and plot,” she said. “I am drawn to poetry for the way it distills the essence of an experience. It’s always a thrill to read a poem someone else has written that fully expresses my own experience in a way I never could. From a craft perspective, I like working at the level of the word and the line.”

When not at her full-time job, Gauffreau can often be found in her study at her dad’s “beat-up old monster of a desk” writing. “I tend to write poetry at night before I go to bed and fiction first thing in the morning,” she said. Her debut novel *Telling Sonny* was published in 2018. She has also published short fiction and poetry in literary magazines and themed anthologies.

Gauffreau lives in Nottingham, NH with her husband. When not writing, she enjoys reading, taking scenic back road drives with her husband, touring historic homes and nature walks.

*Grief Songs: Poems of Love & Remembrance* is due to be released on September 26, 2021. Pre-orders are available at indie bookstores, Barnes & Noble and Amazon. To learn more about the author visit her website at <http://lizgauffreau.com>.

Elizabeth Gauffreau is a member of the New Hampshire Writers’ Project.