Yorifumi Yaguchi. *The Wing-Beaten Air: My Life and My Writing.* Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2008.

Part memoir of growing up in World War II Japan, part spiritual autobiography, and part poetry collection, poet Yorifumi Yaguchi's *The Wing-Beaten Air* braids these strands together in deceptively simple prose to create a thought-provoking meditation on practicing peace and intercultural understanding in contemporary cross-cultural contexts.

Yaguchi was a third-grader when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Through the candid eyes of a child, he reveals the ways in which warfare becomes intertwined with ordinary life. He shows us how he and his classmates were captivated by the jingoistic rhetoric of their time, how Shinto, the traditional Japanese folk religion, was co-opted into supporting a cult of the Emperor's divinity, how as a young man he was introduced to Christianity and came to embrace Mennonite pacifism, and how as an adult he became a cross-cultural ambassador in his roles as a poet, teacher of literature, lay minister, and peace activist.

Yaguchi's story is fascinating in itself, but his book is organized more as a series of interlocking meditations interspersed with poems than as a chronological account of his life. Much is left to the reader's imagination. In the manner of a poet, the themes tend to coalesce around images. Yaguchi shares these insights in poems imbedded in the text. For instance, he says little in expository prose about some of the most dramatic moments of his life, such as the death of his father, but invites the reader to experience these moments through poetry.

Grandson of a Buddhist priest on one side and the great-grandson of a Shinto priest on the other, Yaguchi also discovered threads of Christianity woven throughout his ancestry. Disillusioned with the failure of Buddhism in Japan to practice its teachings on peace during World War II, he likewise rejected Christianity as a warlike religion until he met Mennonite missionary Ralph Buckwalter. Yaguchi was so astounded by a form of Christianity which obeyed Christ's teaching not to kill that he was baptized a Mennonite in 1958. Yaguchi speaks of his Christian conversion more of as an embrace of passionate conviction than as a rejection of Buddhism. He mentions

that his Buddhist relatives respected his Christian conviction and that he respected their spirituality.

Trained as a teacher of literature and already a published poet, Yaguchi spent several years in Indiana in the 1960s at the Mennonite Seminary, where he met Harold Bender, Howard Charles, Millard Lind, and John Howard Yoder. He also recalls some amusing anecdotes of dorm living and describes meeting a full range of Anabaptists, from Amish who divided men and women in their congregations to French Mennonites who knew how to laugh and enjoy wine.

Of particular to writers and readers of contemporary poetry will be Yaguchi's memories of exchanges with a stunning array of American poets. Alicia Ostriker, Robert Bly, William Stafford, and Gary Snyder all came to read in Japan at Yaguchi's invitation. He recalls visiting the Ainu museum in Hokkaido with Robert Bly, remembers Jean Janzen writing a poem about soaking in the hot baths with Misuko, Yaguchi's wife, and portrays William Stafford as a fellow pacifist Christian and kindred spirit: "both of us loved to write on small things in ordinary voices" (139).

In 1976 Yaguchi spent another year in the United States, this time as a Visiting Scholar at SUNY Buffalo, aided by a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies. During this year he learned to know Robert Creely, Allen Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth, Lucien Stryk, Philip Whalen, R.S. Thomas and Denise Levertov, the latter two sharing his visions of Christian spirituality and peace.

That Mennonite Christianity is a religion of peace is abundantly clear to Yaguchi – and that Mennonite literature should be a literature of peace is also his firm belief. His poems of peace are often confrontational – entering the perspective of the "enemy" in order to discover his humanity, the human kinship of the poet with the being he fears or abhors. He has followed through on his Christian vision of peace by becoming an activist in contemporary Japan, where teachers can be removed from their jobs for refusing to teach the jingoistic national anthem to their students.

When Yaguchi visited Goshen College in 2002, he asked my students if they knew the work of Gary Snyder, whom he considered a Mennonite poet because of his commitment to peace. "Snyder is a Mennonite name,

no?" he said playfully. Thus he encouraged them to "see the self in the other" as he reminded them of the Mennonite legacy and commitment to peace. *The Wing-Beaten Air* works this way on the reader as well.

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Stuart Murray. *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith.* Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 2010.

This book is about Anabaptism's evolution into "Neo-Anabaptism" or "hyphenated Anabaptism." It offers perspectives on a modestly successful church planting movement over recent decades in Britain and Ireland, and offers practical examples of church planting in an Anabaptist key. Its ideas deserve to be scrutinized and discussed broadly by Mennonites and others interested in how Anabaptism can offer vibrant and relevant approaches to faith community formation. Despite the book's title, the author notes, alas, that "there is strictly no such thing as 'naked Anabaptism'" (43); it is always culture-clad.

Murray is optimistic, if occasionally boastful, about Anabaptism's prospects in "post-Christendom," suggesting that "Jesus might be making something of a comeback" (56). He trumpets Anabaptist tenets in a way that sometimes sounds anti-ecumenical or exudes an air of triumphalism. Much of his book discusses seven core "convictions" of the Anabaptist Network in Britain and Ireland, with examples of how they reflect new forms of Anabaptism (43-134).

The book seeks to answer the questions "What is an Anabaptist? Where did Anabaptism come from? What do Anabaptists believe? Can I become Anabaptist? What is the difference between Anabaptists and Mennonites?"(16). Much of it aims to convince readers that Anabaptism now means various things, some having no reference to historic Anabaptism. A primary aim is to inspire North American Mennonites either to reclaim