

Critics' Pick [Washington City Paper, May 25, 2018]

Along The Poet's Narrow Road



The photographs in Fred Zafran's exhibition at Multiple Exposures Gallery, *Along The Poet's Narrow Road*, are as moody and contemplative as you might expect for a meditation on a 17th century Japanese poet's journey. Zafran, a Leesburg-based photographer who has previously exhibited works taken in downtown D.C. and Miami, followed the path of Matsuo Bashō, a famous Edo-era master of haiku who cast off his possessions and hiked 1,500 miles through a wilderness region, mostly by himself, and wrote poetry. By the time of Zafran's pilgrimage, the scenery he saw included modern elements like train stations, restaurant kitchens, and bits of new architecture, but in most of the images, the quiet remains, even in nominally busy settings. "In prior trips, I traveled to Japan to photograph Japan. This time was an interior journey, exploring through photography my own evolving relationship with this country," Zafran says. Of special note is an image of a woman standing statue-like on a train platform, "an image of waiting," in Zafran's words, and "a portent of the journey to come." *The exhibition is on view to June 17 at Multiple Exposures Gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Studio 312, Alexandria. Free. (703) 683-2205. multipleexposuresgallery.com.*

(Louis Jacobson)